EPISTEMIC AUTHORITY AND METHODOLOGICAL TENSIONS IN AI-ASSISTED QUR'ANIC EXEGESIS: A CASE STUDY OF TAQIQURAN.ID

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Abstract

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into Qur'anic interpretation raises fundamental questions about epistemic authority and methodological validity. This study examines the epistemological tensions associated with AI-assisted thematic exegesis through a qualitative case study of Taqiquran.id. It focuses on five subthemes concerning the social functions of mosques: education, economic empowerment, sociopolitical activities, interfaith dialogue, and gender-related issues. Data were drawn from documented application outputs, interviews with two Qur'anic studies scholars, and an interview with the application developer. The analysis combined a critical thematic examination of the application's exegetical outputs, guided by the methodological principles of tafsīr mawḍūʿī (thematic exegesis), with a thematic analysis of the interview data. The findings indicate that outputs on education and economic empowerment were relatively consistent with basic thematic requirements, whereas those addressing sociopolitical activities and interfaith dialogue raised contextual and jurisprudential concerns. Differences in scholarly assessments of gender-related outputs further underscored the importance of interpretive plurality. The developer's account of scholarly authorization of the training dataset also highlighted the distinction between the credibility of knowledge sources and the validity of individual AI-generated outputs. Moreover, the reported 90% accuracy rate could not be independently verified. These findings suggest that AI-generated thematic interpretations require contextual verification and accountable human oversight. The study proposes an epistemic-ethical framework centered on source transparency, methodological verification, interpretive plurality, and scholarly accountability, positioning AI as an assistive tool rather than an autonomous authority in Qur'anic exegesis.

***Keywords**: Artificial Intelligence, Epistemic Authority, Religious Interpretation, Thematic Tafsir, Qur'anic Exegesis*

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INTRODUCTION

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into Qur'anic studies has expanded the possibilities for retrieving, organizing, and communicating religious knowledge (Trisnawati et al., 2025). AI-assisted applications can identify relevant verses and generate thematic explanations efficiently (Muhamad et al., 2025). However, these capabilities raise an important epistemological question: can algorithmically generated religious information meet the methodological standards and scholarly authority associated with Qur'anic interpretation? This question is particularly relevant when AI-generated narratives resemble established exegetical explanations without clearly distinguishing textual compilation from interpretive judgment (Khalila et al., 2025).

Within the Islamic scholarly tradition, Qur'anic exegesis requires systematic engagement with linguistic structures, historical contexts, intertextual relationships, and established interpretive sources. Similarly, thematic interpretation (*tafsīr mawḍūʿī*) involves more than collecting verses related to a particular subject; it requires a contextually grounded understanding of the relationships among them (Kerwanto et al., 2024). The ability to generate coherent thematic information, therefore, does not in itself establish exegetical validity. This distinction is central to determining the appropriate scholarly role of AI-assisted Qur'anic applications (Kharomen & In'amuzzahidin, 2024).

Recent studies have examined the limitations of generative AI in interpreting Qur'anic texts. Al-Janabi (2024) and Andrean and Harahap (2025), for example, identify challenges related to contextual accuracy and interpretive depth by comparing ChatGPT-generated explanations with established exegetical sources. Meanwhile, Ahmad and Ghafar (2026) broaden the discussion of AI-mediated sacred-text analysis by examining how interpretive authority is shaped by sociotechnical and institutional arrangements. Together, these studies highlight the need to distinguish computational capability from methodological validity and interpretive legitimacy, while recognizing their interrelationships.

Building on this scholarship, the present study examines how epistemic authority and methodological adequacy are negotiated in the use of Taqiquran.id, an AI-assisted application that provides thematic Qur'anic information (Muchlisin, 2024). Rather than evaluating AI performance in general, the study investigates the relationship among documented application outputs, assessments by two Qur'anic studies scholars, and the developer's account of how knowledge sources are authorized. The social functions of mosques provide a bounded thematic domain for this examination, encompassing five subthemes with distinct interpretive considerations. These subthemes serve as the analytical focus rather than constituting the study's primary research object (Ridho et al., 2022).

The study addresses three research questions: (1) To what extent do Taqiquran.id outputs meet the methodological requirements of thematic Qur'anic interpretation? (2) What epistemological tensions concerning authority emerge from the relationship among algorithmic outputs, scholarly assessments, and the developer's claims about knowledge authorization? (3) What epistemic-ethical principles can be derived from these findings to clarify the appropriate role of AI in Qur'anic inquiry?

