



Examining the Key Features of Islamic Website from the Perspectives of Islamic Education Academics

AIZA JOHARI^{1, a}, AZLINA BUJANG^{2, b}, SHEELA FAIZURA NIK FAUZI^{3, c}, ZAINON HAJI BIBI^{4, d},
ABDUL AZIM MAHDA^{5, e} & SITI HUZAIMAH SAHARI^{6, f}

^{1,2,3,4,5&6}Universiti Teknologi MARA, Sarawak Branch, Malaysia
^aaiza@gmail.com, ^bazlina80@uitm.edu.my, ^csheelafaizura@uitm.edu.my, ^dzaino054@uitm.edu.my
^eazimmahda@uitm.edu.my & ^fhuzaimahs@uitm.edu.my

Abstract

The technology enabling access to Islamic websites appears to be seamless, with the availability of various networks enhancing global accessibility for most Muslim users. Muslim intellectuals, educators, and Islamic organizations also leverage the Internet to share Islamic teachings and promote the faith to both Muslims and non-Muslims. Consequently, the widespread availability of online Islamic content underscores the importance of studying the characteristics of Islamic websites and the factors that influence Muslim users to engage with them, ensuring that these features are of high quality and the content is accurate. This study explores the preferred features of Islamic websites among Islamic Education Academics at a local university in Sarawak. The Islamic factors examined in the study were adapted and were categorised into four main features: ethics, services, symbols, and website usage. A survey was conducted with 15 lecturers from a faculty that caters to Islamic studies and they are also frequent users of Islamic websites. The findings revealed that specific Islamic features significantly influenced the respondents' use of Islamic websites. Most notably, the respondents indicated they frequently used these websites for self-motivation and research purposes, and they preferred websites that were regularly updated, especially those certified by trusted Islamic organisations. The results provide valuable insights for improving the design and development of Islamic websites, with the potential to encourage greater user engagement and provide valuable knowledge about authentic Islamic teachings and practices, in which would be beneficial in their teachings.

Keywords: Preferred Features, Islamic Websites, Muslim Users, Islamic Education Academics

1. Introduction

Islamic education is essential for every Muslim because it is a way to understand Islam and its teachings better. In Malaysian schools and local universities, Islamic religious education is taught to inculcate Islamic teachings and values among the Muslim students, so that the characteristics of good Muslims can be cultivated. Syed Ali Ashraf (1985: p24) asserted that "Islamic education trains the sensibility of pupils in such a manner that in their attitude to life, their actions and decisions and approach to all kinds of knowledge are governed by the deeply felt ethical values of Islam." Rosnani (2004) has criticized the methodology of teaching Islamic education in Malaysia where the most common methods are reading, narrations of stories from Quran and 'Hadith', lectures, dictation of notes and memorization. Due to this issue, there is a need for academicians to engage the students' interests to learn Islamic education and one of the feasible ways would be learning via online. In this technological era with ubiquitous telecommunication gadgets and the world of internet, online teaching and learning, and Islamic websites can be the medium to effectively disseminate Islamic knowledge and information, and also as a way to spread Islamic teachings and preaching (Bibi et al., 2023), especially among the younger generation. Islamic educators should expand their pedagogical methods according to the changing times (Rosnani, 2004). Besides that, the increase in cases of finding unreliable and sometime Islamophobia content websites and questionable authenticity of online information has led researchers and organisations to respond to the reliability issues of Islamic websites. Ished by well-known Muslim scholars. A study by Almenayes (2014) found that younger Muslim users tend to consume Islamic knowledge online rather than via traditional school. As a result, academics need to play active roles in advising their students on reliable Islamic websites.

Today, learning using the online websites is an essential requirement for most educational institutions, so it is important to explore the possible benefits of online learning. Mansur et al. (2013) further stated that the Internet provides an online medium for Muslim users to seek information and knowledge about Islam in which students can have the opportunities to consult and communicate with scholars from different part of the world and different school of thoughts. To add, Wan Abdul Rahim, Nor Laila, and Shafie (2008, p3) describe an Islamic website as a genre website that highlights Islamic ideologies, norms, and values. Helland (2005) on the other hand, observed that despite the recorded success of Islamic websites, such websites require a deeper understanding of the needs of Muslim users as well as the capability to capture the opinion of users with respect to the information provided on the websites. As a result, Muslims users need to be cautious in choosing appropriate websites with the accurate content, effective features and presentation. Some



researchers have discovered that a considerable number of Muslim users have rejected information derived from various Islamic websites because of their lack of confidence on the validity of the contents (Ibrahim et al., 2010). Other studies in Shafie et al. (2010) also suggested that Muslim users of Islamic websites are reluctant to pursue information from these websites because they are uncertain if they can completely trust the online Islamic scholars.

