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AI and Qur'anic Interpretation: Exploring the Ethical and Epistemological Boundaries of Artificial Intelligence in Understanding the Qur'an

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Abstract

The rapid development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has significantly influenced religious studies, particularly in the analysis and interpretation of sacred texts. This study critically examines the role of AI in Qur'anic interpretation by addressing its epistemic capabilities, ethical limitations, and claims to interpretive authority. Employing a qualitative, literature-based research design, this study analyzes peer-reviewed scholarship on AI and religion, computational hermeneutics, natural language processing of sacred texts, and algorithmic bias, alongside classical and contemporary works in Islamic epistemology and Qur'anic exegesis. The findings indicate that while AI demonstrates high proficiency in linguistic processing, semantic consistency, and structural analysis of religious texts, it lacks epistemic understanding, moral intentionality, and ontological subjectivity. From the perspective of Islamic epistemology, knowledge is inseparable from consciousness, ethical responsibility, and interpretive accountability—dimensions that AI cannot possess. Moreover, algorithmic bias and the risk of decontextualization further challenge the use of AI as an autonomous interpretive authority in religious contexts. This study argues that AI should be positioned as an instrumental analytical tool rather than a subject of interpretation in Qur'anic exegesis. Its primary contribution lies in articulating a clear epistemological boundary between computational processing and hermeneutical understanding, thereby offering a critical framework for the ethical and responsible integration of AI within Islamic studies and religious scholarship more broadly.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Qur'anic Interpretation, Islamic Epistemology, Computational Hermeneutics, Algorithmic Bias.

Abstrak

Perkembangan pesat Artificial Intelligence (AI) telah membawa dampak signifikan dalam studi keagamaan, khususnya dalam analisis dan interpretasi teks-teks suci. Artikel ini mengkaji secara kritis peran AI dalam penafsiran Al-Qur'an dengan menyoroti kapabilitas epistemik, keterbatasan etis, serta klaim otoritas interpretatif yang menyertainya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif berbasis studi kepustakaan dengan menganalisis literatur ilmiah bereputasi mengenai AI dan agama, hermeneutika komputasional, pemrosesan bahasa alami terhadap teks suci, serta bias algoritmik, yang dipadukan dengan karya klasik dan kontemporer dalam epistemologi Islam dan tafsir Al-Qur'an. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun AI memiliki kemampuan tinggi dalam pemrosesan linguistik, konsistensi semantik, dan analisis struktural teks keagamaan, sistem ini tidak memiliki pemahaman epistemik, intensionalitas moral, dan subjektivitas ontologis. Dalam perspektif epistemologi Islam, pengetahuan tidak dapat dipisahkan dari kesadaran, tanggung jawab etis, dan akuntabilitas penafsir, yang seluruhnya tidak dimiliki oleh AI. Selain itu, risiko bias algoritmik

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dan dekonstekstualisasi makna memperkuat keterbatasan AI sebagai otoritas interpretatif dalam konteks keagamaan. Artikel ini berargumen bahwa AI seharusnya diposisikan sebagai instrumen analitis, bukan sebagai subjek penafsiran dalam tafsir Al-Qur'an. Kontribusi teoretis penelitian ini terletak pada penegasan batas epistemologis antara pemrosesan komputasional dan pemahaman hermeneutik, sekaligus menawarkan kerangka kritis bagi integrasi AI yang etis dan bertanggung jawab dalam studi Islam dan kajian keagamaan secara lebih luas.

Kata Kunci: Artificial Intelligence, Tafsir Al-Qur'an, Epistemologi Islam, Hermeneutika Komputasional, Bias Algoritmik.

Introduction

In recent years, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has moved beyond merely serving as a technical tool and has begun to assume an active role in religious domains, including religious education, spiritual guidance, and the interpretation of sacred texts. AI is now capable of providing personalized religious learning experiences and facilitating cross-cultural understanding, making it an increasingly influential technology in the religious life of global communities (Papakostas, 2025; Mauluddin, 2024). However, this transformation also raises serious controversies, particularly concerning the potential reinforcement of cognitive biases and the need for strict ethical oversight in the use of AI within religious spaces.

