Negotiating Qur'anic Interpretive Authority in the Age of Artificial Intelligence in Aceh

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Abstract: Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly used in Qur'anic learning through tools that search, translate, recommend, and generate explanatory outputs. While these technologies expand access to Qur'anic resources, they also raise questions about interpretive authority when religious meanings are mediated by automated systems. This study examines how boundaries for AI use are articulated in Qur'anic learning and interpretation in Aceh. Using a qualitative design, the research draws on semi-structured interviews with ulama affiliated with dayah (traditional Islamic boarding schools in Aceh). The data were analysed thematically to trace how authority was framed, where limits of use were drawn, and what educational risks were anticipated. The findings show that AI is generally regarded as *mubāḥ* for limited technical purposes, accompanied by *iḥtiyāṭ* to safeguard *ʿaqīdah* and reduce uncritical reliance on machine-generated outputs. Interpretive credibility is understood to remain anchored in teacher-guided transmission through *talaqqī* and *sanad*, alongside the cultivation of *adab* and *dirāyah*. AI is restricted from activities that resemble *tafsīr*, particularly where contextual reasoning (including *asbāb al-nuzūl*), methodological discipline, and sustained engagement with the classical *turāth* are required. Although AI offers practical benefits for teachers in preparation and administration, it is also associated with concerns about student dependency, weakened study discipline, and reduced engagement with demanding texts. The study shows how epistemic norms in *ʿulūm al-Qurʾān* are operationalised as practical boundaries that conditionally accommodate AI in Qur'anic learning while protecting interpretive authority in dayah contexts in Aceh.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence; Qur'anic Learning; Authority; Tafsīr; Aceh*

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Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly used in Qur'anic learning through search tools, translation applications, recommendation systems, and generative platforms that can summarise verses, suggest meanings, and assemble references quickly. This growth has widened access to Qur'anic resources, but it also invites questions about interpretive authority when religious explanations are produced through automated systems. Recent work has begun to map these developments in relation to AI's role in Qur'anic services and the wider digital turn in Qur'anic scholarship.[1] At the same time,

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[1] Basheer Adnan, "Leveraging Artificial Intelligence Technologies in the Service of the Holy Quran and Its Sciences," *Khazanah Journal of Religion and Technology* 2, no. 2 (January 6, 2025): 36–44,

Islamic ethical and epistemological discussions have raised concerns about responsibility, reliability, and the limits of machine generated guidance.[2]

In Islamic scholarly tradition, authority in Qur'anic interpretation is closely linked to recognised methods and scholarly formation. Literature in *ulūm al Qur'ān* (Qur'anic sciences) stresses that interpretation draws on supporting disciplines and interpretive principles. It is typically learned through established teacher student transmission called *talaqqī* and through scholarly lineages known as *sanad*.[3] Related discussions also highlight interpretive tools such as *asbāb al nuzūl* and *nāsikh mansūkh*, which help scholars handle context and interpretive consistency. In contemporary debates, these foundations are discussed alongside the growth of digital *tafsīr* (Qur'anic exegesis in online and platform settings) and the way online interpretation can reshape public expectations about who may speak for the Qur'an.[4]

Research on AI in Islamic knowledge production suggests that the benefits of speed and scale often come with predictable weaknesses. Reviews of AI in Qur'anic studies note risks such as decontextualised retrieval, limited handling of interpretive disagreement, and outputs that sound confident without clear scholarly accountability.[5] Discussions on AI and religion also point to a basic dilemma. AI can generate plausible explanations, but it does so through pattern based modelling rather than the forms of scholarly training that underpin interpretive legitimacy.[6] These issues become more

https://doi.org/10.15575/kjrt.v2i2.900; Aminun Nabil Ahmad Syahir et al., "Artificial Intelligence and Digital Transformation in Qur'anic Studies: A Systematic Literature Review," *Quranica* 17, no. 2 Special Issue (2025): 542–85, https://ejournal.um.edu.my/index.php/quranica/article/view/65005.

