

Challenges and the Repositioning of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in the Era of Artificial Intelligence (AI): A Perspective from Islamic Epistemology

Tita Yunita, Dyah Khumairoh, Muhammad Zikri, Teguh Andrian, Zalisman
Universitas Islam Al-Kifayah Riau, Indonesia
titayunita589@gmail.com

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI), particularly generative AI, is reshaping how students access, produce, verify, and communicate information, raising questions about source authority, *adab*, values, and character formation in Islamic Religious Education (IRE). This study examines the challenges facing IRE teachers and proposes a repositioning of their roles from an Islamic epistemological perspective. A qualitative library research approach was employed, drawing on literature on Islamic education and epistemology, teacher ethics, UNESCO guidance on AI in education, and recent studies on AI and IRE. Sources were examined through content and conceptual analysis. The findings position AI as a supporting instrument subject to human epistemic oversight and identify teachers' roles as knowledge curators, information validators, digital ethics mentors, learning designers, and exemplars of *adab*. AI outputs should be evaluated within the relationship among revelation, reason, experience, scholarly tradition, and technology. The study proposes the IRE teacher as an epistemic gatekeeper responsible for safeguarding information quality, guiding verification, and aligning technology use with Islamic educational aims. To support implementation, it introduces the *Verifikasi* model, comprising source verification, ethical use, reflection, integration of religious evidence, process orientation, human initiative, and accountability. The study contributes a conceptual basis and an implementation model for repositioning IRE teachers, emphasizing that AI integration should strengthen literacy, critical reasoning, and *adab* while preserving human responsibility in education.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Islamic Religious Education Teachers; Islamic Epistemology; Epistemic Gatekeeping; AI Literacy

INTRODUCTION

The development of artificial intelligence (AI) has ushered education into a new era. Generative systems can produce texts, summarize documents, generate questions, provide examples, translate languages, develop lesson plans, and help users explore various possible answers. In the educational context, these developments represent more than a change in teaching tools; they are transforming the relationship between teachers, students, and knowledge. UNESCO, through its *AI Competency Framework for Teachers*, describes this transformation in terms of the teacher–AI–student dynamic and emphasizes that teachers require new competencies, including a human-centered mindset, AI ethics, AI foundations, AI pedagogy, and AI for professional development (Miao et al., 2024).

For Islamic Religious Education (IRE), this transformation presents particular challenges. IRE is not merely intended to equip students with knowledge of religious concepts but also to guide their faith, attitudes, moral character, and religious practices in everyday life. Consequently, AI-generated responses concerning Qur'anic verses, hadith, Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), Islamic theology (*aqidah*), or moral issues cannot be treated in the same way as general information. Questions concerning the sources of information, the verification of religious evidence, the contextual interpretation of texts, and the explanation of differences of opinion are integral to the educational process itself (Al-Attas, 1985; Harahap et al., 2025).

Generative AI also raises new concerns regarding academic integrity. Students can ask AI systems to write papers or answer assignments within seconds. When learning assessment focuses exclusively on the final product, such as a written text, teachers may find it difficult to distinguish students' actual abilities from the capabilities of machines. However, this challenge does not necessarily warrant a blanket prohibition on AI use. Instead, education should teach students to use technology transparently, responsibly, and in ways that support the learning process.

Within the Islamic educational tradition, teachers occupy a position that extends beyond the transmission of information. Literature on the ethics of educators in *Tadbkirat al-Sami' wa al-Mutakallim*, by Imam Badr al-Din Ibn Jama'ah, emphasizes spiritual, moral, and

intellectual integrity. Teachers are expected to uphold the dignity of knowledge, maintain an awareness of divine accountability, treat students fairly, and preserve the professional dignity of their vocation. These principles remain relevant in an era in which information sources are increasingly diverse and some are mediated by machines (Nugraha et al., 2025).

The perspective of Islamic epistemology provides an important foundation for evaluating these changes. Knowledge does not exist independently of values; rather, it is closely connected to the ways in which truth is acquired, verified, and applied. In the thought of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, education is associated with knowledge (*'ilm*), proper conduct (*adab*), justice, and the formation of the good human being. Accordingly, the fundamental question in the AI era is not merely whether technology can be used, but how it should be positioned within the value system of Islamic education (Al-Attas, 1980; Hady et al., 2025).