The article makes three contributions. Empirically, it examines variations in scholarly assessments of AI-generated thematic explanations. Conceptually, it distinguishes the authorization of knowledge sources from the validation of individual algorithmic

outputs. Methodologically, it clarifies the boundaries between AI-assisted information provision and accountable human interpretation. These contributions inform a preliminary epistemic-ethical AI framework that emphasizes source transparency, methodological verification, interpretive plurality, and scholarly accountability.

Literature Review

The epistemological foundations of Qur'anic exegesis distinguish access to scriptural information from the production of methodologically sound interpretations. In thematic exegesis (*tafsīr mawḍūʿī*), relevant Qur'anic passages must be examined in light of their linguistic and historical contexts, intertextual relationships, and established scholarly interpretations (al-Farmawi, 1977). This distinction provides a key criterion for evaluating AI-assisted applications: retrieving relevant verses does not necessarily mean that the resulting explanations meet the methodological requirements of *tafsīr*.

The relationship between religious knowledge and technological mediation has been widely discussed in digital religion scholarship. Campbell (2007, 2010) demonstrates that digital environments can redistribute and reinforce religious authority rather than simply displace established institutions. Similarly, Bunt (2018) illustrates how cyber-Islamic environments reshape the circulation and recognition of Islamic knowledge. These perspectives suggest that technological platforms mediate religious authority, while the legitimacy of their content remains tied to scholarly, institutional, and interpretive practices. Generative AI further complicates this relationship by producing synthesized explanations whose sources and interpretive decisions may not be readily apparent to users.

Research in computational Qur'anic studies highlights AI's potential to improve access to religious information. ElKoumy and Sarhan (2025), for example, examine computational methods for ranking and retrieving relevant Qur'anic information. Studies of AI-generated interpretations, however, point to additional methodological challenges. Al-Janabi (2024) and Andrean and Harahap (2025) identify limitations in the contextual depth and interpretive adequacy of ChatGPT-generated Qur'anic explanations compared with established *tafsīr* sources. These findings underscore the need to distinguish technical proficiency in retrieving and synthesizing scriptural information from the methodological rigor required for Qur'anic interpretation.

Other studies further illuminate the challenges of applying AI to religious knowledge. Latifi (2024) examines algorithmic bias, accountability, and the complexities of religious reasoning in AI-assisted Shi'i *ijtihād*. Biana (2024) highlights representational assumptions that may shape religion-based AI chatbots, while Farquhar et al. (2024) examine broader concerns about the factual reliability of large language models. Addressing a related challenge, Mohammed et al. (2025) investigate source-grounded generation for Islamic fatwa question answering. Although these studies focus on different technologies and religious disciplines, they collectively indicate that technical reliability, interpretive adequacy, and scholarly accountability require distinct forms of evaluation.

The ethical implications of these developments have also received increasing attention. Floridi and Cowls (2019) propose five foundational principles for AI ethics, including explicability, justice, and non-maleficence. Ahmad and Ghafar (2026), meanwhile, examine interpretive authority in AI-mediated religious knowledge by considering the relationships among textual sources, technological processes,

and institutional governance. These contributions underscore the importance of transparency and accountability. However, general AI governance principles must be considered alongside the specific methodological requirements of the religious disciplines in which these technologies are used.

The literature identifies three interconnected concerns: the methodological validity of AI-generated religious explanations, the mediation of scholarly authority through technological systems, and the ethical conditions governing their use. Building on these insights, the present study brings documented Taqiquran.id outputs, scholarly assessments, and the developer's account into a single case-specific analysis. This approach examines how the authorization of knowledge sources relates to the validity of individual AI-generated explanations and provides an empirical basis for proposing epistemic-ethical safeguards for AI-assisted thematic Qur'anic inquiry.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework integrates three complementary perspectives: thematic Qur'anic exegesis, digital religious authority, and AI ethics. The principles of *tafsīr mawḍūʿī* (al-Farmawi, 1977) provide the disciplinary criteria for assessing the methodological adequacy of AI-generated explanations. Campbell's (2007) account of digital religious authority informs the analysis of how technological systems mediate scholarly legitimacy, while the AI ethics principles proposed by Floridi and Cowls (2019) provide a basis for examining transparency, accountability, and the potential implications of AI-mediated religious knowledge.

