

ALGORITHMIC AUTHORITY AND THE DECONSTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE DIGITAL AGE: AN ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This article examines the deconstruction of knowledge authority in the digital age from the perspective of Islamic philosophy. The main problem addressed is the epistemological crisis caused by the shift of knowledge authority from scholarly institutions, moral legitimacy, and intellectual transmission toward digital systems shaped by algorithms, popularity, speed, and platform visibility. In Muslim society, this shift weakens the traditional foundations of Islamic knowledge, especially sanad, adab, verification, and the integration of revelation and reason. This study uses a qualitative library research method with a philosophical-analytical and critical-hermeneutical approach. The analysis is developed by examining Islamic epistemological concepts, particularly tabayyun, sanad, adab, and the relationship between reason and revelation, in relation to digital media, artificial intelligence, and algorithmic authority. The findings show that the digital age has produced epistemic decentralization, algorithmic legitimation, and performative authority, which blur the distinction between authentic knowledge, opinion, and pseudo-authority. This article argues that Islamic philosophy offers a reconstructive framework for Islamic digital epistemology by restoring verification, ethical knowledge, intellectual accountability, and the proper hierarchy of authority.

Keywords: *knowledge authority, digital epistemology, Islamic philosophy, algorithmic authority, adab.*

Abstrak

Artikel ini mengkaji dekonstruksi otoritas pengetahuan di era digital

dalam perspektif filsafat Islam. Masalah utama yang dibahas adalah krisis epistemologis akibat pergeseran otoritas pengetahuan dari institusi keilmuan, legitimasi moral, dan transmisi intelektual menuju sistem digital yang dibentuk oleh algoritma, popularitas, kecepatan, dan visibilitas platform. Dalam masyarakat Muslim, pergeseran ini melemahkan fondasi pengetahuan Islam, terutama sanad, adab, verifikasi, serta integrasi wahyu dan akal. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif berbasis studi kepustakaan dengan pendekatan filosofis-analitis dan hermeneutik-kritis. Analisis dilakukan dengan menelaah konsep-konsep epistemologi Islam, khususnya tabayyun, sanad, adab, serta hubungan akal dan wahyu dalam kaitannya dengan media digital, kecerdasan buatan, dan otoritas algoritmik. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa era digital melahirkan desentralisasi epistemik, legitimasi algoritmik, dan otoritas performatif yang mengaburkan batas antara pengetahuan otentik, opini, dan otoritas semu. Artikel ini menegaskan bahwa filsafat Islam menawarkan kerangka rekonstruktif bagi epistemologi Islam digital melalui pemulihan verifikasi, etika pengetahuan, akuntabilitas intelektual, dan hierarki otoritas yang sah.

Kata Kunci: *otoritas pengetahuan; epistemologi digital; filsafat Islam; otoritas algoritmik; adab.*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the structure of knowledge production, circulation, and legitimation in contemporary society. The internet, social media, search engines, and artificial intelligence have created a new epistemic environment in which knowledge is no longer mediated only by traditional authorities such as scholars, universities, religious institutions, and intellectual communities. In the digital age, information moves quickly, widely, and often without sufficient verification. This transformation has produced a serious epistemological problem: the authority of knowledge is increasingly determined not by scholarly

depth, moral credibility, or methodological validity, but by algorithmic visibility, popularity, speed of circulation, and digital performance.¹

In the context of Muslim society, this transformation has significant implications. Islamic intellectual tradition has historically developed a distinctive epistemological structure based on the integration of revelation, reason, *sanad*, *adab*, and moral responsibility. Knowledge in Islam is not merely understood as information or data, but as a disciplined path toward truth, ethical formation, and recognition of the proper order of reality. However, digital culture tends to flatten this hierarchy of knowledge. Religious explanations, scholarly arguments, personal opinions, viral preaching, short video fragments, and AI-generated answers often appear in the same digital space without clear epistemic distinction. As a result, the boundary between authoritative knowledge and pseudo-authority becomes increasingly blurred.²