This article is based on the premise that AI should not replace teachers but should instead prompt a repositioning of their roles. As access to information becomes increasingly convenient for students, teachers' abilities to select reliable sources, verify claims, explain contexts, guide reflection, and provide exemplary conduct become even more important. On this basis, the article proposes the concept of the Islamic Religious Education teacher as an *epistemic gatekeeper*, namely, an educator who safeguards the quality of knowledge introduced into the learning process while ensuring that such knowledge is directed toward the goals of education grounded in ethical conduct and human dignity. The article addresses three research questions: (1) What epistemological challenges does AI pose to Islamic Religious Education? (2) What competencies and roles should be strengthened among Islamic Religious Education teachers? and (3) How can Islamic epistemology serve as a foundation for the ethical and pedagogical integration of AI? Accordingly, this study aims to formulate a conceptual framework that can help Islamic Religious Education teachers navigate changes in the knowledge ecosystem without losing sight of intellectual rigor and moral character.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using the library research method. This approach was selected because the study focuses on a conceptual analysis of changes in the role of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers and the relationship between artificial intelligence (AI) and Islamic epistemology. Library research enables the researchers to

compare philosophical sources, works on Islamic education, empirical studies, and policy documents. The data sources were selected from four categories. First, works on Islamic epistemology and education, including the thought of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. Second, literature on educator ethics and the tradition of *adab* (proper conduct), including *Tadbkirat al-Sami' wa al-Mutakallim*. Third, policy documents and AI competency frameworks published by UNESCO. Fourth, recent research articles addressing the use of AI in education and the preparedness of IRE teachers.

Data were collected through source identification, critical reading, the recording of key ideas, thematic categorization, and synthesis. The analysis was conducted in two stages. The first stage involved content analysis to identify key ideas concerning AI, teachers, ethics, sources of knowledge, and learning. The second stage involved conceptual analysis to connect these findings with the principles of Islamic epistemology. The validity of the arguments was maintained through source triangulation by comparing classical literature, contemporary academic publications, and institutional documents. This study did not employ survey or interview data. Therefore, the findings are presented as a synthesis and conceptual argument rather than as statistical generalizations. This limitation is important for maintaining academic integrity and avoiding claims that are not supported by the available evidence (Mestika Zed, 2018).

RESULTS

1. Changes in the Knowledge Ecosystem Caused by AI

Before the emergence of generative artificial intelligence (AI), students already had broad access to the internet. However, the search process generally required them to select websites, open documents, read multiple sources, and formulate their own answers. Generative AI reduces some of these steps by providing answers in a conversational format. This development can benefit students, but it may also reduce opportunities for independent information retrieval and source comparison.

In Islamic Religious Education (IRE), this development presents a paradox. On the one hand, AI can help students understand religious terminology, obtain examples, and engage in learning exercises. On the other hand, AI may oversimplify religious issues that involve specific contexts and differences of scholarly opinion. Therefore, the ability to ask

questions of AI must be accompanied by the ability to critically examine its answers. Teachers need to transform instructional practices from merely delivering information into developing students' verification skills. For example, after students obtain an AI-generated explanation of an ethical concept, the teacher can ask them to identify relevant Qur'anic verses or hadith, consult Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*), compare two sources, and then assess whether the AI-generated answer is adequate. Such activities position AI as an object of critical inquiry.

2. Epistemological Challenges: Who Determines Truth?

The first epistemological question concerns authority. AI can answer questions in a convincing manner, but persuasive language is not evidence of truth. In Islamic education, religious claims require a defensible foundation. Therefore, teachers need to teach students about the hierarchy of sources and the methods used to evaluate their reliability.

The second question concerns the origins of knowledge. AI operates through computational models trained on data. Users generally do not know the full range of data underlying a particular output. Consequently, AI-generated outputs should not be treated as primary sources. Instead, they are products of computational processing that must be traced back to verifiable sources.

The third question concerns responsibility. Machines do not bear moral responsibility in the same way as human beings. If a teacher copies an AI-generated answer and uses it as instructional material, responsibility remains with the teacher. This principle reinforces the idea that AI can support cognitive tasks, while pedagogical and moral decisions must remain under human control.

3. The Risks of Hallucination, Bias, and Oversimplification in Religious Knowledge

One of the problems associated with generative AI is its potential to produce inaccurate information while presenting it with a high degree of linguistic confidence. In the context of Islamic Religious Education, these risks may include inaccurate hadith quotations, incorrect attribution of opinions to scholars, oversimplification of differences among Islamic schools of jurisprudence, or misinterpretation of Qur'anic verses in their original contexts. Teachers must not regard linguistic fluency as an indicator of validity.

Bias may also arise because the data and patterns used by AI systems do not necessarily represent the full diversity of scholarly traditions. Religious questions involving

different interpretations may be answered as though only one position exists. Teachers need to explain that scholarly differences should be presented proportionately and should not be concealed by the concise format of AI-generated responses.

