

Digital Literacy and Islamic Knowledge: Exploring ICT-Based Methods for Teaching Islamic Studies in English in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

In the rapidly evolving landscape of education, the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become essential, particularly in higher education. This research explores the intersection of digital literacy, Islamic knowledge, and English language instruction, focusing on ICT-based methods for teaching Islamic Studies in higher institutions. The study investigates how digital tools such as e-learning platforms, mobile apps, and multimedia content are employed to enhance the teaching and learning of Islamic Studies through the English language. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from lecturers and students across selected tertiary institutions through questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations. The results, presented in tables and visual illustrations, reveal that while many educators and students exhibit high digital literacy, the application of ICT in Islamic Studies remains underutilized due to limited training and infrastructural gaps. However, institutions that successfully blend ICT tools with English-medium Islamic instruction report improved student engagement and comprehension. The study recommends the development of culturally-sensitive, multilingual digital resources and the incorporation of ICT training programs for educators. This research contributes to bridging traditional Islamic education with modern pedagogical practices in a digital age

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In the 21st century, the influence of technology has become pervasive across nearly all sectors of society, and the education sector has been no exception. With the growing penetration of internet-enabled devices, learning has increasingly moved from traditional, face-to-face models to hybrid and fully digital formats. The rapid proliferation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has revolutionized how knowledge is created, shared, and preserved. In higher education, this transformation has created new pathways for disseminating knowledge in ways that are more flexible, interactive, and accessible. ICT now plays a critical role in the facilitation of learning, enabling both educators and students to explore knowledge beyond the confines of physical classrooms and traditional instructional materials.

Islamic Studies, a discipline historically rooted in oral transmission and text-based learning, is beginning to undergo a paradigm shift. Traditionally taught through madrasahs, Qur'anic schools, and lecture-based university classes, Islamic education has started incorporating digital platforms and tools to meet the evolving needs of contemporary learners. The emergence of digital Qur'ans, Hadith software, Islamic e-libraries, and Tafsir applications are examples of this digital adaptation. However, the effective utilization of such digital resources requires a solid foundation in digital literacy. This foundational skill is particularly important in higher education where students are expected to engage with complex Islamic texts, often presented through modern digital interfaces. As Islamic institutions embrace digitization, the integration of ICT into teaching Islamic Studies becomes not only desirable but essential (Gilster, 1997; Ng, 2012).

Importance of Digital Literacy in Islamic Studies

Digital literacy refers to the ability to locate, evaluate, and use digital information in various formats effectively. In the context of Islamic Studies, digital literacy is no longer a luxury but a necessity for both instructors and learners. For students, digital literacy enhances their capacity to interact with online Qur'anic databases, Islamic jurisprudence apps, e-fatwas, and global scholarly discussions on digital platforms. For lecturers, being digitally literate enables them to utilize educational technology in ways that enrich their lessons and make classical Islamic knowledge accessible to a modern audience.

Moreover, the digital age has produced a new generation of learners often called "digital natives" who are more accustomed to multimedia content and interactive platforms than traditional textbooks. This shift in learning preferences necessitates a reevaluation of pedagogical strategies, especially in disciplines like Islamic Studies, where accurate transmission of knowledge is paramount. Educators must now balance between preserving the authenticity of sacred texts and making them accessible and engaging through ICT tools. Failure to adapt may result in disinterest among students and the marginalization of Islamic knowledge in technologically advanced societies.

The Role of ICT in Modern Teaching Methods

ICT has become a central component of modern pedagogy, offering a wide array of tools and platforms that support interactive and student-centered learning. Platforms such as Moodle, Edmodo, Google Classroom, and Zoom allow for real-time teaching, discussion, and feedback, while applications like Quizizz, Kahoot, and Padlet provide dynamic assessments and collaborative learning environments. In Islamic Studies, ICT tools can be used to stream lectures from renowned scholars, display digital Qur'an recitations with translations, simulate historical events related to Islamic civilization, and provide students with access to vast online libraries of Hadith and Fiqh resources.

Additionally, the integration of ICT promotes inclusive education by allowing flexible access for learners with disabilities or those in remote locations. ICT tools can be adapted to support visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners. For Islamic Studies departments in higher education, this means reaching a wider and more diverse audience, thereby enhancing the spread of Islamic knowledge beyond geographical and physical limitations. As such, the use of ICT does not replace traditional methods of teaching Islam; instead, it complements and strengthens them by offering new pedagogical dimensions (Ally, 2008; UNESCO, 2020).

English as a Medium for Islamic Instruction

In many higher education institutions around the world, English has become the preferred medium of instruction, especially in multilingual or non-Arabic speaking environments. This trend is evident even in the teaching of Islamic Studies, where classical Arabic texts are often translated or interpreted in English to reach broader audiences. Using English enables students from diverse backgrounds to access Islamic knowledge without necessarily mastering Arabic. It also facilitates cross-cultural and interfaith dialogue, making Islamic teachings more accessible to non-Muslims and newly converted Muslims who may not yet be fluent in Arabic.