[2] Andini Susanti, Muhammad Adhitya, and Vera Maria, "Meningkatkan Inklusivitas Pendidikan Dengan Artificial Intelligence (AI) Untuk Personalisasi Dan Aksesibilitas Untuk Semua," *Journal of Law, Education and Business* 2, no. 2 (September 30, 2024): 903–11, https://doi.org/10.57235/jleb.v2i2.2695; Ahmad Tholabi Kharlie, "The Morality of Artificial Intelligence," Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta Official Website, 2025, https://uinjkt.ac.id/en/the-morality-of-artificial-intelligence.

[3] Ajahari Ajahari, *Ulumul Qur'an: (Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an)* (Yogyakarta: Aswaja Pressindo, 2018); Jalaluddin Al-Suyuti, *Al-Itqan Fi Ulum Al-Quran* (Dar Al Fikr, 2008); Badruddin Muhammad Abdullah al-Zarkasyi, *Al-Burhan Fi Ulum Al-Quran* (Cairo: Dar al-Hadis, 2006).

[4] Nopriani Hasibuan, Eka Mulyo Yunus, and Thohar Ahmad Hsb, "Digital Tafsir and the Construction of Religious Authority: A Critical Analysis of Gus Nur's Quranic Interpretation," *Journal of Ushuluddin and Islamic Thought* 3, no. 1 (June 1, 2025): 65–97, https://doi.org/10.15642/juit.2025.3.1.65-97.

[5] Syahir et al., "Artificial Intelligence and Digital Transformation in Qur'anic Studies: A Systematic Literature Review"; Tarmizi Tarmizi Tahir and Suswandi Suswandi, "Konsep Al-Qur'an Dalam Menghadapi Peluang Dan Tantangan Artificial Intelligence," *TAFSIR: Journal of Quranic Studies* 2, no. 2 (December 30, 2024): 79–95, https://doi.org/10.62376/tafsir.v2i2.45.

[6] Mohammed Gamal Abdelnour, "Artificial Intelligence and the Islamic Theology of Technology: From 'Means' to 'Meanings' and from 'Minds' to 'Hearts,'" *Religions* 16, no. 6 (June 18, 2025): 796, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel16060796.

sensitive when AI is used to generate explanatory narratives that resemble *tafsīr* rather than simply locating references.

Aceh offers a distinctive setting for examining this question because the *dayah* (traditional Islamic boarding school in Aceh) remains a central institution for religious learning and for shaping *ulama* authority.[7] Studies of Acehnese *dayah* describe its enduring social role and its capacity to respond to wider changes while maintaining recognised learning traditions.[8] In this environment, AI based Qur'anic applications circulate within an increasingly digital public sphere, while *dayah* authority continues to be anchored in established pedagogies and scholarly hierarchies. This encounter raises an empirical question about how *dayah ulama*[9] define what can and cannot be delegated to AI in relation to Qur'anic interpretation.

Despite growing interest in AI and Islam, empirical research that documents how traditional scholarly communities set boundaries for AI in Qur'anic interpretation remains limited, especially in regions where pesantren style authority is socially strong.[10] Much of the current discussion stays at the level of general ethical reflection or focuses on the promised benefits of AI for Qur'anic services.[11] Less attention has been given to how

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[7] Muhammad Sahlan et al., "The Roles of Ulama in the Process of Post-Conflict Reconciliation in Aceh," *Society* 7, no. 2 (2019): 251–67, https://doi.org/10.33019/society.v7i2.106; Firdaus M. Yunus et al., "Rejection of Rohingya in Aceh: The Role of Ulama and Tolerance in Acehnese Society," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 13, no. 3 (September 30, 2025): 1669–92, https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v13i3.1589.

[8] S. Sabirin et al., "The Cultural Survival of Traditional Islamic Education: Dayah Ulee Titi in Modern Aceh, Indonesia," *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 10, no. 02 (2022): 737–58, https://jurnal.staialhidayahbogor.ac.id/index.php/ei/article/view/1395; Erawadi Erawadi and Fadlan Masykura Setiadi, "Transformation of Traditional Islamic Education: Dayah as a Modern Educational Institution in Post-Conflict Aceh," *FITRAH: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 9, no. 2 (January 3, 2024): 225–46, https://doi.org/10.24952/fitrah.v9i2.10110; T. Wildan, "Traditional Dayah Education in Aceh in the Perspective of Perennialist Philosophy," *At-Tafkir* 15, no. 2 (November 30, 2022): 238–51, https://doi.org/10.32505/at.v15i2.5120; Syarifuddin Syarifuddin, "Ulama Dayah and the Construction of Tolerance and Pluralism in Acehnese Society," *Sinthop: Media Kajian Pendidikan, Agama, Sosial Dan Budaya* 4, no. 1 (June 14, 2025): 75–83, https://doi.org/10.69548/sinthop.v4.i1.23.75-83.