Oversimplification constitutes another risk. Religious education requires attention to historical context, terminology, legal objectives, and considerations of public welfare (*maslahah*). When AI provides brief answers without sufficient context, students may perceive complex issues as simple problems. Teachers therefore play an essential role in providing context and teaching students to engage in deeper and more comprehensive reading.

4. Repositioning Islamic Religious Education Teachers as Epistemic Gatekeepers

The concept of the *epistemic gatekeeper* proposed in this article refers to the teacher's role in safeguarding the quality of knowledge. Teachers are no longer the sole sources of information, but they remain responsible for ensuring that information introduced into the classroom has undergone an appropriate selection process and can be justified. This role becomes increasingly important as the range of available information sources expands.

As curators, teachers select credible primary and secondary sources. As validators, they evaluate claims. As facilitators, they teach students how to verify information. As ethical mentors, they explain the boundaries of responsible AI use. As role models, they demonstrate that acknowledging limitations and admitting mistakes are integral to intellectual integrity.

This concept also helps avoid two extremes. The first is *technological optimism*, which assumes that AI can replace teachers. The second is *technological pessimism*, which assumes that all uses of AI undermine education. A more balanced position is *human-centered Islamic education*, in which technology is used to strengthen educational objectives without diminishing human agency or *adab* (proper conduct and ethical comportment).

5. Competencies of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in the AI Era

Table 1. Competencies of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) Teachers in the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Era Based on Islamic Values

Competency	Indicators	Underlying Islamic Values
AI literacy	Understanding the capabilities, limitations, biases, privacy implications, and risks of AI.	Amanah (trustworthiness) and prudence.
Source literacy	Tracing information to its origins, comparing sources, and verifying references.	Tabayyun (careful verification) and accuracy.
AI pedagogy	Designing learning activities that use AI to support thinking rather than replace it.	Hikmah (wisdom) and maslahah (public welfare).

Competency	Indicators	Underlying Islamic Values
Digital ethics	Upholding academic integrity, protecting privacy, respecting copyright, and maintaining transparency.	Sidq (truthfulness), amanah (trustworthiness), and responsibility.
IRE subject-matter expertise	Mastering the fundamentals of the Qur'an, hadith, Islamic theology (aqidah), Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), ethics (akhlaq), and their pedagogical application.	Adab al-'ilm (proper conduct in the pursuit and transmission of knowledge).
Human-centered skills	Demonstrating empathy, communication, mentoring, role modeling, and an understanding of students' contexts.	Rahmah (compassion) and uswah (exemplary conduct).

Source: Processed Research Data, 2026

The table demonstrates that the competencies required of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers in the artificial intelligence (AI) era extend beyond the ability to use technology. They also require subject-matter expertise, pedagogical skills, and moral integrity grounded in Islamic values. IRE teachers need AI literacy and source literacy to understand technological limitations, verify information, and apply the principle of *tabayyun* when assessing the accuracy of information. Furthermore, AI pedagogy and digital ethics are essential for integrating technology wisely without undermining critical thinking, compromising privacy, or disregarding academic honesty. Mastery of IRE subject matter must remain the foundation for guiding students, while human-centered skills, including empathy, communication, role modeling, and mentoring, play a crucial role in character development and the cultivation of noble moral conduct. Therefore, AI integration in IRE should be directed toward responsible, ethical, and welfare-oriented technological use while maintaining the teacher's position as an educator, mentor, and role model for students.

6. The Verification Model for Islamic Religious Education

To operationalize the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into Islamic Religious Education (IRE), this article proposes the VERIFICATION model as a framework that teachers can adapt to different educational levels, subject matter, and student characteristics. The model emphasizes source verification, which involves examining AI-generated information against primary sources or credible academic literature, as well as ethical use, which requires students to understand the limitations of AI, their obligation to disclose its use, and prohibited practices. In addition, reflection encourages students to explain how their understanding has changed after using AI, while the integration of religious evidence directs them to compare religious information with the Qur'an, hadith, Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*),

hadith commentaries (*sharh*), scholarly works, and relevant academic sources. The model also prioritizes the learning process by assessing students' abilities to retrieve information, compare sources, reason critically, and justify their answers rather than focusing solely on final outputs. The principle of human agency emphasizes that final decisions, interpretations, and academic responsibility remain with students and teachers, while the principle of accountability requires AI use to be documented appropriately and prohibits using AI to disguise work that does not reflect one's own thinking. Accordingly, the VERIFICATION model is expected to help IRE teachers integrate AI critically, ethically, and responsibly without neglecting Islamic values, academic integrity, or students' character development.