The rise of digital religious authority in Indonesia illustrates this shift clearly. Recent studies show that religious authority in digital spaces is formed through mediation, mediatization, and celebrification. Digital preachers, religious microcelebrities, and Islamic influencers often gain authority through their ability to attract attention, produce emotionally appealing content, and adapt to the logic of social media platforms.³ This phenomenon does not necessarily eliminate traditional religious authority, but it changes the way authority is recognized, consumed, and legitimized by the public. Authority is no longer grounded solely in institutional recognition or scholarly transmission; it is also constructed through followers, likes, comments, shares, and algorithmic amplification.

¹ Rahmat Hidayatullah, "Otoritas Keagamaan Digital: Pembentukan Otoritas Islam Baru di Ruang Digital," *Ushuluna: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin* 10, no. 2 (2024): 1–16.

² Mohammad Muslih, Ryan Arief Rahman, Amir Reza Kusuma, Abdul Rohman, and Adib Fattah Suntoro, "Mengurai Disrupsi Paham Keislaman Indonesia dalam Perspektif Tipologi Epistemologi Abid Al-Jabiri," *JAQFI: Jurnal Aqidah dan Filsafat Islam* 6, no. 2 (2021): 125–140.

³ Hidayatullah, "Otoritas Keagamaan Digital," 1–16.

This condition becomes more complex because digital media also changes the practice of Islamic learning and da'wah. Contemporary da'wah is increasingly shaped by digital platforms that offer both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, digital media expands access to Islamic knowledge, enables broader religious communication, and allows Muslims to participate actively in religious discourse. On the other hand, it also creates new risks, including superficial religious understanding, fragmented interpretation, ideological polarization, and the commodification of religious messages.⁴ Digital religious participation, especially among Muslim youth and millennial communities, shows that religious identity is now often negotiated through online interaction, affective engagement, and platform-based visibility.⁵

The problem of knowledge authority in the digital age is therefore not merely technological, but epistemological. The central issue is not only how digital media distributes knowledge, but how it changes the criteria by which knowledge is considered valid, trustworthy, and authoritative. In many cases, the digital public tends to trust information that appears repeatedly, is emotionally persuasive, or is endorsed by popular figures, even when such information lacks scholarly basis. This situation corresponds to the broader phenomenon of disruption in Islamic understanding, where religious discourse becomes vulnerable to textual rigidity, ideological simplification, and epistemic imbalance.⁶ In this context, Islamic philosophy provides an important critical framework for examining how knowledge should be verified, ordered, and morally directed.

From the perspective of Islamic philosophy, the digital crisis of knowledge can be read as a crisis of adab and epistemic hierarchy. Syed

⁴ Putri Isma Indriyani and Khadiq, "Transformation of Islamic Religious Practices in the Digital Era: Opportunities and Challenges for Contemporary Da'wah," *Jurnal Dakwah* 24, no. 2 (2023): 175–192.

⁵ Annisa Nurul Chaerani, "Religious Participation of Millennial Muslim Women," *Indo-Islamika* 14, no. 2 (2024): 1–18.

⁶ Muslih et al., "Mengurai Disrupsi Paham Keislaman Indonesia," 125–140.

Muhammad Naquib al-Attas' concept of adab is particularly relevant because it emphasizes the recognition of the proper place of knowledge, authority, and human responsibility. When all digital information is treated as equal, society loses the ability to distinguish between knowledge grounded in scholarly discipline and information produced merely for attention. At the same time, Al-Ghazali's epistemological concern with certainty and verification offers a framework for criticizing the uncritical acceptance of digital information. His method of questioning sources of knowledge can be reconstructed as a principle of digital tabayyun, namely the ethical and epistemological obligation to verify information before accepting or spreading it.

