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From Revelation To Algorithms

(Reconstructing The Epistemology Of Islamic Education In The Age Of Artificial Intelligence (AI))

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the epistemological challenges of Islamic education in the era of Artificial Intelligence (AI), particularly concerning the shift in knowledge authority from revelation to algorithm. This research employs a qualitative approach based on library research, utilizing philosophical-critical analysis of contemporary literature and classical Islamic epistemological thought. The findings reveal that the advancement of AI has transformed the epistemological structure of education from one grounded in revelation, scholarly authority, and intellectual tradition into an algorithmic system driven by data, speed, and efficiency. This transformation has led to a crisis of expertise, the emergence of the illusion of knowledge, and the decontextualization of religious knowledge in Islamic education. Furthermore, the study identifies AI as a new epistemic agent that not only mediates but also produces and validates knowledge, albeit without ethical and spiritual dimensions. In response, this study proposes an integrative reconstruction of Islamic educational epistemology through a synthesis of revelation, reason, and technology within a critical-transformative framework. This model positions revelation as the normative foundation, reason as a reflective instrument, and AI as an epistemic tool subject to ethical control. This study makes a theoretical contribution to reconstructing and expanding the epistemological study of Islamic education in the digital age, and provides a conceptual foundation for the development of adaptive, values-oriented Islamic education amidst technological disruption.

Keywords: *Reconstruction, Islamic epistemology, Artificial Intelligence, Islamic education, crisis of expertise.*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tantangan epistemologis pendidikan Islam di era Artificial Intelligence (AI), khususnya terkait pergeseran otoritas pengetahuan dari wahyu menuju algoritma. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif berbasis library research dengan analisis filosofis-kritis terhadap literatur kontemporer dan pemikiran epistemologi Islam klasik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perkembangan AI telah menggeser struktur epistemologi pendidikan, dari yang berbasis wahyu, sanad, dan otoritas keilmuan menuju sistem algoritmik yang berbasis data, kecepatan, dan efisiensi. Pergeseran ini memunculkan krisis kepakaran, ilusi pengetahuan, serta dekontekstualisasi ilmu dalam pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini juga menemukan bahwa AI berperan sebagai aktor epistemik baru yang tidak hanya memediasi, tetapi juga memproduksi dan memvalidasi pengetahuan, meskipun tanpa dimensi etik dan spiritual. Sebagai respons, penelitian ini

menawarkan model rekonstruksi epistemologi pendidikan Islam yang integratif melalui sintesis antara wahyu, akal, dan teknologi dalam kerangka kritis-transformatif. Model ini menempatkan wahyu sebagai fondasi normatif, akal sebagai instrumen reflektif, dan AI sebagai alat bantu epistemik yang harus dikontrol secara etis. Penelitian ini berkontribusi secara teoretis dalam merekonstruksi dan memperluas kajian epistemologi pendidikan Islam di era digital, serta memberikan dasar konseptual bagi pengembangan pendidikan Islam yang adaptif dan berorientasi nilai di tengah disrupsi teknologi.
Kata Kunci: *Rekonstruksi, Epistemologi Islam, Artificial Intelligence, Pendidikan Islam, krisis kepakaran.*

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology over the past few decades has brought about fundamental changes in various aspects of human life, including the field of education. One of the most revolutionary innovations is the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), which not only serves as a technical tool but also plays a role in the production, distribution, and validation of knowledge. AI enables the automation of thinking processes through algorithms and machine learning, thereby transforming how humans acquire and interpret knowledge, shifting from reflective thinking processes toward increasingly automated and data-driven processes (Baumgaertner & Floridi, 2016; Russell & Norvig, 2022; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019) In this context, Islamic education faces new challenges that are not only technological but also epistemological.

Epistemologically, Islamic education is rooted in the integration of revelation, reason, and experience as sources of knowledge. The Islamic scholarly tradition positions revelation as the authoritative source of truth, yet still allows for rationality within the framework of tawhid. Revelation serves as a normative foundation that guides knowledge, while reason is used as an instrument to understand, interpret, and develop knowledge critically without deviating from the principles of faith. Thus, Islamic epistemology does not reject rationality, but integrates it into a structure of knowledge oriented toward divine truth (Al–Attas, 2014; Nasr, 1996).

