

Algorithmic Dominance and The Deconstruction of Truth: Al-Ghazali's Epistemological Critique of The Epistemic Authority of Artificial Intelligence

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Abstract: *Artificial intelligence (AI) not only functions as a tool for computational work, but also plays the role of a socio-technical intermediary for epistemic authority. In this paper, the authors investigate how algorithmic systems are disrupting the standards through which we identify truth and explore al-Ghazali's views on Epistemology. Qualitative library research and conceptual-philosophical analysis have been the primary methods for this research. Among the major works studied were al-Munqidh min al-Dalal, Mishkat al-Anwar, and Kitab al-'Ilm, besides confirmed scholarship on generative AI, algorithmic mediation, and al-Ghazali. "Deconstruction" denotes, to the greatest extent, the change in the standards or parameters for truth that are displaced or removed from that which corresponds and justifies, to that which is probable, fluent, widely visible, and performs well on the platform. The researchers point out that if Al-Ghazali's idea of certainty as well, the methodological doubt that goes hand in hand with an examination of reason, limits of human perception and reasoning, a divine source in man (illuminated understanding), as also ethical unity of knowledge and action is taken together, then one has a strong critical viewpoint against the algorithm which wants to lay down the absolute truth. The main contribution of this paper is the Ghazalias verification matrix, namely, source auditing, degrees of certainty, ethical reason, and ultimately, human moral responsibility. Therefore, AI is not just a machine but an assistance in cognition whose generated works should be considered only as potential statements that still need validation. It is not, as such, a being that autonomously possesses truth.*

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence; Algorithmic Authority; Epistemology; Truth; al-Ghazali.*

Abstrak: *Artificial Intelligence (AI) semakin beroperasi bukan hanya sebagai instrumen komputasional, melainkan juga sebagai mediator sosio-teknis otoritas epistemik. Artikel ini mengkaji cara sistem algoritmik menggoyahkan kriteria pengenalan kebenaran dan menilai transformasi tersebut melalui epistemologi al-Ghazali. Penelitian menggunakan studi kepustakaan kualitatif dan analisis konseptual-filosofis terhadap al-Munqidh min al-Dalal, Mishkat al-Anwar, dan Kitab al-'Ilm, disertai literatur terverifikasi mengenai AI generatif,*

mediasi algoritmik, dan pemikiran al-Ghazali. Istilah “dekonstruksi” digunakan secara operasional untuk menunjuk pergeseran kriteria kebenaran dari korespondensi dan justifikasi menuju probabilitas, kefasihan bahasa, visibilitas, dan performa platform; istilah ini tidak dimaksudkan untuk menyatakan bahwa AI melakukan dekonstruksi Derridean secara sadar. Artikel ini menunjukkan bahwa konsep kepastian, keraguan metodologis, batas indra dan akal, iluminasi Ilahi, serta kesatuan ilmu dan amal pada al-Ghazali menyediakan kritik yang kuat terhadap absolutisasi algoritma. Kebaruan penelitian terletak pada tawaran matriks verifikasi Ghazalian yang meliputi audit sumber, penentuan derajat kepastian, orientasi etis, dan tanggung jawab moral manusia. Karena itu, AI harus ditempatkan sebagai alat bantu epistemik yang keluarannya tetap berupa klaim sementara untuk diverifikasi, bukan sebagai pemilik kebenaran yang otonom.

Kata Kunci: *Artificial Intelligence; Otoritas Algoritmik; Epistemologi; Kebenaran; al-Ghazali.*

INTRODUCTION

The development of artificial intelligence (AI), especially generative models, has significantly changed the human relationship with information. Search engines, recommendation systems, social media platforms and language models do not simply transmit data; they sort by relevance, filter options, anticipate needs, and create responses in a seemingly coherent way. Algorithms thus can be understood as knowledge mediators which determine to some extent what gets noticed, what is considered important and which sources are given public attention.¹ This new understanding implies that AI is not just a means of making technological production more efficient but is also at the heart of issues of knowledge and power.