Artificial intelligence further intensifies this epistemological crisis. AI-based platforms such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and other large language models are increasingly used to answer religious, philosophical, educational, and social questions. In Islamic education, AI has been discussed as both an opportunity and a challenge: it can support learning, improve access to knowledge, and assist educational innovation, but it also raises ethical questions about accuracy, dependency, authorship, and moral responsibility.⁷ Studies on AI integration in Islamic higher education show that Muslim educational institutions need a risk-management framework grounded in maqasid al-shari'ah to ensure that technology remains aligned with ethical and spiritual objectives.⁸ Therefore, AI should not be treated as an autonomous epistemic authority, but as a technological instrument that requires human verification, moral supervision, and religious-ethical guidance.

⁷ Syukur, Fathurrahman, A. Maghfurin, U. Marhamah, and P. Jehwae, "Integration of Artificial Intelligence in Islamic Higher Education: Comparative Responses between Indonesia and Thailand," *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 3 (2024): 531–553.

⁸ Siti Aflahah, et al., "AI, Ethics, and Islamic Higher Education: Navigating the Future of State Islamic Higher Education through COSO ERM and Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah," *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 26, no. 1 (2026): 1–25.

The urgency of this study lies in the need to reconstruct Islamic epistemology in response to digital disruption. Existing studies on digital Islam, religious authority, and Islamic education have shown how digital platforms transform religious practice, da'wah, learning, and authority formation.⁹ However, these studies often focus on sociological, educational, or communication aspects. There remains a need for a philosophical analysis that examines the deeper epistemological structure behind the crisis of authority in the digital age. This article seeks to fill that gap by analyzing the deconstruction of knowledge authority through the lens of Islamic philosophy, especially through the concepts of tabayyun, sanad, adab, and the integration of revelation and reason.

This study argues that the digital age has deconstructed traditional knowledge authority through three main processes: epistemic decentralization, algorithmic legitimation, and performative authority. Epistemic decentralization occurs when knowledge production is no longer centered on recognized scholarly institutions, but distributed across open digital networks. Algorithmic legitimation occurs when platform systems determine which information becomes visible and influential. Performative authority occurs when public trust is shaped by digital appearance, rhetorical style, and emotional engagement rather than scholarly competence. These three processes create a new epistemic order in which popularity may be mistaken for truth, accessibility for validity, and technological sophistication for wisdom.¹⁰

In response to this condition, Islamic philosophy offers a reconstructive framework. The principle of tabayyun requires verification and critical examination of information. The concept of sanad emphasizes the importance of transmission, intellectual genealogy,

⁹ Rachmad Lutfi Virga, Subaidi, and A. Wibisono, "How NU and Muhammadiyah Shape Religious Authority on Instagram," *Jurnal Sosiologi Reflektif* 18, no. 2 (2024): 1–20.

¹⁰ Nuzul Fitriansyah, "Cultivating Online Fun Fatwa in Contemporary Indonesia: Millennial, Piety, and New Religious Authority," *Religió: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama* 13, no. 1 (2023): 117–135.

and methodological accountability. The notion of adab restores ethical discipline and epistemic hierarchy in the pursuit of knowledge. Meanwhile, the integration of revelation and reason prevents technology from becoming an autonomous source of truth detached from moral and metaphysical foundations. Thus, Islamic philosophy does not reject digital technology; rather, it seeks to place technology within a tauhidic, ethical, and epistemological order.

Methodologically, this article employs qualitative library research with a philosophical-analytical and critical-hermeneutical approach. The philosophical-analytical approach is used to examine the concepts of knowledge authority, epistemic legitimacy, and digital mediation. The critical-hermeneutical approach is used to reinterpret classical and contemporary Islamic epistemological concepts in relation to digital culture, algorithmic systems, and artificial intelligence. The main data are obtained from scholarly literature on Islamic philosophy, digital religion, religious authority, Islamic education, artificial intelligence, and contemporary epistemology.¹¹

Based on this framework, the article is structured into several main discussions. First, it explains the transformation of knowledge authority in the digital age. Second, it analyzes the rise of algorithmic and performative authority in contemporary Muslim society. Third, it examines the epistemological crisis caused by the weakening of sanad, adab, and scholarly hierarchy. Fourth, it reconstructs an Islamic digital epistemology based on tabayyun, sanad, adab, and the integration of revelation and reason. Through this analysis, the article concludes that the greatest challenge of the digital age is not technology itself, but the epistemological disorder produced when technology becomes the dominant mediator of truth without adequate ethical, spiritual, and methodological control.

