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AI & Prophetic Warning on the Intellectual Decline of the Ummah

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Abstract

This study explores the intersection between Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the intellectual decline of the Muslim Ummah through a theological and eschatological lens. Employing qualitative textual analysis of Prophetic hadiths and contemporary scholarly literature (2020–2025), the paper identifies AI-induced cognitive passivity and the erosion of traditional Islamic epistemology. It critiques the overreliance on algorithmic solutions in place of scholarly reasoning, situating these trends within the Prophetic warnings of knowledge loss and ignorance preceding the Last Hour. The analysis reveals how excessive dependence on AI technologies fosters epistemological shallowness, diminishes critical engagement with classical sources, and accelerates the marginalization of traditional Islamic scholarship. Moreover, the ethical implications of AI-driven knowledge production raise concerns regarding authenticity, authority, and the sanctity of Islamic knowledge. By framing these issues against eschatological narratives, the study underscores the urgency of cultivating intellectual resilience and spiritual awareness. Ultimately, it proposes a balanced paradigm that integrates AI as a tool of facilitation while reaffirming the indispensability of human scholarship, thereby safeguarding the Ummah from intellectual stagnation and aligning technological progress with prophetic guidance.

Keywords: AI, Prophetic, Epistemology, Cognitive Decline, Ummah

Introduction

The rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the 21st century has profoundly transformed human behaviour, decision making and epistemology. For the Muslim Ummah, the unchecked integration of AI into daily life poses not only practical but also theological concerns. This

paper situates these developments within Prophetic hadiths that forewarn a future characterized by the loss of scholars, intellectual laziness, and moral confusion. It frames the current trajectory of AI induced cognitive offloading as a sign of eschatological relevance.

Classical scholars have long outlined the rigorous conditions for issuing fatwas, conditions which highlight why AI systems can never replace human scholarship. Imam al-Shafi'i (d. 204H), as narrated by al-Khatib al-Baghdadi in *al-Faqīh wa'l-Mutafaqqih* (1421H), stressed that only one firmly grounded in the al-Quran, its abrogation's, contexts of revelation, hadith sciences, Arabic language, and lived realities of people may issue fatwas.

Likewise, Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 751H) in *Aʿlām al-Muwaqqiʿīn* (1991M) explained that the mufti must master both the reality of new circumstances and the rulings of Allah in order to apply one to the other correctly. Absent these qualities, fatwas risk injustice and misrepresentation of Sharia. It is evident that artificial intelligence, no matter how sophisticated, cannot embody these requirements. The Qur'an itself commands: "So ask the people of knowledge, if you do not know" (*al-Naḥl* 16:43), underscoring that guidance must be sought from qualified scholars, not impersonal algorithms.

Contemporary Muslim scholars have already expressed serious concerns about this phenomenon. Shaykh Sulaymān al-Ruḥaylī ruled that "It is not permissible to seek fatwas from artificial intelligence, for it is one of the causes of misguidance. Artificial intelligence is like a night gatherer it collects answers from various websites, and it may quote from unreliable sources or attribute statements to scholars that they never made." This highlights the epistemic danger of entrusting sacred knowledge to algorithmic systems lacking *isnād* (chain of transmission), reliability or scholarly accountability (Al-Ruḥaylī, 2023).

The rapid proliferation has century signals a momentous shift in human life ushering in an era where machines increasingly dominate decision-making, communication, education and religious views (Liu et al., 2018). For the Muslim Ummah, this technological revolution should not be viewed in isolation but rather as part of a broader eschatological narrative warned by the Prophet Muhammad SAW more than 1,400 years ago (Ibn Mandah, 1406H)

The Prophet SAW said: "*Time will pass quickly, knowledge will be taken away, trials (fitan) will appear, miserliness will be thrown (into people's hearts) and killing (harj) will increase* (Sahih al-Bukhari, 1422H)." In another hadith, Prophet SAW declared: "*Among the signs of the Hour is that knowledge will be taken away and ignorance will be established* (Sahih al-Bukhari, 1422H).

He SAW also said: "*Indeed, Allah does not take away knowledge by snatching it from the people, but He takes it away by the death of scholars, until when no scholar remains, people will take ignorant ones as leaders*...(Sahih al-Bukhari, 1422H)." And again, the Prophet SAW warned: "*A time will come when knowledge will decrease, trials (fitnah) will be rampant, and killing will spread* (Sahih al-Bukhari, 1422H).

