

AI AND MACHINE LEARNING IN ISLAMIC GUIDANCE: OPPORTUNITIES, ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

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Abstract

This study explores the ethical implications of AI in Islamic counseling through interviews with 10 Islamic scholars in Pakistan. The research employs Ethical AI Decision-Making and Islamic Counseling Ethics as theoretical frameworks to examine the potential benefits and limitations of AI in this context. The findings indicate that while AI can improve access to counseling services, particularly in underserved areas, it cannot replace the empathy, personalized care, and spiritual insight essential to Islamic counseling. Scholars emphasize that AI systems must align with Islamic ethical principles, ensuring confidentiality, fairness, and cultural sensitivity. AI should be viewed as a complementary tool rather than a replacement for human counselors, offering support in areas such as preliminary assessments or information delivery. The study contributes to the ongoing discourse on the intersection of AI and religious ethics, providing a foundation for future research on developing AI systems that are both technologically effective and ethically sound.

Keywords: *Ethical AI Islamic Counseling, Artificial Intelligence in Counseling, Cultural Sensitivity, Spiritual Guidance.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi implikasi etis AI dalam konseling Islam melalui wawancara dengan 10 ulama Islam di Pakistan. Penelitian ini menggunakan Kerangka Keputusan Etis AI dan Etika Konseling Islam sebagai landasan teoritis untuk meneliti potensi manfaat dan keterbatasan AI dalam konteks ini. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun AI dapat meningkatkan akses ke layanan konseling, terutama di daerah yang kurang terlayani, AI tidak dapat menggantikan empati, perhatian pribadi, dan wawasan spiritual yang esensial dalam konseling Islam. Para ulama menekankan bahwa sistem AI harus selaras dengan prinsip-prinsip etika Islam, dengan memastikan kerahasiaan, keadilan, dan sensitivitas budaya. AI sebaiknya dipandang sebagai alat pelengkap, bukan pengganti konselor manusia, dengan memberikan dukungan dalam bidang seperti penilaian awal atau penyampaian informasi. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi pada diskursus yang sedang berlangsung mengenai persimpangan AI dan etika agama, sekaligus menyediakan dasar bagi penelitian masa depan untuk mengembangkan sistem AI yang tidak hanya efektif secara teknologi tetapi juga sesuai dengan nilai-nilai etika.

Kata kunci: etika AI dalam konseling Islam; kecerdasan buatan dalam konseling; sensitivitas budaya; bimbingan spiritual.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years multiple sectors like healthcare, mental health, and education have seen the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) technologies evolving faster than ever before. More and more, AI-driven solutions, especially in counseling, are being looked into for the possibilities of being able to provide personalized, scalable, and effective mental health service (Elmahjub, 2023). In this context, Islamic counseling, which is based on the ethical teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, as well as Islamic jurisprudence, creates different opportunities and challenges to integrate therapeutic technologies in this field. Although AI and ML have the potential to improve everyday counseling (Mahudin, 2023, these tools used in Islamic guidance require a cautious investigation of the principles of ethics and religious values that are at their foundation (Raquib, 2023).

Islamic counseling goes beyond treating problems involving anxiety, depression, or family conflict to encourage spiritual well-being and personal development consistent with Islamic values. The concepts of confidentiality, empathy, and respect for the client's dignity form the

cornerstone of Islamic counseling, all of which are intrinsically Islamic, an integral part of the Islamic ethical code of the profession (Manríquez Roa et al., 2021). But with the advent of AI in this space, fundamental questions arise about how it's able to respect these foundational values. For instance, data privacy, cultural sensitivity, and the fitting of AI systems with Islamic teaching are among the critical problems (Fulmer & Fulmer, 2021).

This paper will critically analyze the intersection between AI, ML, and Islamic Consulting (counseling, guidance, advice, and so forth) to see how such technologies may advance the personalization and accessibility of Islamic guidance as well as the ethical concerns such technologies carry. In this specific case, in particular, the paper analyses the capacity of AI to provide counseling that is culturally and spiritually sensitive and weighs the corresponding challenges to privacy, algorithmic bias, and the threat of technological overreach to respond to spiritual needs (Al-Rodhan, 2020). This research adds to the ongoing dialogue about how AI is to be fused into culturally sensitive counseling methodologies, particularly in Islamic culture, through an analysis of existing

literature and empirical case studies. This paper aims to provide a comprehensive and balanced understanding of how AI and ML should be utilized in Islamic counseling ethically and effectively. However, their implications to the future of counseling for Muslim communities will also be addressed to ensure that AI-driven platforms adhere to professional standards of counseling as well as Islamic beliefs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years the momentum has picked up to integrate the Art of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and MACHINE LEARNING (ML) into mental health and counseling services (Graham et al., 2019). As tools for revolutionizing accessibility, scalability, and personalization of mental health care, these technologies have been heralded (Bélisle-Pipon & Williams-Jones, 2020). While the incorporation of AI and ML in general is quite a challenge, it is even more so within the narrow field of Islamic counseling. Islamically, counseling differs from its idea of mental health as it intermixes spiritual guidance from the Holy Quran and Hadith as well as psychological well-being (Haneef, 2021). This section examines the

current state of AI in mental health counseling and underlying principles of Islamic counseling with a brief exposition of their intersections, noting opportunities and ethical problems in this context.