Furthermore, this change is structural in nature. The emergence of digital religious communities, AI-powered chatbots for spiritual guidance, and the digitization of sacred texts marks a significant shift from traditional religious practices toward technology-based religiosity. On one hand, these innovations expand accessibility to religious resources; on the other, they challenge concepts of authenticity and authority in religious practices that have historically relied on human scholarly authority (Putrawan, 2025). Several studies even emphasize that integrating AI in religious contexts has the potential to undermine the authority of scholars and classical scholarly traditions, while also raising doubts about the authenticity of religious content generated by AI systems (Sati et al., 2025).

The situation becomes increasingly urgent as AI begins to be applied directly to the analysis and interpretation of sacred texts. In Qur'anic studies, developments in computational hermeneutics and natural language processing (NLP) allow for complex semantic analysis through mapping meanings and inter-word relationships. The development of Qur'anic ontologies, for example, has opened new opportunities for context-based meaning retrieval and analysis (Beirade et al., 2021). Moreover, the availability of datasets such as the Morphologically-Analyzed and Syntactically-Annotated Quran (MASAQ), with hundreds of

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thousands of morphological and syntactic annotations, demonstrates that the Qur'anic text is increasingly open to large-scale computational exploration (Sawalha et al., 2025).

However, these technical advancements do not come without risks. Algorithmic bias—defined as systematic errors within AI systems that produce unfair outputs—has been shown to reinforce social inequalities and identity-based discrimination (Shin & Shin, 2023; Leavy et al., 2020). When such biases enter the analysis and interpretation of sacred texts, the consequences are not merely technical but also epistemological and ethical, as they touch upon meaning, value, and religious authority.

Previous studies have extensively discussed the potential of AI in religious education, digital religious practices, and computational analysis of sacred texts. Research has also identified ethical challenges and the risks of algorithmic bias in AI use more broadly. Meanwhile, studies on Qur'anic exegesis emphasize that interpretation involves in-depth linguistic, historical, and theological analysis and can be enriched through integrated approaches of tafsīr, ta'wīl, and hermeneutics (Demircigil, 2025; Supena, 2024).

Nevertheless, an important gap remains in the existing literature. Most research on AI and religion focuses on technical capabilities and digital innovations, whereas studies on Qur'anic exegesis emphasize methodological and normative dimensions without systematically examining the epistemological implications of AI use. In other words, there is limited research that integrates AI advancements in Qur'anic analysis with a critical and comprehensive evaluative framework of Islamic exegesis. Notably, several studies have warned that the use of AI in Qur'anic interpretation should not replace human scholars due to the risk of distorting religious understanding (Azhar et al., 2025).

Against this backdrop of change, controversy, and urgency, this study aims to critically examine the role of AI in Qur'anic studies and interpretation, situating it within an evaluative framework of Islamic exegesis and epistemology. The study seeks to address the central question: What is the epistemic and ethical position of AI in Qur'anic interpretation amid advances in computational technology?

The preliminary argument of this article is that, although AI offers significant technical solutions in the analysis and management of Qur'anic texts, it cannot be positioned as an autonomous interpretive agent. AI is better understood as an analytical instrument that requires epistemological and ethical oversight to ensure its use does not exceed the boundaries of authority, authenticity, and moral responsibility inherent in the tradition of Qur'anic exegesis.

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Methodology

The unit of analysis in this study is the contemporary academic discourse on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in religious studies and the interpretation of sacred texts, with particular attention to the Qur'an. This unit was selected because debates concerning AI and Qur'anic interpretation primarily occur at the conceptual, epistemological, and ethical levels rather than within a single geographic location or institutional setting. Accordingly, the analysis focuses on arguments, conceptual frameworks, and theoretical positions articulated in scholarly publications that address the capabilities, limitations, and normative implications of AI in religious interpretation.