[9] *Dayah ulama* refers to Acehnese Islamic scholars whose authority is formed and recognised within *dayah* (traditional Islamic boarding schools in Aceh), where Qur'anic learning is commonly grounded in teacher-led transmission (*talaqqī*) and scholarly lineages (*sanad*).

[10] Muhammad Andrean and Mardian Idris Harahap, "Artificial Intelligence and Qur'anic Interpretation: A Critical Comparative Study of ChatGPT and Classical Tafsir," *Al-Fahmu: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 4, no. 2 (September 30, 2025): 658–70, https://doi.org/10.58363/alfahmu.v4i2.641; Muhammad Anang Firdaus, Muhammad Syihabuddin, and Zein Fuady, "ISLAM AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: Perspectives from Traditionalist and Modernist Muslim Communities in Indonesia," *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 49, no. 1 (June 24, 2025): 141, https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v49i1.1333.

[11] M Agus Salim and Riska Bayu Aditya, "Integration of Artificial Intelligence in Islamic Education: Trends, Methods, and Challenges in the Digital Era," *Journal of Modern Islamic Studies and Civilization* 3, no. 01 (January 20, 2025): 74–89, https://doi.org/10.59653/jmisc.v3i01.1368; Andrean and Harahap, "Artificial Intelligence and Qur'anic Interpretation: A Critical Comparative Study of ChatGPT and

ulama translate classical interpretive norms into practical judgements about AI, including which uses are considered acceptable, risky, or unacceptable. To address this gap, this study adopts a qualitative approach centred on semi structured interviews with *dayah ulama* in Aceh. The interview data were analysed thematically to trace recurring patterns in how authority was framed, where limits of use were drawn, and what kinds of risks were anticipated. Ethical procedures were followed through informed consent and the anonymisation of participants.

Building on this evidence, the article explores how interpretive authority is negotiated where *dayah* epistemology meets algorithmic mediation. It examines how Acehnese *dayah ulama* judge the legitimacy of AI outputs when engaging Qur'anic meaning, how they distinguish between acceptable technical assistance and interpretive substitution that resembles *tafsīr*, and how they anticipate the educational and moral consequences of routine AI use. The findings are presented through four linked themes that recur across the interviews.

Discussion

General Stance toward AI: Between *Mubāḥ* and *Iḥtiyāṭ*

The interviews opened with how AI is already entering daily learning routines, mainly through verse searches, quick reference checks, and instant religious explanations from applications. When the informants were asked to respond to this reality, they tended to start with a legal and ethical judgement. One informant said that AI use is acceptable "as long as it does not contradict the law and *akidah*"[12]. This statement sets an explicit boundary from the outset. Permissibility is framed as permission tied to safeguarding creed.

That permissibility was repeatedly paired with caution, especially when AI outputs are consumed without the ability to evaluate them. The same informant stressed the need to distinguish what fits Islamic guidance from what does not, and he warned that the risk grows when users lack a strong basis in religious learning. Another informant

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Classical Tafsir"; Pipin Armita, "Mapping the Contextual Meanings of the Qur'an Using Artificial Intelligence: A Data-Driven Tafsir Approach," *Al-Mashadir: Journal of Quranic Sciences and Tafsir* 1, no. 1 (2025): 11–23, https://albaayaninstitute.org/index.php/al-mashadir/article/view/176; Sahlawati Binti Abu Bakar et al., "Reconstructing Artificial Intelligence Ethics through Qur'anic Values of Ihsan and Amanah Using Thematic Exegesis," *Quranica* 17, no. 2 Special Issue (2025): 429–46; Adnan, "Leveraging Artificial Intelligence Technologies in the Service of the Holy Quran and Its Sciences."