However, in today's digital age, AI, in particular, has shifted the structure of epistemological authority in society. Algorithms and data-driven systems have now become the primary references in determining the validity of knowledge. In many cases, AI is capable of generating answers instantly and is considered more "authoritative" than the opinions of teachers or scholars. This phenomenon aligns with the critique by Tom Nichols (Nichols, 2024) in his book The Death of Expertise, which explains that modern society is experiencing a decline in trust in traditional scholarly authority and an increasing tendency to equate all opinions, even those deemed true. In the context of Islamic education, this situation has the potential to weaken the authority of classical scholarly traditions and sanad-based models—that is, the Islamic epistemological model emphasizing that the validity of knowledge is determined by a continuous, trustworthy, and verifiable chain of scholarly transmission from teacher to student all the way back to the authoritative source (primarily the Prophet) (al-Salah, 2003; Brown, 2009; Sanseverino, 2019).

This situation has impacted the world of education, where the digitization of

education has given rise to open, flexible, and digital-platform-based learning models. On the one hand, this opens up significant opportunities for the democratization of access to Islamic education (Selwyn, 2021). However, on the other hand, there is a risk of fragmentation of scholarly authority, the decontextualization of religious teachings, and the reduction of knowledge to mere instant information detached from its roots, methodological frameworks, and scholarly traditions, thus information that is not always transparent and often lacks a foundation in transcendent values (Zuboff, 2023).

This transformation also triggers an epistemological crisis in Islamic education, particularly regarding the authority, validity, and purpose of knowledge. When learners rely more on AI than on teachers or professors, there is a shift from an epistemology grounded in scholarly authority (the teacher's chain of transmission) toward an epistemology based on instant access (the digital AI chain of transmission). This aligns with Nichols' (2024) warning that easy access to information, unbalanced by critical literacy, can lead to an "illusion of knowledge", a condition where individuals feel they know something when they have only accessed information superficially. In Islamic education, this phenomenon has the potential to erode scholarly traditions that emphasize depth, process, and ethics in the pursuit of knowledge.

Within the framework of knowledge integration developed by M. Amin Abdullah (2020), an interconnective approach is needed that can bridge religious knowledge and modern science, including digital technology. Thus, the main challenge for Islamic education in the AI era lies not only in the adoption of technology but also in efforts to reconstruct an epistemology capable of integrating revelation and algorithms in a balanced manner.

Based on this discussion, this study is important for conducting an in-depth examination of the epistemological challenges of Islamic education in the AI era, particularly regarding the shift in scholarly authority, the crisis of expertise, and the transformation of knowledge sources. Additionally, this study aims to formulate an integrative, critical strategy for the epistemological reconstruction of Islamic education that remains rooted in transcendent values.

Research on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education shows significant developments, particularly in the context of personalized learning, automated assessment, and data-driven decision-making (Holmes, 2020). Recent studies, such as those conducted by Rose Luckin and Wayne Holmes (2016) and Sohail Rao (2025), indicate that AI can enhance learning efficiency through adaptive data analysis and provide real-time feedback to learners. However, most research still focuses on technical and pedagogical aspects, while the epistemological dimension has not received adequate attention. In fact, it has been found that the digitization of education has driven the emergence of what is known as the "datafication of knowledge," in which knowledge is reduced to data that can be processed by algorithms (Selwyn, 2021). This phenomenon implies a shift in scholarly authority from humans to technological systems, while simultaneously reinforcing Tom Nichols' (2024) critique of the crisis of expertise in the digital age.

In the context of Islamic education, existing studies tend to remain normative

and have not critically examined the epistemological implications of AI use. Yet, classical Islamic epistemology positions revelation as the primary source of knowledge, as emphasized by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (2014), while the integration of modern science has been developed within an interconnective framework by M. Amin Abdullah (2020). Unfortunately, neither of these approaches has specifically addressed the emergence of AI as a new epistemic actor. This is where the research gap lies: the absence of a comprehensive study linking Islamic epistemology with AI-based digital transformation, particularly in viewing algorithms as both generators and determinants of the validity of knowledge.

Based on this research gap, this study offers a novel contribution by developing a critical-epistemological approach that positions AI not merely as a tool, but as a phenomenon that shifts the structure of knowledge. The conceptualization of "from revelation to algorithm" serves as an analytical framework for understanding the shift in scholarly authority, while integrating classical and contemporary thought into a more contextual epistemological framework. Thus, this study is expected to provide a theoretical contribution in the form of a model for the epistemological reconstruction of Islamic education capable of balancing revelation, reason, and technology in the AI era.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using a philosophical-critical library research method, which involves examining various literary sources to conduct an in-depth analysis of concepts, theories, and ideas within an epistemological framework (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Zed, 2008). This approach aims to critically examine the relationship between AI and the epistemology of Islamic education, particularly in terms of the transformation of knowledge authority and its implications for the structure of scholarship. The data used are drawn from classical Islamic epistemological literature and studies on AI in education. Data collection was conducted through a documentary study, involving the tracing, identification, and examination of various relevant literature sources related to the research topic. This process includes literature selection based on academic credibility, thematic relevance, and theoretical contribution (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Meanwhile, the analysis employed content analysis (Krippendorff, 2018), comparative analysis, and critical analysis. Validity was ensured through triangulation of sources and consistency of argumentation (Lincoln, 1985).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research results are discussed in the following points:

An Epistemological Shift: From Revealed Authority to Algorithms

Simply put, epistemology is a branch of philosophy that deals with the nature of knowledge, including: what knowledge is (does it come from reason, experience, intuition, or revelation?); how knowledge is acquired (is it through observation, logic, experimentation, or specific authority?); how truth is tested (is it because it aligns with facts, is rational, or possesses specific legitimacy?); and what are the limits of human knowledge in understanding truth amidst the limitations of reason, the

senses, and the development of AI? In short, epistemology can be referred to as the philosophy of knowledge (Audi, 2010).

Islamic educational epistemology in the context of revelation and AI can be understood as a system of thought regarding the sources, validity, methods, and purposes of knowledge in education that integrates revelation as a normative-transcendental foundation with AI technology as a modern instrument in the production and distribution of knowledge. In the epistemology of Islamic education, revelation (the Qur'an and Sunnah) serves as the primary and absolute authoritative source of knowledge, providing the orientation for belief, morality, spirituality, and the goals of education. Reason and empirical experience are used as instruments to understand and develop knowledge, but they remain within the framework of faith (tawhid) and ethics. Therefore, Islamic education aims not only to transfer knowledge but also to shape individuals who are faithful, knowledgeable, and virtuous (Al–Attas, 2014)—commonly referred to as the insan kamil (Al-Ghazali, 2005).

The development of AI has brought about a new paradigm in educational systems, including Islamic education. The digital transformation marked by the advancement of AI has fundamentally shifted the epistemological structure of Islamic education. Whereas in the tradition of Islamic education, the authority of knowledge rested on revelation, scholarly chains of transmission, and the authority of religious scholars, the AI era has seen a shift toward algorithmic systems based on data, speed, and efficiency.

This shift is not merely a change in medium, but a change in how knowledge is produced, validated, and distributed. Furthermore, AI has introduced learning models that enable faster, broader, and more efficient access to knowledge. In this context, the epistemology of AI shapes new patterns in acquiring knowledge, where learners no longer rely solely on teachers and textbooks but also on search engines, digital platforms, and AI systems.

Tom Nichols (2024) notes that the implications of AI are creating a crisis of expertise, in which traditional scholarly authority is weakened because every individual can instantly access and produce information. In the context of Islamic education, this has serious consequences for the legitimacy of scholars and teachers as guardians of scholarly tradition. Knowledge is no longer acquired through a long, hierarchical process, but through rapid access that is often superficial.

Therefore, the epistemology of Islamic education in the context of revelation and AI must be balanced, with revelation remaining the foundation of educational values and orientation, and reason serving as a critical-reflective instrument. Meanwhile, AI is positioned as a technology that supports learning and must be governed by Islamic ethics. Knowledge generated by AI is probabilistic and instrumental in nature because it lacks ethical and spiritual dimensions (S. Russell & Norvig, 2022). In this context, AI must be positioned as an epistemic tool, not a source of absolute truth. From the perspective of M. Amin Abdullah (2020), an interconnective approach between religious studies, science, and technology must be adopted so that Islamic education can respond to the challenges of modernity without losing its spiritual identity.

Thus, the epistemology of Islamic education in the AI era is not about replacing revelation with algorithms, but rather an effort to build an educational system capable of integrating transcendent values with technological innovation in a critical, ethical, and humanistic manner. AI epistemology must be positioned as a digital algorithm and as an instant "truth-filtering" instrument that operates based on statistical logic regarding the empirical aspects and the 'how' mechanisms of how reality functions, not as a normative value that provides orientation for beliefs, values, morals, and religion. Therefore, revelation provides an ethical and spiritual dimension to AI and modern science (Yusuf et al., 2019).

AI as a New Epistemic Actor

One of the main arguments in this study is that AI can no longer be understood merely as a tool, but rather as an epistemic agent. AI possesses three capacities: generating knowledge (generative AI), filtering information (filtering algorithms), and determining relevance (recommendation systems) (Holmes, 2020; S. Russell & Norvig, 2022; Selwyn, 2021). With these capabilities, AI plays a role in shaping users' cognitive structures, including within the context of religious learning. This marks a shift from human-centered epistemology toward machine-mediated epistemology. This shift implies a change in epistemic authority, from one based on experience, rationality, and scholarly tradition toward data- and computation-based systems (Baumgaertner & Floridi, 2016).