7. Examples of AI Implementation in Islamic Religious Education

Table 2. Examples of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Applications in Islamic Religious Education (IRE)

No.	IRE Subject Matter	Form of AI Application	Student Activities	Assessment Focus
1	Islamic ethics (akhlaq)	AI provides an explanation of honesty.	Examine AI-generated answers against Qur'anic evidence and hadith, identify aspects that have not been adequately explained, and write a reflection on honesty in digital life and the use of AI.	Understanding of honesty, reflective ability, and the application of ethical principles in everyday life.
2	The Qur'an and Hadith	AI is used to obtain hadith quotations or explanations.	Trace hadith sources, compare textual wording, consult scholarly explanations, and formulate conclusions based on the verification process.	Accuracy in source verification, appropriate use of religious evidence, and information-verification skills.
3	Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh)	AI helps develop scenarios involving everyday jurisprudential issues.	Identify legal evidence, compare scholarly opinions, and explain the reasoning underlying their conclusions.	Argumentation skills, understanding of Islamic law, and appropriate use of sources.
4	Islamic theology (aqidah)	AI provides explanations of theological concepts or teachings.	Identify overly general terms or explanations that could lead to misunderstandings, then compare them with the theological sources used in the school curriculum.	Conceptual accuracy, critical thinking, and consistency with established scholarly sources.
5	Islamic Cultural History	AI helps construct a brief chronology of an event in Islamic history.	Verify the chronology using historical books and articles, identify information that requires correction, and explain the reasons for discrepancies.	Historical accuracy, analytical ability, and source-comparison skills.

Source: Processed Research Data, 2026

The implementation of AI in IRE learning, as presented in Table 2, demonstrates that technology can serve as a supporting instructional tool that encourages students to think

critically, verify information, and deepen their understanding of religious subject matter. In the area of Islamic ethics, AI can help students understand moral values and reflect on their application in digital life. In the study of the Qur'an and hadith, Islamic jurisprudence, and Islamic theology, AI is used to strengthen students' abilities to trace religious evidence, compare scholarly opinions, evaluate information, and construct arguments based on verifiable sources. Meanwhile, in Islamic Cultural History, AI can be used to generate preliminary information that can subsequently be examined against credible historical sources.

Therefore, the success of AI integration in IRE is determined not merely by students' ability to use technology but also by the quality of their thinking processes, the accuracy of their source use, and their responsibility in drawing conclusions. Teachers serve as facilitators and mentors who ensure that AI-generated outputs are not accepted without examination, particularly when they concern religious evidence and interpretations of Islamic teachings. This approach is consistent with the principles of *tabayyun* (careful verification), *amanah* (trustworthiness), and intellectual responsibility. Consequently, AI does not replace teachers or Islamic scholarly sources; rather, it serves as a supporting tool for strengthening critical, ethical, and character-oriented learning.

8. Academic Integrity and Assessment

AI requires schools to reconsider their assessment designs. Essays completed entirely outside the classroom are increasingly difficult to use as the sole indicators of student mastery. Teachers can supplement such assignments with oral assessments, presentations, process journals, reflections, discussions, projects, and follow-up questions. In this way, students are required to understand the subject matter and take responsibility for their answers.

AI-use policies should be transparent. Schools can distinguish between permitted uses, uses that must be disclosed, and prohibited uses. For example, AI may be used to generate preliminary ideas or improve grammar, but students must verify factual claims and develop their analyses based on their own understanding. Such a policy is more educationally constructive than a prohibition that is difficult to monitor. Teachers should also avoid making automatic accusations when they suspect that an assignment has been generated by AI. AI-detection tools cannot always be treated as conclusive evidence. Assessment should

instead consider the learning process, students' ability to explain their work, revision histories, and the consistency of their understanding.

9. Ethics, Privacy, and Equity

The use of AI in education raises important privacy concerns. Teachers should not indiscriminately enter students' personal information into AI services. Health information, identity details, grades, and family information must be protected in accordance with school policies and applicable regulations. Equity must also be considered. Not all students have equal access to devices, internet connectivity, or AI service accounts. Teachers must ensure that AI use does not become a source of academic discrimination. Non-digital alternatives should be available for assignments that do not genuinely require AI. AI ethics can be connected to Islamic values. *Amanah* involves protecting data and fulfilling responsibilities. *Sidq* (truthfulness) entails honesty in acknowledging technological assistance. *Tabayyun* requires careful examination of information. *Adab* concerns the appropriate and ethical use of knowledge and technology.