Online users can easily observe the features and presentations of such websites when they surf any Islamic website. Today, Muslim intellectuals and Islamic organisations generally utilise the Internet to spread Islamic teachings and preaching to Muslims and non-Muslims. The accessibility of these online Islamic contents makes it essential to study the Islamic features of the Islamic websites and the factors that influence Muslims to use these websites, so that the features would be more of quality and legitimate, in terms of the contents. These features may influence users' perception on the authenticity of the website as genuinely Islamic (Mansur Aliyu et al., 2013). This use depends on the extent to which users think that the website features provided are genuine, lawful, current, appropriate, and not misleading (Loiacono, Watson & Goodhue, 2007; Song & Zinkhan, 2003). There are other scholars who found that Islamic features are very important measures for evaluating Islamic websites' quality (Hameed, 2009; Mehad, Isa, Noor, & Husin, 2010).

2. Literature review

Websites with Islamic elements have grown as an important means in disseminating religious knowledge and values to the global community, not least through a more interactive and accessible approach. According to Aisha and Zain (2021), an effective Islamic website should contain authentic content and be based on primary sources such as the Quran and modern hadith. In addition, a study conducted by Rahman et al. (2020) that high-quality Islamic websites emphasize content credibility in addition to visual elements that help improve user experience. The aspects of navigation, site structure, and user-friendly design were also identified by Youssef and Halim (2019) as important features to attract users, especially young people. From the perspective of Islamic education, websites also play an important role in promoting religious learning. A study conducted by Ismail and Ahmed (2021) indicates that an effective Islamic website adheres to the principles of pedagogy and provides content covering various aspects of life. For example, websites that provide interactive learning materials such as video clips, quizzes, and e-books tend to be more successful in increasing users' understanding of Islamic concepts (Hassan et al., 2018). Furthermore, Muhammad and Ibrahim (2020) emphasized that interactive elements such as discussion forums and Q&A sessions with religious experts are important attributes in fostering deeper understanding. However, the main challenge faced by Islamic websites is ensuring a balance between design aesthetics and content quality. According to a study conducted by Abdullah et al (2022), several Islamic websites fail to prioritize the accuracy of the information, potentially leading to misunderstanding among users. Additionally, Ali and Suleiman (2019) emphasised the importance of monitoring by academics to ensure websites' adherence to Islamic values. In this context, Shafi and Omar (2021) suggest a collaborative approach between technicians and Islamic scholars to develop websites is not appropriate, but relevant to be used.

There has been a significant evolution in the technology that facilitates access to Islamic websites over the past few decades. This development has fundamentally changed how Islamic content is governed and shared. This shift is part of a broader effort to understand how Muslim intellectuals and educators are utilising online platforms to convey Islamic teachings and disseminate Islam both domestically and internationally. It has become crucial to evaluate the characteristics and features of Islamic websites to meet the diverse information needs of users (Seifali & Fahimifar, 2020). A systematic review conducted by Akhtar et al. (2023) reveals that the fundamental qualities of Islamic websites, such as design, user experience and content, play a crucial role in engaging users and shaping their perceptions. A study conducted by Seifali and Fahimifar (2020) revealed that among various website characteristics, interactivity stands out as the most significant feature. Interactivity involves the ability of users to engage dynamically with the elements of a web page, allowing them to experience the content more effectively. This interactive experience ultimately encourages users to explore and engage more deeply with the content presented on the website (Seifali & Fahimifar, 2020). Imathiu and Mwadulo (2024) highlighted that a well-organised website, with optimised navigation and an easily searchable interface, leads to greater user satisfaction and engagement. This finding is supported by Ghorbanzadeh (2022), stating that institutions emphasising user experience and interactivity will generally provide better engagement (Ghorbanzadeh, 2022). Likewise, factors like navigation, design, and content are related to how users interpret the trustworthiness of the information itself and the website hosting the content.