¹¹ Muhamad Jamaludin, Nur Sa'idah, Firdaus Firdaus, and Muhammad Hisyam Malik, "Hybrid Authority Management of Nasab-Based Religious Leadership among the Habaib in Indonesia: Tradition, Modernity, and Digital Transformation," *HEUTAGOGIA: Journal of Islamic Education* 4, no. 2 (2024): 269–286.

DISCUSSION

1. The Transformation of Knowledge Authority in the Digital Age

The digital age has fundamentally transformed the structure of knowledge authority. In pre-digital epistemic traditions, authority was generally constructed through institutional recognition, scholarly transmission, moral credibility, and methodological discipline. In Islamic intellectual history, this structure was embodied in the concepts of sanad, ijazah, adab, and scholarly responsibility. Knowledge was not merely regarded as information, but as a form of truth-oriented discipline that required ethical formation, intellectual genealogy, and spiritual accountability. However, the emergence of digital media has shifted the basis of authority from scholarly legitimacy to visibility, accessibility, and algorithmic circulation.¹²

This transformation can be seen clearly in the rise of digital religious authority. Religious knowledge is no longer mediated exclusively by traditional scholars, pesantren, universities, or formal religious institutions. Instead, digital platforms allow new actors, such as preachers, influencers, content creators, and even anonymous accounts, to participate in producing and distributing religious discourse.¹³ In this context, authority is increasingly shaped by digital performance: the number of followers, the intensity of engagement, the ability to create viral content, and the emotional appeal of religious messages.¹⁴

The shift from traditional authority to digital authority does not necessarily mean that classical religious institutions disappear. Rather, the digital environment creates a new arena of contestation where institutional authority and popular authority interact, compete, and sometimes overlap. Religious scholars who are able to adapt to digital

¹² Kiki Taufik Siregar, "Indonesian Muballigh and Religious Authority: From Sanad to Algorithmic Legitimacy in Islamic Education," *Indo-Islamika* 15, no. 1 (2025): 1–18.

¹³ Rahmat Hidayatullah, "Pembentukan Otoritas Islam Baru di Ruang Digital," *Ushuluna: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin* 10, no. 2 (2024): 1–16.

¹⁴ Hidayatullah, "Pembentukan Otoritas Islam Baru di Ruang Digital," 1–16.

platforms may strengthen their influence, while those who remain outside digital networks may become less visible to younger Muslim audiences.¹⁵ Therefore, the crisis of authority in the digital age should not be understood simply as the collapse of traditional authority, but as the reconfiguration of epistemic legitimacy within a platform-based society.

From the perspective of Islamic philosophy, this transformation raises a serious epistemological problem. The Islamic concept of knowledge places truth within a moral and metaphysical order. Knowledge is not neutral information, but a means of recognizing reality according to its proper hierarchy. When digital platforms flatten the hierarchy of knowledge, scholarly arguments, personal opinions, viral fragments, and algorithmically generated answers appear side by side without adequate epistemic distinction.¹⁶ As a result, users may consume knowledge without understanding the difference between verified scholarship and unverified digital claims.

