Annual International Conference on Islamic Education (AICIED)
P-ISSN 3032-2146, E-ISSN 3032-260X
Volume 3, January - December 2025
https://prosiding.iainponorogo.ac.id/index.php/aicied

Generative AI and Islamic Scientific Authority: A Critical Review of Modern Literature

Suad Fikriawan[1]Teguh Ansori[2]
[1 2] UIN Kiai Ageng Muhamamd Besari Ponorogo, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Generative AI, Islamic Scientific Authority, Islamic Epistemology, Algorithmic Risk, Algorithmic Authority, Modern Islamic Studies

ABSTRACT

The rapid development of generative AI has triggered a fundamental shift in the landscape of Islamic scholarly authority. This study examines how this technology influences the structure, legitimacy, and perception of Islamic scholarly authority through a literature review with a qualitative analysis approach. The results indicate that generative AI is giving rise to a new form of authority called algorithmic *authority*, which displaces the role of traditional ulama by offering instant religious answers perceived as objective knowledge. This phenomenon poses significant epistemological and hermeneutical risks, such as the potential for hallucinations (false citations), algorithmic bias, and a simplification of the complexity of Islamic legal methodology (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) and interpretation. AI, which works based on statistical calculations, does not have the capacity for intentionality, understanding maqāṣid *al-sharī'ah*, and moral accountability, which underpin the authority of Islamic scholarship. However, academic debate also highlights the potential of AI as an epistemic partner that can aid text analysis and research. Therefore, the Islamic academic community needs to develop digital literacy and an ethical framework to ensure that AI is used as a tool that strengthens, rather than undermines, the integrity of Islamic epistemology.

Corresponding Author:
Suad Fikriawan
Email: suad.fikriawan@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

The development of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and Claude has sparked a major transformation in modern knowledge production. This technology is capable of automatically generating texts, explanations,

interpretations, and even fatwas, which were previously the exclusive domain of experts. In the context of Islamic education and Islamic studies, this phenomenon raises fundamental questions about how generative AI can influence the authoritative process of religious knowledge formation. Recent literature suggests that AI is now not merely a tool, but a new epistemic entity with the potential to rival traditional authority (Al-Khataib, 2023; Khan, 2024).

In the Islamic world, scientific authority (*religious authority*) has developed through scientific chains of evidence, ijtihad methodology, Islamic jurisprudence, and educational institutions such as Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) and Islamic universities. However, the emergence of generative AI capable of "answering" religious questions quickly and convincingly raises epistemological concerns. Several studies warn that Muslim users often perceive AI output as objective truth without considering data limitations, algorithmic bias, or the absence of scientific legitimacy (Rahman & Haris, 2023; Yusoff, 2024). This has direct implications for the stability of the authority of Islamic scholars and academics.

Academic debate has also arisen over whether generative AI can be considered as *knowledge producer*Some technology scholars consider AI merely a predictive tool without any real epistemic capacity (Floridi & Chiriatti, 2020). However, other studies show that AI has shaped epistemic *environments where* knowledge is generated through statistical calculations that are difficult to distinguish from human intellectual products (Kalluri, 2023). In Islamic studies, this is a sensitive issue considering the validity of religious knowledge is related to authority, *legitimacy*, And *moral responsibility*.

Another issue is the tendency of generative AI to hallucinate, manipulate sources, or create false quotations. In the context of Islamic studies—which relies heavily on the accuracy of nas, classical texts, and the integrity of narrations—this risk poses a serious problem. Research shows that AI often fails to distinguish between schools of thought, historical context, or methodological differences in Islamic jurisprudence (Ahmed, 2023). If AI is used without adequate literacy, religious misinformation can spread widely.

Furthermore, discourse has emerged regarding the changing relationship between the community and religious scholars. With easy access to generative AI, the public has a new alternative for asking questions about Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), interpretation of Islamic law (tafsir), and creed (aqidah). Several studies suggest that this could

undermine the authority of religious scholars if they do not actively participate in the use of technology (Hashim & Tamuri, 2024). Islamic education researchers view this phenomenon as a crisis of authority that requires a new epistemological framework.