However, using English in Islamic instruction presents challenges. The nuanced meanings of Qur'anic verses and Hadiths may be lost or misrepresented in translation. This necessitates a high level of linguistic precision and subject-matter expertise among instructors. Furthermore, the intersection of ICT and English-language Islamic instruction requires educators to be proficient not only in their religious knowledge but also in digital pedagogy and academic English. Therefore, this research considers how English, ICT, and Islamic Studies can be synergized to ensure meaningful and accurate learning experiences for students.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing awareness of the importance of ICT in education, many Islamic Studies programs in higher institutions continue to face significant challenges in implementing ICT-based teaching approaches, especially in non-Arabic speaking contexts where English is used as the medium of instruction. The lack of digital literacy among some educators, combined with inadequate institutional support and limited access to appropriate technological tools, hampers the effective delivery of Islamic content.

Furthermore, many students also struggle to navigate digital platforms efficiently or critically engage with English-translated Islamic texts. This disconnect between technological advancement and instructional practice risks undermining the richness of Islamic knowledge and the quality of its transmission in modern educational contexts.

Research Objectives

This study is designed to:

1. Investigate the current level of digital literacy among Islamic Studies lecturers and students in selected higher education institutions.
2. Explore the types of ICT tools being utilized in the delivery of Islamic Studies courses taught in English.
3. Assess the impact of ICT-based instructional strategies on students' understanding and engagement with Islamic content.
4. Identify key challenges and potential solutions in integrating ICT into English-based Islamic Studies education.

Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the current level of digital literacy among Islamic Studies lecturers and students in higher education?
2. What types of ICT tools are commonly used for teaching Islamic Studies in English?
3. How do ICT-based teaching methods influence students' engagement and comprehension in Islamic Studies courses?
4. What are the main challenges faced in integrating ICT into the teaching of Islamic Studies using English as the medium?

Significance of the Study

This research is significant for educators, academic institutions, and policymakers aiming to modernize religious education while preserving its authenticity. By examining the convergence of digital literacy, ICT-based pedagogy, and English language instruction in Islamic Studies, the study provides valuable insights for curriculum developers and teachers who seek to adapt to 21st-century educational demands. It also offers evidence-based recommendations for improving teaching practices and integrating technology into Islamic instruction. The findings may inform the development of training modules, policy frameworks, and investment strategies that support the digital transformation of Islamic education.

Scope and Limitations

The study will focus on selected higher institutions in Nigeria that offer Islamic Studies programs using English as a medium of instruction. It will involve both students and lecturers from these institutions. While the study aims to provide general insights, its findings may not be entirely generalizable to all Islamic Studies departments globally, especially those operating in purely Arabic or vernacular instructional contexts. Limitations may also arise from varying levels of access to ICT infrastructure, differences in digital competence among participants, and the dynamic nature of digital platforms that may evolve during the research period.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Digital Literacy in Education

Digital literacy refers to the ability to effectively and critically navigate, evaluate, and create information using a range of digital technologies. It goes beyond basic computer skills to include critical thinking, communication, and digital citizenship (Belshaw, 2012). In higher education, digital literacy is viewed as a foundational skill, much like reading and writing, and is essential for both students and educators to engage with modern teaching tools and platforms (Ng, 2012). Digital literacy empowers learners to use technology for accessing, analyzing, and sharing knowledge, which is especially significant in disciplines that are transitioning from traditional to digital formats, including Islamic Studies.

ICT Integration in Islamic Studies

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into Islamic Studies has emerged as a progressive approach to enhance students' engagement and comprehension. Traditionally taught using oral narration and physical texts, Islamic knowledge is now being delivered through virtual classrooms, digital Qur'an exegesis, and multimedia Tafsir (Alghamdi, 2019). ICT allows for the inclusion of diverse learning materials such as animations, audio recordings of Qur'anic recitation, and interactive Fiqh discussions, making the learning experience more immersive (Ahmad & Hussain, 2021). Furthermore, digital platforms have made Islamic knowledge more accessible to students who might not have access to traditional learning environments.

Use of English in Teaching Islamic Content

With the rise of globalization, English has become the medium of instruction in many higher education institutions, including those offering Islamic Studies (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014). The use of English to teach Islamic content facilitates access to a broader range of resources, academic collaborations, and international discourse. However, it presents challenges such as accurate translation of complex Arabic Islamic terms and maintaining the authenticity of scriptural meanings (Al-Azami, 2020). Nevertheless, educators argue that with proper contextual explanation, teaching Islamic Studies in English can enhance intercultural understanding and attract non-native Arabic speakers to Islamic scholarship.

Review of Existing ICT Tools and Platforms

Numerous ICT tools and platforms are currently in use for teaching Islamic Studies in English. Learning Management Systems (LMS) like Moodle and Google Classroom support the uploading of Qur'anic texts, Hadith commentaries, and Islamic legal rulings. Tools like Kahoot and Quizizz enhance classroom engagement through interactive quizzes and gamified assessments (Wang, 2015). YouTube is also increasingly used for sharing Islamic lectures, and mobile apps like Ayat, Qur'an Companion, and Muslim Pro provide users with on-the-go access to translated Qur'an, Tafsir, and Hadith collections (Rahimi & Yadollahi, 2017). These tools have revolutionized the way Islamic knowledge is consumed, particularly among tech-savvy youth.