2. Algorithmic Legitimacy and the Rise of Pseudo-Authority

One of the most important features of digital knowledge is algorithmic mediation. Algorithms determine what users see, what becomes popular, and what is repeatedly displayed in digital spaces. In religious discourse, this means that the visibility of Islamic content is not determined solely by its scholarly quality, but also by platform logic. Content that is emotionally engaging, provocative, simple, or entertaining tends to circulate more widely than content that is methodologically rigorous but less attractive to digital audiences.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ahmad Ronaldi, "New Media as an Ideological Transmission Opportunity for Religious Authorities in Indonesia," *Indo-Islamika* 13, no. 2 (2023): 120–136.

¹⁶ Mohammad Muslih, Ryan Arief Rahman, Amir Reza Kusuma, Abdul Rohman, and Adib Fattah Suntoro, "Mengurai Disrupsi Paham Keislaman Indonesia dalam Perspektif Tipologi Epistemologi Abid Al-Jabiri," *JAQFI: Jurnal Aqidah dan Filsafat Islam* 6, no. 2 (2021): 125–140.

¹⁷ Nuzul Fitriansyah, "Cultivating Online Fun Fatwa in Contemporary Indonesia: Millennial, Piety, and New Religious Authority," *Religió: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama* 13, no. 1 (2023): 117–135.

This situation produces what may be called algorithmic legitimacy. A religious message appears authoritative not because it has passed scholarly verification, but because it is widely circulated and repeatedly encountered by users. In many cases, repetition creates familiarity, and familiarity creates trust. This is dangerous because digital visibility can be mistaken for epistemic validity. A popular preacher, viral video, or AI-generated answer may appear more convincing than a careful scholarly explanation simply because it is more accessible and easier to consume.¹⁸

The formation of new Islamic authority in digital spaces has been discussed by scholars who emphasize mediation, mediatization, and celebrification. Digital preachers are not only transmitters of religious knowledge; they are also media personalities whose authority is shaped by aesthetic presentation, rhetorical style, and affective communication.¹⁹ Religious authority thus becomes performative. It is constructed through appearance, emotional closeness, and the capacity to speak in a language that matches the expectations of digital audiences.

This does not mean that all digital religious authority is false or dangerous. Digital media can democratize access to Islamic knowledge and create new opportunities for da'wah. However, the problem emerges when popularity replaces verification and when religious authority becomes detached from scholarly discipline.²⁰ In such a situation, pseudo-authority emerges: a form of authority that appears legitimate in the eyes of the public but lacks adequate epistemological foundation. From the perspective of Islamic epistemology, pseudo-authority represents a disruption of adab, because it places unverified claims and qualified knowledge on the same level.

¹⁸ Dadi Ahmadi Triantoro, "Adaptation of Popular Culture in Digital Fatwa on Social Media," *Islam Realitas: Journal of Islamic and Social Studies* 9, no. 2 (2023): 1–16.

¹⁹ Hidayatullah, "Pembentukan Otoritas Islam Baru di Ruang Digital," 1–16.

²⁰ Putri Isma Indriyani and Khadiq, "Transformation of Islamic Religious Practices in the Digital Era: Opportunities and Challenges for Contemporary Da'wah," *Jurnal Dakwah* 24, no. 2 (2023): 175–192.

3. The Crisis of Sanad, Adab, and Epistemic Hierarchy

The crisis of digital knowledge is closely related to the weakening of sanad and adab. In Islamic tradition, sanad is not merely a chain of transmission; it is an epistemological mechanism that connects knowledge to trustworthy sources, recognized teachers, and established methods of interpretation. The authority of knowledge depends not only on the content of a statement, but also on the credibility of its transmitter and the discipline through which it is acquired.²¹

Digital culture changes this structure. Information can be copied, edited, reframed, and circulated without clear authorship or transmission history. Religious quotations are often detached from their textual, historical, and methodological contexts. Short videos, memes, and social media captions frequently reduce complex religious arguments into simplified fragments.²² This condition weakens the culture of scholarly transmission and encourages instant religious understanding.

