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# The Use of Google Scholar as a Literature Search Tool in Writing Theses for Islamic Education Students

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the utilization of Google Scholar by students who are currently writing their theses in the Islamic Education Study Program (PAI) at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang in searching for and selecting literature for thesis writing. The research employed a qualitative descriptive approach with data collected through interviews, observation, and documentation involving students who are writing their theses, the head of the study program, the head of thesis supervision, and Islamic Education (PAI) lecturers. Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model. The findings reveal that Google Scholar has become the primary academic search tool for students, particularly in writing the literature review (Chapter II) and methodology sections of their theses. Its ease of access, wide coverage of journals, proceedings, theses, and dissertations, and user-friendly features make it highly beneficial. However, several challenges remain, including limited digital literacy, unstable internet connections, difficulties in formulating keywords, and restricted access to paid journals. Supporting factors include the availability of campus internet facilities, guidance from lecturers, and students' motivation to complete their theses. This study contributes to illustrating the development of academic digital literacy within the context of Islamic higher education. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of training in advanced search strategies to optimize the use of Google Scholar. Future research could adopt a quantitative approach to measure the effectiveness of Google Scholar in improving thesis quality and to compare it with other academic database.

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## INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of technology in today's digital era has brought about major changes in various aspects of life, including education. Technology is a tool designed to assist humans in carrying out various activities, both at work and in education.[1] The development of information and comunication technology has had a huge impact on the world of education, creating significant

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[1] Ana Maritsa et al., "Pengaruh Teknologi Dalam Dunia Pendidikan," *Al-Mutharahah: Jurnal Penelitian dan Kajian Sosial Keagamaan* 18, no. 2 (2021): 91–100, https://doi.org/10.46781/al-mutharahah.v18i2.303. Hal. 92

changes in the way we learn.[2] Education itself is a conscious effort or endeavor in the process of civilizing and empowering humans.[3] Education also includes processes that aim to increase knowledge, insight, and experience to determine life goals, so that education itself can create quality individuals.[4]

Information technology, now known as II, is considered to have brought about changes in society, creating many innovations and new things, including in the world of work and education.[5] In the context of education, information technology helps make the learning process more efficient and opens access to various learning resources. This is in line with the fact that the world of education is a very complex reality, involving various aspects of human life.[6] In higher education, information technology is an important element that supports learning, research, and scientific literature searches. This is important considering that educational activities are a very complex world, which involves various aspects of human life.[7]

One tangible example of this development is the emergence of various academic literature search engines that make it easier for students to find references in a short time. Of the many platforms available, Google Scholar has become one of the most popular because Google Scholar is a service provided by Google with the aim of making it easier for users to search for learning materials, scientific journals, books, and other text-based materials in various publication formats. The existence of Google Scholar is very useful for students, researchers, or other academics in finding reading materials and references. Google Scholar can be accessed at www.scholar.Google.com.[8] The advantages of Google Scholar lie in its wide range of sources, ease of use, and supporting features such as automatic citation and citation tracking, which are very helpful for students in writing scientific papers, especially theses.

In addition, access to various scientific sources can encourage creativity in learning, which includes fluency, flexibility, originality, and detail.[9] Fluency in finding information, flexibility in understanding various points of view, originality in developing ideas, and detail in constructing strong and systematic arguments, Google Scholar is currently popular and widely used among students, lecturers, and acadermics.[10] Features on Google Scholar such as year filters, Cite (automatic citations), and Cited by allow users to filter search results, manage citations, and view relevant research. Access to various scientific sources can encourage creative thinking in learning, which includes fluency, flexibility, originality, and detail.[11] Access to a variety of scientific sources via this platform directly contributes to the development of the cognitive abilities of students and academics, training them to think more fluently, flexibly, originally, and in detail. Thus, Google Scholar supports the formation of innovative individuals in the digital age.

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[2] Syarnubi Syarnubi, *Filsafat Pendidikan Islam Suatu Pengantar Untuk Memahami Filsafat Pendidikan Islam Lebih Awal* (Palembang: Anugrah Jaya, 2024).

