

Volume 3 (2025)



RMU e-Bulletin



Research Management Unit
Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Kedah

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eISSN : 2805-47 5X

Published by : Universiti Teknologi MARA
08400 Merbok, Kedah Malaysia

Printed by : Perpustakaan Sultan Badlishah
Universiti Teknologi Mara Cawangan Kedah
08400 Merbok Kedah

e ISSN 2805- 47 5X



9772805 475 000

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Embracing New Horizons: A Fresh Start for 2025



As we stand at the threshold of a new year, I welcome you to RMU4U Third Edition (January 2025). The start of a new year symbolizes renewal, an opportunity to recalibrate our aspirations and refresh our collective commitment to academic excellence, research endeavours, and impactful scholarly contributions.

The year 2024 saw significant progress within our academic and research community. It was a testament to the passion, perseverance, and creativity of all members of the UiTM Kedah family. As we reflect on those accomplishments, let us also look ahead with determination to elevate our efforts in research, publication, and innovation. Let 2025 be the year we chart new pathways for discovery and collaboration, bringing our work to greater heights.

This year, I encourage all of us to reaffirm our scholarly goals by setting clear, measurable targets for research outputs, impactful writings, and knowledge sharing, aiming to contribute meaningfully to society both locally and globally. Let us strengthen research collaborations by building networks across disciplines, faculties, and institutions to foster cross-disciplinary solutions to real-world challenges. At the same time, we must focus on innovation by exploring new ideas, embracing digital tools, and pioneering creative solutions that align with global trends and local needs. Above all, let us support each other by sharing expertise, mentoring the next generation, and collaborating to overcome challenges, creating a thriving research ecosystem where everyone uplifts one another.

Let this be a year where we balance ambition with reflection, passion with purpose, and innovation with impact. The Research Management Unit (RMU) remains steadfast in supporting your research journey through resources, platforms, and opportunities for growth.

As we embark on this new chapter, I wish each of you the strength to pursue your aspirations and the resilience to overcome any obstacles. Together, let us make 2025 a year of breakthroughs, achievements, and shared successes.

Here's to a productive and inspiring year ahead.

Sincerely,

Prof. Dr. Roshima Said

Acting Rector, UiTM Kedah



A Message from the Chief Editor

Dear Readers,

I am pleased to announce the return of the RMU4U Bulletin with Volume 3, showcasing a diverse array of academic inquiries and professional perspectives across multiple themes. This edition continues our commitment to facilitating intellectual exchange and presenting research that engages with contemporary issues.

In this volume, the Law & Policy theme stands out with the highest number of contributions, featuring 14 papers that explore significant aspects of governance, justice, and societal well-being. These papers highlight the role of legal frameworks and policies in addressing current challenges and contributing to societal development.

Highlighted works include topics such as "Enhancing Access to Justice: The Role, Challenges, and Future of Small Claims Courts in Malaysia" and "Environmental Public Interest Litigation: Broadening Locus Standi to Safeguard Collective Interests," which examine the evolving landscape of legal rights and public interest. Additional discussions, such as "Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in Islamic Banking and Finance in Malaysia" and "Balancing Nature and Faith: Protection and Conservation of Water Resources from the Perspective of Islamic Law," shed light on the interplay between ethics, faith, and law in addressing societal challenges.

In addition to the focus on Law & Policy, this issue covers a range of topics that contribute to understanding innovation and societal change. Articles such as "AI-Driven Recommendations in Mobile Shopping Apps, Podcasts, Animations & Gen Z: Revamping Organizational Behavior Learning, and The Role of Social Media in Shaping Islamic Entrepreneurship" explore the intersections of technology, education, and culture in today's world.

This edition represents the collaborative work of our contributors, whose insights and expertise have shaped the content of this bulletin. We encourage readers to engage with these ideas and consider their implications for further research and practical applications.

I would like to thank the authors, reviewers, and editorial team members who made RMU4U Bulletin Volume 3 possible. We hope this publication serves as a resource for understanding key issues and inspires further exploration.

Thank you for being part of this endeavor. Let us continue to learn and exchange ideas

Warm regards,

Dr Azyyati Anuar
Chief Editor, RMU4U E-Bulletin



WHEN THE LIGHT OF KNOWLEDGE (ULAMA) FADES

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Introduction

In the Islamic tradition, knowledge is revered as a guiding light, illuminating paths of righteousness, justice, and understanding. Scholars, or ulama, are entrusted with preserving, interpreting, and transmitting this knowledge, acting as pillars of ethical and spiritual guidance. The diminishing presence of ulama today raises concerns about the potential consequences on moral direction, unity, and intellectual depth within the Muslim community. This paper explores the vital role of ulama and the effects their absence could have, drawing on recent interpretations of classical teachings to underscore the significance of maintaining this “light of knowledge.”

1. Loss of Moral and Ethical Guidance

The ulama serve as custodians of Islamic ethical values, shaping the moral landscape of communities by drawing on the Qur'an and Sunnah. According to recent scholarship, “The erosion of traditional scholarly influence leaves a vacuum that may lead communities toward moral relativism and uncertainty” (Zarkasyi, 2023). Without the teachings and guidance of ulama, communities may risk straying from ethical foundations essential to Islamic principles.

2. Decline in Knowledge Transmission

Ulama not only preserve religious knowledge but ensure its accurate transmission across generations. Contemporary scholars emphasize that “the gradual loss of trained scholars disrupts the chain of transmission, leading to potential distortions in understanding” (Hamdeh, 2021). This erosion threatens the continuity of core teachings, as interpretations may lose authenticity and depth over time.

3. Rise of Misinterpretation and Extremism

Without the qualified interpretation provided by ulama, untrained individuals may misinterpret Islamic texts, often leaning toward more radical or extreme views. This trend has been observed as a pressing concern in modern contexts, with scholars noting, “The absence of classical guidance can lead to simplified, and often distorted, readings of texts, fostering extremism” (Hussain, 2023). The role of ulama in maintaining a balanced approach to Islamic law and ethics is crucial to prevent such misinterpretations.

4. Impact on Spiritual Development and Unity

Ulama contribute significantly to the spiritual depth and unity within the ummah, nurturing an understanding of Islam that emphasizes inner growth and community. Recent studies highlight that “A lack of scholarly presence contributes to a rigid, surface-level interpretation, diminishing the religion’s spiritual richness” (El-Ghamari, 2024). Their absence could lead to divisions within the ummah, as fewer figures remain to guide toward inclusive and holistic Islamic practices.

5. Reduced Emphasis on Intellectual Pursuits

The ulama inspire the pursuit of knowledge as a form of devotion, fostering intellectual development within the Islamic sciences and beyond. Scholars in recent years have argued that “Without the influence of traditional scholarship, communities may experience intellectual stagnation, reducing the incentive to pursue deep knowledge” (Sahin, 2019). The decline in scholarly figures could thus weaken the intellectual and scientific advancements traditionally encouraged in Islam.

Conclusion

The ulama serve as vital bearers of the “light of knowledge,” safeguarding ethical standards, fostering unity, and inspiring intellectual growth. Their diminishing presence poses serious challenges: erosion of moral guidance, increased risk of extremism, spiritual decline, and intellectual stagnation. To ensure the resilience of Islamic teachings, efforts must be made to preserve the legacy of the ulama and encourage new generations to take up this mantle of knowledge. Recent scholarship underscores the need for continued scholarly influence to maintain the integrity of the Islamic tradition, ensuring that the light of knowledge does not fade.

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e ISSN 2805- 47 5X



9772805 475 000

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