The concept of adab is equally important. In Islamic philosophy, adab refers to the recognition of the proper place of things, including the proper place of knowledge, teachers, texts, methods, and authority. The loss of adab occurs when people fail to distinguish between different levels of knowledge and different degrees of authority. In the digital age, the loss of adab appears when users treat all information as equal simply because it is available online.²³

This crisis is not only intellectual but also moral. Digital users often share religious information without verification, respond emotionally to controversial content, and accept claims that support their existing preferences. This tendency creates an epistemic environment in

²¹ Siregar, "Indonesian Muballigh and Religious Authority," 1–18.

²² Afidatul Asmar, "Ekspresi Keberagamaan Online: Media Baru dan Dakwah," *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 40, no. 1 (2020): 54–64.

²³ Muhamad Jamaludin, Nur Sa'idah, Firdaus Firdaus, and Muhammad Hisyam Malik, "Hybrid Authority Management of Nasab-Based Religious Leadership among the Habaib in Indonesia: Tradition, Modernity, and Digital Transformation," *HEUTAGOGIA: Journal of Islamic Education* 4, no. 2 (2024): 269–286.

which truth becomes secondary to identity, emotion, and group loyalty.²⁴ Islamic philosophy criticizes this condition because knowledge must be directed toward truth, justice, and moral responsibility, not merely toward persuasion or social recognition.

Therefore, the reconstruction of Islamic epistemology in the digital age must begin with the restoration of epistemic hierarchy. Not all information is knowledge; not all knowledge is wisdom; and not all speakers possess legitimate authority. The Islamic tradition requires a disciplined process of learning, verification, and ethical formation. Without this process, digital religious discourse risks producing confusion, polarization, and superficial religiosity.²⁵

4. Artificial Intelligence and the New Problem of Epistemic Mediation

Artificial intelligence intensifies the crisis of knowledge authority. AI systems can generate answers quickly and convincingly, creating the impression that they possess objective knowledge. In educational and religious contexts, AI may assist learning, provide summaries, support research, and improve access to information. However, AI also raises serious epistemological and ethical questions. It does not possess moral consciousness, spiritual responsibility, or sanad. Its answers are generated through data patterns, not through wisdom or direct participation in a living scholarly tradition.²⁶

In Islamic education, the use of AI has begun to attract scholarly attention. Studies on AI integration in Islamic higher education show that AI can support learning innovation, but it must be guided by ethical and

²⁴ Naim, "Promoting a Smiling Islam: Religious Moderation in the Virtual Public Sphere," *Insaniyat: Journal of Islam and Humanities* 9, no. 2 (2025): 1–17.

²⁵ Rachmad Lutfi Virga, Subaidi, and A. Wibisono, "How NU and Muhammadiyah Shape Religious Authority on Instagram," *Jurnal Sosiologi Reflektif* 18, no. 2 (2024): 1–20.

²⁶ Syukur, Fathurrahman, A. Maghfurin, U. Marhamah, and P. Jehwae, "Integration of Artificial Intelligence in Islamic Higher Education: Comparative Responses between Indonesia and Thailand," *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 3 (2024): 531–553.

religious values.²⁷ Without such guidance, AI may encourage intellectual dependency, weaken critical thinking, and blur the distinction between human understanding and machine-generated output. In this sense, AI should be understood as a tool, not as an autonomous epistemic authority.

The use of AI in religious learning is even more sensitive. When users ask AI about theology, Islamic law, Qur'anic interpretation, or moral problems, the answer may appear authoritative even though it may lack contextual accuracy, methodological grounding, or scholarly accountability.²⁸ This problem becomes more serious when AI-generated answers are circulated on social media as if they were verified religious explanations. From the perspective of Islamic philosophy, this represents a new form of epistemic mediation that must be subjected to *tabayyun*.

The principle of *tabayyun* is therefore highly relevant in the age of AI. *Tabayyun* requires careful verification before accepting or spreading information. In the digital context, *tabayyun* means checking the source, context, method, and implication of knowledge claims.²⁹ In relation to AI, *tabayyun* requires users to verify AI-generated answers through reliable scholars, authoritative texts, and recognized methods of interpretation. AI can assist the search for information, but it cannot replace the ethical and intellectual responsibility of human beings.