[3] Dodi Irawan, "Pendidikan Agama Islam dalam Menciptakan Kepribadian yang Baik di Keluarga dan Masyarakat," *Jurnal Intelektualita: Keislaman, Sosial dan Sains* 11, no. 2 (2022): 222–31, https://doi.org/10.19109/intelektualita.v11i2.14664. Hal. 223

[4] Baldi Anggara dan Andi M. Darlis, *Pengembangan Profesi Guru* (Palembang: CV Amanah, 2019). Hal. 70

[5] Fajrul Alfatih, Muqowim Muqowim, dan Baldi Anggara, "Persepsi Masyarakat tentang Pinjaman Online : Studi Kasus Masyarakat Plaju Kota Palembang Sumatera Selatan," *Islamika: Jurnal Keislaman dan Ilmu Pendidikan* 5, no. 2 (2023): 657–68, https://doi.org/10.36088/islamika.v5i2.3115. Hal. 658

[6] Baldi Anggara et al., "Pengembangan Program Pembinaan Baca Tulis Al-Qur'an Bagi Mahasiswa Fakultas Ilmu Tarbiyah dan Keguruan Uin Raden Fatah Palembang," *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 12, no. 04 (2023): 3261–74, https://doi.org/10.30868/ei.v12i04.5346. Hal. 3262

[7] Baldi Anggara, "Pengembangan Program Pembinaan Baca Tulis Al-Qur'an Bagi Mahasiswa Prodi Pendidikan Agama Islam (Pai) Fakultas Ilmu Tarbiyahdan Keguruan Uin Raden Fatah Palembang" (UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, 2016), http://eprints.radenfatah.ac.id/3802/1/Baldi Anggara.pdf. Hal. 9

[8] Fella Latania, *Pengaruh Motif Penggunaan Google Scholar terhadap Kepuasan Mahasiswa UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta dalam Memperoleh Informasi, Pharmacognosy Magazine*, vol. 75, 2021. Hal. 21

[9] Popi Septasari, Muhammad Isnaini, dan Baldi Anggara, "Penerapan Model Pembelajaran Metaphorming Untuk Meningkatkan Kreativitas Berpikir Dalam Belajar Siswa Pada Mata Pelajaran Fikih Kelas Xi Di Man 2 Palembang," *Jurnal PAI Raden Fatah* 3, no. 2 (2021): 201–18, https://doi.org/10.19109/pairf.v3i2.6601. Hal. 204

[10] Niken Titi Puspitasari, "Efektivitas Sistem Temu Kembali Informasi Google Scholar dalam Memenuhi Kebutuhan Informasi Akademis (Studi Precision)" (Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kaliajaga Yogyakarta, 2023), https://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/64698/1/16140042_BAB-I_IV-atau-V_DAFTAR-PUSTAKA.pdf. Hal. 4

[11] Septasari, Isnaini, dan Anggara, "Penerapan Model Pembelajaran Metaphorming Untuk Meningkatkan Kreativitas Berpikir Dalam Belajar Siswa Pada Mata Pelajaran Fikih Kelas Xi Di Man 2 Palembang." . Hal. 204

In the context of thesis writing, the availability of credible and relevant scientific references is an absolute requirement for the paper to have a strong theoretical foundation and be academically accountable. Thesis writing is a form of higher education implementation, in which undergraduate students produce scientific papers based on research relevant to their field of study, which are then tested and revised to demonstrate their academic competence.[12] According to Sudjatmiko, students are required to have up-to-date and relevant new issues.[13] Writing a good thesis requires quality literature to strengthen the arguments.

Students of the Islamic Education Study Program (PAI) at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, as future educators and researchers in the religious field, are required to have good academic literacy, not only in understanding Islamic material, but also in the skills of searching for scientific references. The ability to compile scientific works not only reflects mastery of the material but also demonstrates maturity of thought and understanding of social and cultural conditions, as well as diverse human characters. In this context, future educators, such as PAI students, are required to have a high level of professionalism, including the ability to understand the diversity of student characters.[14] This is part of the effort to develop educators who are adaptive, careful in their thinking, and responsive to the times. The role of Islamic Education teachers is also very strategic, namely as conservators, innovators, transmitters, transformers, and organizers, who collectively contribute to character building and moderate religious understanding among students.[15]

*Google Scholar has become the main source for students and academics in conducting literature searches due to its ease of access and citation features*.[16] However, according to Mayr[17] despite its many advantages, Google Scholar cannot completely replace more curated academic databases. On the other hand, students success in finding literature is greatly influenced by their ability to formulate keywords and understand the search system.[18] Therefore, mentors or lecturers are needed who can foster scientific and creative character in utilizing digital sources.[19] The use of Google Scholar with the right search strategy can also strengthen the quality of literature reviews.[20] Digital literacy, especially the ability to use Google Scholar, is one of the important competencies that they must master in order to produce high-quality, relevant, and scientifically sound theses.

