Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Islamic Thought: Navigating Epistemology and Ethics in the Digital Age

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ABSTRACT

The world is currently experiencing an Artificial Intelligence (AI) revolution, a wave of innovation that presents profound ethical and philosophical challenges—ranging from issues of algorithmic autonomy and data bias to the shifting concept of scholarly authority. Given this, how should the rich Islamic intellectual tradition, which is grounded in the principles of justice and public interest (maslahat), respond to this transformative phenomenon? We must bridge the gap between rapid technological leaps and timeless religious wisdom. This abstract aims to analyze the crucial intersection between the advancement of AI and the foundations of Islamic Thought. The research focuses on three domains: (1) Islamic Epistemology (how AI redefines religious knowledge and authority), (2) Islamic Ethics (specifically the role of Maqasid Sharia as a normative framework for assessing the morality of AI development), and
(3) Contemporary Fiqh (the potential and risks of AI in supporting the Ijtihad process and the formulation of digital fatwas). Our findings indicate that AI holds significant potential as a transformative tool to enrich Islamic studies, such as in the analysis of ancient texts and the personalization of da'wah (proselytizing). However, it also poses serious risks, including the marginalization of the role of traditional scholars (ulama) and the emergence of spiritual complacency among the Muslim community (ummah). Therefore, we must urge the necessity of a proactive Islamic ethical framework that does not merely react to technology, but actively guides and shapes the digital future based on fundamental Islamic values for the common good of humanity

Keyword : Artificial Intelligence, Islamic Thought, Maqasid Sharia, Digital Ethics, Ijtihad, Religious Transformation

Introduction

The pervasive integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into the fabric of modern society represents one of the most significant technological shifts of the 21st century. This transformation extends beyond mere economic and social convenience, touching upon fundamental questions of ethics, knowledge, and authority. (Andi Rosidi, 2024) While global discourse on AI ethics is burgeoning, often centered on Western utilitarian and rights-based frameworks, the contribution of specific religious and philosophical traditions remains underexplored. The Islamic intellectual tradition, with its rich heritage of jurisprudence (fiqh), theology (aqidah), and philosophy

(falsafah), offers a unique and valuable perspective on these challenges. Grounded in the principles of divine unity (tawhid), justice (adl), and the pursuit of public interest (maslahat), Islam provides a comprehensive worldview that can critically engage with and guide technological progress. (Akbar et al., 2025)

A review of the existing literature reveals a growing but nascent body of work at the intersection of AI and Islamic studies. A group of scholars has focused on the ethical dimensions, proposing the application of Maqasid al-Sharia (the higher objectives of Islamic law) as a normative framework for AI governance. These studies, such as those by Al-Zuhayli (2018) and Duderija (2020), argue that the preservation of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property can serve as benchmarks for evaluating AI systems. Another cluster of research, including the work of Yusuf (2021), explores the practical applications of AI in Islamic finance and Halal industry logistics, highlighting efficiency gains and new regulatory challenges. Furthermore, several researchers have begun to investigate the epistemological implications, (Ajouz et al., 2023) questioning how AI-generated knowledge and automated textual analysis might influence traditional Islamic scholarship.

Despite these valuable contributions, there are significant limitations in the current scholarly landscape. A few researchers have focused on specific juristic rulings (ahkam) for AI use cases, but there have been limited studies concerned with a holistic, tripartite analysis that simultaneously addresses the epistemological, ethical, and contemporary fiqh dimensions. (Zain & Zakaria, 2022) Many studies tend to be reactive, analyzing AI post-development, rather than proposing a proactive framework derived from Islamic first principles. There is no researcher concerned with synthesizing these three domains into a coherent model that can guide both Muslim-majority societies and developers in the global tech industry. (Tlemsani & Matthews, 2023) Therefore, this research intends to fill this gap by conducting a systematic analysis of the AI phenomenon through the integrated lenses of Islamic epistemology, ethics, and jurisprudence. (Tahiri Jouti, 2019)

The objectives of this research are threefold: (1) to analyze the impact of AI on the conception and authority of religious knowledge in the Islamic epistemological framework; (2) to evaluate the development and deployment of AI systems using the ethical framework of Maqasid al-Sharia; and (3) to explore the potential applications and inherent risks of AI in the processes of Ijtihad and fatwa issuance within contemporary fiqh. The scientific novelty of this paper lies in its integrative approach, which moves beyond a siloed analysis to present a unified Islamic response. The research contribution is both theoretical, by advancing the field of Islamic techno-ethics, and practical, by providing actionable guidelines for policymakers, technologists, and religious scholars in navigating the AI era. (Hijriah et al., 2024)