This study adopts a qualitative research design based on a literature-based approach. A qualitative design is appropriate because the research does not aim to measure the technical performance of AI systems quantitatively, but rather to critically examine their epistemic boundaries, interpretive authority, and ethical implications within the context of Islamic studies. The literature-based design enables an in-depth conceptual analysis and critical synthesis of interdisciplinary scholarship spanning artificial intelligence, digital religion, ethics of technology, and Islamic epistemology.

The data sources consist of peer-reviewed international journal articles indexed in Scopus, selected conference proceedings, and authoritative classical and contemporary works in Islamic epistemology and Qur'anic exegesis. This combination of sources is necessary to bridge contemporary empirical and analytical studies on AI with the normative and philosophical foundations of Islamic interpretive traditions. The dataset includes studies on AI in religious education, computational hermeneutics, natural language processing of sacred texts, and algorithmic bias, alongside foundational works by scholars such as al-Attas, al-Ghazālī, al-Ṭabarī, and al-Rāzī.

Data were collected through a systematic literature search and selection process. Given the conceptual nature of the study, empirical data were drawn from scholarly texts that had undergone peer review. Literature searches were conducted using keywords such as *AI and religion*, *computational hermeneutics*, *Qur'anic interpretation*, *algorithmic bias*, and *Islamic epistemology*. Relevant publications were then selected based on thematic relevance, theoretical contribution, and their alignment with the research objectives.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis combined with critical–interpretive analysis. This approach was chosen to identify recurring conceptual patterns, epistemic assumptions, and ethical concerns underlying scholarly discussions on AI and sacred text

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interpretation. The analytical process involved: (1) categorizing the literature into key thematic domains, including AI capabilities, epistemic limitations, algorithmic bias, and interpretive authority; (2) interpreting these themes through the lens of Islamic epistemology and classical exegetical principles; and (3) synthesizing the findings to articulate a critical framework that positions AI as an instrumental analytical tool rather than an interpretive subject in Qur'anic exegesis.

This methodological approach enables a deep integration of contemporary AI scholarship with Islamic epistemological and hermeneutical frameworks, making it particularly suitable for interdisciplinary inquiry. However, the study is limited by its reliance on literature-based analysis and does not include direct empirical observation of AI-assisted Qur'anic interpretation in practice. This limitation suggests opportunities for future research employing case studies, ethnographic approaches, or experimental designs to complement the conceptual findings of this study.

Results and Discussion

A. Mapping the Capabilities and Epistemic Limits of Artificial Intelligence in Religious Studies and Sacred Text Interpretation

1. Functional Capabilities of AI in Religious Studies and Sacred Texts

The review of contemporary literature indicates that Artificial Intelligence (AI) possesses substantial capabilities in supporting religious studies, particularly at the technical and functional levels. Within the domain of religious education, AI has been shown to facilitate personalized learning experiences, enhance instructional efficiency, and expand access to religious materials. Kurata et al. (2025), for instance, report that educators perceive AI as an effective tool for increasing student engagement and optimizing learning in religious studies, while simultaneously acknowledging persistent ethical concerns and issues of unequal access.

In the analysis of sacred texts, approaches grounded in computational hermeneutics and natural language processing (NLP) have developed rapidly. Numerous studies demonstrate that AI systems are capable of performing Arabic morphological analysis, thematic clustering of verses, semantic search, and bilingual alignment of the Qur'an with a high degree of accuracy (Mohd Yousof et al., 2025). In addition, machine-learning-based sentiment analysis has been applied to sacred texts, including the Qur'an, in order to identify emotional patterns and dominant themes within specific passages (AlHasani et al., 2018).

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To provide a concise overview of these functional applications, Table 1 summarizes the main AI uses identified in the reviewed literature.