The importance of seeking knowledge in Islam is also emphasized in QS. Al-'Alaq verses 1-5, which commands humans to read in the name of Allah, remembering that knowledge is a blessing that Allah has honored. According to Ibn Kathir, this verse indicates the beginning of the revelation that emphasizes the importance of knowledge as the first blessing for humans[21], while Ali al-Shaburu adds that the command to read in this verse also marks the beginning of prophethood and the importance of developing knowledge.[22] Thus, the activity of searching for scientific literature through Google Scholar can be seen as a form of actualization of the spiritual command to read and seek knowledge. With this spiritual basis, the pursuit of knowledge is not only a religious obligation,

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[12] Moh Ismail Sholeh et al., *Pedoman Penulisan Skripsi edisi Revisi 2021* (Palembang: Fakultas Ilmu Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, 2021). Hal. 1

[13] N P Salsabila dan M Abidin, "Analisis Urgensi Kompetensi Literasi Digital dalam Mendukung Kemampuan Penulisan Karya Ilmiah Mahasiswa," *Nusantara: Jurnal Pendidikan …* 4, no. 1 (2024), http://journal.rumahindonesia.org/index.php/njpi/article/view/243. Hal. 246

[14] Yunika Ferinda, Baldi Anggara, dan Ibnu Rozali, "Penerapan Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi Berbasis Rancangan Understanding by Design (UbD) Terhadap Minat Belajar Siswa," *Wahana Karya Ilmiah Pendidikan* 8, no. 01 (2024): 56–68, https://doi.org/10.35706/wkip.v8i01.11737. Hal. 58

[15] Syarnubi et al., "Peran Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Menanamkan Nilai-Nilai Moderasi Beragama," *Internasional Education Conference (IEC) FITK* Vol. 1, no. No. 1 (2023): pp.112-117. Hal. 114

[16] E. Pekdemir, "Google Scholar Through the Eyes of Academics," *International Technology and Education Journal* 2, no. 2 (2018): 1–10, http://ekuad.ejournalmanagement.com/admin/articles/%0Agoogle-scholar-through-the-eyes-of-academics.pdf. Hal. 1-2

[17] Philipp Mayr dan Anne Kathrin Walter, "An exploratory study of Google Scholar," *Online Information Review* 31, no. 6 (2007): 814–30, https://doi.org/10.1108/14684520710841784. Hal. 1

[18] Rebekah Willson dan Lisa M. Given, "Student search behaviour in an online public access catalogue: An examination of 'searching mental models' and 'searcher self-concept,'" *Information Research* 19, no. 3 (2014). Hal. 1

[19] Dong-Joong Kim et al., "Creative Character Education in Mathematics for Prospective Teachers," *Sustainability* 11, no. 6 (2019): 1730–1735. Hal. 1

[20] Linda Zientek, Jon M. Werner, dan Mariela V. Campuzano Kim Nimon, "The Use of Google Scholar for Research and Research Dissemination," *New Horizons in Adult Education & human Resource Development* 30, no. 1 (2018): 39–46. Hal. 39

[21] Abu Fida al-Hafiz ibn Katsir Al-Dimasqi, *Tafsir Alqur'an al-'Adzim, Jilid 4* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, T.th., n.d.). Hal. 645

[22] Muhammad 'Ali Asy-Syabuni, *Shafwah at-Tafsir Juz 3* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, T.th., n.d.). Hal. 580

but also needs to be understood in a scientific and theoretical framework. Therefore, student behavior in utilizing Google Scholar can be explained through several theories of technology use.

Student behavior in utilizing Google Scholar is influenced by several theories of technology use The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) explains that students tend to use Google Scholar if it is considered useful and easy to use. [23] Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) emphasizes that adoption occurs when technology is considered to provide relative advantages, is in line with academic needs, is easy to use, can be tested, and the results are easy to observe. [24] Meanwhile, Uses and Gratifications Theory. (UGT) asserts that students consciously choose Google Scholar because of their specific need for credible scientific literature, not merely because of its availability.[25] Thus, the use of Google Scholar in higher education is influenced by perceptions of usefulness, technological suitability, and students' personal motivation to meet their academic needs.