[12] Interview with Tgk. NHI, September 2025

stated that AI is "more appropriate for educated users so that the answers can be filtered critically".[13] The concern becomes sharper when informants link the issue to the religious formation of younger users. One informant cautioned that careless AI use may weaken the *akidah* understanding of future youth.[14] In these accounts, the problem concerns how quickly a confident output can be accepted without verification, comparison, or awareness of interpretive difference. Similar risks have been noted in recent discussions of AI use in Qur'anic learning contexts.[15]

The informants then drew a clear line when they spoke about authority. One informant stated plainly that "AI is only a tool and cannot replace the role of a teacher," and he connected this position to *sanad* and recognised scholarly authority.[16] AI is treated as acceptable when it supports learning tasks, but it is resisted when it begins to function as an independent interpreter. This boundary is consistent with how *ulūm al-Qur'ān* frames interpretive legitimacy as something maintained through scholarly training and accountable knowledge transmission.[17]

One informant also positioned AI within a longer trajectory of tools by comparing it to the internet and search engines. He described current AI use in religion as still close to "information searching," similar to Google, and therefore not something that should trigger panic at this stage.[18] This comparison helps explain why the informants favour controlled accommodation. AI may be used to speed access and organise material, yet it should remain under the supervision of scholars, particularly in matters that touch belief and religious understanding.[19]

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[13] Interview with Tgk. MY, October 2025

[14] Interview with Tgk. MZA, September 2025

[15] Tahir and Suswandi, "Konsep Al-Qur'an Dalam Menghadapi Peluang Dan Tantangan Artificial Intelligence."

[16] Interview with Tgk. HJ, January 2025

[17] Ajahari, *Ulumul Qur'an: (Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an)*; Al-Suyuti, *Al-Itqan Fi Ulum Al-Quran*.

[18] Interview with Tgk. MS, October 2025

[19] Susanti, Adhitya, and Maria, "Meningkatkan Inklusivitas Pendidikan Dengan Artificial Intelligence (AI) Untuk Personalisasi Dan Aksesibilitas Untuk Semua"; Lia Susanti et al., "AI Epistemology in Islamic Perspective: A Bibliometric Analysis," *Mawaizh : Jurnal Dakwah Dan Pengembangan Sosial Kemanusiaan* 15, no. 2 (2024): 317–46, https://rumahjurnal.iainsasbabel.ac.id/maw/article/view/5273; Sehat Ihsan Shadiqin, Tuti Marjan Fuadi, and Siti Ikramatoun, "AI Dan Agama: Tantangan Dan Peluang Dalam Era Digital," *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik Malikussaleh (JSPM)* 4, no. 2 (August 8, 2023): 319–33, https://doi.org/10.29103/jspm.v4i2.12408.

The interviews point to a stance best described as conditional permissibility (*mubāḥ*)[20] combined with disciplined caution (*iḥtiyāṭ*)[21]. AI is not rejected as a technology, but its use is morally and pedagogically bounded. It may assist retrieval, organisation, and preliminary checking, yet it must not function as an autonomous source of religious explanation when users lack the competence to assess reliability and interpretive difference. For the informants, the decisive boundary is therefore not the device itself but the shift from technical assistance to interpretive substitution, especially in matters touching *akidah*. This is why permissibility is repeatedly tied to supervision and to the preservation of teacher-centred transmission, where authority remains anchored in recognised learning lineages.

AI and Scholarly Authority: Teachers Are Irreplaceable

As the interviews moved from questions of usefulness to questions of authority, the informants drew a clear boundary around the role of teachers in Qur'anic learning. One informant rejected the idea that AI could assume a teacher like position, stating that it is "not relevant as a teacher because it is only an assisting tool, not a teacher".[22] This statement frames AI as support, while pedagogical authority remains located in the teacher. The basis for this boundary was repeatedly expressed through transmission and guided learning. One informant contrasted authoritative religious knowledge with AI directly. "Knowledge has a clear *sanad* reaching the Prophet, while AI has no accountable transmission pathway".[23] Another informant placed emphasis on the formative process of direct instruction, explaining that "the process of *talaqqī* is a key condition for obtaining the *barakah* of knowledge," because knowledge is acquired through direct encounters between teacher and student.[24]

