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ChatGPT as a Supporting Medium for Islamic Religious Education: Strengthening Students' Learning Experience and Academic Integrity

ChatGPT sebagai Media Pendukung Pendidikan Agama Islam: Penguatan Pengalaman Belajar dan Integritas Akademik Mahasiswa

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Abstract

The rapid adoption of generative artificial intelligence (AI), particularly ChatGPT, offers opportunities to enhance learning while raising concerns about academic integrity. This study examines the role of ChatGPT in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) and formulates strategies to preserve students' academic integrity. Using a qualitative library research approach, it analyzes scientific articles, books, policy documents, and other credible sources on generative AI, IRE, learning autonomy, and academic integrity through content analysis and thematic synthesis. The findings indicate that ChatGPT can improve access to learning resources, support independent learning, clarify complex concepts, and provide preliminary feedback. However, excessive reliance may encourage plagiarism, weaken critical thinking, reduce originality, and produce inaccurate information. Six complementary strategies are proposed: institutional policies, academic guidelines, cultivation of academic honesty, higher-order thinking tasks (C4–C6), authentic performance-based assessment, and contextual and problem-based learning. These strategies position ChatGPT as a supporting tool rather than a substitute for students' intellectual processes, and its outputs must be critically verified against credible scholarly sources. The study concludes that the educational value of ChatGPT in IRE depends on sound pedagogical design and a strong ethical framework. Because the framework is a conceptual synthesis of the literature, it has not been empirically validated and should be tested in future research.

Keywords: ChatGPT; Islamic Religious Education; Academic Integrity.

Abstrak

Pesatnya penggunaan kecerdasan buatan (AI) generatif, khususnya ChatGPT, membuka peluang untuk meningkatkan pembelajaran sekaligus menimbulkan kekhawatiran terhadap integritas akademik. Penelitian ini mengkaji peran ChatGPT dalam pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) dan merumuskan strategi untuk menjaga integritas akademik mahasiswa. Dengan pendekatan penelitian kepustakaan kualitatif, penelitian ini menganalisis artikel ilmiah, buku, dokumen kebijakan, dan sumber tepercaya lainnya mengenai AI generatif, PAI, kemandirian belajar, dan integritas akademik melalui analisis isi dan sintesis tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ChatGPT dapat memperluas akses terhadap sumber belajar, mendukung pembelajaran mandiri, membantu memahami konsep yang kompleks, dan memberikan umpan balik awal. Namun, ketergantungan yang berlebihan berpotensi mendorong plagiarisme, melemahkan pemikiran kritis, mengurangi orisinalitas, dan menghasilkan informasi yang tidak

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akurat. Penelitian ini mengusulkan enam strategi yang saling melengkapi: kebijakan institusional, pedoman akademik, penanaman kejujuran akademik, tugas berpikir tingkat tinggi (C4–C6), penilaian autentik berbasis kinerja, serta pembelajaran kontekstual dan berbasis masalah. Strategi tersebut memosisikan ChatGPT sebagai alat pendukung, bukan pengganti proses intelektual mahasiswa, dan keluarannya harus diverifikasi secara kritis terhadap sumber ilmiah yang kredibel. Disimpulkan bahwa nilai edukatif ChatGPT dalam PAI bergantung pada desain pedagogis yang baik dan kerangka etika yang kuat. Karena kerangka ini merupakan sintesis konseptual dari literatur, validitas empirisnya belum diuji dan perlu diuji pada penelitian selanjutnya.

Kata kunci: ChatGPT; Pendidikan Agama Islam; Integritas Akademik.

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Introduction

The rapid development of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has brought significant changes to teaching and learning practices in higher education. One technology that has received considerable attention is ChatGPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer), a generative AI-based language model that produces textual responses through natural-language interaction. Its ability to provide explanations, summarize information, generate ideas, translate texts, and assist with various academic activities has made ChatGPT increasingly accessible to university students. In education, such technology offers not only greater efficiency but also new ways for students to interact with sources of knowledge and complete academic tasks. Recent scholarship highlights both the educational opportunities and the ethical and pedagogical challenges of integrating large language models into learning environments (Thili et al., 2023).

ChatGPT offers several pedagogical opportunities. It can help students obtain initial explanations of difficult concepts, explore alternative perspectives, receive feedback, develop ideas, and engage in self-directed learning. Its interactive nature also allows students to work with learning materials more flexibly, according to their individual needs and pace. In Islamic Religious Education (IRE), digital technologies such as ChatGPT can serve as supporting tools that expand students' access to information and encourage creativity in learning activities (Suhendi et al., 2024). Monib et al. (2025) found that ChatGPT can help students understand learning materials and address difficulties encountered during the learning process. Similarly, Uğraş et al. (2024) demonstrated the potential of ChatGPT as an AI-supported educational tool. ChatGPT therefore has the potential to function not merely as a tool for completing

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assignments but also as part of a learning ecosystem that supports students' independence and exploration of knowledge.