However, unlike humans, AI lacks ethical awareness, intention, or moral responsibility. The knowledge generated by AI is instrumental and devoid of spiritual dimensions. This is where a fundamental tension arises with Islamic epistemology, where knowledge is not only directed toward mastering empirical reality but also toward understanding the meaning and well-being of humanity in spiritual and moral terms (Pratama et al., 2026).

In other words, AI is capable of answering "what" and "how," but is unable to answer "why" within a deeper framework of meaning (Hakim, 2025; Syarif, 2006). When AI is made the primary reference in learning, there is a risk of reducing religious knowledge to mere technical information that loses its dimension of wisdom. Himyari Yusuf et al. (2019) state that modern science tends to reduce humans to material and mechanical beings, whereas Islamic epistemology integrates reason, intuition, and revelation as a holistic source of knowledge. This statement highlights a fundamental difference between modern epistemology, which is reductionist in nature, and Islamic epistemology, which is holistic and integrative.

The Relationship Between Knowledge and Power in the Age of Algorithms

From Michel Foucault's (1980) perspective, this epistemological shift can also be understood as a shift in power relations. Within the power/knowledge framework, whoever controls the production of knowledge holds the power to shape social reality. Foucault explains that the relationship between knowledge and power is inseparable. He asserts that "power and knowledge directly imply one another." In the context of AI and digital media, technology companies that control data and algorithms indirectly also control the production of social truth.

In the AI era, epistemic power in the digital age has shifted from educational institutions and religious authorities toward technology companies and global algorithmic systems. In this context, algorithms function not only as tools for distributing information but also determine what is considered true, relevant, and worthy of public knowledge. Thus, AI not only mediates knowledge but also constructs epistemic reality (Selwyn, 2021; Zuboff, 2023).

In Islamic education, this situation has led to a weakening of the authority of the sanad (al-Salah, 2003) and of the teacher as the center of scholarly legitimacy. Students are acquiring religious knowledge more through the internet and AI than through the traditional processes of talaqqi and knowledge transmission. This phenomenon aligns with Tom Nichols' (2024) critique, which states that the digital age has created a crisis of expertise because access to information makes everyone feel they possess the same authority over knowledge.

The Epistemological Crisis: The Illusion of Knowledge and the Decontextualization of Science

The ease of accessing information through AI has given rise to a phenomenon that can be described as the illusion of knowledge, a condition in which individuals feel they know something without undergoing a process of deep understanding, even though the knowledge they possess is superficial and instantaneous. The ease of accessing information through AI and the internet creates the perception that knowledge can be obtained without an adequate epistemic process. This phenomenon aligns with the findings of Tom Nichols (2024), who states that the digital age has accelerated the "collapse of communication between experts and laypeople," thereby blurring the line between valid knowledge and opinion. Rozenblit & Keil (2002) refer to this as the illusion of explanatory depth, the tendency for individuals to overestimate their understanding of a phenomenon.

Psychologically, the illusion of knowledge is also linked to what is known as the illusion of explanatory depth—that is, the tendency for individuals to feel they understand something better than they actually do (Rozenblit & Keil, 2002). In the context of AI, this phenomenon is amplified by algorithmic systems that present information quickly and concisely, leading users to accept answers without critical verification (Selwyn, 2021). AI also contributes to the formation of superficial and fragmented understanding, thereby reducing critical reflection in learning. This has the potential to create epistemic distortion, where knowledge is reduced to mere instant information that does not undergo a process of deep reflection, critique, and validation. In fact, recent studies indicate that reliance on digital systems for information acquisition can reinforce a false sense of knowledge mastery without sufficient conceptual depth (Bacallo et al., 2024).

In the context of Islamic education, the development of Artificial Intelligence and the digitization of knowledge have impacted three main aspects. First, the weakening of the sanad tradition and scholarly authority, as the transmission of knowledge no longer depends on the teacher–student relationship (talaqqi), but rather on instant access via digital media (Brown, 2009). Second, the reduction of religious knowledge into separate pieces of information, where Islamic teachings are

understood in a fragmented manner without systemic connections between academic disciplines, due to the dominance of a culture of fast and fragmented information (Selwyn, 2021). Third, the loss of historical and methodological context in understanding texts, as users tend to access religious texts without scholarly frameworks such as usul al-fiqh, hadith studies, and history, thereby potentially leading to misinterpretations (Hallaq, 2009; Ṣiddīqī, 1993).