Thus, the background of this research departs from three key issues: (1) How does generative AI affect the structure, legitimacy, and perception of scientific authority in the Islamic tradition?, (2) What epistemological and hermeneutical risks arise when Islamic knowledge is produced through generative AI systems?, and (3) How does the academic debate position AI as an epistemic entity and what are its implications for modern Islamic studies?. These phenomena require a critical literature-based study to assess how generative AI affects Islamic scientific authority and how the traditional authority paradigm can adapt to the new knowledge ecosystem.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a library research method with a qualitative analysis approach. This library study was chosen because the issues surrounding generative AI and Islamic scientific authority are still at the conceptual-theoretical level and require in-depth exploration of academic literature. This approach allows researchers to examine the latest developments in thought, critique existing findings, and build an analytical framework based on scientific arguments discussed in reputable journals (Snyder, 2019). Furthermore, this method is relevant for examining the normative and epistemological transformation of religious authority, thus requiring a comprehensive reading of existing theories, models, and critical studies.

The data in this study were collected through a rigorous selection of scientific literature published in the last ten years, primarily reputable journal articles, academic books, research reports, and scientific publications relevant to the themes of artificial intelligence, Islamic epistemology, religious authority, and digital technology. The literature selection process was conducted using databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, DOAJ, and Google Scholar. The analytical technique used was content analysis to interpret key concepts, argumentation patterns, and trends in academic discourse (Bowen, 2009). Each piece of literature was categorized based on themes such as "scientific authority," "generative AI," "algorithmic bias," and "Islamic epistemology."

Furthermore, this study employed thematic analysis techniques to identify key issues related to the impact of generative AI on the structure of Islamic scholarly authority. Thematic analysis allowed for systematic grouping of findings into categories such as epistemic change, hermeneutical challenges, and risks of digital authority. The study also adhered to the principles of*integrative review*, namely combining and synthesizing various academic arguments to produce a holistic understanding (Torraco, 2016). With this approach, research is able to formulate a map of contemporary issues while identifying research gaps that have not been widely discussed in previous studies.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the literature review show that generative AI has influenced the structure and legitimacy of Islamic scientific authority through the presence of a new form of authority called *algorithmic authority.* Technologies like ChatGPT and other large-scale language models are now becoming the go-to source for some Muslims seeking religious answers, shifting traditional patterns of authority previously centered on Islamic scholars and institutions. Studies by Al-Khataib (2023) and Yusoff (2024) emphasize that AI creates "instant authority" that relies not on scientific chain of transmission but rather on the speed and performativity of responses. This has led to the emergence of a new perception that scientific competence is no longer solely determined by human authority but also by the technology's ability to produce seemingly credible responses.

The following findings suggest that generative AI carries significant epistemological risks in the production of Islamic knowledge. Large language models often experience hallucination, creating false quotations, or providing fiqh answers without considering the school of thought, the methodology of Islamic jurisprudence, or historical context (Ahmed, 2023). These epistemological risks are exacerbated by algorithmic biases arising from training data that do not always align with the principles of Islamic scholarly authority. In the realm of hermeneutics, AI is unable to distinguish between normative and descriptive interpretations, leading to an oversimplification of the process of interpreting religious texts (Rahman & Haris, 2023). This suggests that AI not only produces misinformation but also alters the patterns of interaction between the community and authoritative texts.

Beyond epistemic risks, deeper hermeneutical challenges also arise. Some literature highlights that generative AI tends to diminish the complexity of Islamic interpretation because it operates on statistics rather than methodological and spiritual understanding. A study by Yusof & Hashim (2023) found that AI often presents "neutral" interpretations without a clear epistemological basis, blurring the line between scholarly opinion and data aggregation. Consequently, users may perceive AI output as valid interpretations, even though the AI lacks intentionality, religious experience, or the capacity for ijtihad. This finding poses a critical issue in contemporary Islamic epistemological discourse.