Nevertheless, these benefits are accompanied by significant academic concerns. The ability of ChatGPT to generate text rapidly may encourage students to rely excessively on AI without sufficient verification, reflection, and independent reasoning. AI-generated responses are also not necessarily accurate, complete, or adequately supported by scholarly evidence. [Susnjak and McIntosh \(2024\)](#) highlight concerns about the reliability of ChatGPT-generated responses and their implications for academic integrity in higher education. More broadly, research on large language models in education has identified concerns related to factual reliability, academic integrity, authorship, originality, privacy, and a possible reduction in students' engagement in critical thinking ([Tlili et al., 2023](#)). The use of ChatGPT in education should therefore be understood not only in terms of technological efficiency but also within a broader pedagogical and ethical framework.

These concerns become particularly important when ChatGPT is used to complete academic assignments. The ease with which AI can generate coherent responses may blur the boundary between technological assistance and the replacement of students' intellectual processes. Students may appropriately use ChatGPT to generate preliminary ideas, explore concepts, obtain explanations, or improve the structure of their writing ([Werdiningsih et al., 2024](#)). However, uncontrolled use may shift learning from an active process of reasoning toward the passive acceptance and reproduction of machine-generated information. Such a shift can weaken students' abilities to analyze, evaluate, create, and take responsibility for the knowledge they produce. Consequently, the central issue is not simply whether ChatGPT should be permitted in education, but how it can be integrated without undermining students' intellectual engagement and academic integrity. This view is consistent with the growing emphasis on responsible and human-centered approaches to generative AI in education ([Miao & Holmes, 2023](#)).

In IRE, this issue has an additional dimension. IRE is concerned not solely with the acquisition of religious knowledge but also with the development of attitudes, responsibility, honesty, and the application of Islamic values in academic and social life. The use of ChatGPT should therefore be directed in ways that are consistent with academic honesty and responsibility. Students need to verify information, compare ChatGPT-generated responses with credible scholarly and religious sources, provide

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appropriate attribution, and take responsibility for the arguments and claims presented in their academic work. In this context, ChatGPT is more appropriately positioned as a learning support tool than as a substitute for students' reasoning, judgment, and academic work. This human-centered orientation is consistent with the guidance that generative AI in education should be implemented in an ethical, safe, meaningful, and human-centered manner (Miao & Holmes, 2023).

Several previous studies have examined the potential of ChatGPT as an interactive learning tool and its capacity to support students' learning activities. Javaid et al. (2023) found that ChatGPT can help learners understand learning materials and provide rapid responses during the learning process. Nasikhin et al. (2025) similarly examined students' strategies and challenges in using artificial intelligence in Islamic education and emphasized its potential as an AI-supported learning technology. In the specific context of IRE, Suhendi et al. (2024) found that ChatGPT has potential for supporting the design of IRE learning, while also requiring attention to its limitations and to the ethical implications of AI-generated information.

Despite the growing literature on the benefits, effectiveness, accessibility, and risks of ChatGPT in education, research specifically connecting ChatGPT-supported IRE with the sustained maintenance of students' academic integrity remains limited. Previous discussions have not sufficiently articulated an integrated ethical-pedagogical framework that balances technological assistance with students' intellectual autonomy, critical thinking, creativity, and academic responsibility, despite the importance of ethical frameworks, critical evaluation, human oversight, and institutional guidance in the responsible integration of generative AI (Tlili et al., 2023; Miao & Holmes, 2023).

Addressing this gap, this study offers a conceptual contribution: an ethical-pedagogical framework comprising six complementary strategies, namely institutional policies on generative AI use, academic guidelines, cultivation of academic honesty and integrity, higher-order thinking tasks (C4-C6), authentic performance-based assessment, and contextual and problem-based learning. The novelty of the study lies in integrating these strategies into a single framework for ChatGPT-supported IRE rather than treating them separately. Using qualitative library research, the study examines the contributions of ChatGPT to students' learning experiences and independence, identifies the ethical challenges associated with its use, and synthesizes pedagogical strategies to safeguard academic integrity. The proposed framework positions ChatGPT as a supporting learning medium rather than a substitute for students' intellectual processes,

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and it emphasizes critical verification against credible scholarly sources and learning activities that foster analysis, evaluation, creation, and contextual application. The framework is expected to contribute to the development of technology-supported IRE and to inform lecturers and higher education institutions in designing responsible, critical, and ethically grounded practices for integrating ChatGPT.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using library research to examine the role of ChatGPT as a supporting medium for IRE and the maintenance of students' academic integrity. Library research enables researchers to examine and synthesize knowledge from existing scholarly sources, including books, journal articles, and previous research findings (Fadli, 2021). The literature search was conducted through Google Scholar and the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), with priority given to publications from 2023 to 2026 to capture recent developments in ChatGPT and generative AI in educational contexts. Relevant literature published before 2023 was also considered when necessary to establish the theoretical and methodological foundations of the study.