As a result, religious knowledge becomes superficial, fragmented, and prone to misinterpretation. In fact, in the Islamic tradition, knowledge is evaluated not only by its results but also by its process and authority. Fauzi & Chirzin (2023) argue that the epistemology of Islamic education emphasizes the importance of integrating revelatory sources, reason, and rigorous methodology to preserve the integrity of meaning and prevent the reduction of understanding.

Epistemological Reconstruction: The Integration of Revelation, Reason, and Algorithms

In the face of these various epistemological challenges, this study argues that Islamic education needs to undertake an integrative epistemological reconstruction. This reconstruction is not intended as a rejection of technological developments, including Artificial Intelligence, but rather as an effort to situate them appropriately within a monotheistic framework. From the perspective of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (2014), knowledge must remain grounded in adab and spiritual values, so that every advancement in knowledge, including technology, must be directed toward ethical and transcendent goals.

In line with this, M. Amin Abdullah (2020) emphasizes the importance of an integrative-interconnective approach that links religious studies, science, and technology within a single dialogical epistemological unity. In agreement with Amin Abdullah, Ibrahim Kalin (Kalin, 2017) also asserts that to produce holistic and ethical knowledge, the integration of knowledge must prioritize dialogue between revelation and modern science. This approach allows Islamic education to remain adaptive to the changing times without losing its normative identity. Revelation remains the primary normative source. Meanwhile, reason functions as a critical and reflective instrument. AI, on the other hand, is positioned as an epistemic tool that must be ethically controlled.

Thus, the epistemological reconstruction of Islamic education is directed toward a synthesis of revelation, reason, and technology, in which technology serves as an instrument, while revelation remains the foundation of values and the primary orientation of education. This approach is also relevant in addressing modern challenges, including the rapid advancement of AI (Yusgiantara & Baidi, 2025). This model rejects the dichotomy between religion and technology, while also avoiding the dominance of algorithms over transcendent values. Thus, Islamic education can utilize AI without losing its spiritual orientation (Nasr, 1996).

Toward a Critical-Transformative Epistemology

In summary, this study proposes the concept of critical-transformative epistemology, an approach that examines knowledge reflectively with the aim of

dismantling the power structures underlying it while simultaneously transforming it into a knowledge system oriented toward values, meaning, justice, and liberation (Foucault, 1980; Freire, 1970; Kincheloe, 2008). Therefore, this approach has three characteristics: [1] it is critical of the dominance of digital epistemology; [2] it is reflective of Islamic scholarly traditions; and [3] it is transformative in formulating a new contextual paradigm.

This epistemology positions humans as moral agents who seek not only knowledge but also meaning and value. In this context, AI must be viewed as a limited partner, not as an absolute authority. Nick Bostrom (Bostrom, 2014) states that AI has limitations in understanding human values and goals, and thus cannot serve as an absolute authority in decision-making.

Thus, "from revelation to algorithm" is not a linear shift that replaces one with the other, or pits them against each other, but rather a dialectical space demanding integration, critique, and reconstruction. Islamic education in the AI era will remain relevant only if it can maintain a balance between tradition and innovation, between values and technology, and between transcendent truth and digital reality.

CONCLUSION

The conclusions of this study indicate that the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has triggered a fundamental shift in the epistemological structure of Islamic education, from one originally rooted in revelation, scholarly chains of transmission, and the authority of religious scholars, toward a knowledge system increasingly mediated by data-driven algorithms, speed, and efficiency. This shift is not merely technological but also epistemological, as it touches upon the sources, validity, and authority of knowledge. In this context, AI emerges as a new epistemic actor that does not merely convey information but also plays a role in producing and validating knowledge, albeit without ethical and spiritual dimensions. The implications of this transformation are the emergence of an epistemological crisis in Islamic education, marked by the weakening of expert authority, the rise of the illusion of knowledge, and a tendency toward the decontextualization of religious teachings. This phenomenon reveals a tension between the normative-transcendental epistemology of Islam and the instrumental-pragmatic epistemology of the digital age. If not critically addressed, this situation has the potential to shift the orientation of Islamic education from the formation of civilized human beings to merely the production of technical and instant knowledge. Therefore, this study emphasizes the importance of an integrative and critical epistemological reconstruction of Islamic education. Such a reconstruction must place revelation as the primary normative foundation, reason as a reflective instrument, and AI as an epistemic tool guided by ethical principles and monotheistic values. Within this framework, Islamic education does not reject technology but integrates it in a balanced and responsible manner.

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