Digitalization of Religious (Islamic) Education: Bridging Tradition and Innovation for Global Learning

1* Dr. Nisar Ahmad, 2 Dr. Muhammad Usman Khalid

1 Associate Professor , Department of Religious Studies Forman Christian College (A Chartered University) Lahore
2 Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies, Basic Sciences and Humanities Department,
 MNS University of Engineering and Technology Multan
Email: nisarahmad@fccollege.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

This research explores the impact of digital methods in religious studies on students' global and community engagement within a liberal arts education. The university's Religious Studies department pioneers digital practices to promote civic awareness, global integration, and student empowerment through interactive learning. Small-scale community projects foster global skills, enhance learning, and promote diversity appreciation. One such project, "Digital Methods to Raise Awareness of Domestic Violence & Social Justice," involves creating and disseminating digital messages promoting environmental cleanliness. Insights from interdisciplinary experts, including those from Forman Christian College University, refine these practices. The study aims to standardize effective digital methods for liberal arts education, fostering community-centered individuals and contributing to the digital humanities field. Through experiences at Forman Christian College University, it enriches discussions on integrating digital methods in liberal arts education, fostering future teaching innovations.

Introduction

Technology's integration into Islamic education has profoundly impacted teaching methods. Its application, particularly in Islamic Religious Education, offers practicality and flexibility, simplifying the communication of intricate teachings. [1]The use of educational technology, including audio-visual techniques, has become essential, as it aligns with Islam's philosophical foundations. This integration aims to foster creativity, instill technological skills rooted in Islamic values, and bridge Islamic teachings with science and technology. However, challenges exist, necessitating a balanced approach to maximize benefits while adhering to Islamic principles (Ardita et al., 2021; Ridwan, 2020).

Covid-19 Pandemic and Islamic Education Transition

The Covid-19 pandemic disrupted education but also accelerated the adoption of technology in Islamic education. Online teaching, facilitated by tools like LCD projectors, reflects the integration of human resources with technological advancements, aligned with the principles of the 4.0 revolution. [2]However, caution is advised, considering Quranic warnings against deception, especially in maintaining the integrity of Islamic teachings (Salsabila et al., 2021). Careful filtering and use of technology are essential to uphold the sanctity of Islamic education. Collaboration among educators, students, parents, and stakeholders is crucial for successful technology integration. In today's media-driven world, learning extends beyond formal education, encompassing lifelong activities influenced by family, peers, and media messages. Media, including advertisements and news, shapes perspectives and ideologies, highlighting the importance of responsible media consumption. The advent of printing revolutionized knowledge dissemination, promoting equitable access worldwide.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mass Media

Currently, print, audio, and electronic media play a significant role in disseminating information about Islam worldwide. Television channels, such as "Peace TV," contribute significantly to clarifying the image of Islam and educating people about the religion. [3]Below is a list of some popular Islamic channels:

Serial Number	Channel Name	Language	Launching Details	Comments
1.	MT A Muslim TV	Urdu	January 1994	First Islamic television channel in the UK, available worldwide. Translations in English, Arabic, French, German, Bengali, and Turkish are available for many programs.

2.	MTA2	Urdu/English	April 2004	Available in Europe via Hot bird 7A.
3.	Peace TV	English/Urdu	September 2007, owned by Zakir Naik	Sunni Islamic teachings.
4.	IQRA TV UK	English	April 2009	Shia channel.
5.	Hidayat TV	Urdu/English	February 2009	Shia channel.
6..	Ahlebait TV	Urdu/Farsi	September 2009	Sunni Islamic teachings.
7.	Ummah Channel	Urdu	November 2009	Sultan Bahu Trust, based on Sufi principles of Sunni Islam.
8.	Takbeer TV	English/Urdu	February 2010	Full launch TBA.
9.	Muhammadiya TV/Napoleon TV/Nasheed TV	Urdu channel	-	Micro channels broadcasting via Up & Coming TV channel.
10.	Aalim online	English	-	Launched in Pakistan by Jang group Geo news.
11.	ARY Islamic channel	Urdu	-	Islamic Channel in Pakistan.
12.	QTV	Urdu	-	Islamic Channel in Pakistan.