The search focused on combinations of keywords related to ChatGPT, generative AI, IRE, learning, and academic integrity, including "ChatGPT," "generative AI," "Islamic Religious Education," "self-directed learning," "academic integrity," "plagiarism," and "higher education." Boolean operators (AND and OR) were used to combine related terms where the database search interface supported them. The inclusion criteria covered scholarly publications that addressed the educational applications of ChatGPT or generative AI, learning processes, information accuracy, plagiarism, academic integrity, or pedagogical strategies relevant to IRE. Publications were also included when they provided theoretical or conceptual foundations for understanding learning autonomy and responsible AI use. Sources were excluded when they lacked a substantive connection to the research questions, contained insufficient publication information for verification, or did not provide relevant conceptual or empirical evidence.

Data collection employed a documentation technique involving the identification, screening, classification, and extraction of relevant information. Titles and abstracts were first examined to assess their relevance to the research focus. Potentially

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relevant publications were then assessed in greater detail, and information concerning the educational benefits of ChatGPT, self-directed learning, learning experiences, information accuracy, plagiarism risks, and academic integrity was extracted and organized thematically. The selection process was guided by relevance to the research questions and by the credibility and traceability of the sources. This procedure followed the general principles of library research, which involves the systematic examination of existing literature to understand a particular phenomenon (Fadli, 2021).

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis and thematic synthesis. Qualitative content analysis involves systematic processes of preparing, organizing, categorizing, and interpreting textual data (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The analysis proceeded through repeated reading of the selected literature, extraction of relevant findings, initial categorization, comparison across sources, and interpretation of recurring patterns. Thematic analysis was used to identify, analyze, and report patterns across the literature, following the approach described by Braun and Clarke (2006). Findings from different sources were compared to identify areas of convergence, complementary perspectives, and potential tensions concerning the educational benefits and risks of ChatGPT.

The synthesis produced thematic categories concerning ChatGPT as a learning medium, self-directed learning, learning experiences, information accuracy, plagiarism risks, and academic integrity. Based on these themes, six complementary strategies were formulated to promote the responsible use of ChatGPT: institutional policies, guidelines for AI use, cultivation of honesty and academic integrity, higher-order thinking tasks at the C4–C6 levels, authentic or demonstrative assignments, and contextual and problem-based assignments. These strategies represent a conceptual synthesis of the literature rather than empirically validated interventions. Accordingly, the proposed framework is intended to inform pedagogical practice by balancing the educational benefits of ChatGPT with students' intellectual autonomy, critical reasoning, and academic responsibility. The overall research process is presented in Figure 1.

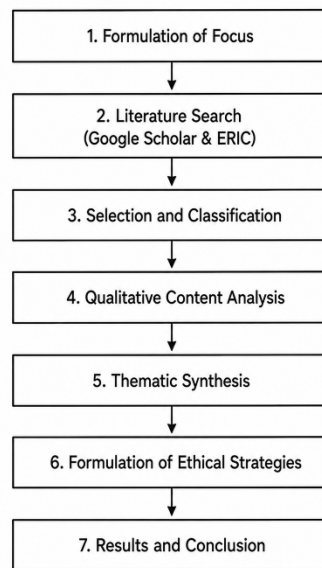


Figure 1. Research Flow Diagram

Figure 1 illustrates the literature search, selection, and analysis process employed in this library research. Relevant literature was identified through Google Scholar and ERIC and selected according to its relevance to ChatGPT, Islamic Religious Education, and academic integrity. The selected sources were reviewed and analyzed using qualitative content analysis and thematic synthesis to identify recurring patterns, interpret key findings, and develop six strategies for the responsible integration of ChatGPT into Islamic Religious Education. This process represents a literature-based analytical procedure rather than a systematic literature review following the PRISMA protocol.

Results and Discussion

Pedagogical and Ethical Integration of ChatGPT

The thematic synthesis identifies ChatGPT as a supporting medium that can facilitate several aspects of IRE. Its main contribution lies in providing students with initial explanations, generating ideas, formulating questions, offering examples, and facilitating further exploration of learning materials.

The analysis further indicates that ChatGPT can function as more than a tool for obtaining immediate answers. Students can use it to explore concepts, request alternative explanations, develop preliminary ideas, and clarify learning materials. In

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the context of IRE, this function can support discussions of Islamic concepts, contemporary religious issues, and different perspectives on religious topics. However, the synthesis also identifies an important limitation: AI-generated responses cannot automatically be treated as final academic or religious knowledge. The use of ChatGPT in IRE therefore requires students to examine, compare, and verify the information obtained through credible academic and Islamic sources.