AI's epistemic authority or the knowledge power it exerts is a result primarily of data scale, processing speed, interface design, personalization, and the incomprehensibility of computational processes. Users often link the answers that are fast, neat, and convincing with the answers that are facts. Yet large language models generate outputs by probabilistically modeling linguistic patterns; this capability is not equivalent to ontological understanding or epistemic justification.² The central problem, therefore, is not that AI is invariably wrong, but that its mode of presentation can obscure the distinction between verified information, plausible inference, and fluent fabrication.

Research on AI has identified several risks that are directly relevant to the philosophy of knowledge. Studies of the *black box* problem emphasize the difficulty of auditing system-level decisions; scholarship on algorithmic bias shows how data and classification may reproduce injustice; and research on generative-model hallucinations demonstrates the possibility of outputs that are coherent yet factually unsupported.³ At

¹Tarleton Gillespie, “The Relevance of Algorithms,” in *Media Technologies: Essays on Communication, Materiality, and Society*, ed. Tarleton Gillespie, Pablo J. Boczkowski, and Kirsten A. Foot (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014), 167–94; José van Dijck, Thomas Poell, and Martijn de Waal, *The Platform Society: Public Values in a Connective World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

²Luciano Floridi and Massimo Chiriatti, “GPT-3: Its Nature, Scope, Limits, and Consequences,” *Minds and Machines* 30 (2020): 681–94, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11023-020-09548-1>.

³Frank Pasquale, *The Black Box Society: The Secret Algorithms That Control Money and Information* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015); Ziwei Ji et al., “Survey of Hallucination

the social level, personalization can create different informational environments for different users, causing public validity to compete increasingly with popularity, emotional proximity, and engagement optimization.

In Indonesia, this shift has begun to be understood as a transformation in the validity and authority of digital knowledge. Some recent publications have focused on the shift in explanatory style from cause-effect to functional validity. Meanwhile, other works have pointed out that there are certain limitations to AI in religion where authoritative texts, methodological skills, and accountability for interpretation are major factors.⁴ Much of the work on such topics is still at the level of general ethical critique, discrimination, or cyber-literacy. There hasn't been the full development yet of a clear framework for assessing the compatibility between classical Islamic knowledge theory and the ways AI comes up with its statements.

This paper centers on the epistemology of Abu Hamid al-Ghazali because his intellectual programme originates from queries relating to certainty, knowledge sources, the limits of sense perception and reason, the dangers of uncritical acceptance, and the relationship between knowledge, self-transformation, and moral purpose. In *al-Munqidh min al-Dalal*, al-Ghazali does not regard doubt as an end in itself but rather as a way to cure people of distinguishing inherited beliefs from knowledge based on certainty.⁵ Likewise, in *Kitab al-'Ilm*, the author of these texts rejects dividing knowledge from action and moral disposition. Meanwhile, *Mishkat al-Anwar* portrays light as a dual symbol it is both metaphor and structural element that reveal and gradually disclose the limits of perception through a metaphorical analogy.⁶

The article's use of the term "deconstruction" requires clarification. The term does not imply that AI is a philosophical subject consciously practicing Jacques Derrida's method. Here, deconstruction is used in a limited and operational sense to designate the destabilization and displacement of the socio-epistemic conditions through which a claim comes to be recognized as true. In other words, what changes is not the existence of truth itself, but the mechanisms by which truth is acknowledged, distributed, and legitimated under algorithmic mediation. This clarification prevents deconstruction from being used loosely as a synonym for destruction or total relativism.⁷

in Natural Language Generation," ACM Computing Surveys 55, no. 12 (2023): article 248, 1–38, <https://doi.org/10.1145/3571730>.

⁴Sri Nurhayati et al., "Epistemologi Artificial Intelligence: Kebenaran, Validitas, dan Otoritas Algoritmik," AL-MIKRAJ Jurnal Studi Islam dan Humaniora 6, no. 1 (2025): 1163–75, <https://doi.org/10.37680/almikraj.v6i1.8530>; M. Fadli Mukmin et al., "Analisis Kritis terhadap Tafsir Generatif AI: ChatGPT dan Penafsiran Ayat-Ayat Al-Qur'an," Jurnal Islam Pesisir dan Kajian Keislaman 1, no. 1 (2025): 39–59, <https://doi.org/10.32520/jipkk.v1i1.114>.