10. Teacher Professionalism and Continuous Professional Development

IRE teachers need to regard AI as part of their ongoing professional development rather than as a passing trend. Their competencies must be continuously updated because AI models and policies evolve rapidly. However, professional learning should extend beyond training in the use of applications. Teachers also need to learn how to evaluate AI-generated outputs, design appropriate assignments, uphold ethical standards, and align technology with learning objectives.

Professional development can be conducted through teacher communities, practice-based workshops, collaboration with Information Technology teachers, and case-based discussions. Each training activity should produce practical outputs, such as AI-use guidelines, assessment examples, lists of credible sources, and instructional scenarios.

Within the framework of Islamic education, professional development also entails renewing one's knowledge while preserving *adab*. Teachers who acknowledge the limitations of their knowledge and remain willing to learn from technological developments demonstrate an intellectual disposition. Technology does not diminish teachers' professional authority when used wisely; rather, the wisdom demonstrated in its use can strengthen their professionalism.

11. Epistemological Synthesis: From Information to Responsible Knowledge

AI generates information, but information does not automatically constitute knowledge. For information to become knowledge that can be meaningfully used in education, it must be examined, understood, contextualized, and connected to learning objectives. In Islamic education, this process also requires *adab*: an understanding of how knowledge should be situated and applied for beneficial purposes.

This process can be represented as follows: AI as an instrument → preliminary output → source verification → contextual and analytical examination → dialogue with the teacher → student understanding → reflection on values → responsible action. This sequence positions human beings as the primary agents in the learning process. AI functions as a supporting tool within the process rather than as an end in itself.

Consequently, the success of AI integration should not be measured solely by speed, the number of completed assignments, or the frequency of application use. More important indicators include improvements in students' abilities to verify sources, provide reasoned explanations, understand contexts, acknowledge uncertainty, and make responsible decisions.

DISCUSSION

The development of Artificial Intelligence (AI), particularly generative AI, has transformed the knowledge ecosystem in education, including Islamic Religious Education (IRE). Before the emergence of generative AI, students generally had to search for information through books, articles, religious texts, or digital websites, and then read, compare, and synthesize the information to develop a comprehensive understanding. Today, AI can provide answers in a conversational format that is fast, systematic, and easy to understand, potentially helping students learn difficult concepts. However, this convenience also presents challenges because instantly available answers may reduce students' engagement in the processes of information seeking, verification, and reasoning when AI is used without appropriate guidance. Research by (Kasneci et al., 2023) explain that large language models have the potential to support more personalized learning, but their use also entails risks, including information inaccuracies, bias, and dependence on technological outputs. Similarly, (Ng et al., 2021) identify the ability to understand, use, evaluate, and consider the ethical implications of AI as essential components of AI literacy. In the context of IRE, these

competencies need to be developed alongside students' ability to understand religious sources so that they do not merely obtain answers but can also assess the accuracy and appropriateness of the information they receive.

These changes demonstrate that the primary challenge of integrating AI into IRE is not merely a matter of technological proficiency but also an epistemological issue concerning the sources, authority, validity, and accountability of knowledge. AI can generate answers in convincing language, but linguistic fluency cannot be regarded as evidence that the information is scientifically accurate or religiously appropriate. From the perspective of Islamic epistemology, knowledge must be examined in terms of its sources, understood within its context, and used with moral responsibility. Therefore, AI-generated outputs should be positioned as preliminary information that requires verification rather than as independent sources of religious authority. By (Kasneci et al., 2023) emphasize the importance of fact-checking and human involvement in the educational use of large language models, while (Tlili et al., 2023; Hayani et al., 2022) demonstrate that the use of educational chatbots also raises concerns regarding information reliability, ethics, and privacy. These studies provide a foundation for emphasizing that IRE teachers need to guide students in tracing AI-generated information back to the Qur'an, Hadith, works of Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*), hadith commentaries (*sharh*), scholarly works by Islamic scholars, and relevant academic literature. Accordingly, the Islamic principle of *tabayyun* can be operationalized as the habitual practice of examining and comparing information before accepting it as accountable knowledge.

The risks of hallucination, bias, and information oversimplification are significant concerns when AI is used to explain religious subject matter. AI may generate inaccurate Hadith quotations, oversimplify differences among scholarly opinions, explain Qur'anic verses without sufficient context, or present historical information that requires further verification. These problems are not always easy for students to identify, particularly when AI-generated answers are well structured and use religious terminology that sounds convincing. Research by (Tlili et al., 2023) examine ChatGPT as a case study of chatbot use in education and identify various opportunities and challenges associated with information reliability, ethics, and responsible technology implementation. Meanwhile, (UNESCO, 2023) emphasizes the importance of ethical validation, data protection, and a human-centered approach to the use of generative AI in education and research. These findings strengthen the argument that IRE teachers need to accustom students to checking sources, comparing

explanations, and identifying the limitations of AI-generated answers. For example, when AI provides an explanation of a Hadith, students can be asked to trace its source, verify its wording, and consult scholarly interpretations before formulating a conclusion. In this way, the potential errors of AI are not viewed solely as threats but can also serve as learning opportunities to develop accuracy, critical thinking, and academic responsibility.