The findings of this study indicate that ChatGPT has a dual role in learning, including in IRE. On the one hand, ChatGPT can facilitate access to information, provide immediate feedback, support idea exploration, and help students understand learning materials. On the other hand, uncontrolled use may raise concerns about inaccurate information, over-reliance on AI, and reduced engagement in students' own learning processes. Previous systematic reviews similarly show that ChatGPT offers various educational benefits while also presenting challenges related to information accuracy, critical evaluation, responsible use, and the need for appropriate institutional and pedagogical guidance (Albadarin et al., 2024; Baig & Yadegaridehkordi, 2024).

The integration of ChatGPT into IRE learning should therefore balance technological utilization, pedagogical design, and academic integrity. ChatGPT can be used to stimulate questions, explore preliminary ideas, provide initial feedback, and support students in understanding learning materials. However, students should remain responsible for verifying information, developing their own arguments, consulting credible scholarly sources, and producing academically accountable work. This position is consistent with research showing that educational chatbots can support self-regulated learning by helping students identify learning resources, apply learning strategies, and monitor their learning processes. Nevertheless, the effects of chatbot-based interventions are not uniformly positive, which indicates that their educational value depends on how the technology is integrated into pedagogical processes (Guan et al., 2025).

This study thus positions ChatGPT not as a replacement for students' learning processes but as a learning support tool whose effectiveness depends on appropriate pedagogical and ethical frameworks. The six strategies proposed in this study (institutional policies, AI-use guidelines, a culture of integrity, C4–C6 tasks, authentic or demonstrative assessment, and contextual and problem-based tasks) provide a framework for ensuring that ChatGPT use supports learning without compromising students' creativity, autonomy, and academic integrity. This argument is consistent with

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recent research emphasizing that generative AI requires institutions not merely to prohibit its use but also to reconsider assessment design and establish clear policies for responsible AI use (Gruenhagen et al., 2024).

Table 1. Synthesis of Literature Findings on ChatGPT Use in IRE Learning

Theme	Literature Findings	Implications for IRE	Representative Sources
ChatGPT as a learning medium	Provides rapid and interactive responses and supports exploration of learning materials	Supports initial exploration and discussion of IRE topics	(Kasneci et al., 2023; Lo, 2023)
Independent learning	Provides flexible access to explanations and learning resources	Encourages self-directed and self-regulated learning	(Kasneci et al., 2023; Lo, 2023)
Information accuracy	AI-generated responses may contain inaccurate or incomplete information	Requires verification through credible scholarly and Islamic sources	(Bender et al., 2021)
Academic integrity	Easy text generation may encourage inappropriate copying or undisclosed AI use	Requires clear AI-use guidelines and transparency	(Cotton et al., 2024)
Higher-order thinking	AI can generate answers rapidly, potentially reducing students' cognitive engagement	Assignments should emphasize C4–C6 skills: analysis, evaluation, and creation	(Kasneci et al., 2023; Cotton et al., 2024)
Academic responsibility	Students remain responsible for the content and arguments submitted	Requires transparency, source verification, and individual accountability	(Cotton et al., 2024)

The synthesis presented in Table 1 reinforces the argument that the educational value of ChatGPT should not be measured solely by its ability to generate answers quickly. Rather, it should be assessed by how effectively ChatGPT supports students' learning processes while maintaining intellectual engagement and academic responsibility.

ChatGPT, Islamic Religious Education, and Inclusive Religious Understanding

The synthesis shows that the interactive characteristics of ChatGPT can give students opportunities to ask questions, request explanations, explore examples, and develop alternative perspectives, which contributes to a more flexible learning process. However, the findings indicate that learning enjoyment should not be measured merely

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by the ease of obtaining answers, because meaningful learning requires students' active cognitive involvement. The use of ChatGPT in IRE should therefore be connected with higher-order thinking activities, particularly analyzing, evaluating, and creating (C4–C6). In this model, students do not simply reproduce ChatGPT-generated answers. They examine the responses, compare them with credible sources, identify strengths and weaknesses, and formulate their own arguments. The resulting learning process places students as the primary actors, while ChatGPT functions as a supporting instrument.

Conceptually, generative AI, including ChatGPT, can serve as a supporting technology for developing more adaptive approaches to IRE in the digital era. Students can use ChatGPT to explore IRE materials, clarify Islamic concepts, discuss contemporary issues, and consider different perspectives on religious questions (Nasikhin et al., 2025; Suhendi et al., 2024). However, the use of ChatGPT for religious learning requires both digital literacy and religious literacy, because AI-generated information should not be accepted without verification against credible scholarly and Islamic sources.

This consideration is particularly important in religious education because the credibility of information is not determined by the fluency or persuasiveness of an AI-generated response. Research on AI in Islamic studies courses has identified both its potential as a learning-support technology and the challenges associated with its implementation (Mainuddin et al., 2025). Suhendi et al. (2024), for example, found that ChatGPT has potential for supporting the design of IRE learning while also requiring attention to the limitations and challenges of its use.