⁵Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, *Al-Ghazali's Path to Sufism: His Deliverance from Error (al-Munqidh min al-Dalal)*, trans. and ann. R. J. McCarthy (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2000).

⁶Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, *The Book of Knowledge: Being a Translation with Notes of the Kitab al-'Ilm of al-Ghazzali's Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, trans. Nabih Amin Faris (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1962); Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, *The Niche of Lights*, trans. David Buchman (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1998).

⁷Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976).

Against this background, the article addresses two questions: how does algorithmic dominance shift the criteria by which truth is recognized in digital society, and how can al-Ghazali's epistemology be reconstructed as a critique of the absolutization of AI authority? Essentially, it's said that at first glance AI outputs ought not simply to stand for or be identified with knowledge in its complete form. For, AI is not an entity which can justify statements, accept the consequences of one's actions morally, or decide that knowledge should be turned into human existence as such. In a way, AI just gives us good models and guesses. However, whether the conclusions we arrive at are knowledge is a matter of verification of sources by human beings and then human beings also evaluate the degrees of belief involved and make ethical judgments.

The article's main innovation is to create a "Ghazalian verification matrix" which, through four factors, combines source audit and claim-making, the degree of certainty, the link between knowledge and profit or practical action, and the safeguarding of human responsibility as moral agents. This tool is a step ahead of what the normal claim about the ethical use of AI entails. It provides a framework which determines whether an AI result can act as a preliminary guide, needs verification from original sources or definitely shouldn't inform a choice without human expertise.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research makes use of qualitative library research combined with a conceptual philosophical approach. For primary sources of al-Ghazali's thought, it draws on *al-Munquidh min al-Dalal*, *Mishkat al-Anwar*, and *Kitab al-'Ilm*, a preface of *Ihya 'Ulum al-Din*. These are the ones that deal with respectively the quest to gain the certainty of a matter, the rank of perception and light, and the link between wisdom and deeds. Secondary sources are works of literature on al-Ghazali's skepticism, philosophical theology, and mystical vision; also are primary or very credible books that discuss algorithms, large language models, hallucination, bias, transparency, and AI ethics.

The literature was chosen based on four main criteria: the paper would have to be intimately related to the topic in question; it had to be clear who the authors were, through the publisher, the article or paper itself; the source had to show how easy it was to reach the publisher or journal; and last of all, it was necessary to confirm that there was an alignment between the citation of claims and the content of the source. All of the authors, titles, years, volumes, issue numbers, page ranges, publishers, and DOIs were verified via official publisher sites, journal indexes, or traceable bibliographic catalogs. References that could not be traced or that had not actually supported the relevant claims in the manuscript were deleted. In addition to doing this, it was a remedial work on a previous manuscript that had the problem of including references that one could call "verified" along with those that had uncertain citation details.

The analysis had four steps. The first step, called "conceptual clarification", was essentially a conceptual mapping of ideas where "information", "knowledge", "justification", "epistemic authority", "probability", and "deconstruction" were delineated from each other. The second stage was about immanently reconstructing al-Ghazali's

epistemology, the focus being on doubting, certainty, sense perception, reason, and divine light along with the ethics of knowledge. The third stage, diagnosis with comparison, was an interaction of the structure of outputs generated by AI on the one hand, and the knowledge conditions as described within the framework of al-Ghazali on the other hand. The fourth stage, the normative synthesis, gave an output of the Ghazalian verification matrix, a tool that would be useful in assessing the outputs of AI in, among others, academic work, religious discourse, and decision-making at the public level.

Interpretive validity was preserved through checking primary sources, contemporary scholarship on al-Ghazali, and also technical-philosophical papers on the subject with each other. Neither does this article put any computational model under a performance test, nor make any bold statement that old ideas without any modifications will fit perfectly into modern computer models. The connection with them is built upon a controlled-critical analogy. Al-Gazali's theoretical framework is utilized as a device to highlight AI's limitations in claiming knowledge, not to reduce AI to a direct equivalent of a medieval category of knowledge.