The same concern appears in how informants spoke about studying religion without a teacher. Some invoked the pesantren maxim *man lāisa lahu syaikh fa al-syaithān syaikhuhu*[25]. One informant stated that learning religion without *talaqqī* may

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[20] *Mubāḥ* denotes what is legally permissible in Islamic jurisprudence (neither obligatory nor forbidden)

[21] *Iḥtiyāṭ* denotes religiously motivated precaution—acting with restraint to minimise error, doubt, or harm, especially in matters affecting belief and religious guidance.

[22] Interview with Tgk. S, September 2025

[23] Interview with Tgk. NHI, January 2025

[24] Interview with Tgk. MY, October 2025

[25] Interview with multiple informants, September 2025

"remove the *barakah* of knowledge".[26] These statements also point to learning habits, including quick reliance on a single output, weak verification, and reduced discipline. Reviews of AI use in Qur'anic learning raise related concerns, particularly when automated systems present confident responses while leaving interpretive disagreement and context unclear.[27]

Several informants also highlighted dimensions of teaching that they regarded as inseparable from human guidance. One informant stated that "the teacher has a spiritual dimension that AI does not have," and he linked the teacher's role to the cultivation of values and *adab*.[28] This emphasis aligns with scholarship in Islamic education that treats the teacher not only as a transmitter of information but as a formative presence in character building and learning discipline. It also helps explain why informants were willing to accommodate AI for access and organisation while resisting it as a substitute for guidance about meaning. In broader terms, this stance sits within a well documented shift in which digital environments widen access to religious materials while also opening new modes of participation that can reshape how authority is perceived.[29] Work in digital religion similarly shows that authority is renegotiated when religious communication moves to platform settings that change visibility, reach, and patterns of trust.[30]

In Indonesia, studies of digitally mediated piety describe how social media can reconfigure religious influence and followership beyond traditional institutional control, which makes questions of guidance and accountability more pressing.[31] The interviews in this study show a distinct local response to that wider dynamic. AI may assist access and organisation, yet authority to teach and to guide meaning remains attached to

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[26] Interview with Tgk. AFA, January 2025

[27] Syahir et al., "Artificial Intelligence and Digital Transformation in Qur'anic Studies: A Systematic Literature Review"; Tahir and Suswandi, "Konsep Al-Qur'an Dalam Menghadapi Peluang Dan Tantangan Artificial Intelligence."

[28] Interview with Tgk. HJ, January 2025

[29] Gary R. Bunt, *Islam in the Digital Age* (Pluto Press, 2003), https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt18fs6ck; D F Eickelman and J W Anderson, *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere*, Indiana Series in Middle East Studies (Indiana University Press, 1999).

[30] H Campbell, *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds*, Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds (Routledge, 2013); Stewart M. Hoover, ed., *The Media and Religious Authority* (Penn State University Press, 2016), https://doi.org/10.5325/j.ctv14gp1zt.

[31] Eva F. Nisa, "Social Media and the Birth of an Islamic Social Movement: ODOJ (One Day One Juz) in Contemporary Indonesia," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 46, no. 134 (January 2, 2018): 24–43, https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2017.1416758; Martin Slama, "Practising Islam through Social Media in Indonesia," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 46, no. 134 (January 2, 2018): 1–4, https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2018.1416798.

accountable learning relations and ethical responsibilities carried by scholars. These interview accounts therefore keep AI within a supportive role while protecting the authority of teaching and interpretation. AI may be used for access and organisation, but the core of Qur'anic learning remains in guided relations between teacher and student, where *sanad*, *talaqqī*, and *adab* shape how knowledge is acquired and trusted.

Limits of AI in Qur'anic Interpretation

The informants became most explicit when AI was discussed in relation to outputs that resemble *tafsīr*. One informant drew the boundary in concrete terms. "AI should only be used for technical needs, such as collecting verses related to a particular theme, but not for interpretation".[32] He explained why this limit matters by adding that "Qur'anic interpretation is a complex process and cannot be approached from only one side".[33] These remarks show how the informants place AI within learning practice. AI is accepted when it functions as retrieval and organisation, and it is resisted when its output is treated as an interpretive conclusion.