The use of AI in IRE can consequently be directed toward strengthening values such as integrity, responsibility, respect for others, moderation, and openness to different perspectives. These values are particularly relevant in digitally mediated religious learning, where students encounter diverse and sometimes contradictory interpretations of religious information. Recent scholarship on Islamic education and digital literacy emphasizes the importance of developing students' capacity to evaluate digital religious information critically and to engage with digital spaces responsibly (Dewayanie & Tantiasih, 2026).

From this perspective, ChatGPT should not be treated as a religious authority. Rather, it can function as an exploratory learning assistant through which students formulate questions and identify possible perspectives. The subsequent process of *tabayyun* (verification, comparison, contextualization, and consultation with

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authoritative sources) remains essential. This is especially important because generative AI systems can produce plausible but inaccurate information, which makes source verification an essential component of responsible AI-supported learning (Chan & Hu, 2023; Strzelecki et al., 2024).

ChatGPT and Flexible Learning Support

The synthesis identifies learning independence as one of the potential contributions of ChatGPT. Students can access explanations, examples, questions, and alternative perspectives without depending entirely on direct explanations from lecturers. Nevertheless, the analysis indicates that learning independence should not be equated with the ability to obtain answers quickly. Rather, it involves students' ability to identify learning needs, formulate questions, examine AI-generated responses, compare information with other sources, and draw conclusions independently. This study therefore positions ChatGPT as a learning support tool that can facilitate students' learning exploration while keeping students responsible for the learning process and for the construction of their own knowledge.

The reviewed literature also indicates that students perceive generative AI as potentially useful for supporting flexible and personalized learning. Chan and Hu (2023), in a study of 399 university students, found generally positive perceptions of generative AI in higher education, particularly regarding personalized learning support, writing assistance, brainstorming, and research-related activities. At the same time, students expressed concerns about accuracy, privacy, ethical issues, and possible effects on personal development.

These findings suggest that ChatGPT can provide students with an additional channel for accessing explanations and exploring learning materials. Its conversational capabilities allow students to ask follow-up questions, seek alternative explanations, and obtain immediate responses to their learning queries (Albadarin et al., 2024; Kasneci et al., 2023). However, such flexibility should not be equated with complete learning independence. Self-directed learning requires students to take an active role in identifying their learning needs, evaluating available information, and making informed decisions about their learning process.

Recent research has examined the relationship between ChatGPT use and self-directed learning in higher education. Najib et al. (2026) investigated whether acceptance of ChatGPT contributes to self-directed learning and emphasized the need to understand

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AI use not merely as technology adoption but in relation to students' learning independence. The contribution of ChatGPT to learning independence thus depends on whether students use the technology to extend their thinking or to replace it. In the former case, ChatGPT can facilitate exploration and reflection; in the latter, it may encourage dependency.

ChatGPT, Academic Integrity, and the Need for Verification

The thematic analysis identifies several risks associated with the use of ChatGPT, particularly overdependence, uncritical acceptance of AI-generated information, plagiarism, reduced originality, and unclear authorship. The analysis also identifies information accuracy as an important concern. AI-generated responses may appear convincing even when the information is incomplete, inaccurate, or insufficiently supported. This issue is particularly relevant to IRE, where religious information requires careful examination of sources, context, interpretation, and scholarly validity. The findings therefore indicate that the main concern is not the existence of ChatGPT itself but the pattern of its use. ChatGPT can support learning when it facilitates students' thinking; its educational function becomes problematic when it replaces students' intellectual processes.

One of the most significant issues identified in the literature concerns academic integrity. Generative AI can produce sophisticated academic-style texts within seconds, creating new challenges concerning authorship, originality, plagiarism, and assessment. Lancaster (2023) argues that text-generation technologies such as ChatGPT can pose significant challenges to educational integrity because students may use AI-generated material in ways that do not represent their own academic work. Similarly, a synthesis of ChatGPT research in higher education identifies academic integrity and plagiarism as major research themes, and Bhullar et al. (2024) found that plagiarism is an important concern because excessive reliance on ChatGPT may affect students' ability to produce imaginative, inventive, and original academic work.

The problem is therefore not simply whether students use ChatGPT but what they do with the output. If students copy AI-generated text without verification, attribution, interpretation, or substantial intellectual engagement, the technology can undermine the learning process. Conversely, if students critically evaluate AI-generated material and use it as a starting point for further inquiry, ChatGPT can function as a productive learning resource (Albadarin et al., 2024).

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This distinction is particularly important in IRE. Religious concepts, Qur'anic interpretation, Hadith, Islamic jurisprudence, and theological arguments require careful attention to textual authenticity, scholarly interpretation, historical context, and methodological differences. Recent research on AI and religious education indicates that generative AI can provide useful support for religious learning, but its outputs may contain inaccuracies, biases, or contextually inappropriate interpretations. In Qur'anic studies and religious education, AI has been identified as a potentially valuable complementary tool, while its limitations in pedagogical depth, contextual interpretation, and religious authority remain significant (Al-Azani et al., 2026; Chrostowski & Najda, 2025). Similarly, recent research on AI applications in Qur'anic studies emphasizes the need to prioritize accuracy, religious principles, and ethical considerations when applying AI to Islamic sources (Al-Azani et al., 2026). AI-generated explanations should therefore be treated as initial material for critical examination and verification rather than as authoritative religious knowledge. Students should compare AI-generated responses with the Qur'an, Hadith, scholarly works, peer-reviewed literature, and other credible Islamic sources before incorporating them into academic work (Chrostowski & Najda, 2025; Faizin et al., 2025).