In response to these changes in the knowledge ecosystem, the role of IRE teachers needs to be repositioned as that of an *epistemic gatekeeper*, namely, a guardian of the quality of knowledge and the direction of its use in learning. In this article, the concept is proposed as a framework that positions teachers not as the sole sources of information but as individuals who guide students in assessing the credibility, verifying the validity, and understanding the context of information. Teachers perform a curatorial function by selecting appropriate sources, a validation function by examining the accuracy of claims, and a facilitative function by guiding students in independently evaluating AI-generated answers. In addition, teachers act as ethical mentors who explain the boundaries of appropriate AI use and as role models who demonstrate the importance of honesty and a willingness to correct mistakes. Through a systematic review of AI applications in higher education, (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019) highlight the importance of considering educators' perspectives in the development and implementation of AI in education. Although their review focuses on higher education and does not specifically examine IRE teachers, its findings are relevant to emphasizing that discussions of AI must consider educators' professional roles rather than focusing exclusively on technological capabilities. Thus, repositioning teachers as epistemic gatekeepers represents an effort to preserve human pedagogical and moral responsibility amid students' increasingly broad access to digital information.

This repositioning needs to be supported by teacher competencies encompassing AI literacy, source literacy, AI pedagogy, digital ethics, mastery of IRE subject matter, and interpersonal skills. AI literacy enables teachers to understand the capabilities, limitations, biases, and risks of AI technology, while source literacy supports their ability to trace information to its origins and assess the credibility of references. AI pedagogical competence is necessary for teachers to design learning activities that use technology to strengthen thinking processes rather than replace students' reasoning. Digital ethics, in turn, encompasses academic honesty, transparency in AI use, privacy protection, and respect for copyright. Mastery of IRE subject matter remains fundamental because technology cannot replace teachers' responsibility to explain Islamic teachings contextually and in accordance

with relevant scholarly sources. Research (Long & Magerko, 2020) conceptualize AI literacy through a set of competencies that enable individuals to interact with AI and critically evaluate the technology, while (Ng et al., 2021) classify AI literacy into the dimensions of understanding, use, evaluation, and ethics. These studies support the view that IRE teachers' competencies in the AI era must extend beyond operating applications to include evaluating outputs, making pedagogical decisions, and taking responsibility for the use of technology. From an Islamic perspective, these competencies can be associated with the values of *amanah* (trustworthiness), *tabayyun* (careful verification), *sidq* (truthfulness), *adab al-'ilm* (proper conduct in the pursuit of knowledge), *rahmah* (compassion), and *uswah* (exemplary conduct), thereby ensuring that AI use remains oriented toward character development and the welfare of students (Sass, 2018; Mat Yusoff et al., 2026).

To translate these principles into classroom practice, this article proposes the VERIFICATION model as a framework for integrating AI into IRE that can be adapted to different educational levels, subject matter, and student characteristics. The model encompasses source verification, ethical use, reflection, integration of religious evidence, process orientation, human initiative, and accountability. Source verification requires students to examine AI-generated information against primary sources or credible academic literature, while ethical use requires transparency and compliance with assignment guidelines. Reflection encourages students to explain how their understanding has changed after using AI, while the integration of religious evidence connects information to the Qur'an, Hadith, Qur'anic exegesis, hadith commentaries, and relevant scholarly works. A process-oriented approach means that assessment considers activities such as information seeking, source comparison, reasoning, and justification of conclusions rather than focusing solely on final answers. Human initiative and accountability emphasize that decisions, interpretations, and academic responsibility remain with humans and that AI use must be disclosed appropriately. This framework is consistent with (Ng et al., 2021), who identify evaluation and ethics as important dimensions of AI literacy, as well as (UNESCO, 2023) guidance emphasizing the safe, ethical, and human-centered use of AI. Nevertheless, the VERIFICATION model proposed in this article remains conceptual and requires empirical testing before its effectiveness can be established.

