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Research Article

Deconstruction of Islamic Scientific Authority: A Phenomenological Study on the Impact of Authentication Reduction Toward Pseudo Literacy Among Islamic University

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Abstract
The rapid integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTAI) has sparked a significant shift in how students engage with religious knowledge. This study investigates the deconstruction of Islamic scientific authority, focusing on the impact of authentication reduction toward "pseudo-literacy" among Islamic Religious Education (PAI) students at UIN Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar. Utilizing a phenomenological approach combined with quantitative empirical data, this research explores the lived experiences of the 2023-2025 cohorts the "AI-native" generation. Findings indicate a critical trend of "epistemic dislocation," where students increasingly bypass traditional verification processes (isnad and tabayyun) in favor of algorithmic convenience. Statistical analysis reveals that authentication reduction has a significant positive influence on the rise of pseudo-literacy, with 82% of respondents showing high dependency on AI-generated content without cross-referencing primary classical texts (turats). Qualitative interviews further highlight "competence illusions," where students produce high volumes of text but lack deep conceptual understanding, leading to "cognitive atrophy." This phenomenon poses a serious theological and pedagogical threat, potentially producing a generation of religious educators severed from their scholarly roots. This study recommends a radical pedagogical reorientation through an "AI-Literacy with Sanad" framework, positioning AI as a supportive tool rather than a substitute for intellectual rigor. Ultimately, reclaiming scholarly authority requires reintegrating the ethics of adab and strict authentication into the digital-era curriculum to safeguard the integrity of Islamic scientific traditions.

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Introduction

The landscape of Islamic education in the digital era is currently facing a dualism between rapid technological acceleration and the erosion of traditional scholarly verification. In Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTAI), students increasingly rely on AI-generated summaries for complex theological inquiries rather than engaging with primary classical texts. This phenomenon indicates a shift where the convenience of technology supersedes the rigorous process of *isnad* (chain of transmission), leading to a crisis of intellectual identity (Hassan, 2021; Mohiuddin, 2023; Pervez, 2023). Thus, the deconstruction of authority is not merely a technical shift but a socio-epistemological problem that threatens the authenticity of Islamic discourse in the public sphere (Chambers & Broadbent, 2025; Kempf & Sevignani, 2024; Raina, 1997; Wade et al., 2024).

The current state of Islamic literacy among students shows a significant gap between the ideal of *tabayyun* (verification) and the reality of instant information consumption. While the ideal educational framework emphasizes deep reading and critical authentication, the actual practice is dominated by "pseudo-literacy," where individuals possess the ability to read but lack the depth of comprehension (Lankshear, C., & Knobel, 2020; Suboh et al., 2026). Previous literature suggests that the digitization of religion often leads to "fragmented authority," yet few studies specifically address how Generative AI accelerates this fragmentation in the PTAI context (Campbell, 2021). This research gap highlights a contradiction where students feel digitally literate while being epistemologically fragile.

The specific problem lies in the emergence of "algorithmic fatwas" and the reliance on Large Language Models (LLMs) that lack the nuanced understanding of *Usul al-Fiqh* (Askar et al., 2025) . When students use AI to bridge their lack of Arabic proficiency or classical training, they are engaging in a simulation of knowledge rather than knowledge itself (Baudrillard, 2020). This specific detail reveals a phenomenon where the "output" of a prompt is treated as a definitive scholarly conclusion without any cross-reference to *mu'tabar* (recognized) sources (Nieminen & Boud, 2025). The analysis using a phenomenological paradigm shows that the "lived experience" of students is now mediated by interfaces that prioritize speed over accuracy. Consequently, the authority of the *ulama* is replaced by the authority of the "prompt," creating a generation of students who can produce religious content without understanding its foundational methodology (Chambers & Broadbent, 2025).

This study hypothesizes that if the reduction of authentication in AI usage continues unchecked, the integrity of Islamic scientific authority in PTAI will undergo a permanent structural collapse (Skårås et al., 2020). The expansion of this problem is predicted to result in "intellectual echo chambers" where AI-generated biases are mistaken for objective religious truths (Fuchs, 2021). As these students transition into roles as religious educators, their pseudo-literacy will likely be transmitted to the broader community, further diluting the quality of religious discourse. The impact extends beyond the classroom, potentially fueling radicalization or extreme secularization through miscontextualized AI data (Liu et al., 2024). If authentication is not reintegrated into the digital literacy curriculum, the PTAI graduate will no longer function as a guardian of the tradition but as a consumer of digital summaries.