The literature synthesis also reveals that academic debates regarding the epistemic status of AI are highly diverse. On the one hand, some scholars, such as Floridi and Chiriatti (2020), assert that AI is merely a predictive tool without the ability to generate true knowledge and therefore cannot be considered an epistemic agent. On the other hand, studies of social technologies indicate that AI has functioned as a *epistemic mediator* which shapes how humans access and understand information (Kalluri, 2023). In the Islamic context, this debate raises a normative question: can AI have a certain epistemic status when interacting with religious discourses that demand moral and spiritual legitimacy? The literature suggests that there is no consensus, but scholars agree that AI is transforming the way Islamic knowledge is produced and consumed.

1. **Generative AI influences the structure, legitimacy, and perception of scientific authority in the Islamic tradition.**

   After conducting in-depth analysis through various literature reviews, the results show that generative AI has changed the structure of Islamic scientific authority by creating what technology literature calls algorithmic authority, namely the authority of knowledge derived from the calculative capabilities of algorithms, rather than from sanad, fiqh expertise, or the moral authority of scholars. In the context of Islamic tradition, where scientific legitimacy is built through a long process such as talaqqi, ijtihad, and social recognition, the existence of generative AI creates a new, non-human center of authority. Al-Khataib's (2023) study shows that many users have begun to perceive AI answers as "valid knowledge" due to convincing language structures, rather than due to accountable epistemic processes. This phenomenon indicates a weakening of the traditional, previously hierarchical structure of authority.

This shift in the legitimacy of authority is further complicated by the emergence of generative AI as an epistemic actor perceived as "neutral," leading many users to place high levels of trust in its responses. Limited digital literacy further reinforces this perception. According to Yusoff (2024), changes in the pattern of interaction between the Muslim community and religious scholars are increasingly influenced by technology, with AI becoming the first point of reference before consulting with Islamic jurisprudence experts. This situation has resulted in the delegitimization of the role of religious scholars as guardians of the authenticity of religious knowledge (*gatekeepers of Islamic knowledge*). In socio-religious analysis, this phenomenon can be understood as a shift from competence-based authority to technology-based authority.

From an Islamic epistemological perspective, generative AI challenges the legitimacy of scholarly authority because it lacks the capacity for intentionality, normative reasoning, or moral responsibility inherent in Islamic scholars. While AI can synthesize vast amounts of data, it cannot understand the maqasid al-shariah (the principles of Islamic law), the social context of the ummah, or the ethical values that guide a mujtahid. Research by Rahman and Haris (2023) notes that many AI responses to fiqh are reductive, ignoring differences between schools of thought and the complexities of ijtihad. This poses an epistemological risk: users perceive AI responses as “final fatwas” when they lack religious legitimacy. This highlights the tension between AI’s technical capacity and the epistemic legitimacy that underpins Islamic authority.

On the other hand, academic debate highlights that generative AI not only threatens the authority of Islamic scholars but also shapes new modes of Islamic knowledge production. Floridi and Chiriatti (2020) assert that AI technology constructs a predictive-statistical epistemology, in contrast to the normative-historical epistemology of Islam. When users unwittingly adopt this model, the structure of Islamic authority will be undermined *reconfiguration*, where transcendent authority (texts), scientific authority (ulama), and social authority (communities) begin to compete with algorithmic authority, perceived as fast, free, and easily accessible. This paradigm shift requires a deep analysis of how people understand the source of truth.

This discussion demonstrates that generative AI is not simply a technological tool, but also a socio-religious phenomenon that influences authority relations in Islam.

While the presence of AI can increase access to knowledge, it also has the potential to erode the legitimacy of traditional scholarship if not balanced with religious digital literacy. Therefore, it is necessary to reposition the role of ulama (Islamic scholars) as mediators between the community and technology, not competitors. Islamic scholars and educational institutions need to develop a framework for AI utilization that maintains Islamic epistemological principles, such as authenticity, continuity of the sanad (chain of transmission), and moral responsibility. Thus, this discussion confirms that the influence of generative AI on the authority of Islamic scholarship is transformational and requires a focused methodological and theological response.