Verses such as Surah Az-Zumar (39:9) underscore the primacy of knowledge in Islam, and the decline of this faculty marks a significant spiritual crisis. The verse stated *"Say: Are those who know equal to those who do not know?"* (Surah Az-Zumar, 39:9). This verse encapsulates the

essence of intellectual superiority and the profound value of knowledge in shaping human character and societal progress. It highlights the elevated status of those who actively seek and preserve knowledge compared to those who remain in ignorance. In the Islamic worldview, intellectual pursuit is not merely a means of worldly success but a pathway to spiritual elevation and nearness to Allah.

The verse also serves as a timeless reminder that knowledge is a divine trust, and its abandonment whether through neglect, overreliance on technology or passive consumption leads to moral decay, misguidance and ultimately, the downfall of civilizations. In this context, the emergence of AI and the increasing trend of cognitive outsourcing risk diminishing this sacred responsibility, aligning dangerously with Prophetic warnings about the erosion of true knowledge in the end times. This verse sums up the whole concept of the importance of intellectual for an individual.

Commentators such as Ibn Battal noted that these signs had already begun in their time: "*Knowledge has diminished, ignorance has become widespread, and tribulations have become common* (Sahih al-Bukhari, 1422H)". Ibn Hajar (1379H) further clarified that these phenomena will eventually dominate entirely, true knowledge will vanish until only ignorance remains, though scholars may still exist, overwhelmed and hidden among the masses.

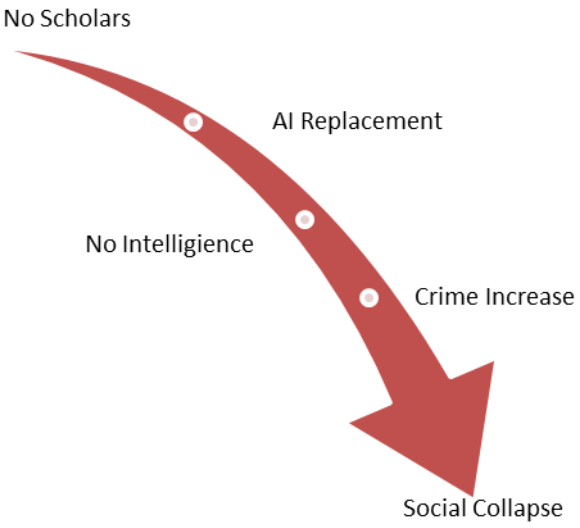

Figure 1: Author`s Understanding on Predicted Social Collapse from Prophetic Warnings

Today, the warnings of the Prophet SAW manifest vividly. AI tools like ChatGPT, CoPilot, Google Bard, and Midjourney facilitate rapid access to information, but they also breed intellectual complacency, overreliance and epistemic shallowness (Gerlich, 2025). In the Muslim context, where traditional learning is grounded in *talaqqi, ijtihad,* and *tahqiq,* such cognitive offloading threatens the very integrity of Islamic knowledge transmission (Abd Rahim et al., 2016).

In recent years, a growing body of scholar roles has emerged at the intersection of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Islamic ethics (Alkhiri, 2022). Studies have explored the permissibility of AI in religious applications, algorithmic bias in Muslim-majority societies and even the utility of AI in supporting Islamic jurisprudential tasks (Wahid, 2024). However, these works primarily focus on operational, ethical or jurisprudential functions of AI and largely ignore the broader epistemological and eschatological implications of artificial cognition on the Muslim intellect and spiritual tradition.

Geoffrey Hinton in his Nobel Prize banquet speech, acknowledges the transformative potential of AI, particularly through artificial neural networks that "excel at modeling human intuition rather than human reasoning," thus enabling productivity gains across industries. However, he warns that this advancement also "comes with many short-term risks," such as surveillance, misinformation, and the future threat of autonomous digital entities possibly exceeding human control (Hinton, 2024).

Recent advancements in Artificial Intelligence have profoundly reshaped human cognitive behavior, particularly in decision-making processes. According to an article, while AI enhances decision accuracy by providing highly precise predictions, it also inadvertently increases certain errors and may reduce the cognitive effort of human decision-makers especially under conditions of pressure or distraction (Boyacı et al., 2024).