Theories explaining technology usage behavior should encourage students, especially Islamic Education students, to be more prudent in utilizing Google Scholar as a means of searching for knowledge. However, the reality in the field shows that the use of Google Scholar by some students is still not optimal. Many students only use simple searches by typing in general keywords without understanding how to use advanced search features. This condition makes it difficult for them to select literature that is truly relevant, current, and credible. As a result, the quality of references used in theses is less than optimal. There are also many students who still experience difficulties in managing citations, understanding the difference between accredited and non-academic journals, and accessing paid articles. This shows that there is a digital literacy gap that needs serious attention.

Initial interviews with one of the 2021 PAI students, Lili Kurruasih, showed that students have begun to use Google Scholar as their main source for thesis literature searches. She admitted to frequently using this platform by typing in keywords related to her topic and using the accessible search results as references. This phenomenon shows that Google Scholar has helped PAI students at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang in writing scientific papers, although its use is still limited to basic search. Thus research is important because there have not been many studies that specifically discuss the ability of PAI students to utilize Google Scholar as a primary source of scientific literature. The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive analysis of the supporting and inhibiting factors of its use in Islamic higher education.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The type of research used in this study is qualitative research. Qualitative research must be supported by the researcher's extensive knowledge, because the researcher interviews the research subjects directly.[26] The focus of the research is directed at the real experiences of students in using Google Scholar, both in terms of the ease and obstacles they encounter, as well as the extent to which this platform contributes to the quality of the references in the theses they compile.

The research subjects were determined purposively, which is a sampling technique with certain considerations or criteria,[27] The research subjects were 2021 Islamic Education students who were in the process of writing their theses and had experience using Google Scholar. In addition to students, this study also involved the Head of the Study Program, thesis advisors, and several other lecturers who are directly related to the students. The presence of these lecturers is important because they can provide additional perspectives on how students utilize Google Scholar and the extent of its effectiveness in supporting scientific writing.

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[23] Tri Irawati, Elistya Rimawati, dan Nayu Ariloka Pramesti, "Penggunaan Metode Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) Dalam Analisis Sistem Informasi Alista (Application Of Logistic And Supply Telkom Akses)," *is The Best Accounting Information Systems and Information Technology Business Enterprise* 4, no. 2 (2020): 106–20, https://doi.org/10.34010/aisthebest.v4i02.2257. Hal. 108

[24] Iis Mulyati et al., "Proses Difusi Inovasi dalam Penerapan Metode Pengajaran Baru," *Edukatif : Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan* 5, no. 6 (2023): 2425–33, https://doi.org/10.31004/edukatif.v5i6.5769. Hal. 2427

[25] Richard West dan Lynn H. Turner, *Introducing Communication Theory: Analysis and Application.* (New York: The MacGraw-Hill Companies, 2010). Hal. 397

[26] Muhammad Firmansyah, And Et.al, "Esensi Perbedaan Metode Kualitatif Dan Kuantitatif," *Elastisitas: Jurnal Ekonomi Pembangunan* 3, no. 2 (2021): Hal. 9–11.

[27] Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Hal. 84-85

Research data was collected using three main techniques, namely interviews, observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore students' experiences and lecturers views regarding the use of Google Scholar. Observation, in a broad sense, includes direct and indirect observation of the object being studied.[28] In this study, observation was conducted by directly observing how students searched for literature through the platform, including the strategies they used and the difficulties they encountered. Meanwhile, documentation was used to obtain supporting data in the form of notes, archives, and photos of student activities relevant to the use of Google Scholar.

The collected data was then analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis technique. This analysis was carried out in three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. In the data reduction stage, the researcher selected, focused, and simplified the raw data to make it easier to understand. Next, the reduced data was presented in the form of descriptive narratives to make it easier for researchers to see patterns and relationships between findings. The final stage was drawing conclusions, in which researchers interpreted the meaning of the data and verified the findings by comparing them with other sources to obtain valid conclusions.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted at the Raden Fatah State Islamic University in Palembang in the Islamic Education Study Program with the aim of describing the use of Google Scholar as a medium for searching literature in the preparation of student theses. Data was obtained through interviews with the Head of the Study Program, the Head of Thesis Development, Islamic Education lecturers, and students from the 2021 batch, and was reinforced by observation and documentation.

### A. Research Result

#### 1. Use of Google Scholar by Student

The research results indicate that Islamic Education students have made Google Scholar their primary source for literature search. This platform was chosen because it provides quick access to journals, articles, e-books, theses, and dissertations relevant to research needs.