Higher-Order Thinking and Critical Engagement

The integration of ChatGPT also has implications for assessment design. If assignments merely require students to reproduce definitions, summarize information, or provide straightforward explanations, generative AI can complete substantial portions of the task. Assessment should consequently emphasize higher-order cognitive processes, particularly analysis, evaluation, and creation. Research by Lu et al. (2024) provides evidence that ChatGPT can be used as a supplementary tool in academic writing while encouraging students to make judgments about feedback and engage in independent revision. Their findings suggest that the educational value of ChatGPT is enhanced when students remain involved in evaluating and revising its output.

C4–C6 assignments in IRE can therefore require students to analyze an AI-generated explanation, identify its factual or conceptual weaknesses, compare the response with scholarly and Islamic sources, evaluate competing interpretations, formulate their own argument, and create a contextual solution or academic product. Through this approach, ChatGPT becomes part of a critical learning cycle rather than a mechanism for generating instant answers.

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ChatGPT as a Supporting Technology, Not a Substitute for Learning

Based on the overall thematic synthesis, this study identifies three conceptual indicators of ChatGPT-supported learning in IRE: learning completion, learning independence, and academic responsibility. Learning completion is reflected in students' ability to understand and complete learning activities with additional support from ChatGPT. Learning independence is reflected in students' ability to explore materials, formulate questions, and develop understanding independently. Academic responsibility is reflected in students' responsibility for verifying information, using credible sources, and accounting for the academic work produced with AI assistance. These indicators are presented as conceptual findings from the literature synthesis rather than as empirically validated measures of ChatGPT effectiveness.

The overall synthesis indicates that ChatGPT has substantial potential as a supporting technology for IRE in higher education. Its contributions include flexible access to information, interactive explanations, idea development, preliminary feedback, and support for academic activities. However, these benefits should not be interpreted as evidence that ChatGPT can replace lecturers, scholarly sources, or students' intellectual work.

The central principle emerging from this study can therefore be expressed as "AI-assisted learning, not AI-dependent learning." Under this principle, students remain the primary agents of learning, while ChatGPT functions as a technological support mechanism. The student formulates the question, evaluates the response, verifies the information, develops the argument, and takes responsibility for the final academic product. This position is consistent with research showing that the integration of ChatGPT in higher education requires attention not only to technological capabilities but also to academic integrity, student engagement, assessment, institutional policies, and responsible implementation (Bhullar et al., 2024; Strzelecki et al., 2024).

Accordingly, the six strategies proposed in this study can be understood as an integrated framework that runs from institutional policy and AI guidelines, through a culture of academic integrity, C4-C6 tasks, and authentic assessment, to contextual and problem-based learning, and finally to academic integrity and effective IRE. The framework emphasizes that the ethical use of ChatGPT cannot be achieved through prohibition alone. It requires the alignment of institutional regulation, pedagogical design, assessment practices, digital literacy, and student responsibility.

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Consistency of Academic Integrity in the Use of ChatGPT

Generative AI tools such as ChatGPT have increased students' access to AI-based support for learning and academic activities, but their growing use also raises concerns about academic integrity, authorship, plagiarism, assessment, and students' intellectual engagement. A synthesis of the higher education literature identifies academic integrity, student engagement, learning environments, and scholarly research as major themes in the discussion of ChatGPT, with plagiarism and the potential reduction of students' originality representing important concerns (Bhullar et al., 2024).

In IRE, therefore, ChatGPT should be positioned as a supporting learning medium rather than a substitute for students' intellectual processes. Its use should not replace students' deep understanding, creativity, critical thinking, or academic responsibility (Kim & Adlof, 2024). Instead, ChatGPT should support students in exploring information, generating preliminary ideas, clarifying concepts, and obtaining initial feedback, while students remain responsible for verifying information, evaluating the quality of sources, developing arguments, and producing academic work that they can explain and defend.

This position is supported by empirical research indicating that students use ChatGPT for various academic purposes, including brainstorming, seeking inspiration, and supporting writing-related activities. Such use can contribute to self-directed learning when students remain actively engaged in the learning process rather than simply accepting AI-generated outputs (C. Wang et al., 2024).

Generative AI is also challenging conventional approaches to assessment and academic integrity in higher education. Research indicates that it creates both learning opportunities and significant challenges for student assessment, particularly in relation to academic integrity, responsible learning, and the authenticity of students' work. These challenges highlight the need for clearer institutional guidance and for assessment redesign that maintains students' intellectual engagement and accountability (Xia et al., 2024; Baig & Yadegaridehkordi, 2024).