Their caution is driven by how interpretation is expected to work in scholarly settings. A recurring concern is that AI reproduces textual fragments while leaving the interpretive environment unclear. One informant stated, "AI can quote data, but it cannot understand the context of revelation".[34] In the same discussion, the informants connected interpretive reliability to the tools and reasoning practices that guide exegetical judgement, including *asbāb al-nuzūl*, historical framing, and *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*.[35] When context and interpretive tools are not carried through, an explanation can sound persuasive while remaining detached from the discipline that makes a reading accountable in Qur'anic scholarship.

A second limit concerns engagement with classical sources and the kind of scholarly depth the informants call *dirāyah*. Tgk. HJ stated that AI "has not yet been able to explain classical books adequately," and he linked this to difficulties in engaging classical Arabic texts in a way that supports reliable comprehension.[36] He then framed interpretive credibility through a distinction between transmission and deep understanding, stating that "truth in religious knowledge does not depend only on

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[32] Interview with Tgk. S, September 2025
[33] Interview with Tgk. S, September 2025
[34] Interview with Tgk. S, September 2025
[35] Interview with Tgk. S, September 2025
[36] Interview with Tgk. HJ, September 2025

transmission, but also on *dirāyah*".[37] This connects to concerns raised in recent work on AI and Qur'anic studies. AI supported applications can widen access and accelerate search, yet the interpretive task remains vulnerable to decontextualisation and overconfidence when automated outputs are consumed as final answers.

The informants also spoke about consequences at the level of reception. Tgk. MZA warned that "seeking Qur'anic interpretation through AI is not recommended because it can produce mistaken understanding".[38] In digital religious environments, access expands and interpretive claims circulate faster, often detached from institutional checks.[39] Studies of digitally mediated piety in Indonesia describe related shifts in religious learning practices and authority relations.[40] The informants anticipate that AI will amplify ready made interpretations, and they attempt to contain that risk by restricting AI to technical support.

This theme clarifies the practical logic behind the boundary setting described earlier. The informants accept AI for bounded tasks such as theme based verse grouping and rapid reference search, yet they reject its use as an interpretive authority when the output begins to function as *tafsīr*.[41] The interviews show how *ulama* translate classical expectations about method and context into a concrete rule of use. AI may support retrieval, while interpretive judgement remains tied to disciplined reading, contextual reasoning, and accountable scholarly formation.

Opportunities and Challenges of AI Use in Education

The informants presented AI as a technology that brings opportunities while also creating challenges in the educational environment. The opportunity they highlighted most often was felt by teachers. Tgk. S stated that "AI is beneficial to support the development of teachers' scholarly literature and to make access to academic sources easier".[42] Tgk. HJ added a concrete example from institutional practice, explaining that AI has been used for administrative needs such as mapping prospective students and

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[37] Interview with Tgk. HJ, September 2025
[38] Interview with Tgk. MZA, September 2025
[39] Campbell, *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds*; Eickelman and Anderson, *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere.*
[40] Nisa, "Social Media and the Birth of an Islamic Social Movement: ODOJ (One Day One Juz) in Contemporary Indonesia"; Slama, "Practising Islam through Social Media in Indonesia."
[41] Interview with Tgk. S and Tgk. MZA, September 2025
[42] Interview with Tgk. S, September 2025

organising activity schedules.[43] These comments keep AI within a supportive role that strengthens preparation and management, while the core of learning remains guided by teachers.

The challenges, however, were directed mainly at students and learning habits. Tgk. MZA warned that "easy access to information through AI has the potential to reduce students' seriousness in seeking knowledge".[44] Tgk. AFA raised a similar concern, referring to "the emergence of laziness to study directly with the teacher".[45] Tgk. MY described the risk in terms of intellectual quality, pointing to "a risk of declining scholarly quality if students begin to leave classical *thurāth* books as the main reference in the learning process".[46] The informants worry about a gradual shift in discipline, commitment, and the willingness to remain with demanding texts and supervised study.