These perspectives are operationalized through five exegetical criteria: (1) the relevance and adequacy of verse selection; (2) linguistic and historical contextualization; (3) intertextual coherence (*munāsabāt*); (4) engagement with established exegetical and jurisprudential perspectives; and (5) recognition of interpretive plurality. These criteria serve as analytical dimensions for examining the documented Taqiquran.id outputs and scholarly assessments, rather than as standalone measures of the application's overall technical accuracy.

To examine epistemic authority, the framework distinguishes between source authorization and output validation. Source authorization concerns the scholarly credibility and authorization of the knowledge resources used by an AI system, whereas output validation concerns the methodological adequacy of individual generated explanations. This distinction guides the analysis of the developer's account alongside assessments by two Qur'anic studies scholars. It also avoids assuming that scholarly involvement in preparing knowledge resources guarantees the validity of every subsequent output.

The integration of these perspectives informs the proposed Epistemic-Ethical AI Framework, which comprises four principles: source transparency, methodological verification, recognition of interpretive plurality, and human scholarly accountability. The framework is developed by synthesizing the empirical findings and theoretical perspectives. It positions AI-generated information as a potential resource for scholarly inquiry while maintaining a clear distinction between computational assistance and accountable exegetical judgment. The framework is conceptual and has not been independently validated as a technical model.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design and Scope

This study employed a qualitative case study design incorporating critical thematic exegetical analysis to examine the methodological validity and epistemic

authority of AI-assisted Qur'anic interpretation. The case study approach enabled an in-depth investigation of Taqiquran.id as a bounded digital platform using multiple sources of qualitative evidence (Yin, 2018). The methodological principles of thematic Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr mawḍūʿī*), particularly those discussed by al-Farmāwī (Abidin, 2019), provided the disciplinary basis for distinguishing the retrieval of Qur'anic information from methodologically justified interpretation.

The study focused on the epistemological and methodological dimensions of AI-assisted Qur'anic interpretation within Taqiquran.id. To establish a manageable analytical scope, the social functions of the mosque served as a thematic testing domain encompassing five subthemes: education, economic empowerment, sociopolitical activities, interfaith dialogue, and gender-related issues. These subthemes provided the material for assessing the interpretive adequacy of AI-generated outputs; they were not treated as independent objects of mosque-related research. The analysis was restricted to documented application outputs collected in April 2026.

Data Sources and Collection

The study drew on three categories of primary qualitative evidence. The first comprised documented outputs generated by Taqiquran.id in response to five predetermined thematic inputs, including Qur'anic references, translations, and explanatory syntheses. These outputs constituted the primary units of analysis. The second consisted of assessments from two scholars specializing in Qur'anic studies and *tafsīr*, identified as E1 and E2. The third was an interview with an application developer, identified as D1, who provided information about the application's knowledge sources, scholarly involvement, operational mechanisms, and reported reliability.

Participants were selected based on their expertise and relevance to the research objectives. The two scholars assessed the exegetical adequacy of the application's outputs, while the developer provided information about the application's development and the authorization of its knowledge sources. This approach was consistent with the principle of information power, which emphasizes the relevance and specificity of participants' knowledge rather than sample size alone (Malterud et al., 2016). However, the limited number of participants was not taken as evidence of thematic saturation.

The application outputs were collected in April 2026 by entering the five predetermined thematic inputs into Taqiquran.id and documenting the resulting Qur'anic references, translations, and explanatory narratives. These materials provided the empirical basis for examining the relationship between AI-generated information and the methodological principles of thematic exegesis. Each thematic input and its corresponding output constituted a separate unit of analysis. The exact input formulations and available testing documentation were considered when assessing the generated explanations. Information about the underlying AI model that was not publicly disclosed was not inferred.

Qualitative interviews were conducted using prepared interview guides, with flexibility to explore relevant issues in greater depth. The interviews with E1 and E2 focused on verse relevance, contextual adequacy, methodological consistency, and interpretive disagreement. The interview with D1 addressed the selection of knowledge sources, scholarly authorization, operational mechanisms, and claims about output reliability. Interview data were organized by participant code and analyzed in relation to the documented application outputs.