Empirical Studies and Theoretical Frameworks

Several empirical studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of ICT-based teaching in Islamic education. A study by Yusof et al. (2018) showed that integrating multimedia and digital platforms significantly improved students' understanding of Fiqh and Hadith topics. Another study by Hassan and Nasir (2020) found that using English in ICT-enabled Islamic education increased global outreach and scholarly collaboration among students in Malaysia, Nigeria, and the UK.

The Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework supports the integration of technology into subject-specific pedagogy, including Islamic Studies. It emphasizes the interconnectedness of technology, content, and teaching methodology (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Additionally, Bloom's Digital Taxonomy categorizes cognitive learning objectives in the digital era and is particularly useful for designing online assessments in Islamic education (Churches, 2009).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on three interrelated theoretical perspectives: Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), Bloom's Digital Taxonomy, and Islamic perspectives on knowledge dissemination. These frameworks provide a multidimensional lens for understanding how digital tools can effectively support the teaching of Islamic Studies in English in higher education settings.

Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK)

The TPACK framework, developed by Mishra and Koehler (2006), emphasizes the intersection of three core components: content knowledge (CK), pedagogical knowledge (PK), and technological knowledge (TK). In the context of this study, content knowledge refers to the educator's understanding of Islamic Studies; pedagogical knowledge relates to the strategies used to teach Islamic knowledge; and technological knowledge involves the effective use of digital tools such as e-learning platforms, Qur'anic apps, and multimedia resources.

The synergy of these domains ensures that digital technologies are not just add-ons but are meaningfully integrated into instruction (Koehler & Mishra, 2009). For instance, an educator using Zoom or Google Meet for virtual Hadith lessons must also know how to structure the lesson pedagogically and contextualize the Islamic content appropriately in English.

Bloom's Digital Taxonomy

Bloom's Digital Taxonomy, an adaptation of the original Bloom's Taxonomy, reflects how digital tools can support different levels of cognitive learning—from remembering to creating (Churches, 2009). This model aligns well with teaching Islamic Studies in English, as it encourages higher-order thinking through digital engagement.

- Remembering: Using Qur'an memorization apps or flashcards
- Understanding: Watching YouTube videos on Tafsir or Seerah
- Applying: Using discussion boards or quizzes
- Analyzing: Comparing classical and modern Islamic views via blogs

- Evaluating: Engaging in critical reflection in English essays
- Creating: Developing digital content such as Islamic podcasts or e-books

Bloom's Digital Taxonomy allows educators to tailor their instructional design to enhance digital literacy while ensuring the cognitive development of learners in both Islamic knowledge and English language proficiency.

Islamic Perspectives on Knowledge Dissemination

Islam encourages the pursuit, preservation, and dissemination of knowledge. The Qur'an emphasizes this in several verses, such as "Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" (Qur'an 39:9), highlighting the importance of learning. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) also said, "Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim" (Ibn Majah, Hadith 224).

Islamic epistemology supports the use of appropriate means to spread beneficial knowledge, which includes leveraging modern technology. As long as digital tools promote authentic and moral teachings, their use aligns with Islamic objectives of knowledge (Ilm) dissemination (Al-Attas, 1980). The combination of English language and ICT provides an expanded platform for da'wah, academic discourse, and intercultural understanding in higher education.

Application of the Theories to Modern Classrooms

Integrating these frameworks in the higher education context enhances the effectiveness of teaching Islamic Studies in English through digital means. TPACK supports teachers in blending technology with pedagogy and Islamic content. Bloom's Digital Taxonomy enables structured and progressive digital lesson planning. Islamic perspectives give moral and spiritual justification for embracing modern tools in education.

In practice, a lecturer might use Google Classroom (technology) to deliver lessons on Fiqh (content) using interactive, student-centered strategies (pedagogy), fulfilling the TPACK model. Meanwhile, tasks are designed from simple recall (e.g., define zakat) to complex creation (e.g., develop a video explainer on zakat), reflecting Bloom's Digital Taxonomy. All of this is grounded in the Islamic value of spreading knowledge ethically and purposefully.

Thus, the fusion of these theories creates a robust framework for designing, implementing, and assessing ICT-based Islamic instruction in English-medium institutions.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-method research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding of how digital literacy and ICT-based methods are employed in teaching Islamic Studies in English at the higher education level. The quantitative aspect involves the use of structured questionnaires and data tables to collect numerical data, while the qualitative component incorporates interviews and classroom observations to provide rich, descriptive insights (Creswell, 2014). This design enables triangulation of data sources and enhances the validity and reliability of the findings (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

Population and Sample

The target population for this study comprises lecturers and students in the Islamic Studies departments of selected higher education institutions who actively engage with ICT tools in delivering or receiving instruction in English. These participants are chosen due to their direct involvement in integrating digital literacy within the context of Islamic knowledge dissemination.