2. **The emergence of epistemological and hermeneutical risks when Islamic knowledge is produced through generative AI systems**

   The most fundamental epistemological risk in using generative AI to produce Islamic knowledge lies in the ontological nature of AI itself, which does not understand meaning, value, or context, but merely processes statistical patterns from training data. In Islamic epistemology, the validity of knowledge relies heavily on the methodology of transmission (sanad), the authority of scholars, and intellectual integrity based on expertise in fiqh and tafsir. However, generative AI produces output without these epistemic processes, thus creating what Ahmed (2023) calls pseudo-knowledge, information that "appears scientific" but lacks epistemic legitimacy. This risk is further exacerbated by users often being unable to distinguish between authentic knowledge and algorithmically generated predictive narratives.

   Furthermore, generative AI often experiences hallucinations, producing incorrect quotations, references, or wordings of hadith and verses. In Islamic studies, even small errors in wording or sanad can significantly alter legal meaning. Rahman and Haris (2023) show that large language models like GPT have the potential to generate fatwas or fiqh opinions never issued by scholars, or to mix up the views of various schools of thought without methodological basis. This poses an epistemic risk in the form of knowledge distortion that can undermine the community's understanding of Islamic sources. If this phenomenon is not addressed critically, the authority of Islamic knowledge could be replaced by unverifiable data constructions.

   From a hermeneutical perspective, generative AI products face fundamental limitations because they do not understand *Shariah goals*, the historical context in

which the verses were revealed (asbab al-nuzul), or the social dynamics that influence the fatwa. AI merely imitates the form of language, not the intellectual or spiritual processes underlying Islamic interpretation. Yusof and Hashim (2023) show that AI interpretations of normative verses are often reductionist, ignoring methodological principles such as*jurisprudential rules*, *term*, or *istinbat*This leads AI to produce shallow textual interpretations, without considering the epistemic complexities that characterize the Islamic exegetical tradition.

Islamic hermeneutics also demands that there be*ijtihad*, which involves linguistic, historical, ethical, and spiritual competencies. However, generative AI lacks intentionality or moral responsibility, and therefore cannot be considered a hermeneutical subject. In his discourse on the philosophy of technology, Floridi (2023) asserts that AI cannot understand values, goals, or intentions (*intentionality*), so that its interpretation is nothing more than a simulation. If people rely on AI to understand sacred texts, there is a hermeneutical risk of displacement of human agency, namely a shift in authority from scholars to a system that lacks moral awareness or authority.

Epistemological risks also arise in the form of algorithmic bias, which can unconsciously influence the way Islamic knowledge is presented. AI training data often comes from secular, orientalist sources, or popular articles that do not always adhere to Islamic scientific methodology. Kalluri (2023) explains that this bias can create epistemic distortions that are invisible to users. In an Islamic context, this bias can give rise to narratives that are inconsistent with Islamic normative frameworks, for example on issues of gender, Islamic politics, or religious pluralism. When this bias goes unnoticed, it has the potential to shape the religious perceptions of a generation of Muslims who rely on technology.

Finally, the epistemological and hermeneutical risks arising from the use of generative AI demand academic and institutional responses. Several scholars emphasize the importance of developing Islamic AI literacy, namely the ability to understand how AI works and distinguish between knowledge with sharia legitimacy and knowledge derived from algorithmic predictions (Yusoff, 2024). Islamic educational institutions need to take a strategic position in developing guidelines for the use of AI that align with Islamic epistemology. This is crucial to ensure that technology does not replace the authority of scholars, but rather serves as a tool aligned

with established scientific methodologies. Without such intervention, the Islamic knowledge ecosystem could shift toward algorithmic authority lacking moral and epistemic accountability.