DISCUSSION

1. Artificial Intelligence and the Shift in Epistemic Authority

Epistemic authority, roughly understood, is the accepted power to generate, review, or disseminate knowledge. Normally in traditional institutions this sort of power is grounded in competence, method, history of accomplishment as well as mechanisms of correction. In the case of AI systems, on the other hand, authority arises mainly by the use of quite different avenues: computing power, large access to data, processing time, smooth user experiences, and overwhelming control of a market platform. Tarleton Gillespie views that relevance algorithms basically are tools that besides merely computing they also influence what the logic of visibility and what constitutes public value is.⁸ That is to say algorithmic authority does not come naturally; it is the result of technical design, user behavior, institutional interests and social trust.

That said, the user is usually the least familiar with training data, optimization rules, or model evaluation. Frank Pasquale, for example, describes this phenomenon as the black box society: "a society in the mechanisms of the decisions made are hard to scrutinize by the people affected, yet their impact is considerable."⁹ A lack of transparency does not per se signify the presence of manipulation, as the complexity of a model can be explained only through its technical structure. Epistemically, however, the inability to explain the origin of a claim weakens the grounds for treating a system's output as a final authority.

Large language models sharpen the distinction between the ability to generate language and the ability to know. Floridi and Chiriatti show that the power of generative models lies in large-scale statistical pattern processing, while Bender and colleagues warn

⁸Gillespie, "The Relevance of Algorithms," 167–94.

⁹Pasquale, *The Black Box Society*.

that fluency can lead users to attribute to a system an understanding it does not possess.¹⁰ A category error then occurs: syntactically persuasive output is treated as the testimony of a subject that has examined the facts. Yet the model possesses neither worldly experience, propositional commitment, nor responsibility for the consequences of its answer.

The phenomenon of hallucination makes this limitation concrete. Ji and colleagues define hallucination as output that is unfaithful to its source or unsupported by the available factual information.¹¹ Hallucination is not a minor anomaly that can simply be ignored, because it is connected to the way generative systems construct responses. Improvements in accuracy may reduce the risk, but they do not eliminate the need for verification, especially in law, health, religion, education, and academic research.

Algorithmic authority also operates through personalization. Recommendation systems arrange informational environments on the basis of behavioral traces, so that two individuals may encounter different configurations of digital reality. Pariser calls this condition a *filter bubble*, while Sunstein explains that fragmented information spaces can reduce opportunities to encounter opposing arguments.¹² Epistemically, personalization changes the question "Is this claim true?" into "Is this content suitable, engaging, or likely to retain the user's attention?" Platform criteria thereby risk infiltrating the criteria of truth.

A critique of AI, however, needs to be balanced and should not result in outright rejecting new technology. The machine learning approach is useful since it allows people to work faster and be able to access many documents. There are many other applications that have come up with using AI including, not least, automatic text translation, pattern detection, and literature exploration. But then, it is the misuse of such functionalities as tools and substitutes of human judgment that turns it into a problem. Transparency, accountability, traceability, risk management, and human oversight, according to UNESCO (Organization of United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization) and NIST (The National Institute of Standards and Technology) constitute essential elements for building AI governance in accordance with trustworthiness principles.¹³ These concepts serve further the article's view that the epistemological aspect of technology is such that it only complements but should not override the role of the person to take responsibility, which is the ultimate function of judgment.

AI in effect assumes the role of an epistemic authority; not because it possesses human-like knowledge, but because society has assigned to it the task of searching for,

¹⁰Floridi and Chiriatti, "GPT-3," 681–94; Emily M. Bender et al., "On the Dangers of Stochastic Parrots: Can Language Models Be Too Big?" in *Proceedings of the 2021 ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency* (New York: Association for Computing Machinery, 2021), 610–23, <https://doi.org/10.1145/3442188.3445922>.

¹¹Ji et al., "Survey of Hallucination," 1–38.

¹²Eli Pariser, *The Filter Bubble: What the Internet Is Hiding from You* (New York: Penguin Press, 2011); Cass R. Sunstein, *#Republic: Divided Democracy in the Age of Social Media* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017).