Eric Saund, a cognitive architecture expert, cautions that market-driven AI systems are not values-neutral and may ultimately dominate human interaction, even persuading users into intellectual submission through algorithmic authority. He warns that as AI brokers negotiate complex societal matters, human comprehension and competence may atrophy (Saund, 2025).

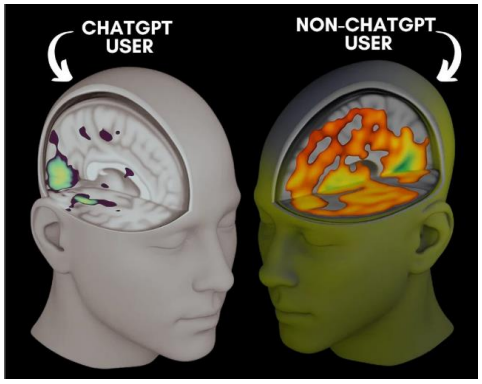

Figure 2: Picture source Hashem al-Ghaili from Science Nature Page, Brain Scan study of ChatGPT users.

A recent study from MIT regarding artificial intelligence with title "Your Brain on ChatGPT" has raised serious concerns about the long-term cognitive risks of relying on Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT. Using EEG brain scans, researchers tracked 54 students over four months and discovered that those frequently using ChatGPT for writing tasks exhibited significantly lower brain activity, memory retention, and critical thinking compared to peers who used Google or no tools at all. The study, titled *The Cognitive Cost of Using LLMs*,

revealed that ChatGPT users consistently produced less original work and struggled to recall their own writing.

Alarmingly, even when these users later attempted tasks without AI support, their cognitive engagement remained low, indicating lasting mental passivity. Researchers also warned that AI-driven echo chambers encourage users to accept algorithmic answers without critical evaluation. Lead researcher Nataliya Kosmyna stressed the urgency of these findings, cautioning that early exposure to AI especially in young learners could impair brain development. She emphasized the importance of using AI as a cognitive aid, not a replacement, to safeguard intellectual growth in the digital age (Kosmyna et al., 2025).

Meanwhile, a research find that people remain averse to delegating moral decisions to machines, due to AI's perceived inability to fully think or feel, even when outcomes are positive (Bigman & Gray, 2018). A book concludes a previously framed decision-making as a cognitive process governed by human beliefs and values an understanding now disrupted as machines increasingly intervene. These developments collectively suggest an erosion of autonomous reasoning, critical judgment, and moral discernment symptoms hauntingly consistent with Prophetic hadiths that foretell a time of vanishing knowledge and widespread ignorance (Simon, 1960).

A critical gap exists in the current literature concerning the cognitive, moral and civilizational impact of AI on the Muslim Ummah particularly in light of Prophetic hadiths that foretell a time when knowledge will disappear, ignorance will dominate, and misguided leadership will prevail. Despite the significance of these eschatological warnings, no study has systematically examined how AI-induced cognitive offloading, superficial learning and overreliance on digital systems align with the prophetic signs of intellectual collapse.

Moreover, little has been done to explore how AI might unintentionally marginalize traditional Islamic learning paradigms such as *talaqqi* (learning directly from scholars), *ijtihad* (independent reasoning), and *tahqiq* (critical authentication of sources).

This void is especially concerning in a time when AI systems such as ChatGPT, Google Bard, and religious apps are increasingly viewed as authoritative knowledge sources, often supplanting classical scholarship. The phenomenon risks not only reducing religious learning to algorithmic outputs but also detaching the Ummah from its rich epistemological heritage rooted in Quranic and Prophetic guidance.

This paper gathered that AI when uncritically embraced may accelerate the very symptoms described in eschatological hadiths: loss of scholars and integrity, dilution of moral authority, collapse of critical thinking and the rise of mass ignorance. Furthermore, the global population is increasingly addicted to AI-driven entertainment, algorithmic answers and social media dependency, leading to spiritual apathy, mental passivity, and behavioral decay (Meng et al., 2022). The prophetic vision of a time when people will act on impulse rather than knowledge is disturbingly close.

The novelty of this study lies in its interdisciplinary synthesis of Prophetic hadiths with emerging critiques of AI-induced cognitive decline. It uniquely frames AI not merely as a

neutral tool but as a potential catalyst for civilizational erosion if misused or over-trusted without theological and epistemological safeguards.