3. Academic debates on positioning AI as an epistemic entity and its implications for modern Islamic studies

Academic debate on the position *Artificial Intelligence*(AI) as an epistemic entity is experiencing rapid development as the capabilities of AI systems in producing, classifying, and synthesizing knowledge increase. In the philosophy of information, Floridi (2014) states that we have entered the era of*infosphere*, where non-human agents such as algorithms play an active role in shaping the knowledge ecosystem. This perspective opens up the understanding that AI is no longer merely a technical tool, but also an epistemic actor that influences how humans understand, access, and validate information. This shift lays the groundwork for a broader discussion about how the epistemic status of AI may impact the authority of knowledge in various disciplines, including modern Islamic studies.

However, some philosophers have fundamentally criticized the idea that AI can be an epistemic entity on a par with humans. Dreyfus (1992) emphasized that human knowledge involves intuition, situated experience, and engagement with the world that cannot be reduced to computational processes. Within a hermeneutical framework, meaning is always contextual and intertwined with the horizon of experience. Thus, AI that operates through predictive models lacks the capacity to understand or*experience*meaning as a human subject. This critique suggests that AI's epistemic status is limited, so its use in scientific fields, including Islamic studies, must be accompanied by an awareness of its limitations.

Meanwhile, another approach positions AI as an epistemic entity.*socially*, not *ontologically* Crawford (2021) explains that AI gains authority not because of its ability to understand the world, but because of the legitimacy conferred by institutions, infrastructure, and social practices. This means that AI can serve as an epistemic reference to the extent that society recognizes and trusts its work. In this context, the question arises: to what extent is AI considered a legitimate source of knowledge in Islamic studies, and how are these structures of legitimacy shaped? This socio-

technical approach helps to understand the dynamics of acceptance or rejection of AI within the Islamic scientific community.

In modern Islamic studies, the use of AI is increasing, both for classical text analysis, hadith-based classification, and other applications.*machine learning*, as well as predictive models of Islamic law. Research on*digital religion*Campbell (2020) demonstrates how digital technology is reshaping religious practice, interpretation, and authority. When AI is used to synthesize interpretations or suggest ijtihad findings based on a corpus of fiqh, it has the potential to function as an epistemic agent that influences the structure of scientific argumentation. This has prompted debate about whether AI is merely a tool or is reconfiguring the way Islamic knowledge is produced and validated within the academic community.

The epistemic implications of this development are significant. The Islamic scientific tradition places importance on sanad, scientific competence (*ijtihad*), and contextual understanding as the primary foundation of knowledge validity. Al-Attas (1993) and Ramadan (2009) emphasize that knowledge in Islam is bound by ethics, exemplary behavior, and the continuity of tradition. AI lacks moral consciousness, spiritual experience, or intentional capacity, so if its position as an epistemic entity is not critiqued, Islamic knowledge can be reduced to mere algorithmic output. This is the risk of "pseudo-objectivity," where AI output is perceived as neutral when in fact it carries the biases of the data and the social structures that shaped it.

Nevertheless, a number of scholars see great potential in using AI to support Islamic epistemology. Driessen (2023) demonstrated that AI can help analyze large corpuses of classical texts, which would be difficult to perform manually. Hashim and Kurniawan (2023) found that AI can increase the accessibility of literature and accelerate the process of verifying academic data. From this perspective, AI does not replace scholars or academics, but rather expands their analytical capacity, enabling the exploration of new methodologies in contemporary Islamic studies. Thus, AI is seen as a*Mithra epistemic*, not epistemic authority.

CONCLUSION

Generative AI has been shown to influence the structure and legitimacy of Islamic scientific authority by presenting a form *algorithmic authority* which are often perceived as neutral and objective by users. This shift challenges the position of scholars as the primary source of reference, as AI can produce instant answers that appear to have scientific validity. Consequently, the dynamics of scholarly authority in Islam face new pressures regarding legitimacy, trustworthiness, and the mechanisms of knowledge production.