Putriserining Illahi stated:

> "When I was a freshunan, my lecturer assigned us to write a paper. At that time, we had difficulty finding references. Then, the lecturer suggested using Google Scholar. From there, I learned that Google Scholar makes it easier to find references, even though we were only taught basic skills such as entering keywords." [29]

In line with that, Dewi Maryam explained:

> "I understand Google Scholar as a scientific literature search platform similar to regular Google, but specifically for journals, articles, and theses. I often use the year filter to make the results more relevant." [30]

Dandi Ariansyah added:

> "In my opinion, Google Scholar is like regular Google but specifically for searching scientific journals. I usually use it to find thesis references because there are many good and accredited journals there." [31]

Annisa Oktaria shared:

> "I understand Google Scholar as a specialized site for searching for scientific journals and articles. While writing my thesis, I often used it because it was easier to access than searching for books directly at the library." [32]

Meanwhile, Lenda Wiransyah explained:

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[28] Istin Novalia Khotima et al., "Pengaruh Metode Pembelajaran Al-Barqy Berbantuan Kartu Huruf Terhadap Kemampuan Mengenal Huruf Hijaiyah Pada Anak Usia 5-6 Tahun Paud Puji Handayani Palembang," *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Konseling* 4, no. 6 (2022): 1349–58. Hal. 1354-1355

[29] Putriserining Illahi, (Student of the Islamic Education Program, Class of 2021), Interview, Thursday July 10, 2025.

[30] Dewi Maryam, (Student of the Islamic Education Program, Class of 2021), Interview, Wednesday July 16, 2025

[31] Dandi Ariyansyah (2021 PAI Student Who has completed her thesis), Interview, Thursday July 10, 2025.

[32] Annisa Oktaria, (2021 PAI Student Who has completed her thesis), Interview, Tuesday August 13, 2025

> "I leamed about Google Scholar from a classmate while working on a paper in my fifth semester. In my opinion, it's more efficient than regular Google because its content is focused on academics." [33]

Azizah also emphasized:

> "I first learned about Google Scholar at the beginning of my seventh semester when my supervisor suggested taking references from joumals. The lecturer recommended Google Scholar because its content is reliable and indexed." [34]

The results of the study show that PAI UIN Raden Fatah Palembang students use Google Scholar as their main source in writing their theses. Students admit to using this platform almost every day when writing Chapters II and III, because it provides complete literature in the form of journals, articles, proceedings, and even dissertations. This finding is in line with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), in which students consider Google Scholar useful (perceived usefulness) because it speeds up literature searches and is easy to use (perceived ease of use) because it can be accessed with a laptop or mobile phone without complicated technical skills. Thus, student behavior in using Google Scholar can be understood as a result of perceptions of the benefits and ease of use of technology.

2. **Views of the Program Coordinator, Thesis Advisor, and Lecturer**

The Head of the PAI Program, Nyayu Soraya, stated:

> "In general, I see that PAI students are already making good use of Google Scholar. Google Scholar is very helpful because it provides valid and always up-to-date references." [35]

The Thesis Advisor, Syarmubi, added:

> "Google Scholar is very important, especially for theses. Journals are superior to books because they are more up-to-date and specific. Google Scholar helps students find references according to research variables." [36]

Rika Hasmayanti Agustina also believes:

> "PAI students have been trying to utilize Google Scholar. They can directly access relevant journals and e-books. Before Google Scholar existed, students had difficulty finding references, but now everything is easier." [37]

Mutia Dewi adds:

> "sually, new students only really utilize Google Scholar when they enter the thesis stage. In the early semesters, they rarely use it. But the search results are quite relevant as long as they can filter them properly." [38]

From the perspective of lecturers, the Head of the Study Program, and the Head of Thesis Development, Google Scholar is considered very effective in supporting students' thesis writing This platform is considered superior to manual searches in libraries because it provides valid, indexed, and up-to-date scientific references. However, students' abilities still vary some are able to select quality literature, while others only use basic searches. This can be analyzed using the Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOT). According to this theory, the success of innovation adoption is determined by relative advantage, compatibility, ease of observation, and trial possibilities Google Scholar provides a relative advantage in the form of quick access and up-to-date literature, but students skills in utilizing this innovation are still influenced by their level of digital literacy.

3. **Literature Search and Selection Strategies**

Students use various strategies in utilizing Google Scholar.