In addition, the study also points to the significance of ethical issues within the designing sectors and the managing process of Islamic websites. Fitri and Adeni (2020) emphasised that these sites are established and operated under ethical issues, such as information accuracy and Islamic values. As a result, some Muslim academics prefer sites that are always up-to-date and certified by credible Islamic organisations to be more confident that what is accessed is true



(Azis et al., 2022). Therefore, it is not just a matter of content but also a matter of the ethical responsibilities of each website administrator to build a stream of information that can be accounted for in the ever-changing digital landscape (Fitri & Adeni, 2020). In addition to that, the visual aspects of Islamic websites have a significant impact on the effectiveness of the user experience. Research on the visual communication characteristics of these platforms reveals that careful design, including colour schemes, typography, and imagery, plays a crucial role in user retention and satisfaction (Seifali Fahimifar, 2020). Hence, the aesthetic dimension of any website, in this case, has become an interactive key and guides its user toward engaging with the content (Seifali Fahimifar, 2020). There are multiple factors come into play that determine the efficacy, trustworthiness, and engagement level in examining the key features of Islamic websites from the perspective of Islamic education academics. Recent literature highlights essential criteria such as content quality and authenticity, ethical considerations, user trust, design and user experience, community engagement, mobile accessibility, multimedia learning tools, online certifications, and authentication.

Content Quality and Authenticity

The authenticity and quality of content on Islamic websites are essential to ensure users receive accurate religious information. According to Nursaleh et al. (2020), transitioning from traditional Islamic teachings to digital platforms necessitates strict quality control measures to guarantee that the content aligns with established religious doctrines. This need is echoed by Olowolayemo and Moustafa (2024), who recognise parental concerns regarding children's potential exposure to misleading or deviant information online. Reliable content is critical; parents and guardians seek platforms with established credibility to safeguard their children's interaction with religious content. Thus, maintaining high standards of accuracy does not only serve the educational purpose but also fosters trust.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical values also play an important role in shaping the perception and trustworthiness of Islamic websites. Macakoglu and Peker (2022) highlighted that the ethical framework that guides Islamic website designs and content presentation must resonate with Islamic elements to build a trustworthy online environment. These websites must embody Islamic morals in all operations, from content to user interactions. Hence, adherence to this ethical framework would significantly strengthen the credibility of Islamic educational platforms.

Content and User Trust

User trust is closely linked to the credibility of content provided by Islamic websites as it consistently delivering accurate and well-researched information for users seeking religious guidance. Dror et al. (2020) support this view, highlighting that websites can be practical public relations tools. They stress the significance of maintaining transparent communication regarding ethical standards and the reliability of the content. Thus, adopting these strategies can help build user trust and foster ongoing engagement with the website.

Design and User Experience

The design of Islamic websites significantly affects the user experience. Kolan et al. (2018) emphasised that simplicity and user-friendliness must be prioritised to ensure that users from various age groups and backgrounds can easily access the information they seek. Furthermore, Krol and Zdonek (2020) discussed the importance of perceptive design elements that resonate with users' needs, demonstrating that a heightened focus on visual appeal and ease of use can enhance engagement with the content.

Community Engagement

Community engagement is essential for creating interactive platforms that nurture a sense of belonging and support among users. Afandi (2023) notes that incorporating features like forums, social media integration, and Q&A sessions on Islamic websites helps build a virtual community, allowing users to connect and engage meaningfully. These websites can promote collaborative learning experiences that align with Islamic pedagogical values by fostering this interaction.

Mobile Accessibility

Given the increasing reliance on mobile devices for internet access, optimising Islamic websites for mobile platforms is imperative. Olowolayemo and Moustafa (2024) highlight how mobile accessibility ensures a seamless user experience, allowing users to engage effortlessly with content from smartphones or tablets. Mobile access to content is crucial in today's digital landscape, where accessibility can significantly influence users' choices in the platforms they frequently consume.

Multimedia Learning Tools



As the digital landscape evolves, incorporating multimedia elements has become vital for educational websites. Integration of tools such as podcasts, video lectures, and interactive quizzes enhances user engagement and accommodates diverse learning styles. Indra et al. (2024) support this multimedia approach as it can significantly enrich the educational experience, rendering Islamic teachings more accessible and engaging for users.