AI Application	Domain	Primary Function	Representative Studies
Personalized learning systems	Religious education	Adaptive instruction and learner engagement	Kurata et al. (2025)
Arabic morphological analysis	Qur'anic studies	Lexical and grammatical parsing	Mohd Yousof et al. (2025)
Thematic verse clustering	Sacred text analysis	Topic modeling and categorization	Mohd Yousof et al. (2025)
Semantic search	Qur'anic studies	Contextual retrieval of verses	Mohd Yousof et al. (2025)
Sentiment analysis	Sacred texts	Identification of emotional patterns	AlHasani et al. (2018)

Table 1. Functional Applications of AI in Religious Studies and Sacred Text Analysis

Taken together, these findings confirm that AI functions effectively as a text-processing tool, excelling in large-scale data management, the detection of linguistic patterns, and automated indexing. Nevertheless, these capabilities remain operational and syntactic in nature, rather than interpretative in a deeper epistemological sense.

2. Epistemic Limits of AI in Understanding and Meaning-Making

Despite its high performance in processing and analyzing religious texts, contemporary scholarship consistently emphasizes the existence of inherent epistemic limitations in AI systems. AI does not possess genuine understanding; instead, it generates outputs based on probabilistic patterns and data correlations. Chavanayarn (2023) argues that AI models such as ChatGPT operate without consciousness, intentionality, or reflective capacity, thereby risking a conflation between machine-generated information and authentic human expertise.

These epistemic constraints directly affect knowledge production. AI lacks the ability to perform normative judgment, to comprehend metaphysical contexts, or to consciously distinguish between literal, symbolic, and ethical meanings. In the case of sacred texts, this limitation becomes particularly evident, as the Qur'an and other religious scriptures contain

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metaphors, complex rhetorical structures, and contextual meanings that cannot be fully reduced to formal linguistic patterns (Chandra et al., 2024).

Accordingly, the findings indicate that AI operates primarily at the level of information and linguistic representation, rather than at the level of epistemic understanding as conceived within religious hermeneutical traditions.

3. Algorithmic Bias and Its Implications for Religious Studies

Another significant finding concerns the issue of algorithmic bias within AI systems. Several studies highlight that bias may emerge at every stage of the AI lifecycle, including data collection, model training, and system deployment (Revathy et al., 2025). Such bias has the potential to perpetuate inequality, reinforce stereotypes, and produce disproportionate or discriminatory outputs (Ali et al., 2025).

In religious contexts, algorithmic bias carries serious epistemic implications. Non-representative datasets may privilege certain interpretive perspectives while marginalizing others. Mandal and Hawamdeh (2025) demonstrate that a lack of demographic and epistemic diversity in AI training data directly affects the quality and fairness of analytical outcomes, particularly in sensitive domains related to identity, values, and belief.

These results underscore that AI cannot be regarded as epistemically neutral. Its outputs invariably reflect the structures of data and the assumptions embedded within the system, thereby necessitating rigorous oversight and validation mechanisms, especially in the study of religion.

4. Authority, Authenticity, and the Challenges of Digital Hermeneutics

Contemporary literature also identifies authority and authenticity as central challenges in the use of AI for religious text interpretation. Malik (2023) observes that AI involvement in the production of Islamic knowledge raises serious questions regarding the legitimacy of machine-assisted religious authority, particularly when AI systems are used to address theological questions or to explain Qur'anic verses.

Other studies emphasize that, although AI enhances accessibility to religious sources, it often fails to grasp historical, social, and theological contexts in a comprehensive manner (Fitryansyah & Fauziah, 2024). This reinforces the conclusion that AI cannot function as an interpretive subject, but only as a technical aid within the interpretive process.

Moreover, the use of AI in religious applications and virtual communities has begun to reshape patterns of spiritual engagement. Alkhouri (2024) notes that this transformation

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raises questions about the authenticity of spiritual experience and the role of technology in shaping religious practice, thereby intensifying the ethical considerations surrounding AI deployment in religious domains.