The VERIFICATION model can be implemented through learning activities tailored to the characteristics of different IRE topics. In lessons on *akhlaq* (Islamic ethics), teachers can ask AI to explain honesty and then guide students in examining the explanation

against evidence from the Qur'an and Hadith, as well as reflecting on honesty in the use of technology. In Qur'an and Hadith lessons, students can trace Hadith quotations generated by AI, compare their wording with reliable sources, and consult scholarly explanations. In *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) lessons, AI can help develop scenarios involving everyday problems, while students are responsible for identifying the relevant legal basis, comparing pertinent opinions, and explaining the reasoning behind their conclusions. In *aqidah* (Islamic theology) lessons, students can identify terms that are overly general or potentially misleading and then compare them with the theological sources used in instruction. In Islamic Cultural History lessons, AI can be used to generate an initial chronology of an event, which students subsequently verify against history textbooks and scholarly articles. These activities position AI as a tool for generating questions and examining information, rather than as a substitute for Islamic scholarly sources or teachers' judgment. Consistent with the AI literacy frameworks proposed by (Long & Magerko, 2020; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019), learning outcomes should be assessed based on students' ability to understand, use, evaluate, and consider the ethical implications of AI in relation to the subject matter being studied.

AI integration also requires changes in assessment practices and stronger academic integrity. Written assignments completed entirely outside the classroom may not adequately demonstrate students' levels of understanding when the work can be assisted by AI without supervision. Therefore, teachers can combine written assignments with oral presentations, discussions, process journals, reflections, projects, and follow-up questions that require students to explain the reasoning behind their answers. Research (Cotton et al., 2024) discuss the challenges of academic integrity in the ChatGPT era and emphasize the need for institutional responses and assessment strategies suited to technological change. In the context of IRE, teachers can distinguish between AI use that is permitted, AI use that must be disclosed, and AI use that is prohibited, according to the learning objectives. For example, students may use AI to generate preliminary ideas but must still verify the information and develop their analyses based on their own understanding. Teachers should also avoid treating AI-detection results as the sole basis for accusations of academic misconduct. Instead, they should consider the work process, students' ability to explain the content of their assignments, and the consistency of their understanding. This approach connects assessment with the Islamic values of *sidq* and *amanah* while emphasizing that the purpose of evaluation is not merely to detect technology use but to ensure that authentic and accountable learning takes place.

Beyond academic integrity, AI use must take privacy, equitable access, and teacher professional development into account. Teachers should not indiscriminately enter students' personal data, grades, health conditions, or family information into AI services, particularly when the services' requirements, security, and data-management policies are unclear. UNESCO emphasizes privacy protection and a human-centered approach as essential elements of the use of generative AI in education. Equitable access must also be maintained because not all students have equal access to devices, internet connectivity, and AI services. Schools need to provide appropriate learning alternatives so that limitations in technological access do not result in academic disadvantages. At the same time, IRE teachers require continuous professional development through practice-based training, learning communities, case discussions, and collaboration with information technology teachers. Such training should not focus solely on teaching application use but should also cover source verification, assessment design, digital ethics, and the integration of AI with learning objectives. This is consistent with the findings of (Sperling et al., 2024), whose scoping review of AI literacy in teacher education highlights the importance of practical, epistemic, and ethical knowledge, as well as the need for greater involvement of the education research community in defining educators' AI competencies. Accordingly, the professionalism of IRE teachers in the AI era needs to be developed through a combination of technological competence, pedagogical judgment, subject-matter expertise, and moral exemplarity.

Overall, this discussion demonstrates that the challenges and repositioning of IRE teachers in the AI era must be understood as technological, pedagogical, ethical, and epistemological issues simultaneously. AI can support information provision, the development of learning scenarios, and the preparation of preliminary teaching materials; however, its outputs still need to be verified and situated within an appropriate scholarly context. The concept of the *epistemic gatekeeper* offers a framework for repositioning teachers as guardians of knowledge quality through curation, validation, facilitation, ethical guidance, and role modeling. Meanwhile, the VERIFICATION model provides an operational framework that connects AI use with source examination, reflection, the integration of religious evidence, reasoning processes, human initiative, and accountability. This conceptual contribution extends discussions of AI literacy by positioning the principles of Islamic epistemology as a foundation for guiding the use of technology in IRE. Nevertheless, because the model was developed through conceptual synthesis and a literature review, empirical research is still needed to assess its implementation across different educational