Please note that this table provides information on various Islamic channels, including their language, launching details, and comments. The number of Islamic channels is increasing dramatically which shows that viewership is increasing as the channels are offering an incredible service. The Internet is a wonderful medium for getting information about anything. It can be used to spread Islam. Websites can be designed where everyone can get the teachings of Islam according to their need. Hadith collections such as [4]Sahih-Bukhari, Sahih-Muslim, Sunan Abu-Dawud, Malik's al- Muwatta with their translation are available in many languages on the internet. These Hadith collections have been arranged properly by topics. Collections are also available in many searchable formats.

Collection of [5]Fiqh books, answers of problems related to Islamic teachings, and articles are also available online.

Information Technology in Education

In the modern era, information technology has revolutionized access to Islamic literature and teachings, overcoming historical challenges of availability. Previously, local scholars predominantly authored limited literature. However, the internet now provides extensive collections of books on Islam in various formats, facilitating easy downloads. High-performance computing and communication, including the World Wide Web and virtual realities, have transformed education, fostering virtual communities and enabling distance learning. These technologies offer innovative learning experiences, connecting learners globally and providing teachers with unlimited resources for communication and collaboration. Islamic education has similarly benefited, with virtual classes enabling remote attendance, particularly for individuals facing constraints like women. Information technology also facilitates access to the Quran and Hadith through downloadable versions for mobile devices and computers, along with applications like Adhan and tools for finding the Qibla direction, enhancing the Islamic digital experience, especially for Muslims in non-Muslim areas.

Islamic Software and Applications

In Islamic education, specialized software and applications play a vital role in enriching learning experiences. These innovations offer diverse resources, including Qur'an and Hadith apps like "Quran Companion" and "Hadith Collection," facilitating easy access to sacred texts. Islamic literature apps like "Goodword Islamic Books" provide comprehensive libraries, enhancing understanding and practice of Islam. Calendars and Zakat calculators streamline religious obligations through apps like "Islamic Calendar" and "Zakat Calculator." Prayer timing apps like [6]"Muslim Pro" ensures punctuality and reinforces the importance of regular prayer. Evolving platforms like [7]"Bayyinah TV" and [8]"Deenstream" offer educational content by esteemed scholars, modernizing Islamic education. This dynamic landscape empowers both students and educators, ensuring accessible and informed learning experiences for the global Muslim community.

Television Channels

Rather than confining Islamic education to dedicated channels, national (private and government) channels in Muslim countries should integrate Islamic programs, game

shows, plays, and talk shows into their content. A diversified approach can attract a broader audience. Animation films and series addressing Islamic topics should be developed to educate children effectively.

SlideShows for Teaching

In Islamic education, PowerPoint slideshows offer a compelling way to teach complex concepts and historical narratives. AI-powered tools like Canva and Beautiful.AI help educators create visually appealing presentations. [9]By incorporating relevant visuals and animations, educators cater to diverse learning styles and ensure comprehensive understanding. Students should also participate in creating presentations, [10]fostering engagement and improving computer skills. Collaborative projects can cover topics like Prophet Muhammad's life, Islamic rituals, and ethics. AI tools simplify the creation process by suggesting content and ensuring professional layouts. Embracing these tools enhances the quality and interactivity of multimedia presentations in Islamic education.

Videos in Teaching

In Islamic education, utilizing videos as a pedagogical tool enriches learning by visually representing complex concepts and cultural practices. Videos vividly portray historical events, Quranic stories, and the life of Prophet Muhammad, enhancing comprehension and retention. They also offer virtual visits to important Islamic sites and facilitate interactions with scholars, fostering a deeper connection to the wider Islamic community. Careful curation of video content aligns with the curriculum and promotes critical thinking. Encouraging students to create their own videos enhances creativity and digital literacy. Integrating videos with traditional methods ensures a balanced educational experience. Addressing concerns and preferences of educators and students is vital for successful technological integration in Islamic education. Embracing media and information technology offers innovative ways to enhance religious knowledge and values, fostering a harmonious and effective educational system.