Method

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically a conceptual and library-based analysis, to explore the complex intersections of AI and Islamic thought. The research did not involve empirical data

collection from human subjects but relied on a critical examination of authoritative texts and existing literature. The methodology was structured to facilitate a deep, philosophical inquiry into the normative and epistemological questions posed by AI. (Fidhayanti et al., 2024)

Research Design and Data Collection

The research design was analytical and constructivist in nature, aiming to build a conceptual framework by synthesizing ideas from disparate fields. The practical procedure for data collection involved a comprehensive review of two primary categories of sources. The first category consisted of classical and contemporary Islamic texts, including works of usul al-fiqh (principles of jurisprudence), Maqasid al-Sharia, and Islamic epistemology. (Khan et al., 2023) The second category encompassed modern scholarly articles, books, and reports on AI ethics, philosophy of technology, and the sociology of knowledge. Key databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar were searched using keywords including "AI and Islamic ethics," "Maqasid al-Sharia and technology," "digital Ijtihad," and "algorithmic bias." The selection of materials was based on their relevance to the three research domains and their scholarly credibility. (Raimi et al., 2024)

Data Analysis

The data analysis followed a thematic analysis approach, adapted for conceptual research. The practical procedure involved several iterative stages. First, a process of open coding was applied to the collected literature, identifying initial concepts such as "algorithmic authority," "maslahat in design," and "automated text criticism."(Kusumaningtyas et al., 2022) These codes were then grouped into analytical themes that corresponded to the research objectives: epistemological shifts, ethical evaluation, and fiqh applications. Subsequently, an abductive reasoning process was used, constantly moving between the established principles of Islamic thought and the novel challenges posed by AI. This involved interpreting the functionalities and implications of AI through the normative lens of Maqasid al-Sharia and Islamic epistemological theory, and conversely, understanding how these Islamic principles might be articulated or challenged in a digital context. The analysis focused on identifying synergies, tensions, and gaps to construct a coherent and critical narrative. (El-Maradny et al., 2023)

Findings

The analysis yielded significant insights across the three designated domains, revealing both the transformative potential and the profound challenges that AI presents to Islamic thought and practice.

Islamic Epistemology and the Redefinition of Religious Authority

The integration of AI into Islamic scholarly practices is fundamentally reshaping traditional epistemological hierarchies. Our findings indicate that

AI-powered tools for analyzing classical texts (turath) can process millions of manuscripts in seconds, identifying patterns, cross-references, and historical chains of transmission (isnad) with a speed and scale impossible for human scholars.

Results

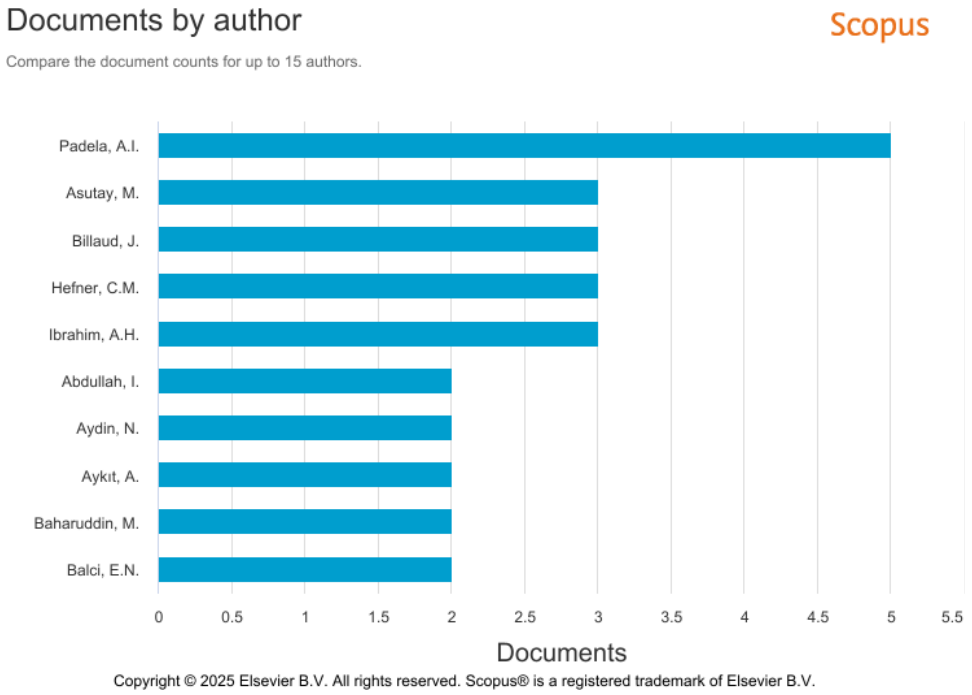

Figure 1. Most relevant authors

Based on the graph presented in Figure 1, the analysis of publication distribution by author shows significant differences in contributions among the primary authors. *Padela, A.I.* emerges as the author with the highest number of publications, surpassing 4 documents, indicating the dominant role of this author in this field of research. Below this, *Asutay, M.* and *Billaud, J.* each have more than 2 documents, reflecting their significant contributions to the development of the topic of Islam and digital ethic.