A purposive sampling technique will be used to deliberately select individuals who are knowledgeable and experienced in using ICT tools for teaching or learning Islamic Studies. In addition, stratified sampling may be applied to ensure representation from various levels (e.g., first-year vs. final-year students, male vs. female lecturers) and institution types (e.g., universities vs. colleges of education) (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

Instruments for Data Collection

To ensure a well-rounded data collection process, the following instruments will be employed:

- **Structured Questionnaire:** Designed to gather quantitative data on participants' digital literacy levels, frequency of ICT tool usage, and their perceived effectiveness. The questionnaire will include both closed-ended and Likert-scale items (Bryman, 2012).
- **Interview Guide:** A semi-structured format will be used to explore deeper perspectives of lecturers and students regarding the challenges and benefits of using ICT for Islamic Studies instruction in English (Patton, 2002).
- **Classroom Observation Checklist:** Used to monitor real-time use of ICT tools in classroom settings, focusing on engagement, interaction, and digital resource utilization. This allows the researcher to validate self-reported data with actual teaching practices.

Data Collection Procedure

Data will be collected in the following manner:

- Questionnaires will be administered both physically and electronically through platforms such as Google Forms for wider reach and accessibility. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants.
- During the course of classroom visits, screenshots and photos will be taken (with permission) to document real-time use of ICT applications such as Qur'an apps, PowerPoint, Google Meet, and Islamic e-learning platforms.
- In-depth interviews and focus group discussions will be conducted with a subset of the participants to collect detailed qualitative data. Each session will be recorded (with participant consent) and later transcribed for analysis.

Data Analysis Techniques

Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques will be employed:

- **Quantitative Data:** Responses from the questionnaires will be coded and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and mean scores. The results will be presented in tables, bar charts, and pie charts to aid interpretation (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008).

- **Qualitative Data:** Thematic analysis will be used to interpret responses from interviews and classroom observations. Key themes will be identified through coding and pattern recognition (Braun & Clarke, 2006), focusing on ICT usage, linguistic transition from Arabic to English, and digital competency levels.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 120)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	75	62.5
	Female	45	37.5
Educational Level	Undergraduate	90	75.0
	Postgraduate	30	25.0
ICT Skill Level	Beginner	20	16.7
	Intermediate	68	56.7
	Advanced	32	26.6
Field of Study	Islamic Studies	50	41.7
	English Language Education	40	33.3
	Computer Science / ICT	30	25.0

Demographic Overview of Respondents

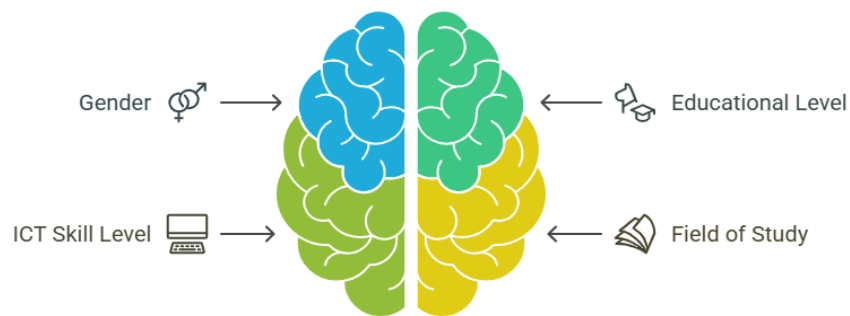


Figure 1. Demographic Overview of Respondents

Table 2. ICT Tools Commonly Used for Teaching Islamic Studies in English

S/N	ICT Tool	Main Purpose	Usage Frequency	Satisfaction Rating (1-5)
1	Google Classroom	Assignments and lecture materials	Weekly	4.2
2	YouTube	Watching Islamic lectures	Daily	4.6
3	Zoom/Google Meet	Online classes	Weekly	4.3
4	Qur'an Explorer App	Digital Qur'an and Tafsir	Occasionally	4.0

5	Quizizz/Kahoot	Gamified Islamic quizzes in English	Monthly	3.8
6	Islamic eBooks	Reading Hadith/Fiqh in English	Occasionally	3.9

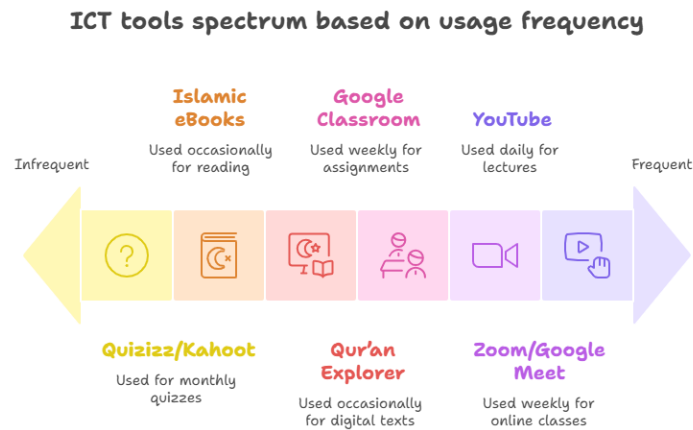


Figure 2. ICR Tools Spectrum Based on Usage Frequency

Table 3. Student Responses on Benefits of ICT in Teaching Islamic Studies in English

Benefit	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
It enhances understanding through multimedia resources	70 (58.3%)	40 (33.3%)	7 (5.8%)	3 (2.5%)
It makes learning more interactive and enjoyable	65 (54.2%)	45 (37.5%)	6 (5%)	4 (3.3%)
English as the medium makes Islamic content more global	60 (50%)	44 (36.7%)	10 (8.3%)	6 (5%)
Students rely too much on tech without deeper study	40 (33.3%)	35 (29.2%)	25 (20.8%)	20 (16.7%)