Problem Background

In the past,[11] limited communication tools hindered the spread of religious education in the Muslim world, relying mainly on traditional books. However, the emergence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) changed this by digitizing Islamic resources, making global distribution easier. As the Internet became dominant, it became a key platform for Islamic studies training and education. [12]Efforts were made to establish user-friendly online Islamic libraries with interactive elements like gamification and

multimedia content to engage learners globally. However, literature on individual-level IT adoption in Islamic studies is limited, especially in regions like Pakistan where literacy and internet access are challenges. Integration of IT in Islamic education must consider [13]Pakistan's unique landscape, addressing issues like limited internet access and economic disparities through collaboration between institutions, government bodies, and technology providers. Preserving cultural and religious heritage while digitizing Islamic education is vital, striking a balance between technological advancements and traditional teachings.

Methodology

The comprehensive investigation into the challenges within Islamic education in Pakistan and the reasons behind the sluggish technological integration employed a multifaceted methodology. Surveys targeting students across various departments at [Your College Name] provided insights into the current landscape of Islamic education and its intersection with technology, complemented by a thorough exploration of articles and books for historical context and contemporary discourse. Purposive sampling ensured a diverse participant pool, while rigorous statistical and thematic analyses discerned patterns and correlations, capturing nuanced insights. Comparative analyses aligned global trends with Pakistan's context, identifying shared challenges and unique nuances. Recommendations and potential policy changes were proposed to streamline technology integration, informed by literature, library research, on-site visits, and in-depth interviews with educators, administrators, and policymakers. Cross-cultural examinations provided broader perspectives, while a forward-looking approach explored emerging technologies for future-proofing Islamic education. This multifaceted methodology aimed to contribute meaningfully to the ongoing dialogue on modernizing Islamic education in Pakistan.

Discussion

Slow adoption of Technology

The sluggish pace of advancement in Pakistan's education system [14]reflects a complex interplay of socio-political intricacies. Political instability and frequent changes in government priorities have hindered the establishment of consistent, long-term policies, including the integration of technology. Extremism exacerbates these challenges, disrupting educational institutions and impeding the adoption of technological innovations. Corruption diverts funds intended for technological integration, exacerbating the technological lag and perpetuating resource shortages, especially in rural areas. Cultural and societal norms, rooted in skepticism towards technological advancements,

further complicate the adoption of educational technology. Overcoming these barriers requires a holistic approach that addresses political stability, anti-corruption measures, increased budgetary allocations, and strategic cultural engagement. Moreover, the connotation of being labeled as [15]"kafir" in the context of science and education reflects broader debates within the Muslim world about the compatibility of religious faith and modern scientific knowledge. Political and social factors have perpetuated this connotation, complicating the integration of science and education into Pakistan's cultural and religious fabric. Overcoming these challenges requires fostering a climate of mutual understanding and reconciling religious values with the principles of education and scientific inquiry. Ultimately, a harmonious dialogue is needed to value intellectual curiosity and spiritual convictions, ensuring the progress of science and education in Pakistan.
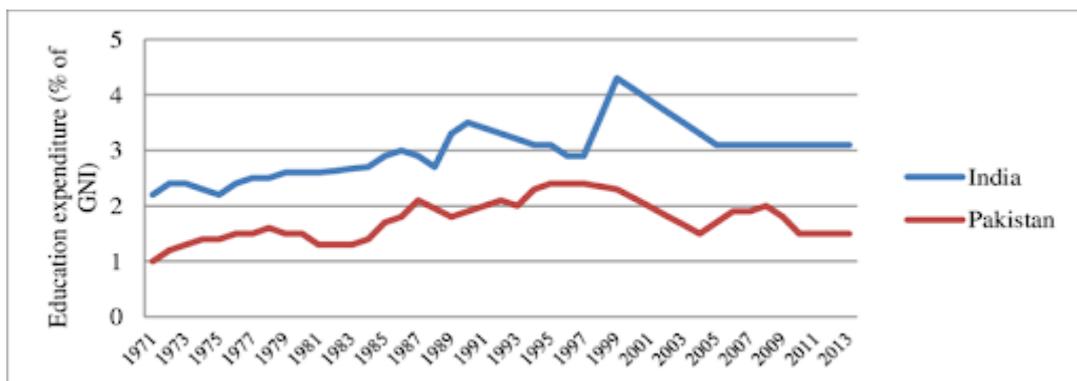
Technological Ethics