Online Certifications and Authentication

Lastly, providing online certifications and authenticated content enhances user confidence in the educational offerings of Islamic websites. Mohamed et al. (2023) asserts that platforms offering courses or materials validated by recognised religious authorities foster a sense of legitimacy and reliability. This feature particularly appeals to users seeking structured educational pathways and verified information, encouraging repeated visits and deeper engagement with the content. Islamic educational websites must prioritise the quality of content, ethical considerations, user trust, design, community engagement, mobile accessibility, multimedia incorporation, and certification processes to create effective, user-centred platforms. By adhering to these criteria, Islamic websites can fulfill their educational missions while fostering community trust and engagement.

On Content Quality and Authenticity:

"Islamic websites must prioritize the accuracy and authenticity of the information they provide, ensuring that users can access teachings that are aligned with traditional Islamic principles." (Aliyu et al., 2013)

On Ethical Considerations:

"The ethical values embedded in the design and content of an Islamic website are paramount, as they influence how users perceive and trust the website's purpose and message." (Philip, 2008). Furthermore, Mansur Aliyu et al. (2013) affirmed that these Islamic features can help users identify the credentials of online scholars who give fatw (scholarly opinion on matters of Islamic law) on the website in which will attract more users to keep using the websites. Generally, the quality of these features is reflected in the users' perception not only in website use but also in producing positive user experience (Wan Abdul Rahim et al., 2008). To sum, when the users gain trust in the Islamic websites, they may refer to them consistently to seek Islamic teachings and knowledge, and thus, recommend them to their peers and family members for future reference. Notably, to properly educate the youths and enhance Islamic knowledge among the Muslims, it is vital that the users are browsing appropriate Islamic websites. This study identifies the features of the Islamic websites use preferred by Islamic Studies academics in one of the local universities in Sarawak. The identified Islamic factors in the questionnaire are adapted from Mansur Aliyu et al. (2013) and Bilal Philip (2008). The four chosen features or factors for this study were ethics, symbols, services, and website use.

Hameed (2009: p564) defines Islamic ethical values "as a set of moral principles and guidance that recognises what is right behaviour from what is wrong or what one should do or not." Islamic symbols as explained by Mehad et al. (2010) are the representations of Islamic values to the users such as Islamic images which are specifically relevant and unique to Islam. According to Mansur Aliyu et al. (2013), many Islamic websites at recent offer Islamic online services, such as forums, educational training, community development programmes, online marriage opportunity, online donation, relief/assistance activities, and direct consultation with online scholars. The final feature, website use will deal with the users' experiences and frequencies in using the websites.

3. Methodology

This study employed a semi-structured adapted questionnaire based on the works of Mansur Aliyu et al. (2013) and Bilal Philip (2008) to evaluate the content of Islamic websites. A 5-point Likert scale was utilised for data collection. The methodology was underpinned by two theoretical frameworks which are Technology Acceptance Model or TAM (Davis, 1989) and the Uses and Gratifications Theory or UGT (Katz et al., 1974). TAM provided a foundation to examine the perceived usefulness and ease of use of Islamic websites while UGT offered a lens to explore the motivations and habits of users engaging with these platforms.