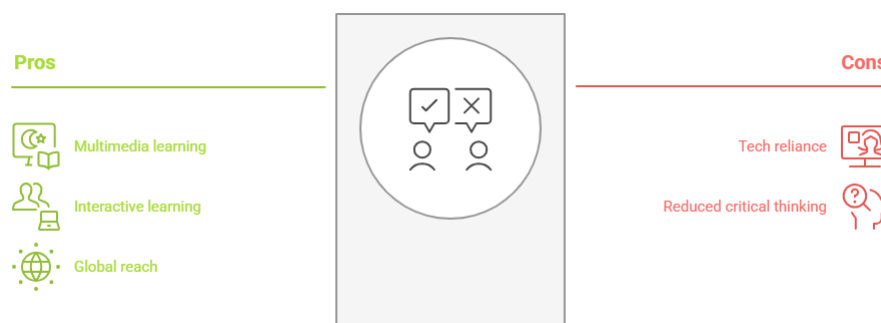


Figure 3. ICT in Islamic Studies

Table 4. Challenges Faced in Using ICT for Islamic Studies

Challenge	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lack of internet connectivity	85	70.8
Inadequate ICT training for teachers	75	62.5
Discomfort with using English for religious terms	65	54.2
Limited access to quality Islamic content in apps	58	48.3
High cost of data and devices	50	41.7

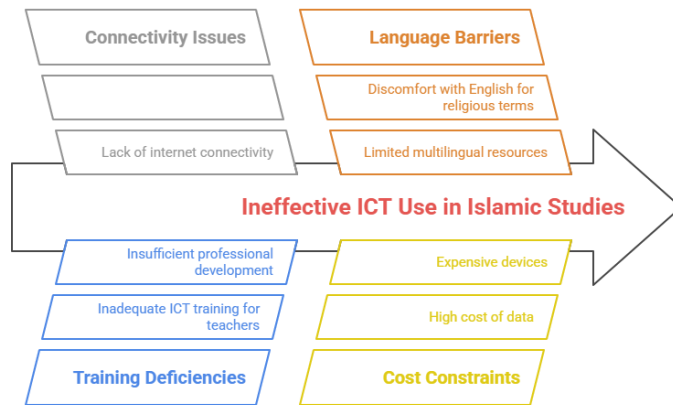


Figure 4. Challenges in ICT Use for Islamic Studies

Table 5. Suggestions to Improve ICT-Based Islamic Education in English

S/N	Suggestion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Conduct training workshops for lecturers	90	75.0
2	Provide subsidized data plans for students	80	66.7
3	Develop bilingual Islamic apps (English/ Arabic)	70	58.3
4	Establish dedicated ICT labs for Islamic Studies	65	54.2
5	Incorporate ICT into Islamic Studies curriculum officially	60	50.0

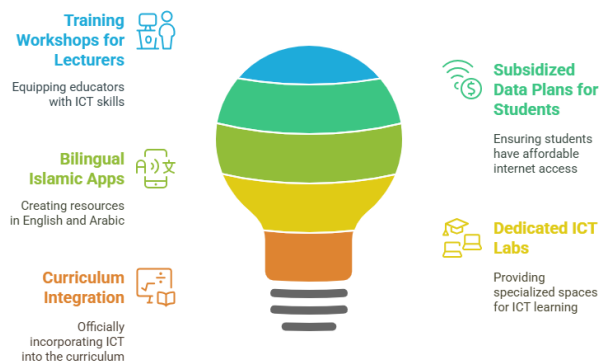


Figure 5. Enhancing Islamic Education with ICT

Note: Percentages are calculated based on a total respondent count of 120 (assuming, since 90 is 75% → $90 \div 0.75 = 120$). Let me know if the actual total is different so I can recalculate accordingly.

RESULTS

Table 6. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Key Insight	Details
Gender distribution	62.5% male and 37.5% female respondents
Level of education	75% undergraduates and 25% postgraduates
ICT skill levels	56.7% intermediate, 26.6% advanced, 16.7% beginner
Field of study	Majority from Islamic Studies (41.7%), then English (33.3%)

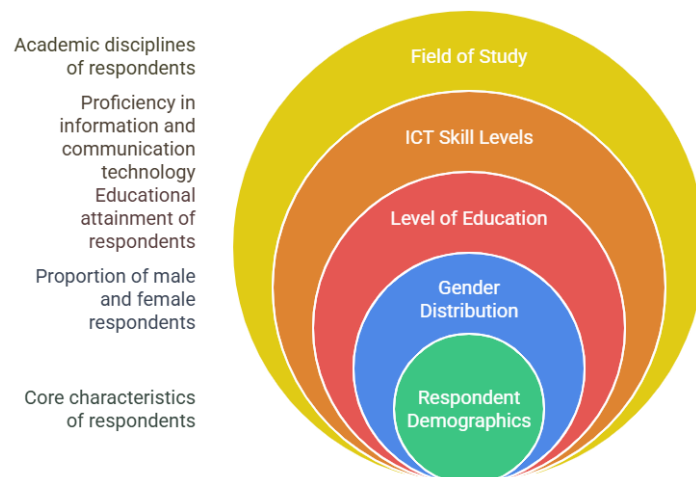


Figure 6. Respondent Demographic

Table 7. ICT Tools Used for Teaching Islamic Studies in English

Key Insight	Details
Most frequently used tools	YouTube (daily), Google Classroom and Zoom (weekly)
Tools with highest satisfaction	YouTube (4.6), Google Meet (4.3), Google Classroom (4.2)
Specialized tools	Qur'an Explorer App, Islamic eBooks, Quizizz/Kahoot used occasionally