Putriserining Illahi said:

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[33] Lenda Wiransyah, 2021 PAI Student Who has completed her thesis), Interview, Tuesday August 13, 2025

[34] Azizah, 2021 PAI Student Who has completed her thesis), Interview, Tuesday August 13, 2025

[35] Nyayu Soraya, Head of the PAI Program at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang) Interview, Monday, july 14, 2025

[36] Syarnubi, (Chair of the PAI Thesis Development Committee at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang) Interview, Wednesday July 16, 2025

[37] Rika Hasmayanti Agustina, (Lecture at thr PAI Program,UIN Raden Fatah Palembang) interview, Tuesday July 15 2025

[38] Mutia Dewi, (Lecture at thr PAI Program,UIN Raden Fatah Palembang) Interview Tuesday August 12, 2025

"I use keywords related to the topic, then read the title and abstract first. I usually use the year filter, at least the last five years. If there are more than 50 citations, it's usually good." [39]

Dewi Maryam explains:

"I often use the year filter, usually from 2018 onwards. I also look at the number of citations and the journal's accreditation status." [40]

Dandi Ariansyah shares his strategy:

"I use quotation marks or the AND operator to make the results more specific. I assess quality based on the author's name, affiliation, and number of citations. I record the results directly in the bibliography." [41]

Annisa Oktaria adds:

"I often use the latest five-year filter. If the number of citations is high, I usually prioritize them." [42]

Lenda Wiransyah says:

"I pay attention to the author's name and the publishing institution. If it is accredited, I trust it more. I also download several journals at once to compare them." [43]

Azizah explains:

"I use the year filter from 2019 onwards, look at the abstract summary, and ensure the journal is indexed in Sinta or Scopus. If the citations are high, I prioritize it." [44]

The Head of the PAI Program emphasized:

"Students' ability to select literature depends on their individual literacy levels. Some are highly skilled, while others only use basic search functions." [45]

The Thesis Advisor added:

"Students are targeted to have at least 40-60% of their references from Google Scholar journals Now they are also directed to use Mendeley so that citations are more organized." [46]

Another lecturer, Rika Hasmayanti Agustina, stated:

"Final-year students most frequently use Google Scholar, but their proficiency varies. Guidance is needed to optimize their use." [47]

Mutia Dewi emphasized:

"Students are already quite familiar with it, but some are skilled, while others still need a lot of practice. Those who use it most diligently are usually final-year students." [48]

Students strategies in using Google Scholar show significant variation. Some students use filters such as year, quotation marks, number of citations, publisher reputation, and journal indexing (Sinta/Scopus), while others simply type in basic keywords without any further strategy The head of the study program emphasized that student literacy greatly affects the quality of literature selection, while the head of the thesis advisory committee targets a minimum of 40-60% of references to come from Google Scholar. This analysis can be linked to the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT). Students consciously choose Google Scholar to meet their academic needs, particularly to obtain credible scientific literature. Therefore, the search strategies used by students are a form of gratification for their academic needs.

## 4. Supporting and Hindering Factors

[39] Putriserining Illahi, (Student of the Islamic Education Program, Class of 2021), Interview, Thursday July 10, 2025.

[40] Dewi Maryam, (Student of the Islamic Education Program, Class of 2021), Interview, Wednesday July 16, 2025

[41] Dandi Ariyansyah (2021 PAI Student Who has completed her thesis), Interview, Thursday July 10, 2025.

[42] Annisa Oktaria, (2021 PAI Student Who has completed her thesis), Interview, Tuesday August 13, 2025

[43] Lenda Wiransyah, 2021 PAI Student Who has completed her thesis), Interview, Tuesday August 13, 2025

[44] Azizah, 2021 PAI Student Who has completed her thesis), Interview, Tuesday August 13, 2025

[45] Nyayu Soraya, Head of the PAI Program at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang) Interview, Monday, july 14, 2025

[46] Syarnubi, (Chair of the PAI Thesis Development Committee at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang) Interview, Wednesday July 16, 2025

[47] Rika Hasmayanti Agustina, (Lecture at thr PAI Program,UIN Raden Fatah Palembang) interview, Tuesday July 15 2025

[48] Mutia Dewi, (Lecture at thr PAI Program,UIN Raden Fatah Palembang) Interview Tuesday August 12, 2025

The main supporting factors include ease of access, internet availability, completeness of literature, and support from supervisors. However, there are also obstacles in the form of limited access to paid journals, difficulty in determining keywords, unstable internet connections, and low utilization of advanced features.