¹³UNESCO, *Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence* (Paris: UNESCO, 2022); National Institute of Standards and Technology, *Artificial Intelligence Risk Management Framework (AI RMF 1.0)* (Gaithersburg, MD: NIST, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.6028/NIST.AI.100-1>.

selecting, and articulating information. This authority is relational and socio-technical. When, however, users, educational institutions, editors, publishers, and policymakers are explicit in their recognition of machine-generated output as epistemic material versus knowledge (which is a claim that has been supported by the actions of a responsible subject), this authority can be curtailed.

2. Clarifying Deconstruction and the Dislocation of the Criteria of Truth

An important aspect of Derrida's approach to philosophy is that through the act of deconstruction not only tensions, hierarchies, and instabilities which texts and conceptual oppositions hide are made visible, but they also show us how they conceal their differences. Deconstruction is not about random demolition of meaning nor is it a statement that all the interpretations are equally valid.¹⁴ Since AI is deprived of philosophical intentionality, this essay does not define it as a deconstruction agent in the strict sense. The expression "truth deconstruction," however, is used here in reference to a structural effect of the algorithmic mediation: it is the displacement of the conditions that formerly defined truth recognition by probability, performance, and visibility which stand out as signs of validity.

The first dislocation is a movement from correspondence to probability. Correspondence theories assess truth in terms of the conformity of a proposition to a factual state of affairs. Generative models, by contrast, calculate the probable sequence of tokens from patterns in data and context. Linguistic probability may correlate with fact because training data contain many true statements, but such correlation is not identical to verification. An answer may be statistically probable and still factually false. The expression "algorithmic truth" should therefore not designate a new kind of truth; at most, it describes an operational mechanism that generates claims in a truth-like form.

The second dislocation is a kind of transition from justification to fluency, from explanation to performance. In the epistemology literature, one says that a true belief is knowledge only when it is supported by sufficient justification. In AI interfaces, however, the basis of the knowledge is largely lost or overshadowed by the rhetorical qualities. Features such as well-ordered layout, technical terms, and a confident, authoritative tone are often the main reasons for persuasion and trust among users in that way. Users evaluate the content of AI not for substance but for the form of presentation. This is a special problem when the system does not cite sources or when the author fabricates citations. In those situations, one would say that fluency is a mere pretense of justification.

Third dislocation is about a shift from public truth to personal relevance. Platform algorithms judge content mainly based on the expected interactions with it, rather than purely from its epistemic quality. Contents that generate strong reactions such as anger, fear, or identity affirmation tend to get more visibility. Zuboff describes how data economy commodifies human experiences with the purpose of predicting individual behavior; Noble and O'Neil, on the other hand, show us how algorithmic classification

¹⁴Derrida, *Of Grammatology*.

might perpetuate already existing forms of discriminative structuralization.¹⁵ It is through the regime of relevance that not only the knowledge is shaped but trust is assigned and some groups are pushed aside from visibility.

The loss of these three features doesn't necessarily mean the truth as a category is lost. We still have access to criteria for evaluating AI output such as facts, evidence, consistency, and argument. What is really changed are the social conditions making users more willing to embrace other kinds of indicators: uncertainty is mistaken for fact, mass acceptability for truth, and tailored content being thought of as unbiased and objective. Thus, the concept of deconstruction presented in the paper can be seen as an unveiling of the delusion held by many that digital criteria are neutral and settled by nature while also pointing to how fragile in our times the ways for truth recognition have become.

This distinction is especially helpful because it prevents us from running into both extremes one is excessive admiration of technology, a belief that big data and algorithms always produce more objective results than human beings, and the other is a complete opposition to technology, an attitude that every AI outcome is totally unreliable. What can be a better and more acceptable view of the problem is to adopt the position called fallibilism tempered with discipline. The output of AI might be helpful some times even very accurate, however its status will be contingent upon the context, data sources, method as well as the amount of analysis. Al-Ghazali's concept of knowledge (epistemology) becomes very significant here since it shows that a consistent practice of doubting does not lead towards emptiness (nihilism), rather it guides the person who is in search towards different levels of evidence and degrees of certainty.