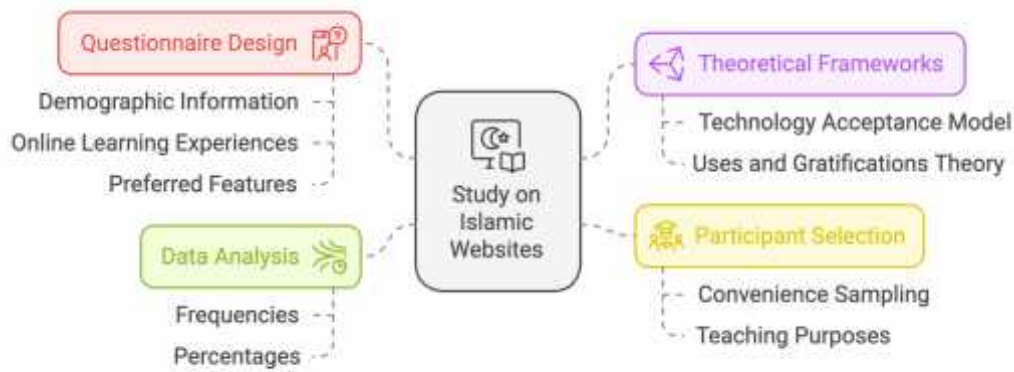


Figure 1: Research Design

The sample for this study comprised fifteen Islamic Studies academics from a local university in Sarawak, Malaysia. A convenience sampling technique was adopted due to its practicality and time-saving feasibility. These participants were chosen based on their frequent use of Islamic websites for teaching purposes. The questionnaire consisted of three sections designed to gather comprehensive data. The first section focused on demographic details, such as gender and age, to establish a profile of the participants. The second section explored the respondents' online learning experiences and habits including the frequency of their Islamic website usage and the key influences encouraging this behavior. This section aligned with UGT's emphasis on understanding user behavior and motivations in digital environments. The third section examined respondents' preferred features when using Islamic websites, such as interface design and content organization which integrate TAM's focus on usability and user satisfaction. Data collected from the questionnaires were analysed using SPSS version 23 with the results presented in tables displaying frequencies and percentages.

4. Findings

This study focuses on Islamic websites (users' online experiences and habits) and preferred features of Islamic websites. Aliyu et al (2013) emphasise that Islamic websites must include contents that convey the commandments of Allah SWT in alignment with teachings of Prophet Muhammad SAW and it is an opportunity for the Islamic scholars to da'wah worldwide, especially for those who want to deepen their knowledge about Islam (Zainon et al., 2022). The respondents for this study comprised 15 lecturers from a faculty specialising in Islamic studies and notably, they are also frequent users of Islamic websites. Although the Likert scales employed include both frequency scales (ranging from 'Most Frequent' to 'Never') and agreement scales (ranging from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree'), the tables below present only the scale categories as reflected in the respondents' answers.

Table 1: Demographic details

Item	Detail	Frequency
Age	20 - 30	5
	31 - 40	5
	41 - 50	5
Gender	Female	10
	Male	5
Years of teaching in the faculty	Between 11 - 20 years	5
	Between 6 - 10 years	5
	less than 5 years	5
Who encourage you the most to browse the Islamic Website	Self-Motivation	15



From Table 1, the respondents were distributed evenly across three age groups: 20–30, 31–40, and 41–50 years, with five respondents in each group. The majority of respondents were females (66.7%), while males accounted for 33.3%. In terms of teaching experience at the faculty, there were also five respondents each in the categories of less than 5 years, 6–10 years, and 11–20 years of service. All respondents (100%) indicated that self-motivation was the key factor that encouraged them to browse Islamic websites. According to Murni et al. (2012), many Muslim users consider Islamic websites a popular platform for fulfilling various religious obligations. These websites serve as alternative media through which users can recite the Quran, study its meanings along with Hadith, seek religious guidance, and engage with other users and renowned Islamic scholars.

Table 2: Most frequently browsed topic when browsing Islamic Websites

Item	Frequent	Less Frequent	Most Frequent	Never
(Personal Relationship) [With Allah]	10	0	5	0
(Personal Relationship) [Marriage and family]	9	6	0	0
(Personal Relationship) [Brotherhood and Sisterhood]	8	6	1	0
(Islamic Studies) [Beliefs]	8	0	7	0
(Islamic Studies) [Qur'an and Prophets' Traditions]	10	0	5	0
(Islamic Studies) [Biography of Rasulullah]	11	4	0	0
(Islamic Studies) [Prayers]	11	0	4	0
(Islamic Studies) [Islamic Practices]	9	1	5	0
(Personal Development) [Motivation]	8	1	6	0
(Personal Development) [Seeking Knowledge]	6	1	8	0
(Personal Development) [Overcoming Hardship]	7	2	6	0
(Personal Development) [Spiritual Purifications]	7	3	5	0
(Personal Development) [Reflection]	11	1	3	0
(Personal Development) [Islamic Character Development]	9	1	5	0
(Personal Development) [Grooming]	8	3	4	0
(Society) [Women]	7	3	5	0
(Society) [Youths]	7	5	3	0
(Society) [Men]	6	6	3	0
(Society) [International Affairs]	7	6	1	1
(Society) [Domestic Affairs]	9	3	0	3



Table 2 presents the most frequently browsed topics by the respondents when accessing Islamic websites and these are categorised according to different aspects, such as personal relationship, Islamic studies, personal development and society. The topics with the highest frequency—each reported by more than 10 or 11 respondents include: (a) personal relationship with Allah; (b) Islamic studies, specifically the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet; (c) the biography of the Prophet Muhammad (Rasulullah); (d) Islamic prayers; and (e) personal development, particularly self-reflection. These findings suggest a strong user interest in both devotional and educational content. Kahfi and Mahmudi (2024) emphasize the importance of establishing guidelines and policies for digital Islamic platforms to ensure that the content remains aligned with the moderate and tolerant principles of Islam.

