



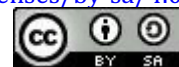
## Epistemic Injustice in Islamic Religious Education: A Critical Literature Review in the Digital Media Context

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Article Info :	ABSTRACT
Accepted: 10-04-2026 Approved: 04-05-2026 Published: 21-05-2026	The rapid development of digital technology has significantly transformed how religious knowledge is accessed, produced, and disseminated among students. In the context of Islamic Religious Education (IRE), this transformation raises critical concerns regarding epistemic authority, credibility, and the validation of religious knowledge sources in digital environments. This study aims to analyze the phenomenon of epistemic injustice in Islamic education within the digital era, particularly focusing on the shifting relationship between teachers, students, and digital media. This research employs a qualitative approach using a critical literature review method. Data were collected from reputable academic databases such as Scopus, Google Scholar, and SINTA-indexed journals, with inclusion criteria focusing on publications from 2015–2025 related to epistemic injustice, Islamic education, and digital media. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring patterns, conceptual relationships, and epistemological implications. The findings reveal three major forms of epistemic injustice: the shift of epistemic authority from teachers to digital platforms, the delegitimization of teachers as credible religious knowledge sources, and the fragmentation of students' religious understanding due to unverified and algorithm-driven digital content. The study's novelty lies in integrating epistemic injustice theory with Islamic epistemological principles such as <i>tabayyun</i> (verification) and <i>tafakkur</i> (critical reflection) as conceptual solutions for strengthening epistemic literacy in Islamic Religious Education in the digital era.
<b>Keywords:</b> epistemic injustice, Islamic Religious Education, literature review, epistemic authority	

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### INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology over the past two decades has fundamentally transformed the way people access, produce, and distribute knowledge (Chen et al., 2024). In a religious context, this transformation has not only expanded access to Islamic sources but has also created new spaces where scholarly authority has become increasingly fluid. (Ruiz-Rojas et al., 2024) state that students today no longer rely entirely on teachers as the primary source of religious knowledge, but also access various religious

content through social media, video platforms, and even artificial intelligence-based applications.

On the one hand, this phenomenon presents an opportunity for the democratization of religious knowledge; on the other hand, it raises serious concerns regarding scientific validity and authority. This is because not all religious information circulating in the digital sphere has a strong scientific foundation. In fact, in many cases, popular content does not always align with authentic Islamic scholarly principles. This indicates a shift from science-based authority toward popularity-based authority.

In the study of the philosophy of knowledge, this condition can be understood through the concept of epistemic injustice introduced by Fricker (2007). Epistemic injustice refers to the injustice that occurs in the process of the distribution and recognition of knowledge, where certain individuals or groups are not recognized as credible sources of knowledge (Fürst, 2023). In the context of Islamic religious education, this phenomenon is evident when teachers or scholars who possess scholarly authority are actually less trusted than viral digital content.

Previous studies have examined the impact of digital technology on Islamic education, particularly focusing on digital literacy and the integration of technology in learning. For instance, Fernández-Otoya et al. (2024) conducted a systematic literature review highlighting the importance of digital literacy among educators in adapting to technological advancements. Similarly, Putra et al. (2024) found that social media plays a significant role in shaping students' religious understanding, although it often leads to superficial comprehension. Another study by Siregar et al. (2025) emphasized the transformation of religious authority from traditional sanad-based systems to algorithm-driven knowledge dissemination.

Several previous studies have explored the relationship between digital technology and religious education from different perspectives. Fernández-Otoya et al. (2024) through a systematic literature review, emphasized that digital literacy has become an essential competency for educators in responding to technological transformation in education. Their study focused primarily on teachers' technological adaptation and did not specifically discuss epistemological injustice in knowledge validation. Meanwhile, Putra et al. (2024) investigated the role of social media in Islamic Religious Education and found that digital platforms significantly influence students' religious perspectives, although the study highlighted the risk of superficial understanding due to fragmented information consumption. Furthermore, Siregar et al. (2025) analyzed the transformation of Islamic religious authority from sanad-based systems toward algorithm-driven dissemination. Their

findings demonstrated that digital algorithms increasingly shape public trust in religious knowledge sources. However, these studies largely focused on pedagogical and technological dimensions rather than critically examining epistemic injustice as a philosophical problem in Islamic education.