Islam emphasizes ethics as a cornerstone of its teachings, [16]with the Qur'an and Sunnah providing guidance on timeless principles like truth, goodness, justice, and piety. In the realm of Information Technology (IT), the unique attributes of technology necessitate the creation of specific ethical codes to navigate its complexities. Adherence to Islamic and professional principles, including integrity, honesty, and respect for privacy, is essential for IT professionals. These principles, rooted in Islamic teachings and professional standards, guide individuals to act responsibly and consider the broader impact of their actions on society and individuals in the rapidly evolving field of information technology. The proposed Code of Ethics for Information Technology (IT) offers a comprehensive framework encompassing both Islamic principles and professional standards, reflecting the unique ethical considerations inherent in the digital domain. Islamic principles embedded within the code emphasize the sacred duty of IT professionals as vicegerent of

Allah, underscoring the inherent responsibility to act with integrity, honesty, and equity in their professional endeavors. These principles, drawn from the Quran and Sunnah, serve as guiding pillars for ethical conduct, reminding practitioners of their accountability to a higher moral authority and the importance of upholding ethical standards in all aspects of their work. Furthermore, the professional principles outlined in the code address contemporary ethical challenges within the IT industry, emphasizing the paramount importance of preventing harm, ensuring fair representation, and safeguarding privacy and confidentiality. [17]These principles resonate with broader ethical frameworks in professional practice and underscore the ethical imperatives of transparency, accountability, and respect for individual rights and dignity. By integrating Islamic principles with professional standards, the code seeks to foster a culture of integrity, responsibility, and ethical awareness among IT professionals, thereby promoting trust, credibility, and ethical conduct in the digital sphere. In addition to ethical considerations, [18]The integration of mobile learning (m-Learning) initiatives represents a transformative shift in education, particularly in resource-constrained communities where access to traditional educational resources may be limited. By leveraging mobile devices and digital platforms, m-Learning initiatives offer flexible and accessible learning opportunities, empowering individuals to pursue education at their own pace and convenience. Moreover, m-Learning initiatives have the potential to break down barriers to education, particularly for marginalized groups such as women and individuals with disabilities, by providing a private and flexible means of learning that transcends traditional constraints. [19]Similarly, the adoption of computer-aided assessment (CAAS) mechanisms enhances the feedback process in education, enabling educators to provide timely, personalized, and constructive feedback to students. By leveraging technology, CAAS mechanisms streamline administrative tasks, improve accessibility, and promote continuous improvement in learning outcomes. Furthermore, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in Islamic education represents a paradigm shift in the dissemination and understanding of religious texts and teachings. AI-driven platforms offer personalized learning experiences, adaptive feedback mechanisms, and multilingual support, democratizing access to authentic Islamic knowledge and fostering a deeper understanding of religious principles and practices. Overall, the convergence of ethical principles, technological innovations, and educational initiatives underscores the transformative potential of technology in shaping the future of Islamic education. By embracing ethical standards, leveraging innovative technologies, and promoting inclusive educational initiatives, the IT industry and educational institutions can collectively contribute to the

advancement of Islamic education, fostering a culture of lifelong learning, critical inquiry, and ethical leadership in the digital age.