Secondary sources included foundational works on Qur'anic exegesis, relevant classical and contemporary commentaries, and academic publications on digital religious authority and AI ethics. These materials provided methodological and conceptual reference points for interpreting the empirical evidence.

Data Analysis

Data analysis proceeded in four interconnected stages. First, the documented application outputs were organized into five thematic units. Each unit included the Qur'anic references, translations, and explanatory narratives generated by the application. This organization facilitated systematic examination of the outputs across themes involving different interpretive considerations.

Second, the outputs were examined through critical thematic exegetical analysis using five criteria derived from the methodological principles of *tafsīr mawḍūʿī*: (a) the relevance and adequacy of verse selection; (b) consideration of linguistic and historical context; (c) coherence in the relationships among relevant Qur'anic passages (*munāsabāt*); (d) engagement with established exegetical and jurisprudential perspectives; and (e) recognition of interpretive plurality where scholarly disagreement was relevant. These criteria provided a theory-informed framework for assessing the methodological adequacy of the AI-generated explanations, drawing on the principles of directed qualitative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Third, the interview data were analyzed thematically, informed by Braun and Clarke (2021). The analysis examined recurring and divergent perspectives on methodological adequacy, interpretive complexity, knowledge authorization, and algorithmic reliability. Agreements and disagreements between E1 and E2 were retained as analytically significant findings rather than automatically reconciled into a single evaluative judgment.

Fourth, evidence from the application outputs, scholarly assessments, and developer interview was synthesized through epistemological interpretation. Particular attention was given to the distinction between source authorization and output validation. Source authorization concerns the credibility and scholarly foundations of the application's knowledge resources, whereas output validation concerns the methodological adequacy of individual generated explanations. To maintain traceability between the theoretical framework, empirical evidence, and research findings, the five exegetical criteria guided the comparison of application outputs and expert assessments. The resulting analysis was then organized around the study's three research questions.

Epistemic Position of AI-Generated Information

AI-generated outputs were treated as objects of critical examination and potential preliminary resources for Qur'anic inquiry, rather than as authoritative interpretations in their own right. This approach distinguishes the algorithmic retrieval and organization of relevant Qur'anic materials from the scholarly processes of contextual reasoning, interpretive evaluation, and normative judgment.

Accordingly, the relevance of retrieved verses was not considered sufficient to establish exegetical validity. Interpretive adequacy required further assessment against established methodological principles and scholarly evaluations. Similarly, the developer's statements about dataset authorization and reported accuracy were treated as informant accounts rather than independently verified technical evidence. In particular, the reported accuracy rate of 90% was not treated as a statistical finding because the underlying evaluation

procedures and supporting records were unavailable for independent verification.

Trustworthiness and Research Limitations

Analytical credibility was supported by examining three complementary sources of evidence: documented application outputs, scholarly assessments, and the developer's explanations. Differences among these sources were retained and critically examined rather than resolved in favor of technological claims or individual scholarly judgments (Herliana et al., 2026). The relationship between analytical criteria, empirical evidence, and interpretations was made explicit to enhance analytical transparency, following the qualitative trustworthiness principles discussed by Nowell et al. (2017). Participants are identified by role-based codes (E1, E2, and D1), and personal identifying details are omitted where they are not necessary for understanding the findings.

The study was limited to one application, five thematic testing units, two scholars, and one developer. It did not include an independent technical audit of the application's underlying model, complete dataset, or statistical performance. The findings therefore provide context-specific qualitative insights rather than generalizable measurements of AI accuracy.

The proposed Epistemic-Ethical AI Framework was developed by synthesizing the empirical findings and relevant theoretical perspectives. According to the original research account, the framework was also presented to one participating *tafsīr* scholar for appraisal of its scholarly relevance, conceptual consistency, and practical feasibility. Because no standardized testing procedure was documented, this appraisal is distinguished from independent empirical validation. The framework is therefore presented as a preliminary conceptual contribution rather than a technically validated AI model.

DISCUSSION

From Thematic Retrieval to Exegetical Validity: Reconsidering the Methodological Role of AI

The findings highlight a fundamental distinction between AI's ability to organize thematically relevant Qur'anic information and its capacity to generate methodologically justified interpretations. The relatively favorable assessments of the educational and economic testing units suggest that Taqiquran.id can provide useful preliminary material for thematic inquiry (Gunawan et al., 2021). However, these assessments should be interpreted in relation to the specific criteria used to evaluate the outputs, rather than as evidence of comprehensive exegetical validity (Fuadi & Muhammad, 2025).