The urgency of this study lies in the increasing vulnerability of students to misinformation, shallow religious understanding, and the decline of traditional scholarly authority in digital spaces. Without strong epistemic literacy, students may accept religious information based solely on popularity and algorithmic exposure rather than scholarly credibility and verification. This condition potentially weakens the quality of Islamic Religious Education and threatens the development of critical and reflective religious understanding among students.

However, these studies tend to focus on practical and pedagogical aspects rather than examining the epistemological dimensions of how knowledge is recognized, validated, and trusted. There remains a significant gap in understanding how digital transformation contributes to epistemic injustice, particularly within the context of Islamic Religious Education. This study addresses this gap by analyzing digital phenomena as an epistemic arena that reshapes authority, credibility, and knowledge validation. Unlike previous research, this study integrates the concept of epistemic injustice with Islamic epistemological values, offering a more holistic framework.

**Research benefits:** Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of epistemic injustice discourse within Islamic education studies. Practically, it provides insights for educators to strengthen students' critical awareness in navigating digital religious information.

**Research implication:** This study implies the need for a paradigm shift in Islamic education, emphasizing epistemic literacy to ensure that students are able to critically evaluate and verify religious knowledge in the digital era.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a critical literature review design. The research focuses on conceptual analysis without involving specific research subjects or field locations.

Data were collected from academic databases including Scopus, Google Scholar, and SINTA-indexed journals. The search keywords used were "epistemic injustice," "Islamic religious education," "digital media," and "epistemic authority." The inclusion criteria were: publications between 2015-2025, peer-reviewed journal articles, and relevance to the research topic. Both international (Scopus-indexed) and national (minimum SINTA 2) sources were included.

The initial search yielded approximately 85 articles. After screening titles and abstracts, 40 articles were selected for full-text review. Finally, 21 articles were included based on relevance and quality. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, supported by a literature review matrix as the research instrument. The analysis involved coding, categorizing, and interpreting key themes related to epistemic injustice in Islamic education.

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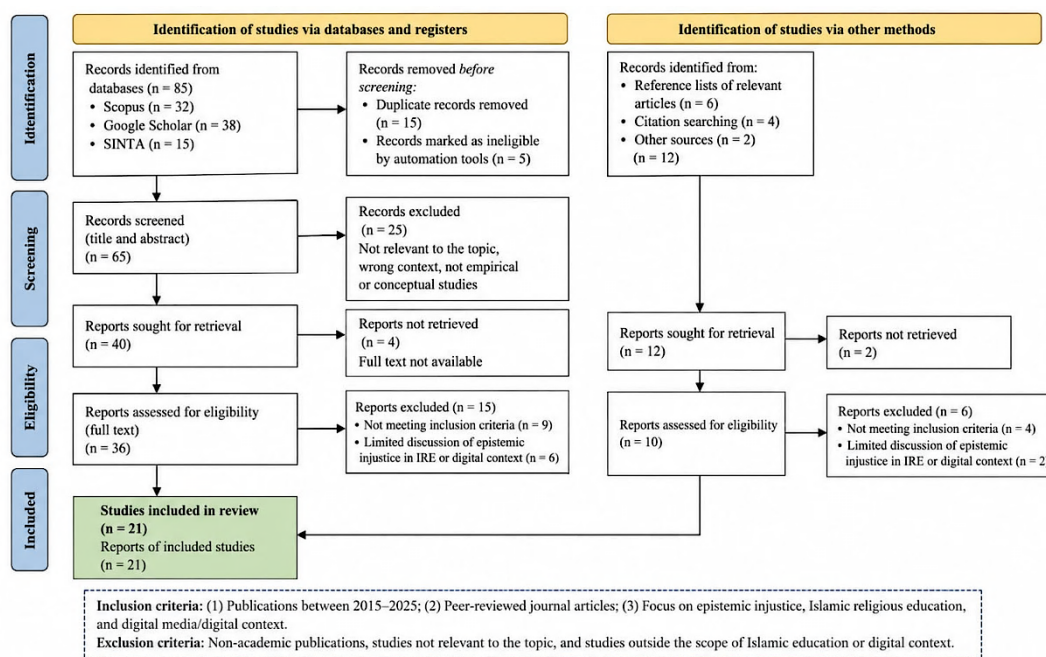