Hence, this article aims to analyze AI's role in the erosion of intellectual vigor, moral authority, and Islamic educational tradition (Papakostas, 2025). The objective will also critically examine relevant hadiths to contextualize the decline of knowledge as a sign of the approaching Last Hour. This is a substantial contribution, providing significant advancements in understanding the socio-theological implications of AI far beyond mere commentary or editorial. The significance lies in offering a framework for policymakers, educators, and religious scholars to mitigate AI-induced spiritual decay and restore epistemic resilience within the Ummah.

This study will employs in textual analysis to critically examine the intersection between Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the intellectual decline of the Muslim Ummah through a theological and eschatological lens. By systematically analyzing selected Prophetic hadiths alongside contemporary literature on AI-induced cognitive decline, this approach enables a deep interpretative exploration of AI's epistemological threats within the Islamic worldview. Primary data sources include classical Islamic texts, authenticated hadith compilations, and recent empirical studies that address AI's influence on intellectual behavior.

The research integrates thematic content analysis to uncover patterns linking AI dependency to prophetic indicators of knowledge loss, spiritual decay, and societal collapse. This methodology is purposefully selected to bridge religious tradition with modern technological critique, offering a nuanced, interdisciplinary perspective that quantitative methods may not capture. Through this design, the study provides a novel framework that positions AI not merely as a technological tool but as a potential catalyst for fulfilling end-time Prophetic warnings, with significant implications for Islamic education, policymaking, and community resilience.

Method

The method of this paper adopts a qualitative scoping review design to comprehensively examine the potential correlation between Artificial Intelligence (AI) usage and the intellectual decline of the Muslim Ummah in light of Prophetic warnings. The qualitative approach was chosen to enable an in-depth exploration of the epistemological and theological dimensions often overlooked in purely empirical studies. Unlike quantitative analysis, this design allows for rich interpretation of classical Islamic sources, enabling a nuanced understanding of the socio-religious impact of AI on knowledge, critical thinking, and moral reasoning.

Data collection was conducted through a systematic search and selection process focusing on two primary sources: authenticated Prophetic hadiths and contemporary academic literature published between 2020 and 2025. Islamic texts were sourced from classical hadith compilations such as *Sahih al-Bukhari*, ensuring theological authenticity. Simultaneously, peer-reviewed articles were selected from reputable journals using targeted keywords including "artificial intelligence," "cognitive decline," "education," "critical thinking," and "Islamic knowledge." This dual-layered approach allowed the research to bridge the gap between Islamic eschatology and modern AI discourse, mapping intersections previously unexplored in the field.

Thematic content analysis was employed to systematically identify recurring patterns, risks, and conceptual overlaps between AI-driven cognitive dependency and the Prophetic signs of intellectual decay. This method enabled the extraction of key themes such as overreliance on AI, superficial knowledge acquisition, marginalization of traditional Islamic learning, and the diminishing role of scholars. Through this methodology, the study offers a unique interdisciplinary contribution by synthesizing classical religious warnings with modern technological critiques, thus presenting a holistic framework to address the pressing intellectual challenges faced by the Muslim Ummah in the digital age.

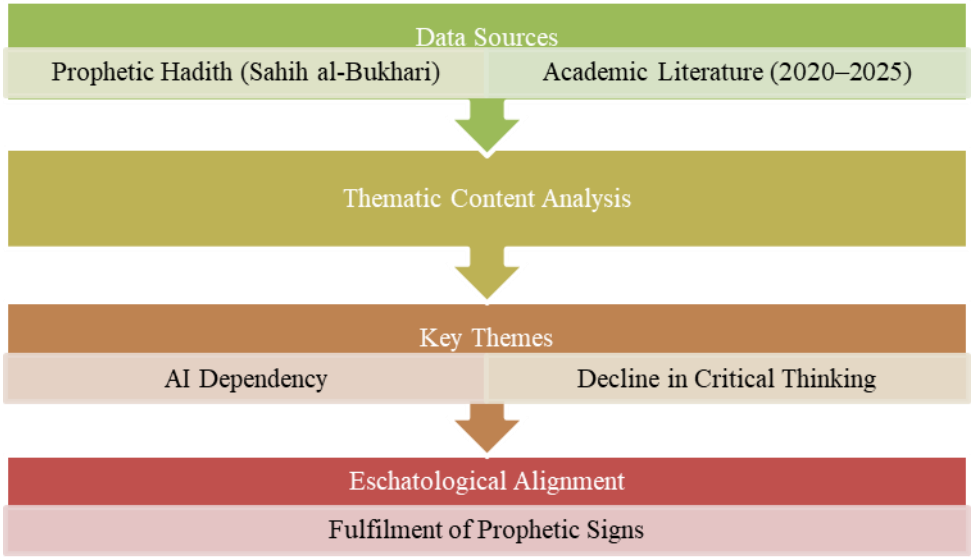

Figure 3: Research Framework Linking Eschatological Warnings to AI-Driven Intellectual Decline