Islamic AI literacy should therefore be developed as a form of responsible knowledge practice. Such literacy must include awareness of AI limitations, the ability to evaluate information critically, ethical responsibility in using digital tools, and commitment to Islamic values such as *amanah*, *'adl*, *maslahah*, and *adab*.³⁰ In this way, AI can be

²⁷ Siti Aflahah et al., "AI, Ethics, and Islamic Higher Education: Navigating the Future of State Islamic Higher Education through COSO ERM and Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah," *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 26, no. 1 (2026): 1–25.

²⁸ Siti Hawa Panjaitan, "Integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in PAI Learning and Its Implications for Islamic Religious Education Values," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 22, no. 1 (2025): 1–18.

²⁹ Aulia Rahma Maulidiya, "Comparative Analysis of ChatGPT and Gemini in Arabic Learning," *Arabiyat: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab dan Kebahasaan* 11, no. 2 (2024): 1–17.

integrated into Muslim intellectual life without being absolutized as the final source of truth.

5. Islamic Philosophical Critique of Digital Epistemology

Islamic philosophy offers a strong critical framework for responding to the digital crisis of knowledge. Al-Ghazali's epistemology is particularly relevant because it emphasizes the need to examine the sources of knowledge critically. His intellectual journey shows that certainty cannot be achieved through imitation or unexamined acceptance. Knowledge must be tested, verified, and directed toward truth. In the digital age, this perspective can be developed into a method of critical digital verification.

Ibn Rushd also provides an important contribution through his emphasis on the harmony between reason and revelation. His thought shows that rational inquiry is not opposed to religious truth when both are properly understood. In the context of digital technology, this means that Muslims should not reject technological development, but they must evaluate it through rational, ethical, and theological criteria.³¹ Technology should be placed within the framework of human responsibility and divine orientation, not treated as an independent source of ultimate truth.

Meanwhile, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas' concept of *adab* provides a deeper diagnosis of the digital crisis. The problem is not merely misinformation, but the disorder of knowledge. When users cannot distinguish between true authority and pseudo-authority, between knowledge and information, and between wisdom and data, society experiences epistemological confusion.³² This confusion reflects the loss of proper order in knowledge. Therefore, the solution is not only technical fact-checking, but also moral and epistemological education.

³¹ Muslih et al., "Mengurai Disrupsi Paham Keislaman Indonesia," 125–140.

³² Abdullah Saeed, "Authority Crisis in Contemporary Muslim Societies," *Contemporary Islam* 19, no. 1 (2025): 41–63.

Islamic philosophy also criticizes the reduction of knowledge into data. In modern digital culture, knowledge is often measured by speed, quantity, and accessibility. However, Islamic epistemology views knowledge as a transformative process that shapes the human soul, guides action, and connects the knower to truth.³³ This means that the digitalization of knowledge must not detach knowledge from its ethical and spiritual purposes. Information may be abundant, but without wisdom and adab, abundance can produce confusion rather than enlightenment.

Thus, the Islamic philosophical critique of digital epistemology is not anti-technology. It is a critique of technological absolutism. Digital tools may be useful, but they must remain subordinate to higher principles: truth, justice, wisdom, and human responsibility. Technology becomes problematic only when it replaces moral judgment, weakens scholarly transmission, or claims authority beyond its proper limits.

6. Toward an Islamic Digital Epistemology

Based on the previous analysis, this article proposes the reconstruction of Islamic digital epistemology. This reconstruction consists of four main principles: digital tabayyun, restoration of sanad, strengthening of epistemic adab, and integration of revelation and reason in evaluating technology.