5. Synthesis of Findings: The Position of AI in Religious Studies and Interpretation

Based on the thematic analysis of the literature on AI and religion, several key conclusions can be synthesized. First, AI demonstrates strong capabilities in the processing, classification, and linguistic analysis of religious texts. Second, AI exhibits clear epistemic limitations, particularly in its inability to comprehend meaning, values, and the spiritual dimensions of sacred texts. Third, algorithmic bias constitutes a tangible risk that may affect the fairness and balance of religious knowledge production. Fourth, issues of authority and authenticity remain fundamental challenges in the integration of AI into religious interpretive practices.

Collectively, these findings affirm that the role of AI in religious studies is fundamentally instrumental rather than substantively hermeneutical. AI serves as an analytical tool that extends human capacity to manage and access data, but it does not replace human reflection, judgment, or epistemic responsibility.

B. AI between Linguistic Processing and Epistemic Understanding

Building on the empirical findings presented in the Results section, this discussion begins by interrogating the conceptual distinction between AI's demonstrated technical capabilities and the epistemic requirements of religious understanding. While the reviewed literature confirms that AI performs effectively in linguistic processing, semantic mapping, and large-scale textual analysis, these strengths raise a fundamental question regarding the nature of "understanding" itself within religious studies. This subsection therefore situates the technical findings on AI within a broader epistemological framework, asking whether computational efficiency can be equated with interpretive comprehension. By engaging Islamic epistemology as an analytical lens, the discussion seeks to clarify why the distinction between processing language and grasping meaning is not merely technical, but deeply normative and philosophical in nature.

The results of this study demonstrate that AI capabilities in religious studies are largely confined to the domain of linguistic data processing rather than epistemic meaning-making. This distinction is critical when viewed through the lens of Islamic epistemology, which understands knowledge (*ʿilm*) not as the accumulation of information, but as the integration of revelation (*waḥy*), rational reflection (*ʿaql*), and moral orientation (*akhlāq*). Al-Attas (1993)

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defines knowledge as "the arrival of meaning in the soul," a formulation that presupposes consciousness, intentionality, and ethical awareness on the part of the knowing subject. Within this framework, Qur'anic understanding necessarily involves human agency that is reflective and morally grounded. Consequently, meaning is not reducible to linguistic structures alone, but emerges through an epistemic process rooted in ethical responsibility and spiritual awareness.

In contrast, AI systems operate through statistical modeling, pattern recognition, and probabilistic correlations without consciousness or intentionality. This limitation aligns with broader epistemic critiques of AI, which emphasize that machine-generated outputs do not represent substantive understanding but rather simulations of knowledge (Chavanayarn, 2023). While computational linguistics enables AI to process translations and detect semantic consistency across different renderings of sacred texts, such as the Qur'an (Chandra & Kulkarni, 2022), this capacity remains syntactic rather than epistemic. Similarly, computational hermeneutics—drawing on automated theorem proving and argumentation theory—can evaluate logical coherence within discourse, yet it does not grasp meaning as lived or morally oriented understanding (Fuenmayor & Benzmüller, 2019). These findings reinforce the conclusion that AI lacks the epistemological status required for genuine interpretation.

Recognizing this epistemic limitation is not merely a theoretical clarification, but has direct implications for questions of authority and legitimacy in Qur'anic interpretation. If AI lacks consciousness, intentionality, and moral orientation, then its outputs cannot carry the same epistemic weight as interpretations produced by human scholars. This insight necessitates a closer examination of who—or what—can legitimately claim interpretive authority in Islamic tradition. Accordingly, the following subsection extends this analysis by addressing the problem of tafsīr authority and the absence of niyyah in AI systems, situating the epistemic limits of AI within the ethical and normative foundations of Islamic exegetical practice.