AI in Mental Health Counseling: Benefits and Challenges

The potential for AI and ML to revolutionize the delivery of mental health care, specifically through virtual counseling systems such as chatbots and AI-powered therapy platforms is massive (Brown & Smith, 2021). Natural Language Processing (NLP), and machine learning algorithms are used to interact with users in therapeutic conversations; providing users with interventions, such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), mindfulness exercises, and mood tracking (Florida, 2019). AI-based interventions help improve access to mental health care, especially for underserved populations, by opening access to low-cost, scalable and immediate support (Cohen & Gerke, 2020).

However, still some way to go. Algorithmic bias is one major concern, where AI systems can perpetuate stereotypes or not solve the fine-grained needs of diverse populations, by accident (Ibrahim, 2021). This is a

big problem in culturally diverse settings because it's possible that AI systems haven't been trained well enough to recognize cultural or religious differences in the interpretation and expression of mental health (Williams & Moore, 2020). Additionally, both the privacy and confidentiality of user data remain a paramount issue in mental health applications driven by AI since personal health information is sensitive (Carr, 2020). Hence, solving these ethical challenges that accompany AI in shaping mental health care in a future where such technologies are being integrated into culturally and religiously sensitive contexts, such as Islamic counseling, becomes urgent.

Islamic Counseling: A Holistic Approach to Mental Health

Islamic counseling is a counseling form, which stresses the application of the Islamic spirit to integrate with psychological well-being in the perspective of Islamic ethics. The foundations of such an approach are principles from the Qur'an and the Hadith guiding counselors to offer clients support that promotes healing respects their dignity, and strengthens their relationship with God (Shneiderman, 2020). Conferring with Islamic counseling does not take

care of only mental health issues certainly psychological; it involves also the spiritual development of individuals, using a religious teaching mix within therapeutic practices of some problems (such as anxiety, stress, depression, and interpersonal conflict) (Rahman et al. 2020).

Confidentiality (sir), trust (amana), and empathy are basic ethical principles in Islamic counseling in that they are essential in forming a relationship between a client and a counselor (Rahman & Ahmad, 2021). Though expected to provide psychological counseling, Islamic counselors are also required to serve as spiritual guides: guides that could allow the person experiencing personal crises to see the issues they are facing with moral clarity and a reliance on support from God. The introduction of AI into Islamic counseling is surely a daunting task and when we view these principles, it becomes clear that AI systems could have difficulty reproducing the firmly human components of empathy, moral direction, and spiritual understanding that are critical to the practice.

AI and Islamic Counseling: Opportunities and Ethical Considerations

However, there lies significant potential for AI to back Islamic counseling in a way that increases the accessibility and scalability of services in Muslim-majority countries and communities where mental health professionals are, as stated by (Davahli et al., 2021). Considering their ease of access and alignment with Islamic values, AI-powered platforms can proffer initial consultation, emotional support, and psychoeducation for such persons. For instance, AI systems can be configured to respond with a type of counseling based on Islamic teachings would be logical counseling based on the religion of the client. Alongside this, AI could use patterns in users' behavior and emotions to identify mental health problems early, and thus intervene and provide support (Khoury & Ioannidis, 2020).

However several ethical problems need to be addressed carefully if AI in Islamic counseling has to be adopted without compromising the sanctity of practice. Sensitive information, the nature of which poses high levels of confidentiality, is shared, so privacy and data security concerns are crucial

(Jeyaraman & Roberts, 2023). Moreover, the likelihood of cultural insensitivity and algorithmic bias is especially concerning when AI systems have not been explicitly created to work within Islamic cultural contexts (Baskin & Bartlett, 2021). For the same reason, AI may not appraise prayer, fasting, or the use of sacred religious texts which form a very important part of Islamic counseling, as being important. Gaonkar & Kulkarni (2023) notes that, therefore, the algorithm AI systems ought to be carefully programmed to capture Islamic values, just like the ethical requirements of privacy and non-bias in the treatment process.

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on two central theoretical frameworks to guide the analysis of AI in Islamic counseling: The Titles of the two books are Ethical AI Decision-Making & Islamic Counseling Ethics.

Ethical AI Decision-Making:

The legal development of AI systems should comply with ethical principles that are already established such as fairness, accountability, transparency, and privacy, and could be presented in an Ethical AI Model, developed by Binns et al. (2018). What this model does is that firstly it states AI systems

have to be designed to operate consistent with human rights and dignity that is algorithms should not perpetuate biases and data privacy has to be scrupulous. In the field of Islamic counseling, these ethical principles are essential to guarantee that AI systems go beyond respecting individuals privacy to embracing the values of fairness and justice as studied in the Islamic ethical teachings.