The identification of Qur'an 9:122 and 62:10 illustrates this distinction. Although both passages were considered relevant to their respective thematic inquiries, connecting them to contemporary educational and economic functions of mosques requires interpretive reasoning beyond the identification of scriptural references (Raja Yusof et al., 2025). Such connections must be established through contextual examination and methodological justification. The coherence of an AI-generated thematic narrative should therefore be distinguished from the more demanding scholarly work required to interpret the relationship between Qur'anic passages and contemporary socio-religious issues (Aldeeb, 2026).

This distinction aligns with the methodological principles of thematic exegesis articulated by al-Farmāwī, which underpin the five analytical criteria used in this study. These criteria address verse selection, contextual interpretation, intertextual coherence, engagement with

established exegetical perspectives, and recognition of interpretive plurality. However, the evidence matrix indicates that the available documentation did not support a comprehensive assessment of every criterion. Insufficient evidence for a particular dimension should not automatically be interpreted as proof of methodological failure. Instead, it marks the limits of the present evaluation and highlights the importance of preserving complete application outputs for future studies (Yanti et al., 2024).

The concerns identified in the socio-political and interfaith testing units further illustrate the importance of this distinction. In the socio-political unit, expert assessments raised questions about contemporary political framing and jurisprudential considerations. These observations suggest that thematic relevance alone is insufficient to establish methodological adequacy. Interpretations involving political authority require attention to the relationship between scriptural principles, historical circumstances, and the normative assumptions underlying contemporary applications. The available evidence does not establish that the application's dataset contains a specific ideological bias. Rather, it indicates that the generated explanation raised interpretive concerns requiring further scholarly examination (Saifullah et al., 2026).

A similar issue arose in the interfaith dialogue unit. Although Qur'an 29:46 provides relevant guidance on engagement with the People of the Book, its thematic relevance to interfaith dialogue does not, by itself, resolve jurisprudential questions about non-Muslims entering mosque spaces. Moving from general scriptural guidance to a specific normative conclusion requires additional interpretive reasoning. This finding illustrates a potential epistemological problem: algorithmically organized information may be presented in a form that appears to constitute a complete thematic interpretation even when further jurisprudential analysis is needed (Ahmad Syahir et al., 2025).

These observations are consistent with Al-Janabi (2024), whose comparative study identifies limitations in the contextual depth and interpretive adequacy of ChatGPT-generated Qur'anic explanations. Andrean and Harahap (2025) similarly emphasize that coherent AI-generated responses do not necessarily demonstrate the methodological rigor associated with established *tafsīr* traditions. The present study extends this discussion by examining a specific AI-assisted thematic application through scholarly assessments across a bounded testing domain, rather than focusing exclusively on ChatGPT-generated interpretations.

The significance of this comparison lies in moving beyond the binary question of whether AI can interpret the Qur'an. The findings suggest that AI-generated thematic information can serve as a preliminary resource, although the degree of contextual scrutiny required varies with the interpretive demands of each subject. The educational and economic units received relatively favorable assessments, whereas the socio-political and interfaith units raised additional methodological concerns. These differences do not establish a universal hierarchy of thematic difficulty. Rather, they indicate that the adequacy of AI-generated explanations must be assessed within their specific interpretive contexts.

The first contribution of this study is to clarify the epistemic boundary between thematic information retrieval and methodologically justified exegesis. The value of AI-assisted Qur'anic applications should not be judged solely by their ability to identify relevant verses or generate coherent explanations. Their scholarly utility also depends on whether their outputs can be evaluated transparently, contextually, and in accordance with established methodological principles.

Negotiating Epistemic Authority: Source Authorization, Output Validation, and Scholarly Disagreement

The second research question examines how epistemic authority is constructed and negotiated when Qur'anic information is mediated through an AI-assisted application. The findings distinguish between the authority associated with the preparation of religious knowledge resources and the methodological validity of individual AI-generated explanations (Alghifari et al., 2026).