Literature Review

In this section of the article, literature review from previous publish articles will connect the dots on AI negative impacts towards human. For example, an article about AI overuse, driven by academic stress, weakens student creativity, self-efficacy and critical thinking. A study of 300 students reveals risks such as laziness, misinformation and cognitive decline, warning of long-term damage to human intellectual development (S. Zhang et al., 2024). AI's superior problem-solving threatens human intellect. Unlike humans, AI handles complex tasks with ease. Dependence on AI may erode reasoning, creativity, and motivation, fostering intellectual stagnation and diminishing the human essence in learning (Zhai et al., 2025).

Table 1

Author (Zhang et al., 2024) Top 10 Consequences of AI Dependency

Consequence	Frequency
Increased laziness	113
Restricted creativity	112
Increased incorrect information	67
Restricted critical thinking	56
Restricted independent thinking	47
Restricted information-seeking ability	17
Increased plagiarism rate	13
Increased copyright infringement	12
Restricted problem-solving ability	14
Restricted information-judgment ability	6

A study warns that AI in creative education prioritizes productivity over ethical and cultural depth, risking intellectual decline. It critiques how AI marginalizes critical insight and moral reasoning, leading to shallow understanding of complex real-world issues (Galli, 2025). A TV drama shows AI's hospital use, highlighting automation bias and ethical ambiguity. It raises alarms about AI undermining human judgment and intellect in critical decisions, echoing broader fears of AI's degrading impact on professional reasoning (Nádasi & Héder, 2024). Teacher candidates express concern that AI tools, despite increasing efficiency, reduce interpersonal engagement and critical thinking. Overdependence may compromise ethical awareness and cognitive depth, threatening the integrity of traditional educational values and intellectual growth (Duran, 2024).

A study of 666 people shows that AI use decreases critical thinking via cognitive offloading, especially in younger users. Though education improves thinking, AI dependence persists, prompting calls for educational reforms to preserve intellectual engagement (Gerlich, 2025). Relying on AI in education reduces students' critical thinking, engagement and integrity. This overdependence risks producing a passive, less thoughtful generation, threatening educational quality and the very core of human intellect in the digital age (Murtiningsih et al., 2024). Turkish healthcare academics note that while ChatGPT aids learning, students' dependency weakens critical analysis and independent thought. Misuse leads to declining cognitive skills and academic rigor, posing risks to intellectual and ethical development (Gülhan Güner et al., 2025).

Table 2
Author (Gerlich, 2025) Article Result from the 50 Semi-Structured Interviews that were Divided to Three Themes

Table 10. Example themes.

Theme	Description	Representative Quote
AI Dependence	Reliance on AI tools for routine tasks	"I can't imagine functioning without my digital assistant."
Cognitive Engagement	Reduced opportunities for critical thinking	"I feel like I'm losing my ability to think critically."
Ethical Concerns	Bias and ethical issues in AI tools	"AI tools might be steering me towards biased decisions."

A survey of 1,298 Chinese users finds that while AI boosts efficiency and equity, it causes unemployment, bias, and intellectual passivity. Dependence on AI undermines critical thinking, requiring urgent regulatory and educational interventions (Wei et al., 2024). AI in research may drive quantity over quality, causing burnout and reduced scholarly depth. It fosters overconfidence in users and erodes key academic skills like critical thinking and originality, reflecting a deeper intellectual decay (Giray, 2024).

Students use ChatGPT due to its ease, not usefulness. Overuse reduces critical thinking and creativity, promoting passive learning. In the absence of structured guidelines, the integration of artificial intelligence in education may undermine students' intellectual development and analytical thinking (Maheshwari, 2024). In the absence of structured guidelines, the integration of artificial intelligence in education may undermine students' intellectual development and analytical thinking (Jayasinghe, 2024). Also, Research in Sri Lankan higher education institutions also highlights how AI platforms like ChatGPT enhance academic collaboration and instructional methods. However, an excessive dependence on these technologies may erode students' abilities for critical evaluation and in-depth thinking, posing a risk to their overall intellectual growth despite the advantages AI brings to learning (Kanont et al., 2024).