Digital practiced activities at the Department Level

Interdisciplinary Exploration: Integrating DLA Tools and Collaboration for Sustainable Living at FCCU's Department of Religious Studies[20]

In the Department of Religious Studies, we prioritize cultivating globally-minded students under the liberal arts umbrella, instilling qualities like humility and tolerance. In the previous semester, our instructional approach integrated various digital tools to achieve these goals. One project, "Littering, Cleanliness, and the Role of Digital Humanities," embedded in the upper-level course ISLM 301, explored environmental concerns and religious teachings' intersection. Environmental sciences majors contributed diverse perspectives, enhancing the project's collaborative nature. Internal faculty collaboration and inter-campus co-teaching enriched the initiative, captured in a project presentation video (available at https://youtu.be/cmnxzQrf3Nc). This project highlights our commitment to holistic, community-engaged learning experiences for our students at FCCU.

Advocating Change: [21]Unveiling Realities through Digital Humanities in the FCCU Department of Religious Studies

In a bid to promote social justice, students from FCCU's Department of Religious Studies initiated the "Domestic Violence, Social Justice, and Digital Humanities" project. Utilizing podcasting and storytelling as Digital Learning and Collaboration (DLA) tools, they researched and presented a comprehensive case study on domestic violence and societal conflicts. Through immersive storytelling, they produced a documentary that delved into the issues and portrayed the narratives gathered from local communities. The resulting video, accessible at (https://youtu.be/KEaX1sV3akU), offers profound insights and aims to spark discussions within the academic community, reaching out to AMICAL members, workshop participants, and university faculty.

Fostering Empowered Learners through Community-Connected Teaching and Learning

Community-connected teaching and learning, seen in institutions like the XP School and South Eastern Regional College, redefines education by blending classroom learning with real-world challenges. Students engage in problem-solving activities, becoming global citizens equipped to shape society. The XP School prioritizes proactive student development, while the South Eastern Regional College aligns skills with regional needs, empowering learners to actively contribute to the world.

Navigating Culture: Unveiling Social and Dining Manners through Digital Humanities at FCCU's Department of Religious Studies

Students at FCCU Religious Studies explored "Social/Dining Manners and Digital Humanities" using tools like Digital Oral History. They analyzed social behaviors at rural events like weddings, highlighting impatience and intolerance. View their experiences at https://www.youtube.com/shorts/zR274e3Q-FQ and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5pxHmJfTN4. A detailed presentation is at https://youtu.be/CGVdN2oPX20. Their projects are shared with AMICAL members and peers to promote standardized practices. Workshops cover preparing students for projects, aligning DLA with Sustainable Development Goals, and integrating digital tools into humanities courses. These projects also set the stage for potential grant proposals.