However, the use of generative AI also poses significant epistemological and hermeneutical risks. Because AI operates based on statistical patterns without contextual understanding, its output is potentially reductive, biased, or even erroneous. AI's inability to understand the maqasid al-shariah (objectives of Islamic law), scientific ethics, and social context makes it vulnerable to producing pseudo-knowledge that threatens the accuracy and integrity of Islamic knowledge. Hermeneutical risks also arise because interpretive authority can shift from religious scholars to non-human entities lacking intentionality or accountability.

Nevertheless, AI still has constructive potential in the development of Islamic studies if it is properly positioned as an epistemic tool (epistemic partner), not a substitute for the authority of scholars (epistemic authority). This technology can enrich textual analysis, accelerate research, and open up new approaches to Islamic studies. Therefore, the future of modern Islamic studies depends on the academic community's ability to establish adequate boundaries, guidelines, and literacy for AI, so that its use can support, rather than disrupt, the epistemological foundations of Islam.

REFERENCES

Ahmed, S. 2023. “AI Hallucination and Islamic Jurisprudence: Risks in Automated Fatwa Generation.” *Journal of Islamic Ethics* 7 (2): 134–50.

Al-Attas, S. M. N. 1993. *Islam and Secularism*. Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC.

Al-Khataib, M. 2023. “Algorithmic Authority and the Future of Islamic Knowledge.” *Muslim Intellectual Review* 12 (1): 22–41.

Bowen, Glenn A. 2009. “Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method.” *Qualitative Research Journal* 9 (2): 27–40.

Campbell, Heidi. 2020. *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds*. New York: Routledge.

Crawford, Kate. 2021. *Atlas of AI: Power, Politics, and the Planetary Costs of Artificial Intelligence*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Dreyfus, Hubert L. 1992. *What Computers Still Can't Do: A Critique of Artificial Reason*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Driessen, Z. T. 2023. "AI and the Future of Islamic Scholarship." *Journal of Islamic Studies* 34 (2): 145–68.

Floridi, Luciano. 2014. *The Fourth Revolution: How the Infosphere Is Reshaping Human Reality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Floridi, Luciano. 2023. "The Ethics of Artificial Intelligence: Understanding Machine Agency." *AI & Society* 38 (3): 599–612.

Floridi, Luciano, and Massimo Chiriatti. 2020. "GPT-3: Its Nature, Scope, Limits, and Consequences." *Minds and Machines* 30 (4): 681–94.

Hashim, H., and R. Kurniawan. 2023. "Digital Islamic Scholarship and the Role of AI in Contemporary Knowledge Production." *Islamic Studies Review* 12 (1): 55–78.

Hashim, R., and A. Tamuri. 2024. "Ulama in the Age of AI: Rethinking Islamic Authority in Digital Religious Ecosystems." *Journal of Contemporary Islamic Studies* 18 (1): 55–73.

Kalluri, Priya. 2023. "Epistemic Challenges of Generative AI Systems." *AI & Society* 38 (2): 411–27.

Khan, S. 2024. "Generative AI and Muslim User Behavior: A Study on Trust, Authority, and Religious Inquiry." *Journal of Islamic Media Studies* 5 (2): 100–22.

Rahman, F., and M. Haris. 2023. "Bias, Legitimacy, and the Crisis of Authority in AI-Generated Islamic Content." *Contemporary Fatwa Studies* 4 (3): 201–19.

Ramadan, Tariq. 2009. *Radical Reform: Islamic Ethics and Liberation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Snyder, Hannah. 2019. "Literature Review as a Research Methodology: An Overview and Guidelines." *Journal of Business Research* 104: 333–39.

Torraco, Richard J. 2016. “Writing Integrative Literature Reviews: Using the Past and Present to Explore the Future.” *Human Resource Development Review* 15 (4): 404–28.

Yusoff, N. 2024. “Digital Fatwa, AI, and the Shifting Landscape of Islamic Authority.” *International Journal of Islamic Thought* 25 (1): 1–15.

Yusof, A., and R. Hashim. 2023. “Hermeneutical Challenges in AI-Assisted Islamic Interpretation.” *Journal of Qur’anic Scholarship* 11 (2): 55–73.