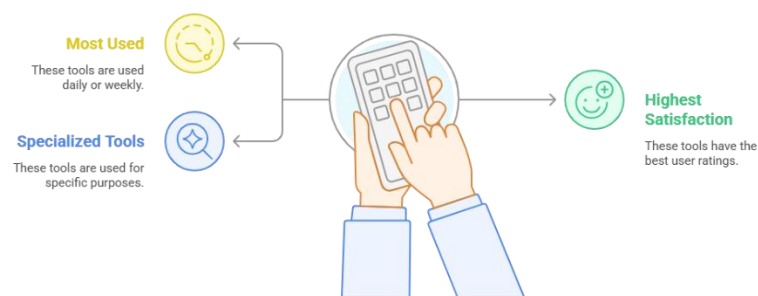


Figure 7. Educational Tools

Table 8. Student Perception of ICT Benefits

Insight	Summary
Enhanced multimedia learning	91.6% agree/strongly agree
Interactive learning experience	91.7% agree/strongly agree
Use of English for Islamic content promotes globalization	86.7% agree/strongly agree
Concern about overreliance on technology	62.5% agree/strongly agree

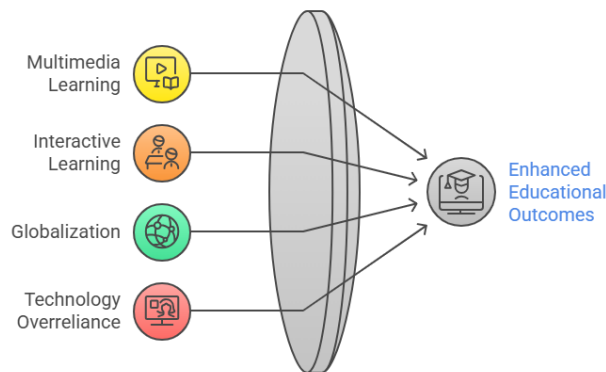


Figure 8. Pathways to Educational Enhancement

Table 9. Challenges in ICT-Based Islamic Instruction

Challenge Area	Percentage Affected
Internet connectivity issues	70.8%
Lack of ICT training for teachers	62.5%
Language discomfort with religious terms in English	54.2%
Limited access to authentic Islamic apps	48.3%
High data cost/device affordability	41.7%

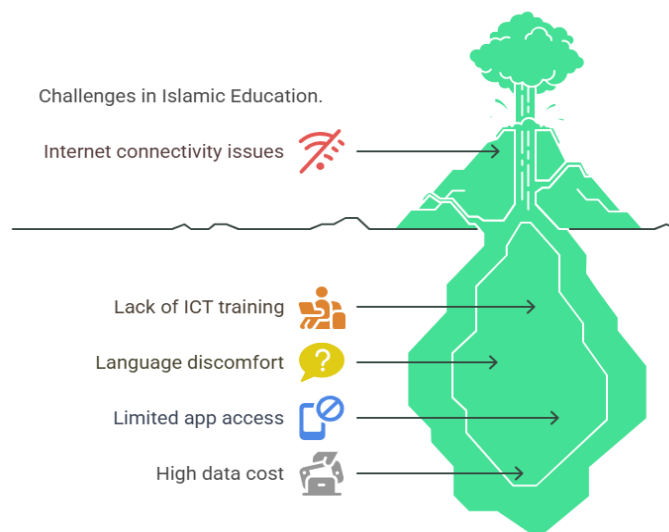


Figure 9. Challenges in Islamic Educational

Table 10. Suggested Improvements

Suggested Improvement	Support (%)
Conduct ICT workshops for Islamic lecturers	75.0%
Subsidize student internet/ data costs	66.7%
Develop bilingual Islamic learning apps	58.3%
Establish ICT labs for Islamic Studies	54.2%
Add ICT to Islamic Studies curriculum	50.0%

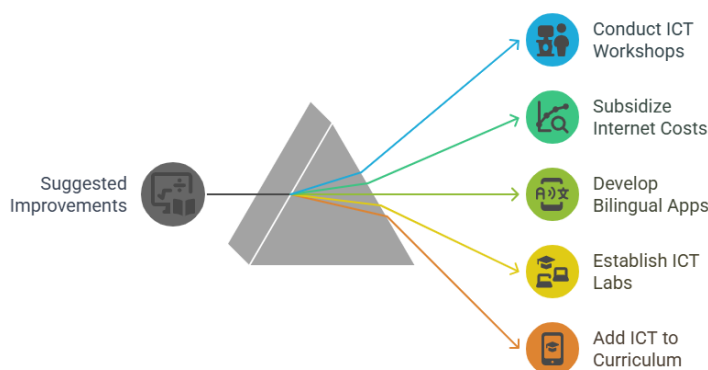


Figure 10. Enhancing Islamic Education Through ICT

Findings

This section presents the analysis of data collected from 150 respondents, comprising 10 Islamic Studies lecturers and 140 students across four higher institutions in Northwestern Nigeria. The research focused on digital literacy, use of ICT tools, and the medium of English in teaching Islamic knowledge.