Islamic Counseling Ethics:

Islamic counseling is based on an all-encompassing system of ethics with origins in Islamic Jurisprudence (fiqh) and moral teachings in the Qur'an and Hadith. Al Krenawi and Graham (2000) point out that counseling practice requires founders' ethical principles: trust, confidentiality, and integrity. In bringing AI into Islamic

counseling, it must be assured that AI systems observe these principles and deliver culturally adequate, religion-orientated interventions. According to Mahudin, N. D. M. (2023), if they can align AI with Islamic values then AI systems will be ethical and be accepted and successful among the Muslim communities while their rejection will work in reverse. This paper synthesizes these two frameworks to assess the ethical and practical implications of incorporating AI in Islamic counseling, specifically highlighting how technology can strengthen, not erode, the integrity of Islamic therapeutic practices (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Modified Theoretical Model Integrating Ethical AI Principles with Islamic Counseling Ethics

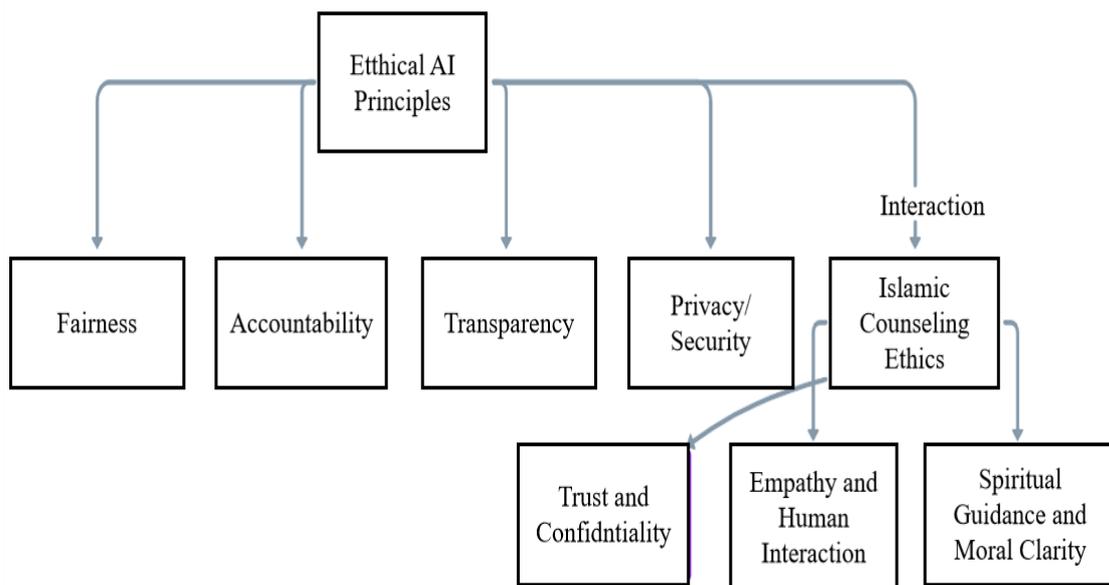


Figure 1 shows the nexus of Ethical AI Principles; namely, fairness, accountability, transparency, and privacy/security with the ethical foundations of Islamic counseling; viz., trust and confidentiality, empathy and human interaction, and spiritual guidance and moral clarity. This relation is then applied to cement the necessity of both maintaining ethical rigor and being culturally sensitive when designing AI systems for Islamic counseling. This model brings the technological capabilities of AI into line with Islamic ethical principles, ensuring that AI systems have respect for the client's spiritual and emotional needs and observance of fairness, accountability, and privacy standards.

METHODOLOGY

The present research adopted a qualitative research methodology to study how Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be integrated within Islamic counseling, keeping in view the cultural, religious, and ethical aspects in relation to Pakistan as a case study. This research was determined to be most appropriately done with a qualitative approach as it provides an in-depth look at the problems that Islamic scholars hold regarding AI's compatibility with Islamic counseling practices. Semi-structured interviews-especially qualitative

methods – are flexible in the sense that they enable to capture of a rich, detailed understanding of the subtleties of the participants' perspectives.

The convenience of a semi-structured interview was the flexibility; the semi-structured that it provided. Due to the semi-structured format of the interview, predetermined themes such as ethical considerations, cultural relevance, and religious concerns were investigated; this, however, allowed participants to elaborate on some of the beliefs expressed in connection to the nurses' perception of research. It was especially important to tackle this intersection of Islamic ethics and AI technology, as in this case structured quantitative methods might have failed to capture as much of the understanding and insights of the scholars as their discussions did.

The study engaged in collaboration with Islamic scholars — those who know about the religion and the culture — to learn how AI could be aligned with Islamic principles and counseling. By using this methodology the researcher was able to gain more meaning into what the scholars believe and think, their values, and concerns about the integration of AI in counseling which was discussed as a culturally sensitive and context-specific subject. Furthermore, qualitative research also helps in building new theoretical

frameworks or extending the existing ones because AI and its integration into Islamic counseling are still an emerging area and are scarce.

Finally, a qualitative approach was used for the analysis since it provides the opportunity for exploratory analysis and allows for a context-sensitive analysis that reflects participants' views to comprehensively understand the ethical, cultural, and religious dimensions of AI use in Islamic counseling. This approach lends itself particularly well to the nature of the research questions being complex as further exploration of this intersection in the future is robust.