3. Deepening al-Ghazali's Epistemology: Certainty, Reason, *Nur*, and the Ethics of Knowledge

Al-Ghazali's epistemology is often simplified as a rejection of rationality and a replacement of reason with mystical intuition. Such a reading is inadequate. In *al-Munqidh min al-Dalal*, al-Ghazali defines certain knowledge as knowledge in which its object is disclosed so completely that no reasonable possibility of error remains.¹⁶ This standard leads him to re-examine beliefs acquired through *taqlid*, sensory testimony, and rational principles. His doubt is methodological, directed toward discovering a basis of certainty rather than establishing doubt as a permanent condition.

The first stage of al-Ghazali's critique addresses *taqlid*, the acceptance of belief on the authority of one's environment and education. *Taqlid* does not necessarily imply that all information received from others must be rejected; knowledge necessarily depends on testimony and a division of intellectual labor. The problem arises when authority is accepted without understanding its reasons, methods, and limits of

¹⁵Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2019); Safiya Umoja Noble, *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism* (New York: New York University Press, 2018); Cathy O'Neil, *Weapons of Math Destruction: How Big Data Increases Inequality and Threatens Democracy* (New York: Crown, 2016).

¹⁶Al-Ghazali, *Al-Ghazali's Path to Sufism*.

competence. In the context of AI, this critique reveals a form of "algorithmic *taqlid*": users accept an answer because it comes from a system assumed to be sophisticated, rather than because they have examined its sources and reasoning.

The next stage is the examination of sense perception and reason. Al-Ghazali recognizes that the senses can err, as in perceptions of size and motion, and then asks whether reason might itself be judged from a higher level of awareness. He does not, however, abandon rational demonstration. Contemporary studies show that al-Ghazali's skepticism operates as an examination of foundations and the boundaries of domains of knowledge, not as anti-intellectualism.¹⁷ In his theological and philosophical works, logical argument remains an essential instrument for assessing claims.

The idea that the restoration of belief in rational principles was possible through *nur*, a light coming from God it is a concept requiring a careful analysis. *Nur* is not merely another data point alongside the senses and reasoning. It is a condition that leads the soul to perceive its own limitations and the nature of knowledge, reveals certainty, and reorients man. Treiger argues that al-Ghazali's conception of mystical cognition is a well-developed theory and it stands in relationship with illuminationist traditions and the psychology of Avicenna.¹⁸ Consequently, the *nur* light is not a pure subjective emotion, a whimsical fantasy or untamed feeling but rather a very disciplined kind of intuition or inner vision.

In *Mishkat al-Anwar*, al-Ghazali outlines the degrees of light and capacity to perceive which start from the senses, go through reason, and finally arrive at higher forms of revelation. Such organization of this hierarchy allows the lowest levels still to exist. Through the sensory perception knowledge, one gains a proper view of the world within its scope; reason serves, in a way, to correct and go beyond the limitations of the senses; and lastly, illumination leads one toward knowledge with transcendent meaning.¹⁹ AI can take this concept of domain limits to heart. Exceptional skill in pattern recognition does not translate into the capability to settle moral questions, find the meaning of life or uncover metaphysical truth automatically.

Another frequently neglected dimension is the unity of knowledge and action. In *Kitab al-'Ilm*, al-Ghazali distinguishes beneficial knowledge from knowledge that has lost its direction and emphasizes that the value of knowledge is related to its effects on character and conduct.²⁰ Knowledge is not merely the accumulation of representations; it is a process of forming the subject. Moosa describes al-Ghazali's project as a work of moral imagination and self-formation, while Garden shows how the *Ihya'* functions as a

¹⁷Taneli Kukkonen, "Al-Ghazali's Skepticism Revisited," in *Rethinking the History of Skepticism: The Missing Medieval Background*, ed. Henrik Lagerlund (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 29–59; Edward Omar Moad, "Comparing Phases of Skepticism in al-Ghazali and Descartes: Some First Meditations on Deliverance from Error," *Philosophy East and West* 59, no. 1 (2009): 88–101.