C. Interpretive Authority and the Absence of *Niyyah* in AI Systems

Following the identification of AI's epistemic limitations in meaning-making, the question of interpretive authority becomes unavoidable. If understanding in Islamic epistemology presupposes consciousness, moral orientation, and ethical responsibility, then the legitimacy of interpretation must also be examined in normative terms. This subsection therefore shifts the focus from epistemic capacity to authority (*ḥujjiyyah*) in Qur'anic

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interpretation, exploring whether AI systems—despite their technical sophistication—can be regarded as authoritative interpreters. By situating authority within the Islamic exegetical tradition, the discussion highlights how intentionality (*niyyah*) and moral accountability function as decisive criteria that distinguish human interpretation from computational output.

Within the Islamic exegetical tradition, interpretive authority is inseparable from scholarly competence, intellectual lineage (*sanad*), and moral integrity. Classical mufassirūn such as al-Ṭabarī emphasized rigorous transmission and verification of sources (Al-Thabari, 2001), while al-Rāzī highlighted rational reflection accompanied by epistemic humility (Al-Razi, 1981). Al-Ghazālī further asserted that *niyyah* (intentionality) and *adab* (ethical discipline) are foundational prerequisites for all forms of knowledge production, including Qur'anic interpretation (Al-Ghazālī, 2005). These principles position interpretation as a morally accountable act, rooted in conscious intention and ethical responsibility. Authority in tafsīr, therefore, does not arise solely from technical competence, but from the moral and spiritual disposition of the interpreter. This framework underscores why interpretation cannot be reduced to procedural or computational processes alone.

AI systems, as non-subjective entities, lack *niyyah*, moral accountability, and ethical intentionality. Consequently, they cannot be positioned as legitimate holders of interpretive authority. This conclusion is consistent with contemporary scholarship showing that AI-assisted Islamic knowledge production raises serious concerns regarding legitimacy and authenticity (Malik, 2023). Moreover, recent studies indicate that generative AI can amplify cognitive biases, subtly shaping users' understanding of religious doctrines and cultural diversity (Zhang et al., 2025). Such dynamics further complicate claims of neutrality or authority in AI-generated outputs. Epistemologically, AI may assist scholars by organizing data, retrieving sources, or summarizing interpretations, but it cannot replace the role of the mufassir. AI thus remains an auxiliary analytical tool (*muʿīn*), not an interpretive authority.

The absence of niyyah and moral accountability not only disqualifies AI from interpretive authority, but also exposes deeper risks associated with its uncritical use in religious contexts. When AI outputs are perceived as neutral or authoritative, they may obscure embedded assumptions, data biases, and epistemic asymmetries that shape interpretation indirectly. This concern invites further examination of how AI-mediated religious knowledge may influence users' perceptions, values, and interpretive horizons. Accordingly, the next subsection turns to the issue of epistemic bias and the illusion of

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objectivity in AI systems, analyzing how technological mediation can subtly reshape religious understanding without possessing interpretive legitimacy.

D. Algorithmic Bias and Epistemic Justice in Qur'anic Interpretation

If AI cannot claim interpretive authority due to the absence of niyyah and moral accountability, a further question arises regarding the epistemic consequences of relying on its outputs. Beyond issues of authority, AI-mediated interpretation introduces structural risks that affect fairness, representation, and epistemic balance. This subsection therefore shifts the discussion from legitimacy to epistemic justice, examining how algorithmic bias may shape Qur'anic interpretation in subtle yet consequential ways. By situating algorithmic bias within the Islamic ethical principle of ʿadl (justice), this analysis connects empirical findings from the Results section with normative concerns about equity, plurality, and responsibility in the production of religious knowledge.

The issue of algorithmic bias identified in the Results section has direct implications for epistemic justice within religious studies. In Islamic intellectual tradition, justice (ʿadl) functions as a foundational ethical principle governing the production and dissemination of knowledge. Contemporary AI research demonstrates that bias can emerge at multiple stages of the AI lifecycle, including data collection, model training, and system deployment (Revathy et al., 2025; Ali et al., 2025). Such bias may result in disproportionate representations of certain perspectives while marginalizing others. In the context of Qur'anic interpretation, this risk is particularly acute, as datasets may privilege dominant interpretive traditions based on data availability rather than epistemic legitimacy.