Putriserining Illahi said:

"I use Google Scholar almost every day. The problem is that sometimes the internet connection is unstable and there are too many search results. The advantage is that the internet connection is smooth, even though the campus Wi-Fi is only available at certain points." [49]

Dewi Maryam added:

"The supporting factors are the simple interface and campus Wi-Fi. The challenges are paid journals, difficulty in determining keywords, and the website sometimes malfunctions." [50]

Dandi Ariansyah mentioned:

"The supporting factors are the many free joumals. The challenges are slow internet and difficulty in determining keywords. Usually, I ask my professor or look at my friends' thesis examples." [51]

Annisa Oktaria stated:

"The supporting factors are campus Wi-Fi and guidance from professors. The challenges are that journals cannot be accessed in full text and it is difficult to find keywords. I overcome this by changing the keywords." [52]

Lenda Wiransyah explains:

"The supporting factors are stable internet and guidance from professors. The challenges are paid journals; I usually search in the campus repository." [53]

Azizah stated:

"The supporting factors are easy access via phone and laptop. The challenge is that search results are too numerous, so I use quotation marks or specific keywords." [54]

Program Coordinator Nyayu Soraya emphasized:

"The supporting factors are student motivation and stable internet access. The challenge is low literacy levels, so many only use basic search functions." [55]

Syarnubi added:

"The main supporting factor is students' literacy skills. The challenge is that they rarely use advanced features and paid journals. I recommend combining them with printed books." [56]

Rika Hasmayanti Agustina explained:

"The supporting factors are easy access and comprehensive literature. The challenges are difficulty in determining keywords and internet limitations. Students should not rely solely on Google Scholar." [57]

Mutia Dewi corncluded:

"The main support is a stable internet connection and students' knowledge. The challenge is unstable signals and the lack of ability to determine keywords. My suggestion is that students should expand their literacy and not rely solely on one source." [58]

[49]Putriserining Illahi, (Student of the Islamic Education Program, Class of 2021), Interview, Thursday July 10, 2025.

[50] Dewi Maryam, (Student of the Islamic Education Program, Class of 2021), Interview,  Wednesday July 16, 2025

[51] Dandi Ariyansyah (2021 PAI Student Who has completed her thesis), Interview, Thursday July 10, 2025.

[52] Annisa Oktaria, (2021 PAI Student Who has completed her thesis), Interview, Tuesday August 13, 2025

[53] Lenda Wiransyah, 2021 PAI Student Who has completed her thesis), Interview, Tuesday August 13, 2025

[54] Azizah, 2021 PAI Student Who has completed her thesis), Interview, Tuesday August 13, 2025

[55] Nyayu Soraya, Head of the PAI Program at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang) Interview, Monday, july 14, 2025

[56] Syarnubi, (Chair of the PAI Thesis Development Committee at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang) Interview, Wednesday July 16, 2025

[57] Rika Hasmayanti Agustina, (Lecture at thr PAI Program,UIN Raden Fatah Palembang) interview, Tuesday July 15, 2025

[58] Mutia Dewi, (Lecture at thr PAI Program,UIN Raden Fatah Palembang) Interview Tuesday August 12, 2025

When viewed comprehensively, the supporting and hindering factors in the use of Google Scholar complement each other and reveal a complex pattern. The main supporting factors are internet access, comprehensive literature, and encouragement from lecturers (TAM), while the obstacles include limited digital literacy, paid journals, and unstable internet connections (DOI). Students' efforts to overcome obstacles reflect their high academic motivation to continue meeting their need for credible literature (UGT). Thus, despite various obstacles, internal (motivation, digital literacy) and external (faculty support, internet access) driving factors remain the main assets for the optimal use of Google Scholar. This confirms that the successful use of academic technology is not only determined by the availability of facilities, but also by students' awareness, strategies, and skills in utilizing them.

## B. Discussion

Based on the research process, this section discusses the findings obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. The researcher attempted to analyze the data in depth by relating it to relevant theories and referring to the formulated focus of the problem. The discussion of the research findings is as follows:

### 1. How do PAI students at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang use Google Scholar to search for and select literature for writing their theses?

The results show that most PAI students have made Google Scholar their primary medium for searching for scientific literature, especially when writing Chapter II (literature review) and when revising their thesis. The intensity of use varies, from almost every day to several times a week, depending on the stage of thesis writing. This platform is considered convenient for students because it can be accessed via laptops or mobile phones, provides comprehensive literature (journals, articles, proceedings, dissertations), and has a simple interface.