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram for New Systematic Review

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The literature review identified three dominant themes regarding epistemic injustice in Islamic Religious Education within digital contexts. First, digital media contributes to a significant shift in epistemic authority from teachers and religious scholars toward algorithm-driven digital platforms. Second, teachers increasingly experience delegitimization as authoritative knowledge sources due to students’ dependence on viral digital content. Third, students’ religious understanding becomes fragmented because digital information is often consumed partially without contextual interpretation. These findings indicate that digital transformation affects not only learning practices but also the structure of knowledge legitimacy in Islamic education.

The phenomenon of epistemic injustice in Islamic religious education in the digital age cannot be understood merely as a consequence of

technological advancements, but rather as an epistemological issue that touches upon how religious knowledge is recognized and trusted. The relationship between teachers, students, and sources of knowledge has undergone a significant shift (Lestari & Suhada, 2020) knowledge is no longer monopolized by traditional authorities such as teachers and religious scholars, but is widely disseminated in an open and uncontrolled digital space.

The concept of epistemic injustice introduced by Fricker (2007) helps explain this condition, particularly in two main forms: testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice (Dryzek & Niemeyer, 2025). In Islamic religious education, testimonial injustice occurs when the credibility of teachers as conveyors of religious knowledge is no longer recognized proportionally by students (Reid, 2024). Meanwhile, hermeneutical injustice arises when students lack an adequate interpretive framework to understand the religious information they obtain from various digital sources (Mercer, 2022; Siregar et al., 2025).

Based on this analysis, epistemic injustice in Islamic religious education can be categorized into three main aspects: a shift in epistemic authority, the delegitimization of teachers' scholarly authority, and the fragmentation of students' religious understanding. These three aspects indicate that the problem lies not only at the level of teaching methods but also in the structure of knowledge itself (Bufkin, 2025).

### **The Shift in Epistemic Authority in Islamic Religious Education**

The development of digital media has transformed the landscape of scholarly authority in Islamic religious education (Siregar et al., 2025). Whereas teachers and religious scholars were previously the primary sources of guidance in understanding Islamic teachings, students now have direct access to a variety of knowledge sources through digital platforms. This situation has created a shift from knowledge-based authority toward authority based on accessibility and popularity (Castells, 2010; Prima et al., 2025).

This finding is consistent with previous studies indicating that digital media reshapes students' trust in knowledge sources. However, unlike prior research that focuses primarily on digital literacy, this study emphasizes the epistemological consequences, particularly the emergence of epistemic injustice.

From an Islamic epistemological perspective, the principles of tabayyun (verification) and tafakkur (reflection) provide a strong foundation to address this issue. Tabayyun emphasizes the necessity of verifying information before acceptance, while tafakkur encourages deep reflection and critical thinking. These principles offer a unique contribution that distinguishes this study from

previous research, which rarely integrates Islamic epistemology into discussions of digital knowledge. For the next, this from the perspective of testimonial injustice, this situation indicates an imbalance in the distribution of epistemic trust (Bufkin, 2025). Consequently, teachers who possess scholarly authority are actually less trusted, while sources lacking academic legitimacy garner greater trust. This aligns with findings that the digital generation tends to rely on quick and practical information sources rather than in-depth ones (Szymkowiak et al., 2021).