Applying computational methods to sacred texts therefore raises serious ethical concerns. Rohra and Prasad Shukla (2025) stress that respectful and accurate analysis of sacred texts requires heightened ethical awareness to avoid misinterpretation and epistemic harm. Furthermore, epistemic limitations in AI can negatively influence decision-making processes and perpetuate misinformation unless explicitly acknowledged and addressed (Chavanayarn, 2023). Recent ethical frameworks emphasize justice, transparency, and accountability as core principles in AI design and implementation (Srivash et al., 2025). Within Qur'anic studies, these principles necessitate continuous human oversight and scholarly validation to ensure that AI-supported analyses do not undermine the pluralistic and cautious ethos of the tafsīr tradition.

These concerns reveal that algorithmic bias is not merely a technical flaw, but an epistemic and ethical challenge with direct implications for how sacred meaning is mediated

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and understood. When AI systems are treated as neutral instruments, their embedded assumptions may obscure deeper ontological limitations regarding their relationship to revelation itself. This recognition invites a more fundamental inquiry into the nature of AI as a non-subjective entity and its capacity—or incapacity—to engage with the spiritual and metaphysical dimensions of Qur'anic hermeneutics. Accordingly, the following subsection addresses the ontological boundaries of AI within Islamic hermeneutics, clarifying why technological assistance cannot substitute for the human encounter with revelation.

E. Ontological Limits of AI in Islamic Hermeneutics

The problem of algorithmic bias discussed in the previous subsection ultimately points to a deeper issue that cannot be resolved solely through technical refinement or ethical regulation. Even if concerns of fairness, transparency, and accountability were adequately addressed, a more fundamental question remains regarding the ontological status of AI itself. Islamic hermeneutics is grounded not only in epistemic procedures but also in assumptions about the nature of the interpreting subject. This subsection therefore shifts the discussion from epistemic justice to ontological capacity, examining whether AI, as a non-human entity, possesses the conditions necessary to participate meaningfully in Qur'anic interpretation.

Islamic hermeneutics conceptualizes interpretation as an activity that is both intellectual and spiritual. Practices such as tadabbur and frameworks like maqāṣid al-sharīʿah require reflective engagement oriented toward ethical purpose and human well-being (Kamali, 2019). These dimensions presuppose an ontological capacity to internalize meaning, respond to revelation, and align understanding with moral responsibility. Interpretation, therefore, is not merely an analytical exercise, but an existential engagement with divine guidance. Human subjectivity, consciousness, and ethical orientation are essential to this process, positioning the interpreter as an active participant in meaning-making rather than a passive processor of textual data.

AI, as a non-conscious and non-subjective entity, lacks the ontological conditions required for such engagement. Although computational approaches can assist in textual clarification, semantic mapping, and the evaluation of argumentative coherence, they remain fundamentally detached from the spiritual and ethical dimensions intrinsic to Islamic hermeneutics. This limitation echoes Iqbal (2000) critique of modern epistemologies that detach knowledge from the sacred order and moral purpose. Without consciousness, moral responsibility, or the capacity for spiritual receptivity, AI cannot experience revelation or respond to it meaningfully. Its outputs, however sophisticated, remain external simulations

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rather than internalized understanding. Consequently, AI cannot replace the human role in Qur'anic interpretation, but can only function as a technical facilitator that supports human interpretive labor.

Recognizing the ontological limits of AI clarifies why debates about authority, bias, and ethics cannot be resolved by technological advancement alone. These issues are rooted in the fundamental distinction between human subjectivity and machine functionality. By situating AI within its proper ontological bounds, Islamic hermeneutics affirms that technological tools must remain subordinate to human moral agency and spiritual responsibility. This insight provides the foundation for a broader synthesis of the article's findings, which integrates empirical results with Islamic epistemological and ethical frameworks. The following subsection therefore articulates a critical synthesis of AI's role in Qur'anic studies, highlighting its instrumental value while reaffirming the irreplaceable position of human interpreters.