Table 3: Websites with Islamic Ethics

Item	Frequency	
	Strongly Agree	Agree
Portray belief in the oneness of Allah (SWT)	13	2
Follow the authentic traditions (Sunnah) of the prophet Muhammad (SAW)	13	2
Start with "Bismill h al-Ra m n al-Ra m"	10	5
Begin with Salam	10	5
Consistently write the name of Allah SWT	9	6
Consistently seek blessings for prophet Muhammad (SAW) when His name is written/mentioned	10	5
Consistently use the words "Assal mu alaikum", "Mash All h", "Alhamdulill h" and/or "Jazakall hu khay-ran" in communicating with users	10	5

Table 3 indicates that the majority of respondents selected *Strongly Agree* when asked whether Islamic websites serve as a popular and alternative medium for fulfilling religious obligations. According to Kahfi and Mahmudi (2024), websites represent a strategic and significant platform that offers a broad range of Islamic content, contributing to the development of new religious practices and spiritual perspectives among users (Zainon et al., 2023).

Among the most frequently endorsed items was the preference for trustworthy Islamic websites in Malaysia, particularly those managed by authoritative institutions such as JAKIM (Department of Islamic Development Malaysia). Bilal (2008) emphasized that, given the widespread reliance on the internet by both Muslims and non-Muslims seeking information about Islam, it is essential to ensure that the content accessed is in accordance with the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah. This precaution helps users avoid misinformation and the influence of deviant or unverified sources.

Table 4: Websites with Islamic Services

Item	Frequency			
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Online Donation	7	2	3	2
Chat rooms with online Islamic scholars or authorities	6	5	4	5
Islamic software/applications	9	0	0	0
Bazaar/online shopping services	9	2	1	2
Community development	9	6	0	6
Islamic video content	10	5	0	5
Islamic audio content	8	7	0	7
Online youth relief and aid	10	5	0	5
Online marriage/matrimony	9	5	1	5
Online educational training/courses	7	8	0	8
Direct call services to online educational websites	9	8	0	6



As shown in Table 4, the respondents largely agreed that websites offering Islamic services are user-friendly and provide a range of features that cater to the diverse needs of Muslims. Sulaiman et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of incorporating key elements such as functionality, usability, performance, and regular updates to ensure that Islamic websites effectively deliver relevant features that benefit the Muslim community. Similarly, Aliyu et al. (2013) highlighted that well-designed Islamic websites can significantly enhance user engagement and facilitate religious practices by offering accessible and reliable content.

Table 5: Websites with Islamic Symbols

Item	Frequency			
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Arabic text	3	5	7	0
Islamic arts	9	5	1	0
Picture of Hijab	6	6	3	0
Islamic Symbols	5	5	5	0
Picture of Qur' n	7	6	2	0
Picture of Ka'abah	5	6	3	1
Picture of scholars	4	4	7	0
Picture of Mosques	6	7	2	0

As shown in Table 5, the majority of respondents preferred websites that feature Islamic symbols such as Islamic art, images of the Qur'an, and depictions of mosques. These elements are widely recognized as visual representations of the Islamic faith. The mosque, being the central place of worship for Muslims, holds profound symbolic significance. According to a narration attributed to Ibn 'Abbas, as cited in SinniPath (2005), "Mosques are the houses of Allah on the earth. They shine up to the inhabitants of the heavens just as the stars in the sky shine down to the inhabitants of the earth" (abar n). Similarly, the Qur'an is revered as the irrefutable and inimitable Word of God (Source of Guidance, 2018). Revealed through the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), it serves as the ultimate source of guidance for Muslims. As such, these symbols are frequently incorporated into Islamic websites to enhance their religious relevance and visual appeal.