Sampling and Participants

Ten Islamic scholars from Islamabad Pakistan were purposively sampled. The participants were chosen because of their expertise in Islamic studies, counseling, and ethics, covering a wide range of perspectives from both urban scholars. Priorly, all participants had some prior engagement with either mental health counseling or ideas related to the impact of technology on religion.

Note. Information on each participant's age, gender, education, area of expertise, and years in counseling in ethics or technology are included in the table. The diversity and expertise of scholars involved in the study are seen in this data.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, allowing flexibility to explore emerging themes while focusing on specific research questions. The interview guide covered:

Perceptions of AI in Counseling: Views on the integration of AI tools in mental health and spiritual guidance.

Ethical Concerns: Ethical issues such as privacy, algorithmic bias, and adherence to Islamic values.

Cultural and Religious Sensitivity: How AI can respect cultural contexts and align with Islamic teachings on counseling.

Future Prospects: Predictions on AI's role in Islamic counseling.

Interviews were conducted via secure video platforms and were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used as a qualitative approach, which entails analysis and reporting of patterns (themes) in data derived from the conducted interviews with Islamic scholars. The reading started with a rigorous study of the interview transcripts to understand the general content. I started with initial codes by marking the text that directly targets the research questions. From these codes, broader categories were formed to

determine key themes that came through throughout the interviews.

The overall themes were ethical alignment, cultural relevance, and issues regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI) in addition to Islamic counseling. We iteratively coded and categorized these themes. Usually, initial codes were developed and then further similar codes were clustered to generate overarching themes that captured the main issues and perceptions of scholars about the role of AI in Islamic counseling.

Qualitative data analysis was conducted by means of NVivo, a qualitative data analysis tool that enables working with and coding large data sets. NVivo did organize any data into a sensible category for further tracking and visualization across the interviews. Thematic maps were created using this software to visualize relationships between different themes and as a means to ensure a complete understanding of the interview data.

Utilizing the thematic analysis process enabled deeper meanings seeded in the data to be identified into which insights into how Islamic scholars perceive the ethical, cultural, and religious aspects of AI used in counseling are derived. The main findings of the study were then presented as the final set of themes reflecting the scholars' concerns and hopes

for the integration of AI into Islamic counseling practices.

Ethical Considerations

This study followed strict ethical guidelines at each stage of the research to protect participants' rights and the integrity of the research. All participants gave their informed consent at the beginning of the study. Before being involved, every scholar was given a thorough overview of the study to explain what we were trying to do that participation was voluntary, and, if they did, that they should feel able to withdraw at any time without repercussion. The participants of this research were able to make a conscious decision to participate based on this transparency as to what we planned to do, and how.

The study was conducted with utmost confidentiality having been given a very high level of consideration. All data was anonymized, that is, participant identifying information was removed, so that participants' privacy was protected. Data were securely stored in password-protected files, and there was no link to personal details. It finalized up-to-date what contained sensitive or personal information of the scholars, preserving their identity for the duration of the study and also after it.

The research process also preserved a high level of cultural

sensitivity considering this Islamic scholars are from Pakistan. Effort was made to tailor the design of the interviews and the data analysis to the participants' cultural and religious norms. The interrogation of questions was done in such a way that the Islamic values and praxis were respected and the participants did not feel disgusted in their answers. Moreover, in the process of interpreting the data, the research team was conscious of the Islamic worldview and context to make sure the findings were credible and of such kind as to fit into the Islamic worldview and context. This augmented the quality, and credibility of, the study using respect for the participants' beliefs and values.

Limitations

Limitations of the study were that findings were based on the opinions of a subpopulation of scholars at one institution, and may not generalize to the broader scholar population. The research was conducted within a specific cultural and religious context (Pakistan), thus restricting its ground for generalization of occurred phenomena to any other region. This is thereby a qualitative study that provides valuable insight into the integration of AI in Islamic counseling. The research is based in Pakistan and engages Islamic scholars to focus on ethical and cultural considerations for the

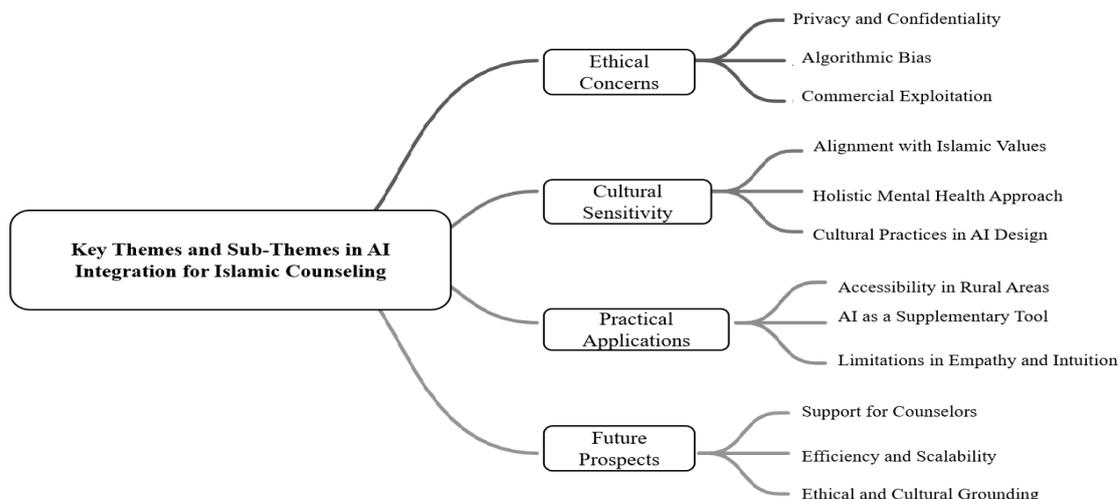
development of AI-based counseling tools on Islamic values and principles.