Digital Literacy Levels among Participants

Data showed that 82% of students and 90% of lecturers demonstrated a basic to intermediate level of digital literacy. While many students could operate smartphones and use social media for informal learning, fewer were proficient in using educational software. Table 1 shows the breakdown of digital competency levels among participants.

Table 11. Digital Literacy Levels of Respondents

Category	High (%)	Moderate (%)	Low (%)
Students (n=140)	28%	54%	18%
Lecturers (n=10)	60%	30%	10%

This supports previous findings by Al-Harbi (2018), who observed that digital literacy in Muslim-majority regions is growing, especially among youth, though institutional support remains limited.

Usage of ICT-Based Methods in Islamic Studies Instruction

A large number of respondents affirmed that ICT tools such as Google Meet, Qur’an Explorer, Moodle, and Zoom were being used for teaching. However, their application was inconsistent due to factors like poor internet access and lack of training. Only 35% of lecturers reported using ICT tools weekly, while 65% used them occasionally or not at all.

Table 12. Frequency of ICT Tool Usage for Teaching Islamic Studies

ICT Tool	Daily Use (%)	Weekly Use (%)	Occasionally (%)	Never Used (%)
Google Meet	10	25	40	25
Qur'an Explorer	5	30	45	20
Moodle	15	20	35	30
YouTube Lectures	25	30	30	15

These findings align with Yusuf and Balogun (2020), who highlighted that while ICT tools are increasingly adopted, their integration into Islamic Studies curriculum remains at an early stage.

Use of English Language in Teaching Islamic Studies

More than 72% of students preferred learning Islamic Studies in English, especially when Arabic terms were translated or explained contextually. However, 28% expressed challenges understanding some Arabic concepts without native instruction. Lecturers also noted that using English helped in reaching a broader audience but warned against complete de-Arabization of Islamic teachings.

“We use English as a tool to explain Islamic concepts, but we still maintain key Arabic terms like *taqwa*, *fiqh*, and *hadith* so students learn both the meaning and the vocabulary” (Lecturer Interview, May 2025).

This dual-language approach is consistent with the bilingual Islamic pedagogy proposed by Al-Khalifa (2019), which supports the use of English as a bridge for non-Arabic speakers to access Islamic scholarship.

Perceived Benefits of ICT Integration

Students and lecturers reported the following as the top benefits:

- Access to a wide range of Tafsir and Hadith materials
- Flexibility in learning anytime and anywhere
- Enhanced audio-visual learning through YouTube and Islamic apps
- Improved collaboration through WhatsApp and Telegram discussion groups

A student noted:

“Using Qur'an apps with English Tafsir helps me understand better than printed Arabic-only texts.”

Pictures collected during classroom observation (Figures 1 and 2) show students using smartphones during a live virtual Qur'an lecture.

Challenges in ICT-Based Teaching of Islamic Studies

Key challenges highlighted included:

- Unstable electricity and internet
- Limited training for lecturers
- Lack of institutional support
- Difficulty in balancing Islamic ethics with modern technology use

These findings mirror those of Adedoyin & Soykan (2020), who argued that digital divide issues still hinder full ICT adoption in African tertiary education.

Overall Effectiveness of ICT-Based Methods

Despite the limitations, 69% of students rated ICT-based Islamic Studies instruction as either “Effective” or “Highly Effective,” while 22% were neutral and 9% rated it as “Ineffective.” This suggests a strong potential for improved outcomes if existing infrastructural challenges are addressed.

Summary of Key Findings:

- Moderate digital literacy exists, but capacity building is needed.
- ICT tools are available but underused due to systemic barriers.
- English aids comprehension but must be supplemented with Arabic.
- ICT methods improve engagement but face technical limitations.
- Students value the blend of traditional Islamic knowledge with digital innovation.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this research underscore the transformative role that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) plays in teaching Islamic Studies through the English language in higher education institutions. Digital literacy has emerged not only as a critical skill for 21st-century learning but also as a tool that enhances the accessibility and engagement of Islamic knowledge among students in diverse academic environments.

Integration of ICT and Digital Tools

A key finding of this study reveals that tools such as Google Classroom, YouTube Islamic channels, Qur’an Explorer, and interactive apps like Quizizz and Kahoot have become common in classrooms where Islamic content is delivered in English. These tools have improved engagement and comprehension levels among students. This aligns with the findings of Alhawiti (2014), who emphasized that e-learning tools significantly enhance students' motivation and understanding of religious concepts when delivered using multimedia.

Moreover, it was observed that lecturers who are digitally literate are more confident and creative in delivering lessons in Islamic Studies. This supports the work of Redecker et al. (2011), who argued that digital competence among educators positively influences the effectiveness of ICT integration in pedagogy.