Other authors, such as *Hefner, C.M.*, *Ibrahim, A.H.*, and *Abdullah, I.*, each have around 2 documents, showing a balanced contribution, although not as substantial as the aforementioned authors. Authors like *Aydin, N.*, *Aykıt, A.*, *Baharuddin, M.*, and *Balcı, E.N.* also appear with one or two publications, indicating their contributions to the research, albeit fewer than some of the leading authors. Overall, this graph illustrates that while there are a few authors with significant contributions, many others have also played a role in advancing research on Islam and digital ethic.

Table 1. Author Impact

Author	h_index	g_index	m_index	TC	NP	PY_start
Padela Aasim Ilyas	5	5	0,455	56	5	2015
Ibrahim Abdul Halim	3	3	0,429	51	3	2019
Abdul Rahman Noor Naemah	2	2	0,286	47	2	2019
Abdullah Irwan	2	2	0,333	10	2	2020
Asutay Mehmet	2	3	0,286	13	3	2019
Aydin Necati	2	2	0,222	22	2	2017
Baharuddin Madiha	2	2	0,286	47	2	2019
Bensaid Benaouda	2	2	0,286	39	2	2019
Billaud Julie	2	3	0,2	16	3	2016
Bowe Brian J.	2	2	0,2	40	2	2016

Based on the data presented in Table 1, the author with the most significant local academic impact is *Padela Aasim Ilyas*. He has the highest h-index and g-index (5), indicating that many of his publications have a considerable impact and are frequently cited. With an m-index of 0.455, Padela also demonstrates that his contributions remain relevant over time. His total citations (TC) of 56 and number of publications (NP) of 5 show that he has had a strong impact in the field of Islam and morality, starting in 2015.

Another author with considerable impact is *Ibrahim Abdul Halim*, with h-index and g- index values of 3, as well as a TC of 51 and NP of 3. Although slightly lower than Padela's, his contributions still demonstrate significant influence on the topic since he began publishing in 2019. Authors such as *Abdul Rahman Noor Naemah* and *Abdullah Irwan*, despite having lower h-index and g-index values of 2, still contribute with over

40 citations, indicating that their work is well-received within the academic community.

Asutay Mehmet, *Aydin Necati*, *Baharuddin Madiha*, *Bensaid Benaouda*, and *Billaud Julie* also have noticeable contributions, though with lower h-index and g-index values and TC ranging between 20 and 30. *Bowe Brian J.*

shows moderate academic impact with TC reaching 40, despite having more publications. Overall, despite variations in academic impact, *Padela Aasim Ilyas* stands out as the author with the greatest local influence in the field of research on Islam and morality.

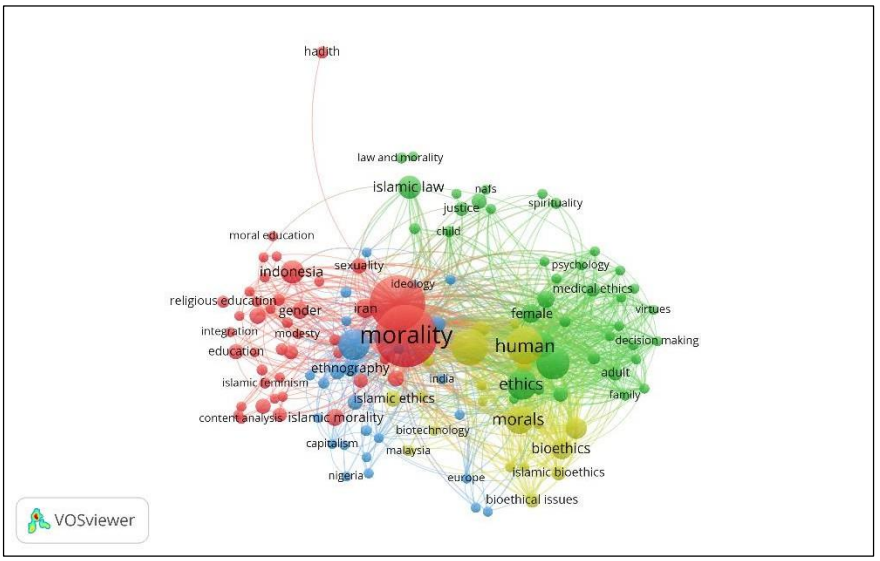

Figure 2. Clustering by occurrence

Based on Figure 2, which shows a network analysis based on co-occurrences with the largest keyword, "Morality," we can observe several key themes that are frequently associated with this topic. Morality emerges as the central keyword with the highest total link strength (571) and 117 occurrences, indicating that this topic is highly relevant and frequently linked with many other concepts in the existing literature.