5. Discussion

This study investigated the online experiences, usage habits, and preferred features of Islamic websites among Islamic Studies academics at a local university in Sarawak, Malaysia. The findings offer several important insights into how such specialized users engage with digital Islamic content and what they value most in these online platforms. Firstly, the demographic data revealed a balanced representation across different age groups and teaching experience levels, with a predominance of female participants. Notably, all respondents reported self-motivation as the primary driver for using Islamic websites, highlighting intrinsic reasons behind their engagement. This supports previous literature (Murni et al., 2012) that identifies Islamic websites as the key resources for fulfilling various religious obligations independently. This self-directed motivation aligns strongly with Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), which emphasizes the active role of users in selecting media that satisfy personal needs and desires. Regarding content preferences, the respondents preferred topics that focus on devotional and educational purposes, such as the personal relationship with Allah, the Qur'an and Prophetic traditions, biography of Rasulullah, prayer, and self-reflection. These priorities demonstrate a dual focus on deepening faith and acquiring scholarly knowledge, confirming that academic users engage with Islamic websites not only for teaching support, but also for personal spiritual development. This duality echoes Aliyu et al.'s (2013) and Zainon et al.'s (2022) assertions about the role of Islamic websites as platforms for da'wah and comprehensive learning.

The study further underscores the importance of ethical and authentic content on Islamic websites. The respondents strongly agreed that websites should portray monotheism (belief in only one god), follow the Prophet's Sunnah, and incorporate Islamic etiquette in communication. These preferences reflect a concern for combating misinformation online, a matter emphasized by Bilal (2008) and Kahfi and Mahmudi (2024). The preference for websites managed by authoritative bodies such as JAKIM also indicates a demand for credible sources, enhancing trust and reliability. In terms of website services and features, the results reveal that items such as Islamic videos, audio content, educational courses, and online community support are highly favored. Such functionalities address diverse user needs, from



acquiring knowledge and conducting research to engaging socially and practicing religious acts in a digital context. This variety aligns with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), demonstrating that usability and perceived usefulness are the critical determinants of continued engagement with these platforms (Sulaiman et al., 2022 & Aliyu et al., 2013). Visual and symbolic elements also play a significant role in user preference. Islamic artistry, imagery of Qur'an texts, mosques, and hijab are considered crucial in enhancing the religious atmosphere and user connection to the website. This incorporation of meaningful symbols boosts both the aesthetic and spiritual appeal of the websites, reinforcing a Muslim identity and fostering a culturally resonant user experience. Overall, these findings carry practical implications for designers and administrators of Islamic websites. Developers should prioritize content authenticity, user-friendly features, and culturally relevant aesthetics while ensuring that sites comply with established Islamic ethical guidelines. Moreover, given that academic users utilise these websites for educational purposes, often linked with assignments and research, the official certifications and endorsements from recognised Islamic authorities are essential to validate content and provide academic legitimacy. Finally, the study contributes to the broader discourse on digital religion and e-learning by highlighting the pivotal role academic users play. Islamic Studies lecturers serve as conduits who not only consume but also disseminate reliable digital Islamic knowledge to their students, underscoring the importance of maintaining quality and accessibility in online Islamic resources.

6. Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that, under Islamic ethics, the most reliable features are faith in the omnipotent Allah and adherence to the Prophet's authentic 'sunnah,' while the most preferred types of Islamic services include video and audio content. The respondents also identified the holy Qur'an and mosques as the most significant Islamic symbols. Regarding the 'Website Use' feature, respondents primarily accessed websites for completing assignments, emphasizing the necessity for certification by reputable Islamic authorities to ensure the validity and accuracy of the content. This study's findings are particularly relevant given the increasing number of Islamic websites and Muslim internet users. It provides empirical insights into the use of Islamic websites from the perspective of Muslim users, particularly Islamic Studies academics. These academics, in turn, play a crucial role in imparting knowledge gained from such websites to their students and guiding them to appropriate, reliable resources. Furthermore, it is recommended that users who frequently access online materials exercise caution and select websites based on specific, reliable features. The results also offer valuable insights for the design of more effective Islamic websites, which could encourage greater user engagement and enable Muslims to acquire sound knowledge about authentic Islamic teachings and practices. The study's empirical findings provide guidance for developing educational Islamic websites that cater to Muslim users, particularly those seeking resources for academic assignments and research. Improved, carefully designed websites can foster ongoing engagement, encouraging users to revisit the sites regularly, thereby serving as an important medium for enhancing Islamic education and contributing to the development of a knowledgeable Muslim community. In conclusion, the present research enriches understanding of Muslim academics' engagement with Islamic websites and informs the future development of digital Islamic educational tools. Further studies could expand the scope to include students and practitioners to provide a more comprehensive picture of user needs and expectations in the evolving digital Islamic landscape.

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