According to the developer, Taqiquran.id uses a dataset whose authorization is associated with a professor specializing in Qur'anic exegesis. This account suggests that scholarly involvement is an important element in how the application's reliability is established and communicated. However, it raises an epistemological question: does the credibility of a system's source materials guarantee the validity of the explanations it subsequently generates? The inclusion of authoritative sources does not, by itself, establish the interpretive validity of every output produced through computational processing (Hasanah, 2024).

Campbell's (2007) multidimensional account of religious authority helps explain this distinction by showing how digital religious legitimacy emerges through interactions among recognized scholars, institutions, religious knowledge, and technological mediation. In the present case, the perceived authority of AI-generated explanations is not necessarily autonomous. Instead, it may derive from established scholarly knowledge, decisions about how that knowledge is organized, and the way the application presents its outputs to users (Nugroho et al., 2024).

The study therefore distinguishes between source authorization and output validation. Source authorization concerns the credibility, selection, and scholarly foundations of the application's knowledge resources. Output validation, by contrast, concerns whether an individual explanation adequately represents the relevant sources and meets established interpretive requirements. This distinction matters because scholarly involvement in preparing a dataset does not eliminate the need to examine the validity of individual outputs.

The differing assessments of the gender-related testing unit further illustrate this issue. E1 considered the explanation broadly acceptable from an exegetical perspective, whereas E2 emphasized jurisprudential dilemmas concerning women's participation in mosque-related activities. Rather than treating this disagreement as evidence that one expert must be correct and the other mistaken, the findings suggest that interpretive adequacy can be assessed through different disciplinary perspectives (Ahmed, 2024).

An explanation may contain relevant Qur'anic references yet remain insufficient to address the jurisprudential implications of a particular social issue. Exegetical relevance and jurisprudential completeness should therefore not be treated as interchangeable measures of interpretive validity. This distinction also underscores the importance of recognizing legitimate scholarly disagreement when AI-generated information addresses contested socio-religious issues (Atallah, 2026).

These findings resonate with Latifi's (2024) discussion of AI in Shi'i *ijtihād*, particularly the challenges of contextual reasoning, religious authority, and accountability. Although Qur'anic exegesis and jurisprudential reasoning are distinct scholarly domains, both require a careful distinction between accessing authoritative materials and developing justified interpretive or normative conclusions. In this study, the differing assessments of E1 and E2 demonstrate why scholarly plurality should be treated as an analytical dimension rather than

automatically interpreted as an inconsistency in AI performance.

The developer's claim that the application achieves approximately 90% accuracy raises a further epistemological concern. Because the underlying assessment instrument, sample size, evaluation criteria, and supporting records were unavailable for independent examination, this figure cannot be treated as a verified finding. More fundamentally, technical reliability and exegetical validity are distinct. A system may retrieve accurate references while generating an explanation that requires further contextual examination. Conversely, disagreement among qualified scholars does not necessarily indicate a computational error (Jan, 2026).

This distinction aligns with Ahmad and Ghafar (2026), who conceptualize authority in AI-mediated religious knowledge as a product of sociotechnical arrangements rather than computational accuracy alone. Their work highlights the role of textual sources, algorithmic mediation, and institutional arrangements in shaping the production and recognition of interpretive authority. Similarly, Salvatierra (2026), in a study of an institutionally deployed religious chatbot, highlights the importance of examining how religious organizations negotiate the boundaries between technological assistance and established religious roles.

The present study extends this discussion by examining the relationship between the developer's claim of scholarly authorization and two Qur'anic studies scholars' assessments of the application's thematic outputs. The findings suggest that AI-mediated authority remains dependent on human scholarly decisions and open to critical scrutiny. However, because the study did not independently audit the application's dataset or technical architecture, it cannot establish precisely how interpretive assumptions were incorporated into the system (Gebru et al., 2021).

The second contribution of this study is a more differentiated understanding of AI-mediated epistemic authority as derivative, conditional, and subject to scholarly evaluation. The central concern is not that technology necessarily displaces traditional religious authority, but that its role in producing and validating religious explanations may become obscured when AI-generated outputs are presented as self-contained interpretations (Lukman, 2024).

Repositioning AI through an Epistemic-Ethical Framework for Qur'anic Exegesis

The findings provide a basis for reconsidering the relationship between artificial intelligence and scholarly interpretation. Rather than treating AI as an autonomous exegete or dismissing its potential contribution to Qur'anic studies, this study proposes an epistemic-assistance model that distinguishes computational information processing from the interpretive responsibilities of qualified scholars (Van den Bosch et al., 2025).