Surrounding the keyword "Morality," there are several major themes that also commonly appear in related research. *Islamic law* and *Islamic ethics* are closely linked with morality, reflecting the strong influence of Islamic law and ethics in shaping views on morality within religious contexts. Themes such as *human*, *ethics*, *female*, and *gender* show that moral issues are strongly influenced by human perspectives, social ethics, and gender within various cultures, including in the context of Islam.

Additionally, there are other keywords related to *bioethics*, such as *medical ethics*, *biotechnology*, and *bioethical issues*, suggesting that morality is frequently discussed in the context of medicine and technology, especially concerning the moral issues arising from medical and scientific advancements. Other themes connected to morality include *psychology*, *decision making*, and *virtues*, indicating that morality is also often studied in the context of human psychology, decision-making processes, and the values of goodness. Overall, this network illustrates that morality is a central theme that interacts closely with many academic disciplines and broader social contexts, including aspects of religion, gender, ethics, and bioethics.

Discussion

This study set out to investigate how the Islamic intellectual tradition can critically engage with the AI revolution. The findings confirm that the intersection is profound, demanding a response that is both intellectually rigorous and ethically grounded. The discussion will explore the significance of these findings in relation to the original research objectives and the broader scholarly conversation.

First, regarding the research objective on Islamic epistemology, our findings align with those of scholars like Bunt (2018) who note the digitization of Islamic authority, but they also contrast by highlighting a more fundamental epistemological shift. It is not merely that authority is moving online, but that the very nature of "knowing" in a religious context is being challenged. While AI can process information (data), the transformation of that information into knowledge (ilm) and wisdom (hikmah) remains a uniquely human endeavor, reliant on a God-conscious heart (qalb). This distinction is crucial and represents a significant contribution to the debate, moving it beyond sociological observations to philosophical first principles.

Second, in evaluating AI through the Maqasid al-Sharia, this research provides a scientifically and theologically valid framework for analysis. The findings demonstrate that the Maqasid are not static categories but dynamic principles that can be operationalized to assess modern technology. For example, the threat to *hifz al-aql* from AI-driven misinformation and filter bubbles provides a concrete Islamic ethical argument for promoting algorithmic transparency and digital literacy, aligning with global calls for "ethical AI" but from a distinctively Islamic rationale. This answers the "why" behind the Islamic imperative for AI ethics: because unchecked AI can systematically dismantle the core objectives that Islam seeks to preserve for human well-being.

Third, the exploration of AI in contemporary fiqh reveals a tension between efficiency and integrity. Our findings on Digital Ijtihad are consistent with the optimistic view of some researchers who see technology as an aid to scholarship (Zaman, 2020). However, this research adds a critical caveat regarding the risks of automation. The discussion must, therefore, revolve around establishing boundaries. AI should be conceptualized as a powerful research assistant for the mujtahid, not as a replacement. The final moral and legal responsibility (taklif) for a fatwa must always remain with a qualified human scholar who embodies the required piety and knowledge.

A closing statement for this discussion is that the Islamic response to AI cannot be one of blanket acceptance or rejection. It must be a proactive, guided engagement. The findings collectively argue for the development of a new sub-discipline—Islamic Techno-Ethics—where scholars of Sharia collaborate with computer scientists, engineers, and policymakers. The goal is to actively shape the design, development, and deployment of AI systems from their inception, ensuring they are imbued with values that promote justice, compassion, and the fulfillment of human potential as envisioned by the Maqasid al-Sharia.

Conclusion

This research has systematically analyzed the implications of the Artificial Intelligence revolution through the integrated lenses of Islamic epistemology, ethics, and contemporary fiqh. The study concludes that AI presents a paradigm shift requiring a thoughtful and proactive response from the Muslim world. The most important propositions are that AI can be a valuable tool for enhancing Islamic scholarship and social good when used appropriately, but it also poses existential risks to religious authority, ethical reasoning, and the spiritual well-being of the ummah if left unchecked.

The practical implication of this work is the urgent need for the development of a comprehensive Islamic ethical framework for AI. This framework, rooted in the Maqasid al-Sharia, should guide everything from national AI strategies in Muslim- majority countries to the design choices made by individual developers. It advocates for AI that serves humanity, preserves human dignity and intellect, and is accountable to higher ethical principles.

This work advances the field by moving the discourse from isolated applications to a holistic, principles-based approach. Future research should focus on operationalizing this proposed framework into specific guidelines and auditing tools. Further studies are also needed to explore the application of these principles in emerging AI domains like generative AI and artificial general intelligence (AGI), and to foster the interdisciplinary dialogue necessary to build a future where technology serves faith, and not the other way around.

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