RESULTS

Through Qualitative study, conducting in-depth interviews with 10 Islamic scholars from Islamabad, some valuable observations were made that can help in understanding the possibility of integrating AI into Islamic counseling. The scholars appreciated the benefits that AI has to bring but they had major concerns about the possibility of AI to fully replace humans in the counselling process. Across the discussions, four major themes emerged: these are, ethical issues, cultural disparities, religious compatibility, and the realism of AI. The scholars were quite clear that AI could be a valuable help to counselors, but could not replace the human, emotional, and spiritual aspects of Islamic counseling. The information presented in Figure 2 is derived from the research themes identified in the study of AI Integration in Islamic Counseling. The model aligns technological advancements in ethical AI with the cultural and spiritual values inherent in Islamic counseling practices.

Figure 2

Key Themes and Sub-Themes in AI Integration for Islamic Counseling



Ethical Concerns in the Integration of AI

The predominant theme in the discussions pertained to ethical concerns and all scholars agreed that any integration of AI into Islamic counseling should harmonize with Islamic ethical principles. Poised issues were breaches of confidentiality, privacy risks, and potential misuse of AI for commercial benefits. Again and again, the principle of *Amana* (trust) was spoken of, and participants worried that AI systems might not be able to uphold the trust and confidentiality needed for Islamic counseling. Potential violation of privacy in AI-driven counseling was one of the most pressing concerns. Moreover, they were skeptical of AI’s capacity to work with sensitive personal information securely. Breach of privacy, they said, would not only circumvent counseling relationships but

contravene fundamental tenets of the Islamic faith of trust and morality.

Participant 1 reflected cautiously: *“Trust is central to Islamic counseling, and I am not convinced that AI can maintain the level of confidentiality required. If sensitive information is mishandled or misused, it becomes a violation not only of the individual’s trust but also of Islamic values.”* Furthermore, the scholars also explained the risks of privacy breaks in marital or family counseling. All of these issues needed to be handled delicately, and scholars presumed AI didn’t have the emotional intelligence to offer. Participant 6 hesitated, stating: *“AI might handle basic counseling tasks, but it cannot understand the deeper moral and emotional complexities of family issues. If trust is broken in such cases, the consequences can be devastating—not just emotionally*

but spiritually as well.” Another major ethical issue was seen when algorithms used by AI were found to have a certain bias with no real idea about why the particular decision had been made. Leaders were concerned that the sentiment of programming or limited data would result in unfair or negative repercussions for multicultural and or religiously diverse environments. Participant 8 questioned: *“If we cannot understand how AI reaches its conclusions, how can we trust it to provide fair or accurate advice? In Islamic counseling, fairness and justice are paramount, and an opaque system cannot meet these standards.”*

In addition to privacy and bias, scholars warned about the commercialization of AI in mental health, expressing fears that profit-driven motives could compromise ethical standards. The use of AI to exploit personal mental health data was seen as a significant risk. Participant 4 remarked: *“If AI is developed with commercial goals in mind, it risks prioritizing profits over ethical practices. Counseling is about helping people, not monetizing their vulnerabilities.”*

Cultural Sensitivity and Alignment with Islamic Values

Cultural sensitivity and the alignment of AI systems with Islamic values were recurring themes in the interviews. Scholars emphasized that AI

tools must not impose generic solutions but must instead be deeply rooted in Islamic teachings and cultural contexts to ensure relevance and effectiveness. The failure to contextualize AI in this way could lead to misunderstandings or misinterpretations of Islamic principles. Participant 3 argued: *“An AI system cannot offer one-size-fits-all solutions. It must be contextualized within Islamic frameworks, reflecting principles like tawbah (repentance), sabr (patience), and shukr (gratitude). Without this, the advice it gives risks being irrelevant or even harmful.”*