First, digital tabayyun means that every digital claim must be verified before being accepted or shared. This includes checking sources, authorship, context, evidence, and methodological reliability. In religious matters, tabayyun also requires consultation with qualified scholars and reference to authoritative Islamic texts.³⁴

Second, the restoration of sanad does not mean returning mechanically to the past, but preserving the principle of intellectual accountability. In the digital age, Muslims need to know where

³³ Siregar, "Indonesian Muballigh and Religious Authority," 1–18.

³⁴ Muhamad Ali, "Islamic Knowledge and Digital Transformation in Indonesian Muslim Society," *Studia Islamika* 30, no. 2 (2023): 221–248.

knowledge comes from, who transmits it, and what method supports it. Sanad can be reconstructed through transparent citation, scholarly networks, academic discipline, and responsible digital education.

Third, epistemic adab must be strengthened. Digital literacy is not enough if it only teaches technical skills. Muslims also need epistemic discipline: the ability to recognize hierarchy, respect qualified knowledge, avoid arrogance in interpretation, and understand the limits of one's competence.³⁵ Without adab, digital literacy may only produce more confident but less responsible users.

Fourth, revelation and reason must remain the foundation for evaluating technological development. Digital platforms and AI should be assessed not only by efficiency, but also by their impact on truth, justice, human dignity, and public benefit. This requires an ethical framework rooted in maqasid al-shari'ah, especially the protection of religion, intellect, life, dignity, and social welfare.

Therefore, the deconstruction of knowledge authority in the digital age should be followed by epistemological reconstruction. Islamic philosophy provides the conceptual resources for this task. It reminds us that the central problem of the digital age is not the existence of technology, but the absence of proper epistemic order. If knowledge is reduced to information, authority to popularity, and wisdom to algorithmic output, then society will lose its ability to distinguish truth from illusion. An Islamic digital epistemology seeks to prevent this by restoring knowledge to its proper place: as a path toward truth, ethical responsibility, and human flourishing.

CONCLUSION

This article concludes that the deconstruction of knowledge authority in the digital age is not merely a technological phenomenon, but a profound epistemological crisis. Digital platforms, social media,

³⁵ Ahmet Suaedy, "The Impact on the Legitimacy of Fatwas: The Case of MUI and Digital Religious Authority," *Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 23, no. 1 (2023): 1–22.

search engines, and artificial intelligence have changed the way knowledge is produced, distributed, and legitimized. Authority that was once grounded in scholarly discipline, institutional credibility, moral integrity, and intellectual transmission is now increasingly shaped by visibility, popularity, algorithmic recommendation, and digital performance. As a result, the boundary between knowledge, opinion, information, and pseudo-authority becomes increasingly blurred.

From the perspective of Islamic philosophy, this condition reflects the weakening of sanad, adab, and epistemic hierarchy. Islamic intellectual tradition understands knowledge not simply as data or information, but as a truth-oriented process that requires verification, ethical responsibility, and proper recognition of authority. Therefore, the digital crisis of knowledge must be responded to not by rejecting technology, but by reconstructing the epistemological foundation through Islamic philosophical principles.

This study argues that Islamic philosophy offers a critical and constructive framework for facing the challenges of digital knowledge. The principle of tabayyun is essential for verifying digital information; sanad is necessary for maintaining intellectual accountability; adab restores the ethical order of knowledge; and the integration of revelation and reason prevents technology from becoming an autonomous source of truth. Al-Ghazali's critical method, Ibn Rushd's harmonization of reason and revelation, and al-Attas' concept of adab provide strong philosophical foundations for developing an Islamic digital epistemology.

Therefore, the main task of Muslim society in the digital era is not simply to adapt to technological change, but to ensure that technology remains subordinate to truth, wisdom, justice, and human responsibility. Artificial intelligence and digital platforms may serve as useful instruments for learning and communication, but they cannot replace human moral judgment, scholarly authority, and spiritual accountability. The future of Islamic knowledge in the digital age depends on the ability to build a balanced epistemology: one that is open

to technological development while firmly rooted in tauhid, adab, tabayyun, and the pursuit of authentic truth.

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