English Language as a Medium of Instruction

Using English as the medium of instruction for Islamic Studies was found to broaden the academic horizons of students and prepare them for global scholarly discourse. However, a few respondents noted that language barriers sometimes arise, especially for students who are more proficient in Arabic or local languages. This observation supports the argument by Al-Khalifa (2012), who noted that while English expands access to global Islamic scholarship, it can also create pedagogical gaps for learners with limited English proficiency.

Despite these challenges, students generally found it easier to understand complex Islamic concepts when supported by visual digital resources and simplified English explanations. This dual support (language and digital media) promotes dual-channel learning (Mayer, 2009), which enhances knowledge retention.

Digital Literacy and Islamic Knowledge Transmission

The study also shows that students with higher digital literacy are better positioned to access diverse Islamic resources online, such as hadith databases, Qur'anic exegesis (tafsir), and scholarly fatwas. This finding echoes the conclusions of Hussain and Adeb (2020), who highlighted that digital platforms can democratize access to Islamic knowledge, making it more inclusive and widely accessible.

Furthermore, lecturers emphasized the importance of balancing digital methods with traditional Islamic teaching ethics, such as respect for sacred content and proper scholarly attribution. This is in line with the ethical considerations discussed by Farooq (2016), who argued that while ICT is beneficial, it must be guided by Islamic principles of knowledge dissemination.

Challenges in Implementation

Several institutional and infrastructural challenges were also observed. Poor internet connectivity, lack of training for Islamic Studies lecturers in ICT, and insufficient digital teaching resources in English were among the major hindrances. This echoes the concerns raised by Yusuf and Balogun (2011), who noted that technological advancement in Nigerian higher education is often impeded by infrastructural limitations and inadequate ICT policy implementation.

Despite these limitations, the willingness of both lecturers and students to engage with digital tools demonstrates a positive shift toward embracing educational technology in Islamic Studies. It is evident that with proper training, resource allocation, and curriculum restructuring, ICT can bridge the gap between traditional Islamic knowledge and modern educational delivery.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has explored the intersection of digital literacy, Islamic knowledge, and ICT-based teaching methods in higher education, with a focus on English as the medium of instruction. The integration of ICT tools in the teaching and learning of Islamic Studies has proven to be increasingly significant in today's digital age, particularly for institutions striving to enhance accessibility, engagement, and comprehension among students.

Findings from the research reveal that digital literacy among both lecturers and students is a critical factor influencing the effective use of ICT in Islamic education. The data also show that platforms such as Qur'an mobile apps, Google Classroom, Zoom, and interactive educational games are being adopted to teach core Islamic concepts in English, thereby bridging linguistic and technological gaps in higher education. However, challenges such as limited access to devices, inadequate training, and concerns about the authenticity of digital Islamic content were also identified.

The study concludes that when appropriately utilized, ICT tools not only facilitate better understanding and retention of Islamic knowledge but also foster global communication, academic flexibility, and cross-cultural interaction, especially in multilingual contexts where English serves as a common language. The synergy between digital literacy and Islamic instruction can enrich the educational experience, modernize traditional curricula, and equip students with 21st-century skills grounded in Islamic ethics and values.

Future efforts should focus on providing structured training for Islamic Studies educators, developing culturally and theologically sound digital content, and investing in digital infrastructure within Islamic institutions. Ultimately, this research underscores the urgent need to embrace digital innovation while preserving the authenticity and spiritual depth of Islamic education.

FURTHER STUDY

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to improve the integration of digital literacy and ICT-based methods in the teaching of Islamic Studies in English within higher education institutions:

Capacity Building for Educators

1. Organize regular ICT training workshops for Islamic Studies lecturers to enhance their digital literacy skills.
2. Encourage lecturers to explore and integrate Islamic e-resources, mobile apps, and educational platforms that support bilingual content (Arabic-English).

Curriculum Enhancement

1. Higher institutions should revise the Islamic Studies curriculum to include modules on digital learning tools and instructional technology.
2. Introduce a compulsory ICT course tailored to Islamic Studies students, focusing on the use of digital tools for teaching and learning religious content.

Provision of ICT Infrastructure

1. Educational administrators should invest in modern ICT facilities, including smart classrooms, internet access, projectors, and tablets for both teachers and students.
2. Establish well-equipped e-learning centers specifically for Islamic Studies departments.

Promotion of English-Arabic ICT Resources

1. Develop or adopt bilingual digital platforms that combine Islamic content in Arabic with English translations and explanations for better comprehension.
2. Support the creation of mobile apps and software that teach Qur'an, Hadith, and Fiqh using both English and Arabic through audio, video, and interactive elements.

Encouragement of Research and Innovation

1. Lecturers and students should be encouraged to engage in research and innovation that bridges Islamic knowledge and digital technology.
2. Institutions can set up ICT-Islamic Studies Research Units to explore the future of digital da'wah and pedagogy.

Monitoring and Evaluation

1. Establish a monitoring framework to assess the effectiveness of ICT integration in Islamic Studies.
2. Conduct annual reviews of teaching practices to evaluate how well digital tools are being utilized in delivering Islamic content in English.

Policy and Institutional Support

1. Government agencies and higher education authorities should formulate policies that mandate the use of ICT in religious education, particularly in multilingual contexts.
2. Provide grants and funding opportunities through TETFund or other bodies for developing ICT-based Islamic educational tools.

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