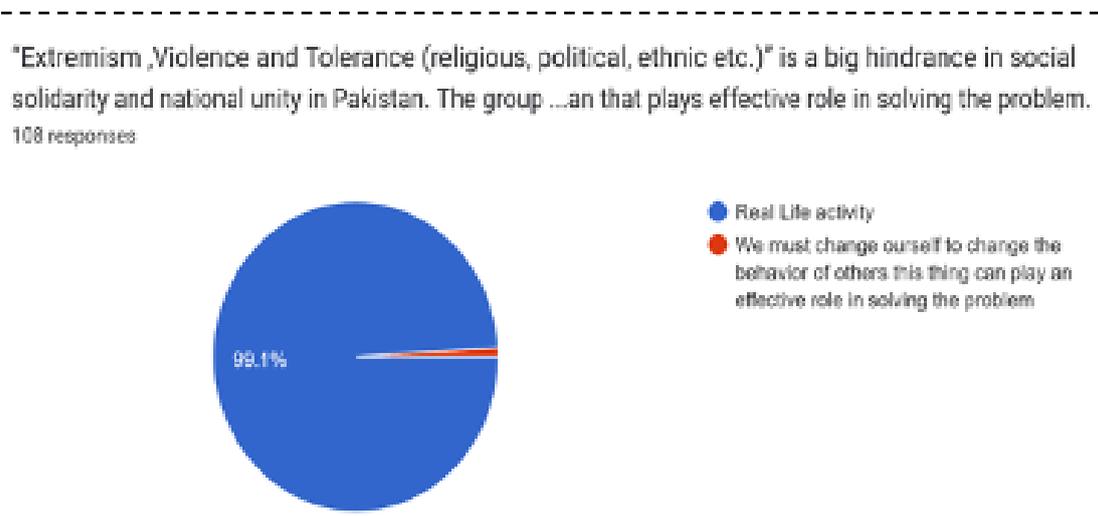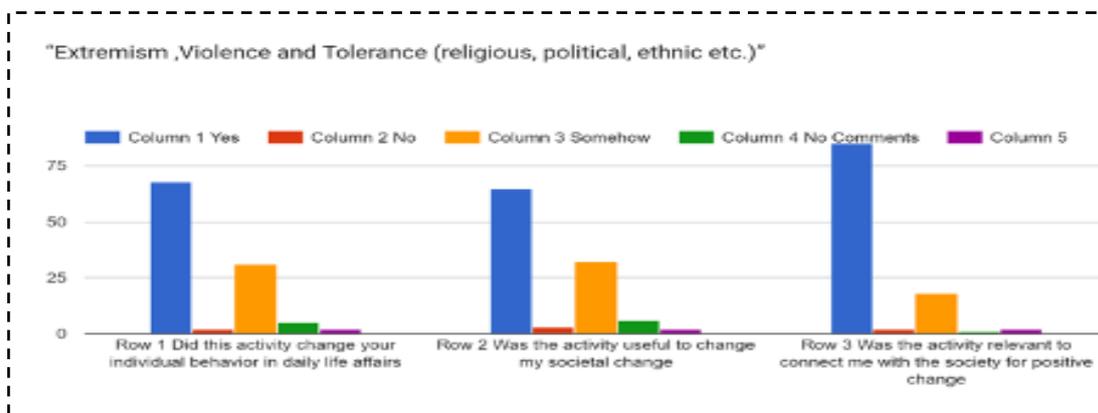**Integrating Digital Tools and Community Engagement in Liberal Arts Education at DRS, FCCU**

In the liberal arts department at FCCU, students are groomed to embrace humility, tolerance, and self-criticism, aiming for global citizenship. Recently, in ISLM 301, students collaborated across majors to raise awareness about cleanliness and littering, integrating religious teachings for sustainability. The project involved 211 participants, with a balanced gender representation. Watch the project video here: https://youtu.be/cmnxzQrf3Nc.
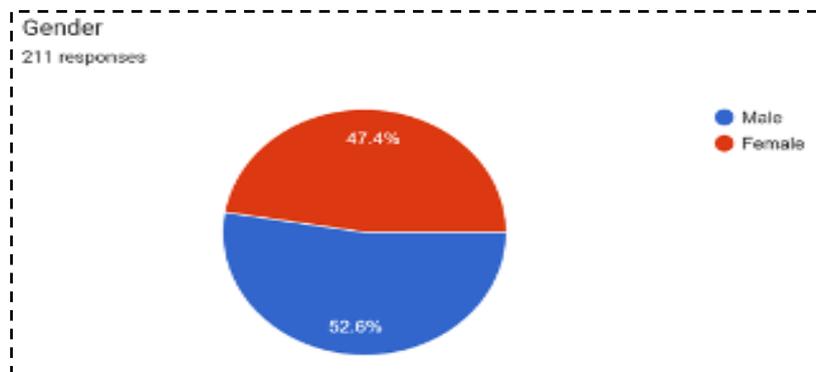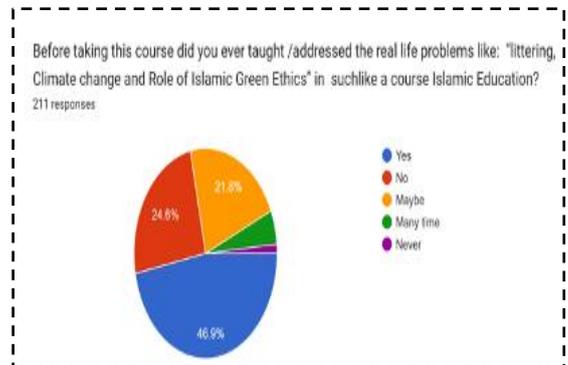
Domestic Violence, Social Justice and Digital Humanities DLA Applied Tools/Methods: Podcasting, Story Telling