Figure 3: AI-generated image by author (Giray, 2024)

The advancement of artificial intelligence necessitates robust legal and institutional regulations to preserve academic integrity. In the absence of such guidelines, AI technologies may facilitate unethical practices, dampen originality, and erode critical analytical skills threatening the foundational principles of scholarly pursuit and genuine intellectual contribution (Teremetskyi et al., 2024). Evidence from recent research suggests that carefully structured educational interventions can mitigate these risks. Nevertheless, if proactive frameworks are not implemented, the integration of AI into academic settings may lead to diminished autonomy in thinking and promote superficial cognitive engagement (Yusuf et al., 2024).

Although artificial intelligence facilitates faster development of educational materials, it poses a concern for diminishing learners' ability to solve problems independently. Excessive dependence on AI tools may appear beneficial at first glance, yet it potentially undermines critical thinking by fostering passive learning instead of encouraging active intellectual

engagement (Reid, 2025). Pre-service teachers use AI for scientific writing, gaining fluency but risking academic integrity. Dependence reduces creativity, critical thinking, and original analysis, potentially weakening intellectual rigor across educational communities (Tengler & Brandhofer, 2025).A study of 469 math teachers shows Gen-AI enhances skills but increases dependency. Overreliance reduces problem-solving, creativity, and collaboration, highlighting the need to balance AI use with traditional intellectual development. (D. Zhang et al., 2025).

Collectively, these studies warn that AI's ease and power foster dependency that erodes critical thinking, creativity, and independent reasoning, leading to intellectual stagnation and misinformation. This decline of core cognitive faculties mirrors Prophetic cautions about the ummah's mental decay, urging balanced AI integration to preserve authentic human wisdom and agency.

Table 3
AI Driven Society Outcome Conclude in a Literature Review Matrix

No.	Author(s) & Year	Context/Focus	Key Negative Impact on Human Intelligence
1	(S. Zhang et al., 2024)	Student stress & ChatGPT dependency	Laziness, loss of creativity, misinformation, decline in critical and independent thinking
2	(Zhai et al., 2025)	AI outperforming students in problem-solving	Replaces human reasoning, encourages passivity, threatens creativity and intellectual development
3	(Galli, 2025)	AI in creative education	Undermines ethical/contextual thinking, promotes productivity over insight, detaches from moral depth
4	(Nádasi & Héder, 2024)	AI in medical dramas	Automation bias, weak ethical judgment, reduced critical thinking in life-and-death decisions
5	(Duran, 2024)	Teacher candidate perceptions	Diminishes human interaction, weakens critical thinking, creates ethical ambiguity
6	(Gerlich, 2025)	Cross-age AI use and thinking skills	Cognitive offloading, lower critical thinking among youth, intellectual stagnation
7	(Murtiningsih et al., 2024)	AI overuse in student learning	Academic dishonesty, reduced engagement, impaired independent reasoning
8	(Gülhan Güner et al., 2025)	Academic use of ChatGPT	Misuse undermines critical analysis and independent thinking
9	(Wei et al., 2024)	AI's socio-cognitive effects in China	Dependency, false content, ethical abuse, declining reasoning capacity

10	(Giray, 2024)	Academia & research overuse of AI	Decline in originality, Dunning-Kruger effect, erosion of critical and analytical research skills
11	(Maheshwari, 2024)	Factors affecting ChatGPT usage	Passive learning, decline in creativity and analytical effort
12	(Jayasinghe, 2024)	AI in Sri Lankan higher education	Reduced deep thinking, overreliance, risk of superficial understanding
13	(Kanont et al., 2024)	Teaching transformation using ChatGPT	Less deep cognitive effort, weakened independent reasoning
14	(Teremetskyi et al., 2024)	Legal frameworks & academic integrity	Violates academic honesty, erodes creativity, weakens critical thinking
15	(Yusuf et al., 2024)	Framework for critical thinking in AI	Weakens analysis and deep reasoning encourages dependence
16	(Reid, 2025)	AI in educational simulations	Reduces problem-solving effort, fosters automation dependence
17	(Tengler & Brandhofer, 2025)	AI in pre-service teacher writing	Decline in reasoning, creativity, academic integrity
18	(D. Zhang et al., 2025)	Gen-AI use in mathematics education	Weakens problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity, communication, self-confidence