Furthermore, this phenomenon also impacts how students understand Islamic teachings. The learning process, which should involve reflection and deepening of meaning, is often replaced by the consumption of instant information. In the long term, this can diminish the quality of comprehensive and systematic religious understanding.

### **The Erosion of Teachers' Academic Authority in the Digital Age**

In the tradition of Islamic education, teachers serve not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as authoritative figures guiding the internalization of religious values (Haluti et al., 2024). Furthermore, the concept of sanad in Islamic scholarship indicates that the legitimacy of knowledge is closely tied to the personal authority of those possessing competence and integrity (Rofi, 2025).

However, in the digital age, this position faces significant challenges. Students no longer view teachers as their sole reference for understanding religious teachings. They tend to compare information received in class with content they find on digital media. In many cases, digital content that is more visually and emotionally engaging is considered more convincing, even if it lacks a strong scholarly foundation.

This phenomenon indicates a crisis of trust in teachers as epistemic authorities. Within the framework of epistemic injustice, this situation can be understood as a form of epistemic injustice that is not always caused by the teachers' shortcomings, but by changes in the social structure of knowledge distribution (Mukwambo, 2025).

Furthermore, the role of algorithms in digital media further reinforces this phenomenon. Algorithms work by displaying content that aligns with users' preferences, thereby creating what is known as an "echo chamber"—an information space that reinforces existing viewpoints (Pariser, 2011). In the context of Islamic religious education, this can hinder the process of critical dialogue and narrow students' perspectives.

From an Islamic epistemological perspective, this situation contradicts the principles of tabayyun (verification) and tafakkur (reflection), which form

the foundation for understanding religious teachings (Ritonga et al., 2025). Therefore, the delegitimization of teachers impacts not only pedagogical aspects but also the epistemic quality of Islamic education.

### **Fragmentation of Students' Religious Understanding**

Another significant impact of the phenomenon of epistemic injustice is the fragmentation of religious understanding among students. Putra et al. (2024) assert that religious information obtained through digital media is often partial and lacks adequate context. Students tend to understand Islamic teachings through fragments of information, such as brief quotations of verses or hadiths.

This fragmentation leads to a superficial and unintegrated understanding. In many cases, students struggle to connect one concept with another, resulting in an incomplete understanding. This aligns with the concept of hermeneutical injustice, where individuals lack an adequate interpretive framework to understand the experiences or information they receive (Hopster, 2024).

Furthermore, from an Islamic epistemological perspective, knowledge is not merely understood as a collection of information but as an integrated system encompassing revelation, reason, and experience (Al-Furqon et al., 2025). Therefore, Islamic Education instruction should not merely convey information but also build a comprehensive framework of thinking.

However, the dominance of digital media often overlooks this aspect. The content presented tends to be simplistic and leaves little room for deep reflection. As a result, students have access to a wealth of information but lack a deep understanding. To address this phenomenon, a restructuring of Islamic religious education is needed that emphasizes the strengthening of epistemic literacy. Students need to be equipped with the ability to assess the credibility of sources, understand context, and engage in critical reflection on the information they receive. In this regard, teachers play a crucial role as facilitators who help students navigate the complexity of information in the digital age (Fernández-Otoya et al., 2024; Lan & Tung, 2024; Ruiz-Rojas et al., 2024).

### **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that epistemic injustice in Islamic Religious Education manifests in three primary forms: the shift in epistemic authority, the delegitimization of teachers, and the fragmentation of students' religious understanding. These findings indicate that the challenge is not merely pedagogical but deeply epistemological. However, this study is limited to a

conceptual analysis based on literature review without empirical validation. Therefore, its findings cannot fully represent real classroom dynamics.

Future research is recommended to conduct empirical studies involving teachers and students to validate the proposed framework. Additionally, further exploration of Islamic epistemological principles in addressing digital knowledge challenges is highly encouraged.

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