F. Critical Synthesis and Theoretical Contribution

The ontological constraints of AI established in the preceding subsection provide the necessary grounding for a final synthesis of this study's arguments. Having demonstrated that AI lacks the consciousness, intentionality, and spiritual receptivity required for hermeneutical engagement, the discussion now turns toward consolidating the empirical findings and theoretical insights developed throughout the article. This subsection therefore functions as an integrative reflection, bringing together technical, epistemological, and ethical considerations in order to clarify the proper position of AI within Qur'anic studies and Islamic scholarship more broadly.

Synthesizing the empirical findings on AI with the normative framework of Islamic epistemology, this study affirms that AI occupies an instrumental rather than epistemically authoritative role in Qur'anic studies. While AI demonstrates significant capacity in linguistic processing, data organization, and pattern recognition, it lacks the epistemological and ontological conditions required for interpretation. The primary theoretical contribution of this article lies in articulating clear boundaries for AI's role in tafsīr, thereby preventing conceptual overreach that conflates computation with understanding. By foregrounding principles such as niyyah, amanah, and maqāṣid al-sharīʿah, the study proposes a normative framework that governs AI use ethically and responsibly.

Rather than rejecting technological innovation, this framework positions Islamic epistemology as a critical lens for guiding AI integration in religious scholarship. AI is not

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framed as a threat to tradition, but as a tool whose legitimacy depends on human oversight, ethical intentionality, and scholarly accountability. This approach addresses contemporary concerns regarding bias, authority, and authenticity, while preserving the centrality of human epistemic agency. In doing so, the study contributes to broader interdisciplinary debates on AI, ethics, and religion by offering a model that harmonizes technological utility with moral and spiritual responsibility.

By consolidating these arguments, this subsection closes the discussion by reaffirming that the question of AI in Qur'anic interpretation is ultimately a question of epistemic responsibility rather than technological capability. The findings underscore that meaningful engagement with sacred texts remains inseparable from human consciousness, moral intentionality, and spiritual accountability. These insights provide the conceptual foundation for the concluding section, which summarizes the study's key contributions, reflects on its limitations, and outlines future directions for ethically grounded research at the intersection of artificial intelligence and Islamic scholarship.

Conclusion

This study has examined the role of artificial intelligence in Qur'anic studies by integrating empirical findings from contemporary AI research with the normative framework of Islamic epistemology. The analysis demonstrates that while AI exhibits strong capabilities in linguistic processing, data organization, and pattern recognition, these capacities remain confined to the level of instrumental assistance. AI does not possess the epistemological or ontological conditions—such as consciousness, intentionality, and moral accountability—required for genuine Qur'anic interpretation. Consequently, AI cannot be regarded as an epistemically authoritative agent in *tafsīr*, but rather as a technical tool that supports human scholarly activity.

The principal contribution of this article lies in articulating clear conceptual boundaries that distinguish computational efficiency from epistemic understanding within religious scholarship. By foregrounding key Islamic epistemological principles, including *niyyah*, *amanah*, and *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*, the study offers a normative framework for evaluating and governing the use of AI in the study of sacred texts. This framework challenges uncritical narratives that equate advanced language modeling with interpretive competence, while simultaneously rejecting technophobic approaches that dismiss AI's analytical utility altogether.

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Several limitations should be acknowledged. This study is primarily theoretical and literature-based, and does not empirically test specific AI systems within applied Qur'anic research contexts. Future studies may therefore explore case-based evaluations of AI-assisted tafsīr, comparative analyses across different religious traditions, or the development of ethically informed AI design models tailored for religious studies. Ultimately, this article argues that the responsible integration of AI into Qur'anic scholarship depends not on expanding machine autonomy, but on reaffirming human epistemic responsibility, ethical intentionality, and spiritual awareness as the foundations of interpretive authority.

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