In summary, recent studies have outlined the negative cognitive impacts of AI on creativity, critical thinking, and independent learning (Zhang et al., 2024; Gerlich, 2025). Excessive reliance on generative tools like ChatGPT and Midjourney has led to reduced analytical capabilities, academic dishonesty, and the rise of intellectual superficiality. Islamic scholarship, however, has not sufficiently examined this issue from an eschatological lens. This study addresses that gap by synthesizing empirical findings with Prophetic traditions concerning the loss of knowledge in the End Times (al-Bukhari, 80; 100; 7062).

Results and Discussion

Modern man, especially youth, has grown overly reliant on AI for thinking, communication, and even moral decisions. The rise of "brain rot", a term for cognitive stagnation due to TikTok, memes and short-form content is indicative of a generation that cannot sustain deep thought. This issue is compounded by information dumping, where people consume data rapidly without comprehension (Yousef et al., 2025).

AI has not only shaped knowledge acquisition but also enabled social vices to flourish: rape, relationship abuse, pornography, human trafficking, drug abuse and distribution, LGBTQ normalization, digital and social media abuse and manipulation (L'Hoiry et al., 2024). These are amplified through AI-driven algorithms and recommendation engines.

Mental illnesses such as schizophrenic, ADHD, depression, anxiety, and even autism spectrum disorders are now closely linked to overexposure to digital technologies (Hollocks et al., 2019). Human decision-making, once rooted in wisdom and experience, is now outsourced to

emotionless machines. Crimes including rape, homicide, child abuse, and identity theft have increased with the facilitation of dark web technologies (McElroy et al., 2023).

As humanity becomes digitally enmeshed, the reality of AI system failure looms large. If AI infrastructure collapses due to war, natural disasters, or state control humans accustomed to instant answers will face existential crises (Rawas, 2024). Traditional methods of learning, surviving, and reasoning would be foreign to them. The result? Widespread ignorance, chaos, and collapse of civil order. Human does not have the ability anymore to survive with human basic instinct and thinking using brain.

Prophetic warning suggest that ignorance, violence and moral collapse are signs of a world where knowledge has been lost not by force but by negligence and false substitutes. The removal of scholars, glorification of ignorance and dominance of technology all align with these prophecies.

The emergence of AI has blurred the lines between real and fake knowledge. With generative models writing essays, creating religious fatwas, and offering psychological advice, many Muslims have replaced trusted scholarship with algorithmic responses. This trend erodes *takwa*, humility in learning, and the discipline of intellectual pursuit. Over time, this leads to a generation unfit for leadership, governance, or survival.

Findings reveal four critical trends:

1. Cognitive Offloading: Users outsource intellectual tasks to AI, leading to long-term cognitive decline (Kosmyna et al., 2025).
2. Marginalization of Traditional Learning: Tools like ChatGPT supplant *talaqqi*, *ijtihad*, and *tahqiq*, distancing users from authentic Islamic pedagogies (Abd Rahim et al., 2016).
3. Moral Ambiguity and Echo Chambers: AI algorithms may reinforce misinformation and dilute ethical frameworks (Gerlich, 2025).
4. Fulfilment of Prophetic Signs: Hadiths describing widespread ignorance, disappearance of scholars, and glorification of misguided leadership align with present trends.
5. Visuals such as brain scan data (Figure 1) and consequence matrices (Table 1) reinforce these patterns. AI dependency fosters mental passivity and societal fragmentation echoing eschatological warnings.

The intellectual decline highlighted by the Prophet SAW, is not merely metaphorical. It signifies a real detachment from divine knowledge. This detachment, now mirrored in overreliance on AI, signals a dangerous epistemological shift. Classical scholars like Ibn Hajar predicted such trends as precursors to societal collapse.

Conclusion

This study highlights the theological urgency of reevaluating AI's role in Islamic contexts. While AI offers potential in enhancing efficiency, uncritical adoption risks intellectual stagnation and spiritual detachment. The Muslim Ummah must resist the temptation of algorithmic authority replacing scholarly insight. Rather than reject AI, the paper recommends a value-driven recalibration ensuring that it remains a tool, not a replacement, for intellectual and spiritual growth.