These findings can be explained by the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Students find Google Scholar useful (perceived usefulness) because it speeds up the literature search process and is easy to use (perceived ease of use) without requiring complex technical skills. This is in line with the student interview quotes that emphasize that Google Scholar is very helpful in the thesis writing process.

From the Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) perspective, the use of Google Scholar shows relative advantage, meaning that students feel a relative advantage over manual searches in libraries. In addition, Google Scholar is highly compatible with students' needs in writing their theses. Despite obstacles such as paid journals or difficulties in determining keywords, students still choose Google Scholar because of its observable benefits and trialability.

From the perspective of Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), students consciously choose Google Scholar because they have specific needs for credible academic literature. This makes them actively develop search strategies, such as using the latest year filter, utilizing logical operators, and combining digital searches with print sources. Thus, the use of Google Scholar is not only because of its availability, but also because of urgent academic needs.

### 2. What are the supporting and inhibiting factors experienced by students in using Google Scholar as a scientific reference source?

The main supporting factors in the use of Google Scholar by PAI students include ease of access, both via laptop and smartphone, the availability of internet and campus wifi networks, the completeness of the available literature, and the support of supervising lecturers who encourage students to utilize scientific reference sources. In addition, the motivation of students to complete their theses with strong literature is also a significant internal factor.

However, there are also a number of obstacles. Internal obstacles encountered by students include difficulty in determining the right keywords, limited skills in selecting literature based on quality, and a tendency to only use basic searches without utilizing

advanced features. External obstacles include limited internet access in some areas, the large amount of paid literature, and the lack of training in digital literature search strategies.

Analysis based on TAM shows that these obstacles are related to the aspect of perceived ease of use. If students find it difficult to use Google Scholar, their acceptance of the technology decreases From the DOI perspective, these obstacles are related to complexity, namely the level of difficulty in use that prevents some students from utilizing the features optimally. Meanwhile, according to UGT, these obstacles affect the level of student satisfaction in meeting their scientific literature needs.

Therefore, to maximize the use of Google Scholar, support is needed in the form of improved digital literacy, training in literature search strategies, and diversification of reference sources so that students do not rely solely on one platform.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be cuncluded that PAI UIN Raden Fatah Palembang students have made Google Scholar their main source for scientific literature searches, especially for writing their theses. This platform is considered very helpful because it provides eary access to relevant, credible, and up-to-date national and international joumals. These findings are in line with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), in which students consider Google Scholar to be useful and easy to use in supporting the process of writing scientific papers.

The use of Google Scholar by students is supported by a number of factors, such as the availability of internet access, motivation to complete their thesis, and encouragement from their supervisors However, there are also several obstacles, including students limited ability to determine the right keywords, low skills in selecting quality literature, limited access to paid journals, and technical obstacles in the form of urutable intemet connectiona. Nevertheless, in general, the benefits shadents gain from using Google Scholar far outweigh the obstacles.

This study contributes to providing a realistic picture of the level of Google Scholar utilization among Islamic Education students, while also emphasizing the importance of digital literacy in improving the quality of research. The results of this study can be used as a basis for study programs lecturers, and students to develop more effective strategies for utilizing Google Scholar, for example through digital literacy training, literature search workshops, and integration with other academic databases. For further research, it is recommended that quantitative studies be conducted to measure the effectiveness of Google Scholar on the quality of student theses, as well as comparative studies with other literature search platforms to obtain a more comprehensive picture.

## LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations that need to be acknowledged. The research involved only a small, purposive sample of 2021 PAI students at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, which limits the generalizability of the findings to broader student populations or other institutions. Data were primarily collected through interviews, making them susceptible to self-reporting bias, as participants may not accurately reflect their actual behavior when using Google Scholar. Additionally, since Google Scholar is a continuously evolving platform, some findings related to its features and accessibility may become outdated over time. Future research is therefore encouraged to employ quantitative or mixed-methods approaches, expand the sample across multiple institutions, and conduct longitudinal studies to more comprehensively assess the impact of Google Scholar on the quality of student academic writing.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

AO contributed to the conceptualization, data collection, data analysis, and writing of the original draft. BA contributed to the supervision, review, and editing of the manuscript. AS contributed to the methodology, validation, and review of the manuscript. KF contributed to the

review, editing, and finalization of the manuscript. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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