Islam views mental health holistically, integrating the well-being of the mind, body, and soul. Scholars doubted whether AI could adequately address this holistic approach, particularly the spiritual aspects of mental health, which they considered fundamental in Islamic counseling. Participant 8 elaborated: *“AI may help with psychological aspects, but it cannot guide someone spiritually. Spiritual healing is deeply personal and requires an understanding of the soul that no machine can replicate.”* While some scholars acknowledged that AI could assist in offering self-help resources or preliminary guidance, they were firm in their belief that these tools must remain secondary to the role of human counselors. AI could provide psychoeducation or basic

resources aligned with Islamic teachings, but deeper emotional and spiritual issues require human intervention. Participant 5 remarked: *“AI might offer tools for stress management or grief, but it cannot replace a counselor who integrates spiritual wisdom with emotional understanding. The human connection is essential.”*

Additionally, scholars stressed the importance of tailoring AI systems to Islamic cultural practices, such as incorporating religious rituals like prayer, fasting, or references to Qur'anic verses and Hadith. Participant 9 emphasized: *“Cultural sensitivity is non-negotiable. An AI system that does not understand the spiritual dimensions of practices like salah (prayer) or dhikr (remembrance of God) will fall short of addressing the real needs of Muslim clients.”*

Practical Applications and Limitations of AI in Counseling

While scholars acknowledged the potential of AI to enhance counseling accessibility, particularly in rural or underserved areas, they expressed significant concerns about its practical limitations. The inability of AI to replicate empathy, intuition, and spiritual insight was a major limitation identified by all participants. Participant 2 explained: *“AI might help diagnose or provide general guidance, but it cannot replace the empathy and emotional depth that a*

human counselor provides. Especially in sensitive cases, people need to feel understood, and that’s something only a human can offer.”

Several scholars were concerned about the over-reliance on AI, particularly in cases where individuals might turn to AI systems for emotional or spiritual support instead of seeking help from qualified professionals. They stressed that counseling must remain a human-centered process, with AI acting only as a supplementary tool. Participant 7 cautioned: *“AI lacks the spiritual understanding and moral reasoning needed to provide real guidance. It might give some general advice, but it cannot truly connect with people or understand their struggles on a deeper level.”* Moreover, scholars were critical of the notion that AI could handle complex emotional or mental health crises. They pointed out that while AI might help handle routine or less complex tasks, it could not replace the wisdom and insight of a trained counselor in addressing deeply rooted emotional issues. Participant 10 stated firmly: *“AI is not capable of addressing the complexities of emotional or spiritual crises. It might help with minor issues, but for anything deeper, the human touch is irreplaceable.”*

AI's Role in Addressing Mental Health within Muslim Communities

Despite their reservations, scholars recognized that AI could play a role in addressing mental health challenges within Muslim communities, particularly in raising awareness and improving access to resources. In regions where mental health remains stigmatized, AI might serve as a gateway for individuals hesitant to seek traditional counseling. Participant 5 suggested: *“For people who are too shy or worried about stigma, AI could provide an anonymous and judgment-free space to take the first step. It could encourage them to eventually seek more personalized help.”*

The shortage of mental health professionals in rural and underserved areas was also noted as a significant challenge, with AI viewed as a potential tool to fill some of these gaps. However, scholars were adamant that AI systems must be carefully designed to avoid misinterpretations of Islamic teachings. Participant 4 noted: *“AI might help in areas where counselors are unavailable, but it must draw from authentic Islamic sources. Otherwise, it risks offering advice that doesn't align with our values.”* The risk of oversimplifying Islamic teachings was another concern. Scholars worried that AI might misrepresent or reduce complex religious principles into generic responses,

leading to confusion or harm. Participant 6 cautioned: *“Islamic counseling requires depth and context. If AI oversimplifies or misunderstands the religious dimension, it could lead to significant harm.”*

Future Prospects for AI in Islamic Counseling

Looking to the future, scholars expressed cautious optimism about AI's potential, provided it is used responsibly and remains a supportive tool for human counselors. They saw opportunities for AI to assist with administrative tasks, preliminary assessments, and psychoeducation, freeing counselors to focus on more complex issues.

Participant 9 reflected: *“AI has potential if it is used ethically and with caution. It can support counselors, but the human element must remain central.”*

However, they stressed that AI systems must be grounded in Islamic ethical principles and designed to complement, not replace, traditional counseling practices.

Participant 10 reiterated: *“AI should empower counselors, not replace them. If developed properly, it can improve accessibility and efficiency, but it must never compromise the spiritual and emotional depth of counseling.”*

The results illustrate a common understanding amongst Islamic scholars that artificial intelligence can improve

access to Islamic counseling yet does not eradicate human, empathic, and spiritual dimensions of Islamic counseling. The scholars stressed that AI must be integrated into Islamic ethical and cultural sensitivity so that it is used as a tool to improve—not compromise—the basic principles of counseling.

DISCUSSION

This study brings forth meaningful perspectives which are significant to integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Islamic counseling, regarding the ethical, cultural, and spiritual alignment. Important insights into how AI can be effectively used as a supporting tool to help counseling, make it accessible, increase its efficiency, and provide cultural sensitivity along with human counselors were presented by Islamic scholars from Islamabad. Based on these findings, this discussion relates these to the theoretical frameworks of Ethical AI Decision Making and Islamic Counseling Ethics to show how AI could adhere to the principles and values in Islamic counseling.