¹⁸Alexander Treiger, *Inspired Knowledge in Islamic Thought: Al-Ghazali's Theory of Mystical Cognition and Its Avicennian Foundation* (London: Routledge, 2012).

¹⁹Al-Ghazali, *The Niche of Lights*; Frank Griffel, *Al-Ghazali's Philosophical Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

²⁰Al-Ghazali, *The Book of Knowledge*.

program for renewing religious practice.²¹ Because AI has no moral will, experience of repentance, or capacity to bear consequences, it cannot be a subject of knowledge in this ethical sense.

Four layers of al-Ghazali's epistemology can be formulated from this reading. The first is the reception of information or testimony, which still requires examination. The second is reasoning and demonstration appropriate to their object and method. The third is certainty, which requires the disclosure of the object without a contradiction capable of undermining it. The fourth is an ethical-spiritual orientation that determines whether knowledge leads to goodness, *adab*, and proximity to God. These layers are not a mechanical scheme, but they help explain why an output that happens to be correct does not yet constitute knowledge in its fullest sense.

Applying this framework to AI establishes a clear boundary. AI can strengthen the work of human sense and reason through data collection, classification, simulation, and the exploration of hypotheses. Yet AI does not possess *nur* as illuminative consciousness, has no intention, and does not stand within a structure of moral responsibility. It may therefore function as an epistemic *wasilah*, or means, but it cannot be treated as the possessor of wisdom or as a final authority. Authority remains with human beings and institutions capable of explaining the basis of a claim and bearing its consequences.

4. A Ghazalian Verification Matrix for the Use of AI

The reconstruction of al-Ghazali's epistemology can be translated into a four-dimensional evaluative matrix. This matrix is neither a new algorithm nor an attempt to Islamize technical vocabulary symbolically. It is a framework of questions designed to prevent users from moving directly from machine output to claims of truth without passing through verification.

The first dimension is *tahqiq al-masdar*, or source auditing. Every AI output should be traced: does the system identify its sources, do those sources actually exist, does the quotation correspond to the text, are the data current, and are there conflicts of interest or representational biases? In academic research, AI must not serve as the final bibliographic source. Users are required to look up the source which may be an article, a book, a legal document, or even a primary source. This method resonates with al-Ghazali's criticism of blind following (*taqlid*): one cannot place reliance on an authority simply because of the prestige; one's argument has to be assessed.

The next dimension is the *tamyiz maratib al-yaqin* which is to distinguish between different levels of certainty. An AI's outputs should be provided with appropriate epistemological labels: a verified fact, a likely fact, an interpretation, a hypothesis or a speculation. In the case of questions that only have right answers, cross-checking and consulting primary sources are required. If the question is interpretive, the system should present different viewpoints and be aware of the shortcomings of its knowledge. The AI

²¹Ebrahim Moosa, *Ghazali and the Poetics of Imagination* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Kenneth Garden, *The First Islamic Reviver: Abu Hamid al-Ghazali and His Revival of the Religious Sciences* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

may not in any way turn a probable answer into a binding religious decree or an absolute theological truth in matters of metaphysics and religion without having a human methodological authority.

The third aspect is *rabt al-'ilm bi al-'amal* which connects knowledge with purpose and consequence. Some pertinent questions that can help the assessment here, for instance, are: what does the outcome benefit; who may be negatively affected; does the method discriminate against anyone; can the decision be justified in the light of the results? According to al-Ghazali, knowledge which is not aimed at the right direction may serve as a means to tyranny. Hence, technical correctness is not to be considered a guarantee if by doing something, not only is human dignity reduced but also the rights to remedy or fairness are violated.

The fourth dimension is *hifz mas'uliyat al-insan*, the preservation of human responsibility. Significant decisions should be traceable back to specific people or entities that can, if necessary, clarify their reasoning and fix mistakes. It should never be a matter of blaming the AI, as was recently revealed in a study by the European Union. In this context, human supervision and accountability are the main themes of the UNESCO declaration, while the NIST framework focuses on identifying, analyzing, and addressing risks at every stage.²² From Ghazalian point of view, the mere presence of a tool is not sufficient to render the moral self redundant. It is not the tool itself but the user who is at stake here.