levels. Future studies could test the VERIFICATION model through field studies, classroom action research, or instructional experiments, while also developing instruments to measure students' information-verification skills, academic integrity, and epistemic literacy.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI), particularly generative AI technologies, has fundamentally transformed the knowledge ecosystem in Islamic religious education, ranging from how students obtain religious information and understand learning materials to how they construct religious knowledge and beliefs. These changes create opportunities for Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers to develop learning experiences that are more interactive, adaptive, contextual, and responsive to students' needs. At the same time, however, they introduce epistemological challenges concerning the truthfulness of information, the authority of knowledge sources, AI hallucinations, algorithmic bias, the oversimplification of religious teachings, and moral responsibility in the use of technology. Therefore, the role of IRE teachers can no longer be understood solely as that of content deliverers and primary sources of information. Instead, their role needs to be repositioned as that of an *epistemic gatekeeper*, namely, a mentor and guide who helps students examine sources, verify information, distinguish accountable knowledge from misleading information, and understand Islamic teachings critically and responsibly. This repositioning must be supported by competencies in AI literacy, Islamic source literacy, digital pedagogy, technology ethics, mastery of IRE subject matter, and interpersonal skills grounded in Islamic values, including *amanah* (trustworthiness), *tabayyun* (careful verification), *sidq* (truthfulness), *hikmah* (wisdom), *adab al-'ilm* (proper conduct in the pursuit of knowledge), *rahmah* (compassion), and exemplary conduct. In terms of implementation, the VERIFICATION framework, encompassing source verification, ethical use, reflection, integration of religious evidence, process orientation, human initiative, and accountability, can serve as a conceptual alternative for guiding the use of AI in teaching the Qur'an and Hadith, Islamic theology (*aqidah*), Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), Islamic ethics (*akhlak*), and Islamic Cultural History. Thus, the successful integration of AI into IRE is determined not merely by technological sophistication or the efficiency of content delivery but also by teachers' ability to safeguard the validity of knowledge, cultivate character, foster digital

responsibility, and ensure that technology remains a supporting tool for human-centered education aligned with Islamic values.

Future research should empirically examine the VERIFICATION framework through field studies at various educational levels, ranging from primary and secondary schools to higher education institutions, while considering differences in student characteristics, teacher readiness, digital infrastructure, and institutional culture. Qualitative approaches could be used to explore the experiences of IRE teachers and students in using AI, while quantitative approaches could measure the effects of AI literacy on the ability to verify religious information, academic integrity, subject-matter understanding, and character development. Mixed-methods research could also provide a more comprehensive understanding of these issues. Furthermore, experimental or quasi-experimental studies could compare AI-assisted IRE instruction with conventional teaching, particularly in terms of critical-thinking skills, accuracy in understanding religious evidence, the ability to distinguish valid religious information from inaccurate information, and responsible technology use. Subsequent studies should also incorporate the perspectives of IRE teachers, students, school principals, educational technology developers, and Islamic scholars to identify supporting factors, implementation barriers, and potential ethical risks, including data privacy, algorithmic bias, dependence on AI, unequal access to technology, and the reduction of meaningful educational interaction. Given that the VERIFICATION framework developed in this study remains conceptual and has not yet undergone empirical testing, further work is needed to develop measurement instruments, conduct expert validation, assess readability and practical applicability, and evaluate its effectiveness continuously before recommending the framework for broader implementation.

This study makes conceptual, pedagogical, and practical contributions to the development of Islamic religious education in the AI era by framing the use of technology not merely as an issue of instructional innovation but also as a matter of epistemology, ethics, and character development. Conceptually, the study extends discussions of the role of IRE teachers beyond their traditional function as transmitters of knowledge toward their role as *epistemic gatekeepers*, responsible for guiding students in evaluating sources, verifying information, understanding the context of Islamic teachings, and taking responsibility for knowledge obtained through AI. Pedagogically, the study proposes the VERIFICATION framework as a conceptual guide for integrating AI literacy, accuracy in understanding religious evidence, critical reflection, digital ethics, and human responsibility into IRE

learning processes. In practical terms, these ideas can inform teachers' design of learning activities, development of assessments that evaluate students' reasoning processes and genuine understanding, establishment of transparent guidelines for AI use, and strengthening of learning practices based on dialogue, role modeling, and the cultivation of good character. The study also offers insights for schools, educational institutions, and policymakers in formulating professional development programs for IRE teachers, guidelines for responsible AI use, and strategies to protect students in digital environments. Nevertheless, these contributions remain at the level of conceptual development and implementation recommendations. Therefore, the originality of the VERIFICATION framework and the effectiveness of repositioning teachers as epistemic gatekeepers require further examination through empirical testing. Overall, this study emphasizes that the primary objective of Islamic religious education in the AI era is not to replace human roles with technology but to strengthen the capacity of teachers and students to use technology critically, ethically, responsibly, and in accordance with Islamic values.

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