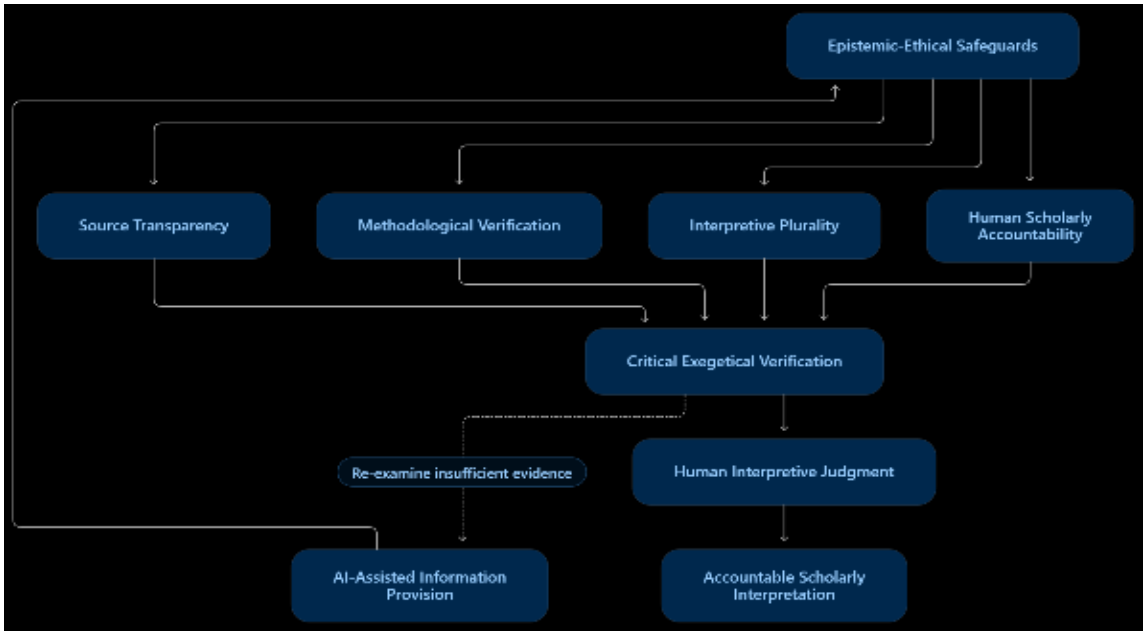
The proposed Epistemic-Ethical AI Framework draws on four interrelated concerns identified in the case study. First, independently verifiable information about the application's authorized knowledge sources was limited. Second, the selected thematic outputs varied in their methodological adequacy. Third, the two scholars differed in their assessments of the gender-related output. Fourth, the developer's reported accuracy rate could not be independently verified because supporting evidence was unavailable (Novis-Deutsch et al., 2026).

These concerns inform four corresponding principles: source transparency, methodological and contextual verification, recognition of interpretive plurality, and human scholarly accountability. Their formulation connects the empirical findings with the broader AI ethics framework proposed by Floridi and

Cowls (2019), particularly its principles of explicability, accountability, justice, and non-maleficence. The proposed framework applies these general ethical principles to the specific methodological requirements of Qur'anic interpretation.

The relationships among these four principles and their application to AI-assisted Qur'anic exegesis are illustrated in Figure.

Figure 1. *Proposed Epistemic-Ethical AI Framework for Qur'anic Exegesis*



Source: Authors' conceptual synthesis based on the empirical findings and the integration of thematic exegetical principles, digital religious authority, and AI ethics

Source transparency requires clear disclosure of the religious materials and scholarly foundations informing AI-generated explanations. This principle addresses the gap between reported dataset authorization and the availability of source information for independent examination. Methodological and contextual verification requires generated explanations to be assessed against established exegetical principles rather than accepted solely because they appear relevant or coherent (Zhu et al., 2024). Recognition of interpretive plurality requires attention to legitimate scholarly disagreements, particularly when interpretations concern contested jurisprudential or socio-religious issues. Human scholarly accountability establishes the responsibility of qualified scholars to evaluate the adequacy and implications of religious explanations produced through AI-assisted systems.