The three indicators should therefore operate together with consistent academic integrity. Uncontrolled use of ChatGPT may increase dependence on AI, facilitate academic misconduct, and reduce students' engagement with intellectual processes. Research on ChatGPT in higher education has consequently emphasized the need to

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address academic integrity not simply through prohibition but through appropriate educational practices and assessment design (Bhullar et al., 2024).

Six Strategies for Strengthening Academic Integrity

The thematic synthesis further produces six conceptual strategies for maintaining academic integrity in the use of ChatGPT, which represent the principal output of this study: institutional policy, AI-use guidelines, honesty and integrity, higher-order thinking tasks (C4–C6), authentic and demonstrative assignments, and contextual and problem-based assignments. These strategies form an integrated framework in which ChatGPT remains a supporting learning medium, while students retain responsibility for reasoning, verification, interpretation, and academic production. The overall findings can be represented as the following conceptual sequence:

ChatGPT → Supporting Learning Medium → Critical Verification → Student Reasoning (Analyze–Evaluate–Create) → Academic Work → Six Ethical Strategies → Academic Integrity → Effective and Ethical IRE Learning

The synthesis therefore positions ChatGPT as a supporting technology rather than a substitute for students' intellectual processes. The central finding of this study is that the educational value of ChatGPT depends on the integration of technological assistance, student reasoning, source verification, and institutional mechanisms for maintaining academic integrity.

First, institutional policy. Higher education institutions need to establish clear and proportionate policies governing the use of AI in academic activities. Such policies should not focus exclusively on prohibition but should clarify acceptable and unacceptable forms of AI use, requirements for verification and transparency, and students' responsibility for their academic work. Research examining university policies and guidelines shows that institutions are increasingly developing frameworks to respond to the opportunities and academic integrity challenges associated with generative AI. Institutional guidance is particularly important because both lecturers and students need clearer expectations regarding appropriate AI use (H. Wang et al., 2024).

Second, ChatGPT use guidelines. Students need practical guidance concerning the appropriate use of ChatGPT in learning. Such guidelines should address the permissible level of AI assistance, information verification, protection of personal data, disclosure or acknowledgment of AI use, and the prohibition of submitting AI-generated outputs

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directly as personal academic work. Clear guidelines are particularly important because students may differ in their understanding of whether particular forms of AI assistance constitute legitimate academic support or academic misconduct (Gruenhagen et al., 2024).

Third, a culture of honesty and integrity. Institutional regulations alone are insufficient to establish academic integrity. Ethical AI use needs to be supported by an academic culture that emphasizes honesty, responsibility, respect for others' intellectual contributions, transparency, and accountability. Academic integrity should not be reduced to the technical detection of AI-generated text. Rather, it should be understood as part of a broader educational culture in which students are expected to demonstrate genuine learning and take responsibility for the work they submit. Research on ChatGPT in higher education has identified academic integrity as one of the central dimensions requiring institutional and pedagogical attention (Bhullar et al., 2024).

Fourth, higher-order thinking tasks (C4–C6). Assessment tasks should move beyond simple recall and reproduction toward analysis, evaluation, and creation. C4–C6 tasks can require students to compare arguments, critique ChatGPT-generated responses, evaluate the validity of sources, construct arguments, and develop solutions based on their own analysis. This approach is particularly important because generative AI can perform many conventional academic tasks. A multi-institutional study examining generative AI across different types of higher education assessments found that the increasing capabilities of these systems intensify academic integrity concerns while also creating opportunities for educators to redesign assessment practices (Nikolic et al., 2024). Accordingly, the role of ChatGPT can shift from answer generator to object of critical examination. Students may, for example, be asked to generate an initial response using ChatGPT, identify weaknesses or inaccuracies in that response, compare it with scholarly sources, and then produce a revised argument based on their own reasoning.

Fifth, authentic and demonstrative assessment. Written assignments can be complemented by presentations, discussions, demonstrations, interviews, reflections, or other forms of performance-based assessment. Such approaches give lecturers opportunities to observe whether students actually understand the content of their submitted work. The shift toward more authentic and process-oriented assessment is increasingly discussed as a response to generative AI. Rather than relying exclusively on a final written product, assessment can place greater emphasis on students' reasoning,

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13 explanation, reflection, and demonstration of understanding. Such approaches can make the learning process more visible and reduce the possibility that students complete an assignment simply by submitting AI-generated text (Harris, 2024).