The interviews also suggest that adoption patterns differ across institutional types. The informants observed that salafi oriented institutions remain centred on classical texts and have not widely adopted AI, while more integrated institutions appear more open to using technology to support learning systems. Even so, the informants did not recommend a total prohibition because they feared it would leave Islamic educational institutions behind contemporary developments. They preferred a controlled approach through restrictions on student use and stronger AI literacy so that the technology is used appropriately and responsibly.[47]

This controlled approach becomes clearer in further remarks about benefits and risks. Tgk. HJ stated that AI is very helpful for quickly searching sources of *tafsīr*, *hadith*, and other Islamic literature.[48] Tgk. MY emphasised that AI use can be justified when it is directed toward education and used by those who can distinguish between correct and incorrect information.[49] At the same time, Tgk. AFA warned that the convenience offered by AI may cultivate an instant culture and weaken the spirit of *talaqqī* in seeking knowledge[50]. This concern echoes broader discussions in Islamic education that treat learning as a process of formation that depends on discipline and proper conduct rather

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[43] Interview with Tgk. HJ, September 2025
[44] Interview with Tgk. MZA, September 2025
[45] Interview with Tgk. AFA, September 2025
[46] Interview with Tgk. MY, October 2025
[47] Interview with multiple informants, September 2025
[48] Interview with Tgk. HJ, September 2025
[49] Interview with Tgk. MY, October 2025
[50] Interview with Tgk. AFA, September 2025

than speed alone. The informants also noted a social challenge in more traditional environments where technology is avoided out of concern that it may disrupt the simplicity of students' lives. Younger scholars appear more open to technology, yet they seek to protect *adab* and scholarly tradition by using digital tools selectively and proportionately.[51] In this sense, AI use becomes a space of negotiation between adapting to technological change and maintaining the epistemic and ethical foundations of Islamic learning.

Conclusion

This study shows that *dayah* ulama in Aceh respond to the growing use of artificial intelligence in Qur'anic learning in a non-binary way. They neither reject AI outright nor accept it without clear limits. Instead, they articulate a conditional stance in which AI may be used as a technical support tool, provided it remains governed by Islamic scholarly principles, especially the continuing authority of the teacher, *sanad*, and the pedagogical practice of *talaqqī*. Across the interviews, AI is regarded as acceptable for bounded tasks such as searching for verses, organising references, and assisting preparation, while its use is restricted when outputs begin to function as *tafsīr* or are treated as authoritative interpretive answers. This boundary is grounded in the view that interpretive credibility depends on accountable transmission and guided learning, and on the cultivation of *adab* and *dirāyah*, rather than on the speed or confident tone of machine-generated explanations. In this respect, the findings clarify how classical norms of *ʿulūm al-Qurʾān* are translated into practical rules that separate permissible assistance from impermissible substitution in matters of Qur'anic meaning.

Theoretically, the study contributes to contemporary discussions of Qur'anic interpretation by showing that assessments of interpretive authority in digital contexts remain closely tied to epistemic criteria embedded in *ʿulūm al-Qurʾān* and in recognised forms of scholarly formation. The interviews suggest that AI's availability makes questions of *sanad*, *adab*, and *talaqqī* more explicit as standards for evaluating legitimacy, while also illustrating a process of negotiation over where technological mediation is acceptable and where it becomes risky or inappropriate. Practically, the findings indicate that AI may assist educators in preparation and in accessing relevant

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[51] Shadiqin, Fuadi, and Ikramatoun, "AI Dan Agama: Tantangan Dan Peluang Dalam Era Digital."

literature, yet its use among *santri* is widely seen as requiring restriction and guidance through strengthened AI literacy, given concerns about overreliance, weakening study discipline, and reduced engagement with demanding classical *turāth* texts. This study is limited by its small sample and its focus on *dayah* ulama in Aceh, and it does not directly observe classroom practices of AI use in *tafsīr* learning; further research may therefore extend the analysis through comparative settings, closer examination of AI-mediated pedagogy in *pesantren*, and critical evaluation of AI-based *tafsīr* products from the standpoint of *tafsīr* methodology.

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