Ethical Considerations in AI Integration

Ethical principles, like privacy, confidentiality, and fairness must be present in the case of integrating AI into Islamic counseling (Umam et al., 2024). The results of this paper are consistent

with the Ethical AI Decision-Making framework that advocates for Fairness, Accountability, Transparency, and Privacy (FATP) as key elements of AI systems. This is especially important as Islamic counseling is very much based on trust (amana) and the scholars strongly urged AI system designers to retain these elements (Maruf, 2024).

One of its key concerns was confidentiality, scholars mentioned the fact that the conversation of sensitive information that is shared among the counseling individuals should be secured. Privacy from the perspective of AI and Islamic Ethics was seen as nonnegotiable for the integration of AI in this domain. Scholars also said that AI systems need to be explainable and auditable, so they can be accountable for the processes used as part of their decision-making and ensure that this matches up with both moral and cultural expectations (Ali et al., 2023). In the case of AI systems, we present these ethical considerations as means that could help such systems respect and strengthen the required trust in counseling practices. However, by prioritizing privacy, ensuring fairness in the design of an AI algorithm as well as maintaining transparency of operations, AI could afford a trustworthy and ethical basis for Islamic counseling.

Cultural Sensitivity and Spiritual Alignment

AI systems built to assist Islamic counseling have to be culturally sensitive. What the scholars stressed is that Islamic counseling is deeply entrenched in cultural and spiritual values and encompasses psychological well-being and spiritual guidance. Since AI is to be presenting for Islamic counseling, AI must present the ideals of Islamic ethics and include major ideas from Islamic teachings. The main point was to contextualize AI within Islamic frameworks, Alkhouri, (2024) added. Tawbah (repentance), sabar (patience), and shukr (gratitude) were found to be equally important concepts in counseling and mental well-being (Shabana, 2023). Therefore, all AI systems must be structured such that they respond in alignment with these principles, such that they resonate with the values and beliefs of their Muslim clientele.

Islamic counseling is holistic mental health: mind, body, and soul (Ahmed, 2023). These scholars insisted that this holistic view should be infused into AI that supports it by programming a spiritual component and emotional resilience. For it, AI systems can be customized to be referenced to Qur'anic verses, Hadith, and Islamic routine, so the guidance given to them can be both relevant and spiritually uplifting. These

findings show how AI could help align the Islamic counseling practice in terms of culture and spirit. AI will thereby respect Muslim clients' distinct religious and cultural contexts and serve as meaningful support in addition to the human-centeredness of traditional counseling.

Practical Applications and Complementary Role of AI

Rafudeen, & Sitoto, (2024) discovered the possibility of applying AI in Islamic counseling in a practical way, for example, to improve the services' accessibility and efficiency. AI could help counselors in many ways, including having the AI initially assess, provide psychoeducation, and manage routine administrative tasks, Zubair, T. (2023) said. When these processes are made automated, AI will afford human counselors to spend more time and focus on addressing complex emotional and spiritual concerns. Preliminary support for people who need counseling is one of the key strengths of AI. The resources that AI systems can provide for stress management, grief coping, and emotional well-being could incorporate Islamic principles in their guidance. The capability of AI makes it a great tool for delivering help instantly at a time when human counselors are not widely available.

Ghaly, M. (2023) also explained that AI systems could greatly help expand

the availability of counseling services where there are few counselors, in rural or underserved areas across the world. Using AI, we can provide culturally sensitive and spiritually aligned resources to individuals who might not otherwise have this option because AI technology could be leveraged by them.

Although these practical applications exist, Khamis, (2021) pointed out that AI was meant to be an additional tool, not a substitute for human counselors. However, human presence is needed as human beings are still the ones to lend their empathy, intuition, and spiritual awareness, which is part of Islamic counseling. While AI can aid with some things, there's no way AI can replace the depth of human connection and spiritual guidance counselors provide. The AI makes this counseling process complementary so that AI helps in the counseling function while keeping it human-centric.

1. Future Prospects for AI in Islamic Counseling

Raza Rabbani et al. (2021) herald AI as having enormous potential contribution towards Islamic counseling, but in case such development of AI is by Islamic ethical standards and cultural values. AI systems can transform how counseling services are provided as they offer the promise to increase accessibility,

scalability, and efficiency. In responsible development, AI empowers counselors with tools to improve the delivery of service to their clients. At the same time, there is much promise in using AI as a tool for performing preliminary assessments and data analysis. With AI systems analyzing patterns that show up in clients' responses, counselors will be able to use insights to help identify what might work best for each individual. By using AI, educational resources for example on emotional resilience and mental health, would be delivered in alignment with Islamic teachings.