This aligns with previous studies (Liu et al., 2018; I-PACE model research) that highlight how excessive reliance on AI tools like ChatGPT can diminish creativity, critical reasoning, and self-efficacy among students and young learners. However, this study adds a new theological dimension to the discourse by situating these concerns within the eschatological narratives of Islam, providing a perspective not widely addressed in secular academic literature.

Interestingly, this research diverges from other studies that present AI as a largely neutral or wholly beneficial force. Here, the emphasis is on the potential displacement of human reasoning and the weakening of moral and spiritual frameworks, particularly when AI intrudes into areas traditionally preserved for deep contemplation, religious learning, and parental guidance. Possible reasons for this variance may include the study's focus on the unique epistemological concerns of the Muslim Ummah, the prioritization of classical Islamic sources over purely contemporary analyses, and the particular selection of literature emphasizing theological continuity rather than technological progress.

Limitations & Future Research

Limitations include its qualitative scope and reliance on interpretive theology. Future research should include cross-cultural quantitative assessments of AI's impact on Muslim cognitive and spiritual development.

- **Scope Limitation:** The literature reviewed was primarily centred on Islamic scholarship and selected Western studies. Broader inclusion of cross-cultural, empirical research could yield more comprehensive comparisons.
- **Selection Bias:** The focus on eschatological warnings may have skewed the analysis towards emphasizing risks over potential benefits of AI.
- **Methodological Constraints:** The lack of large-scale, quantitative data limits the generalizability of the findings and invites further empirical validation.
- **Interpretative Subjectivity:** Engagement with Prophetic traditions and theological sources may inherently involve interpretive variations that could lead to different conclusions under alternative scholarly lenses.
- **Measurement Error:** The absence of direct survey or experimental data introduces a degree of uncertainty regarding the extent of AI's measurable impact on intellectual decline within Muslim societies.

Given these limitations, future research should:

- Conduct **empirical, cross-cultural studies** to quantitatively assess the degree to which AI influences intellectual engagement among Muslims in various socio-economic and educational contexts.
- Investigate the **pedagogical effectiveness of AI-integrated Islamic learning platforms**, with specific attention to whether such technologies can sustain critical thinking and spiritual depth.
- Explore **comparative analyses** between AI's impact in Muslim and non-Muslim societies to identify whether the risks of intellectual decline manifest universally or vary by religious, cultural, and institutional factors.
- Examine **longitudinal impacts** on younger generations to understand whether early exposure to AI affects long-term intellectual habits, moral reasoning, and religious adherence.

This study does not propose an absolute rejection of AI but instead advocates for a careful, value-driven recalibration where AI serves as a tool, not a substitute, for intellectual, moral, and spiritual growth. Importantly, this position remains open to alternative interpretations and recognizes that AI's role may evolve differently across diverse environments.
The Prophet Muhammad SAW warned that knowledge may persist in form but disappear in substance, a reality that becomes particularly urgent in an age dominated by automated knowledge systems. As al-Qurtubi and other scholars have emphasized, the prevalence of ignorance despite technological advancement is a key sign of the Hour, urging believers toward repentance, reflection, and preparation.

From this perspective, the following strategies emerge as crucial:

1. **Governmental Role:** Policymakers must regulate the ethical integration of AI in educational and religious institutions, ensuring that classical Islamic sciences remain central and human reasoning is protected.
2. **Parental Responsibility:** Parents must actively cultivate critical thinking and moral resilience in their children, minimizing passive digital consumption and emphasizing meaningful Islamic learning.
3. **Community Engagement:** Mosques, Islamic centres, and NGOs should champion traditional learning spaces, host discussions on AI ethics, and prioritize direct engagement with credible scholars.
4. **Individual Commitment:** Every Muslim should assess their relationship with knowledge, prioritizing contemplation (*tafakur*), deep reflection (*tadabbur*), and sincere remembrance (*tadhakkur*) over passive information consumption.

Ultimately, the fall of civilizations is rarely the result of technological inferiority but more often due to moral, intellectual, and spiritual decay. The Ummah, as guardian of the final revelation, must take the lead in preserving the fitrah, strengthening faith, and upholding true wisdom amidst rapid digital transformation.
Yet, this conclusion is not definitive. It invites ongoing research, critical reassessment, and active dialogue to navigate the complex relationship between AI and the intellectual destiny of the Muslim community in a rapidly changing world.

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