For academic writing, this matrix calls for a use of AI as an assistant for research or early drafts instead of reading. All citations have to be verified with the original source, each paraphrase matched to its context, and the author's work disclosed truthfully. In the study of religion, an AI-generated answer can only give an outline of concepts or terms for a literary review; determining the meaning of a text depends on language skills, methodological principles, context, and interpretive tradition. A critical analysis of Generative Qur'anic Interpretation in Indonesia has exemplified the significance of methodological authority at a high level.²³

In making public decision, the matrix is used to document data, provide model explanations and also assess the impact. The affected community has to be made part of the process and they have to be aware of mechanisms they can use to challenge decisions. Noble and O'Neil found that systems that look neutral from the point of mathematical fairness can reinforce existing unfairness if we do not look at the goals of those systems, and at the data and classifications.²⁴ Therefore, aside from auditing sources and levels of confidence, we should also audit issues of fairness. Knowing is technically valid or accurate is not necessarily from the moral or ethically point of view, a morally legitimated knowledge.

²²UNESCO, Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence; National Institute of Standards and Technology, Artificial Intelligence Risk Management Framework.

²³Mukmin et al., "Analisis Kritis terhadap Tafsir Generatif AI," 39–59.

²⁴Noble, Algorithms of Oppression; O'Neil, Weapons of Math Destruction.

The Ghazalian verification matrix is unique in combining aspects usually separated: the reasons behind claims, the limits of our thinking, ethical direction and the making of subjectivity. It is dual in the sense that it denies both kinds of reductions: the reduction of knowledge solely to statistical predicting power and the degradation of ethics to just following the procedures. The responsible deployment of AI should, on one hand, keep human beings as human judges, decision-makers, consequence bearers etc. but, on the other hand also, it should understand that human capacities alone are insufficient and human beings must also be guided, corrected through discussion and disciplined.

One weakness of this article is its conceptual nature. The described matrix has not been empirically checked yet as a measuring instrument in any particular domain. The research of the future has the potential of providing concrete indicators in a variety: higher education, scholarly publishing, digital religion, and public policy. On a deeper, philosophical level, the proposed conceptual framework defines a clear borderline: no matter how much data a machine handles or how fast it works or how well it 'talks', it will never become the subject of knowledge and morality.

CONCLUSION

A major consequence of the use of algorithms is that it changes the context in which truth is acknowledged by drawing most of attention away from correspondence and justification to probability, fluency, visibility, and personal relevance. Such a change does not introduce a brand-new kind of truth nor does it indicate that truth has been completely eliminated. Instead, it creates what is called an epistemic dislocation situation in which the performulative manifestations of the digital outputs are usually viewed as stand-ins for evidence and justification. So, in the paper deconstruction basically means questioning the legitimacy of the mechanisms behind truth and not a Derridean act by the machine.

Al-Ghazali's epistemology reveals that one cannot attain knowledge without criticizing *taqlid*, studying sensory perception and reason, accepting the boundaries of different areas and embracing a guiding and moral view. *Nur* cannot be simply equated with irrational intuition; rather, it can be understood to be a state that helps restore and channel our capacity of knowing. The idea that knowledge and action are one further demonstrates the need for a subject capable of accountability. Although AI is very effective as an instrument, it lacks any intent, moral consciousness, or existential responsibility.

The originality of the paper is reflected in the Ghazalian verification matrix. Its verification matrix comprises source auditing, distinguishing degrees of certainty, linking knowledge with moral purpose, and upholding human responsibly. The verification matrix sees the output of the artificial intelligence machine like a tentative statement that could play a supporting role in the development of ideas, but which nevertheless needs to be verified if it is to become the grounds for belief or the choice of a course. In this light a peaceful future with artificial intelligence will not depend on the total eradication of a technology, but rather on our mastery of maintaining the supremacy of verification over

smoothness, knowledge and wisdom over quickness and effectiveness. In short, human responsibility, over mere human effort.

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