Ardianti, (2023) stressed they also regarded the ethical and cultural foundation of AI systems as its top priority. This integration of AI will make sure that the spiritual and moral dimensions of Islamic counseling are preserved, without compromising the quality of services cultivated. Nawi, et al. (2023) determined that AI can benefit from traditional practices, especially if it remains to serve as a tool, both to supplement and strengthen the counselor's role. The discussion conveys how AI can be an aid to Islamic counseling, while also acting as a facilitator to making Islam counseling easily accessible, more efficient as well as alignable with Islamic values. When we integrate these principles of Ethical AI Decision Making, based on

Islamic Counseling Ethics to design our AI Systems, they will be able to act as complements to human counselors that will support the emotional, spiritual, and cultural needs of clients. The results indicate that responsibly developed AI has the potential to support the advancement of Islamic counseling practices in a way that respects their human-centered nature.

Implications of the Study

This study has important implications for research, practice, and policy in the integration of Artificial Intelligence into Islamic counseling. These implications suggest what is necessary to design, execute, and operate AI systems to be aligned with Islamic values of ethics as well as the practice of counseling.

Implications for Research

This research offers a solid theoretical foundation combining the frameworks of Ethical AI Decision-Making and Islamic Counseling Ethics and sets future researchers an agenda to examine how culturally distinct counseling practices interface with the use of AI. This research emphasizes the point that AI systems must be aware of cultural and religious sensitivities, thereby providing direction for continuing research into how AI can be optimized to reflect Islamic principles like tawbah (repentance), sabr (patience), and shukr (gratitude). Finally,

future research could tackle the issue of bringing these values into the development of AI tools which also consider practical issues such as bias mitigation and data privacy.

Also, the research calls for investigating how advanced technologies such as Natural Language Processing (NLP) and emotion recognition algorithms can be customized to address the psycho-spiritual needs of the Muslim clientele. Furthermore, comparing different, cultural or religious, counseling paradigms could teach about the best practices when it comes to developing AI systems in culturally diverse places, which are equally ethical and culturally compatible.

Implications for Practice

This study stresses the importance of AI as a supportive tool for practitioners, underscoring its support for, rather than the replacement of, human-centered aspects of Islamic counseling. AI can be used by counselors for initial assessments, psychoeducation, and administrative tasks so they can devote more energy to attending to emotional, psychic, and spiritual aspects. For example, AI systems could recommend tailored recommendations or point out client response patterns that would enable counselors to create more impactful therapeutic strategies.

Additionally, if developers are to build AI systems in a culturally sensitive manner, they must design these technologies as a reflection of what Islamic teaching promotes, through the Qu’ran, Hadith, and ethical principles. Aligning AI tools with Islamic values will enable the use of these systems to support the work of practitioners without compromising tradition in the process of delivering traditional counseling. For example, AI might make resources about stress management or grief coping available, but spiritually uplifting and culturally relevant, adding another level of support to counselors and their clients.

In addition, AI can enhance the accessibility of Islamic counseling services in areas that are not served, or rural. AI systems can fill gaps in mental health care by extending the reach of counseling to those that would not otherwise be able to access professional counselors, by providing culturally aligned resources and basic support.

Implications for Policy

For AI to be safely and effectively integrated into Islamic counseling strong ethical and regulatory frameworks are needed. Policymakers must thus stipulate standards for the development and deployment of AI technologies in counseling, so we align them with universally agreed ethical standards and

Islamic principles. On the principles for designing trustworthy AI — or what these guidelines should include — there must be freedom from bias, transparency, confidentiality, fairness in algorithms, and privacy.

Additionally, regulatory oversight is important to ensure misuse or unethical practices, including the commercialization of personal mental health data, do not arise. As AI developers and mental health NGOs rise to the challenge of producing and collaborating to promote innovation, it is the responsibility of governments and authorities to create policies safeguarding the users they are meant to serve. While there would be such oversight, it would entail mandatory audits of AI systems, including certificates for developers who work on such technologies in sensitive fields, such as counseling.

Along with this, training programs for counselors and other mental health practitioners will be essential to how AI will be oriented into the area of Islamic counseling. Just as important, however, is to educate our practitioners – the people on the front lines who will be tasked with applying these tools – about the ethical use of AI, what AI is capable of, and what it is not, so they know how to use the tools while retaining their role first and foremost as empathetic, human-centered caregivers.

CONCLUSION

In this study, Artificial Intelligence (AI) was investigated as a potential integration technique within Islamic counseling; by surveying 10 Islamic scholars in Islamabad on cultural, ethical, and practical issues associated with such a relationship. The results demonstrate that though AI can undoubtedly improve the accessibility, efficiency, and scalability of counseling services, its function must be in addition to, not replace, human counselors. It is impossible for AI to accurately replicate a human-centered Islamic counseling approach that draws on spiritual guidance; empathy and trust. However AI can help counselors by taking out the initial assessments and handling standard tasks such as psychoeducation so they can concentrate on offering individualized, empathetic, spiritually coupled guidance.

To align Integrated AI Systems to Islamic values and Cultural Sensitivities; the Application of Ethical AI Decision-Making and Islamic Counseling Ethics as principles that ground them provides such a sense of alignment. The study postulates that AI systems should be designed to put trust, confidentiality, fairness, and spiritual alignment in line, ensuring the systems work as tools that complement rather than replace traditional counseling methods. In the future, AI in Islam counseling will

provide that extra help to human ones without compromising the spiritual and emotional depth of the process.

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