88 *Sixth, contextual and problem-based assignments.* Assignments should be connected to real-world problems that require observation, analysis, argumentation, interpretation, and decision-making. In IRE, for example, students can be asked to analyze issues related to digital religious discourse, ethics in social media, religious moderation, interfaith interaction, or contemporary socio-religious problems. Contextual tasks are particularly valuable because they require students to connect theoretical knowledge with specific situations. Research examining assessment guidelines in response to generative AI has similarly emphasized the value of designing more relevant and authentic tasks that are less vulnerable to simple AI-generated responses and more closely connected to students' engagement with real-world contexts (Shishavan, 2024). ChatGPT can thus remain available as a supporting resource, but students must contextualize the information, verify it against scholarly sources, and develop their own interpretations and arguments.

70 *Toward an Integrated Model of Academic Integrity*

The findings of this study indicate that maintaining academic integrity in the age of ChatGPT cannot rely solely on restricting or prohibiting the use of artificial intelligence. A more constructive approach requires the integration of institutional regulation, ethical guidance, academic culture, and assessment redesign. Based on the thematic synthesis, this study proposes an Integrated Model of Academic Integrity for ChatGPT-Assisted Learning in IRE.

The proposed model consists of six interconnected components: institutional policy, AI-use guidelines, integrity culture, higher-order thinking tasks (C4-C6), authentic and demonstrative assessment, and contextual and problem-based tasks. These components are not intended as separate measures but as a systemic sequence in which institutional regulation establishes boundaries, ethical guidelines clarify responsible use, academic culture develops students' integrity, and assessment design ensures continued intellectual engagement. The model is represented in Figure 2.

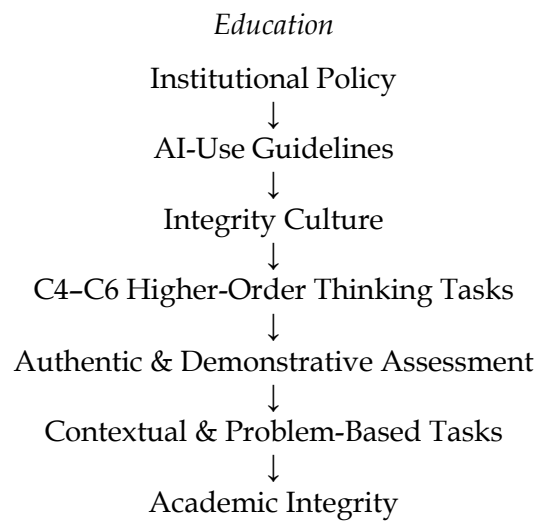


Figure 2. Integrated Model of Academic Integrity for ChatGPT-Assisted Islamic Religious

Source: Developed by the authors based on the synthesis of the reviewed literature.

The originality of this model lies not in proposing individual strategies that have been discussed separately in previous studies but in integrating them into a single pedagogical-institutional framework for ChatGPT-assisted IRE. The model positions academic integrity as a systemic outcome of the interaction between institutional governance, ethical awareness, learning design, and assessment practices. Academic integrity is thus viewed not merely as an individual student's responsibility but as a shared outcome of the educational ecosystem.

Within this model, ChatGPT remains a supporting technology rather than the primary source of intellectual production. AI may assist students in exploring information, generating preliminary ideas, requesting explanations, and obtaining initial feedback. However, verification, interpretation, critical reasoning, argument development, contextualization, and academic accountability remain the responsibility of students. This position is consistent with recent scholarship emphasizing that the educational challenge of generative AI is not simply whether students use AI but how institutions redesign learning, assessment, and academic policies so that AI supports rather than replaces meaningful learning (Gruenhagen et al., 2024; Bhullar et al., 2024; Nikolic et al., 2024).

Accordingly, the central principle of the proposed model is "AI-assisted learning, not AI-dependent learning." Through this model, the use of ChatGPT in IRE can be directed toward more flexible and interactive learning while strengthening students' independence, critical thinking, creativity, and academic responsibility.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that ChatGPT has considerable potential to support IRE, particularly by facilitating access to information, understanding of learning materials, self-directed learning, and academic activities. However, these benefits must be balanced against risks such as overreliance on AI, inaccurate information, plagiarism, and reduced intellectual engagement. ChatGPT should therefore function as a supporting learning tool rather than a substitute for students' critical reasoning, creativity, and academic responsibility. The literature synthesis identifies six complementary strategies for strengthening academic integrity: institutional policies, clear guidelines for ChatGPT use, a culture of honesty and integrity, higher-order thinking tasks at the C4-C6 levels, authentic and demonstrative assignments, and contextual and problem-based assignments. Together, these strategies provide a conceptual framework for integrating ChatGPT into IRE while maintaining learning objectives and academic integrity.

This study proposes that responsible ChatGPT use in IRE requires synergy among AI technology, credible scholarly and Islamic sources, and students' intellectual reasoning. Students remain responsible for analyzing, evaluating, verifying, and interpreting information, as well as for the academic work they submit. Nevertheless, because this study employed a library research approach, the proposed framework remains conceptual and has not been empirically validated. Future research should test the effectiveness of the six strategies across different higher education contexts, particularly in relation to students' learning independence, critical thinking, creativity, and academic integrity.

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