Together, these principles inform a conceptual sequence in which AI-generated materials are treated as preliminary information, subjected to critical exegetical examination, and assessed through accountable human judgment. This sequence does not imply that existing AI systems are inherently incapable of contextual analysis. Rather, it emphasizes the need for explicit evaluative standards and procedures before generated explanations are accorded scholarly authority (Ahmad, 2026).

Recent technological research provides a useful point of comparison. Mohammed et al. (2025), in their work on an AI-assisted Islamic fatwa system using retrieval-augmented generation, demonstrate the potential of source-grounding and verification mechanisms to

improve the reliability of automated religious responses. However, improvements in information retrieval and text generation cannot, by themselves, establish the methodological legitimacy of every religious interpretation. The proposed framework therefore emphasizes the complementary roles of reliable technical procedures and context-sensitive scholarly evaluation (Fepriani & Ratnasari, 2026).

The contribution of this framework should nevertheless be defined carefully. Ahmad and Ghafar (2026) have already proposed reporting standards addressing transparency and authority in computational engagement with sacred texts. The novelty of the present study therefore lies not in introducing transparency or human oversight as entirely new ethical principles, but in specifying their exegetical implications through an analysis of Taqiquran.id outputs, divergent scholarly assessments, and the developer's account of knowledge authorization.

The framework also distinguishes between routine information assistance and interpretively sensitive applications. For thematic inquiries involving relatively straightforward textual associations, AI may help identify and organize relevant materials. When generated explanations involve jurisprudential disagreement, social controversy, or consequential normative claims, more extensive source disclosure, contextual verification, and scholarly assessment are warranted. This distinction represents a proposed methodological safeguard, not an empirically established threshold of system performance (Huang et al., 2022).

Accordingly, the framework should be understood as a preliminary conceptual model developed through the synthesis of empirical findings and theoretical perspectives. Although the study reports that the proposed framework was presented to a participating *tafsīr* scholar for appraisal, the available documentation does not establish a standardized or independent empirical validation process. Its effectiveness in practical application development therefore remains to be examined in future research.

Taken together, the findings addressing the three research questions show that the epistemological challenges of AI-assisted Qur'anic interpretation extend beyond technical accuracy and computational sophistication. They involve the relationship between methodological validity, the visibility of scholarly authority, and the conditions under which algorithmically mediated information acquires religious significance. By bringing these dimensions together in a case-specific framework, this study advances a more accountable understanding of AI as an assistive resource for Qur'anic scholarship rather than an independently authoritative interpreter.

CLOSING

This study demonstrates that integrating artificial intelligence into Qur'anic interpretation raises epistemological and methodological questions concerning interpretive validity and religious authority. The examination of Taqiquran.id shows that its outputs received relatively favorable scholarly assessments in the thematic areas of education and economic empowerment, whereas those addressing socio-political activities, interfaith dialogue, and gender-related issues raised additional contextual and jurisprudential concerns. Differences in scholarly assessments further demonstrate that thematic relevance alone does not establish exegetical validity. Moreover, the developer's account of scholarly authorization of the dataset highlights the distinction between the credibility of knowledge sources and the methodological validity of individual AI-generated outputs. These findings

underscore the need for contextual verification and scholarly evaluation rather than exclusive reliance on algorithmic coherence or reported technical accuracy.

This study contributes to contemporary Qur'anic scholarship by proposing an Epistemic-Ethical AI Framework comprising four interconnected principles: source transparency, methodological verification, recognition of interpretive plurality, and human scholarly accountability. The framework positions AI as an epistemic assistant that can support the retrieval and preliminary organization of Qur'anic information while preserving the responsibility of qualified scholars for contextual interpretation and normative judgment. Its main contribution lies in connecting the methodological requirements of thematic exegesis with the ethical challenges of AI-mediated religious knowledge.

Nevertheless, the study is limited to one AI-assisted application, five thematic testing units, assessments by two Qur'anic studies scholars, and information provided by one developer. It did not include an independent audit of the application's underlying dataset or technical architecture, and the proposed framework has not undergone systematic empirical validation. Future research should extend this investigation through comparative assessments of multiple AI-assisted Qur'anic applications, broader scholarly participation, and transparent evaluations of source attribution, interpretive adequacy, and contextual reasoning. Further studies should also examine the practical application of the proposed framework to assess its usefulness in supporting methodologically sound and accountable Qur'anic interpretation.

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