A student group tackled the issue of domestic violence and societal conflicts through a case study, presenting their findings in a documentary format. They captured real-life scenarios from local communities and showcased them in class. Watch the video here: https://youtu.be/KEaX1sV3akU. This project aims to share insights with AMICAL members, workshop participants, and university faculty.

"Extremism ,Violence and Tolerance (religious, political, ethnic etc.)"

Column 1 Yes · Column 2 No · Column 3 Somehow · Column 4 No Comments · Column 5

Row 1 Did this activity change your individual behavior in daily life affairs · Row 2 Was the activity useful to change my societal change · Row 3 Was the activity relevant to connect me with the society for positive change

"Extremism ,Violence and Tolerance (religious, political, ethnic etc.)" is a big hindrance in social solidarity and national unity in Pakistan. The group ...an that plays effective role in solving the problem.

108 responses

Real Life activity

We must change ourself to change the behavior of others this thing can play an effective role in solving the problem

99.1%

Enriching Workshop Discussions: Experiences and Practices in Digital Learning and Collaboration

I eagerly await the upcoming workshop where I'll contribute insights on Digital Learning and Analytics (DLA). Key topics include preparing students for collaborative projects, addressing challenges they face, and leveraging DLA, especially with AI, to tackle

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Sharing experiences will foster dialogue and improve digital teaching methods, particularly in digital humanities. These discussions will inform standardized practices and potential grant proposals with input from DLA experts, AMICAL staff, members, and digital humanities advisors.
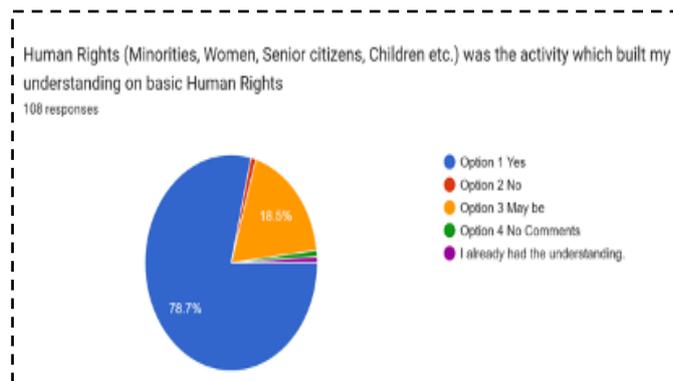
CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the digitalization of Islamic education marks a transformative leap forward, erasing geographical barriers and traditional limitations. Technology integration offers unprecedented access to Islamic knowledge through multimedia presentations, online courses, and AI-driven tools, enriching learning experiences. Yet, this digital shift presents both opportunities and challenges, necessitating careful consideration of authenticity and integrity. Moreover, digitalization fosters communal learning through collaborative platforms and virtual classrooms, fostering global dialogue and shared exploration. While celebrating progress, ethical reflection and pedagogical effectiveness remain crucial for preserving Islamic teachings' essence amid technological advancements.

In essence, digital Islamic education underscores the faith's adaptability and resilience in a changing world. It signifies a harmonious blend of tradition and innovation, paving the way for a more connected and informed Muslim community on a global scale.

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