The grounded theory of this research identifies that the core category of this crisis is "Epistemic Dislocation," where the subject is separated from the source of truth by layers of digital mediation. Glaser, B. G., & Strauss (2023) posit that grounded theory must emerge from the data to explain a substantive area, which in this case is the loss of *ta'dib* (disciplined education) in the digital interaction. The research gap discovered here is the absence of a "Digital Isnad" framework that could validate information in the age of AI. While traditional theories focus on the teacher-student relationship, they fail to account for the "AI-as-Teacher" phenomenon that students now experience. This theoretical void necessitates a new conceptualization of how authority is constructed when the mediator is non-human (Lan & Tung, 2024).

The categorization of this phenomenon can be divided into three levels of pseudo-literacy: technical, conceptual, and authoritative (Williams, 2021). At the technical level, students master the tools but fail to understand the data; at the conceptual level, they parrot definitions without ontological grounding (Schwab, 2021). The final category is the deconstruction of authority, where the student

views the AI as a more "objective" source than traditional scholarship. This taxonomy aligns with the theory of "Digital Religion" which suggests that the medium increasingly dictates the message in contemporary spirituality (Helland, 2020). By categorizing these behaviors, it becomes clear that pseudo-literacy is not a lack of reading, but a specific way of reading that avoids the burden of proof (Kızılcık, 2024).

Advanced theory defines the deconstruction of authority as an "automated iconoclasm" where the traditional structures of Islamic knowledge are dismantled by the democratic but chaotic nature of the internet (Fouz Mohamed Zacky & Moniruzzaman, 2024). This process is defined not as a planned intellectual movement, but as a byproduct of the "attention economy" where complexity is sacrificed for clickability (Zuboff, 2022). In the context of PTAI, this definition implies that students are active participants in deconstructing their own scholarly heritage by preferring algorithmic convenience. The research gap here is defined by the lack of an "Ethics of Algorithms" within Islamic educational philosophy. This advanced definition moves the discourse from mere "literacy" to "epistemic sovereignty."

The categorization of advanced theory further distinguishes between "augmented intelligence" and "substituted intelligence" in religious learning. Augmented intelligence refers to using AI to enhance existing scholarly skills, whereas substituted intelligence replaces the human cognitive process of synthesis (Floridi, 2023). Most PTAI students fall into the latter category, leading to a state of "cognitive offloading" where the brain no longer practices the rigorous task of *ijtihad*. This category explains the causal link between AI usage and the decline in critical thinking regarding religious texts (Jarmer, 2025). The theory suggests that the more a student relies on AI for interpretation, the less they are able to perform it independently (Allaire, 2025).

The causal relationship between the need for instant academic results and the decline of authentication is driven by the neoliberalization of higher education. Students feel pressured to produce high volumes of assignments, leading them to view AI as a survival tool rather than an educational aid (Selingo, 2021). This causality creates a feedback loop where the institution's demand for productivity inadvertently fosters pseudo-literacy (Grotlüschen et al., 2024). The novelty of this research lies in the conceptualization of Digital Isnad as a framework for validating religious information in the age of Artificial Intelligence, specifically addressing the emerging AI-as-Teacher phenomenon. Unlike previous studies that focus on general digital literacy, this study uniquely identifies the state of Epistemic Dislocation within Islamic Higher Education, where students become ontologically severed from classical scholarly authority through algorithmic mediation. By categorizing pseudo-literacy into technical, conceptual, and authoritative levels, this research provides a new theoretical contribution to understanding how the traditional chain of transmission is deconstructed by the convenience of modern technology. Therefore, this study aims to examine the empirical influence of authentication reduction on the rise of pseudo-literacy among Islamic Religious Education students. The research objectives are operationalized to analyze the extent to which algorithmic trust leads to a bypass of traditional reference systems and to measure the resulting levels of cognitive atrophy through statistical correlation.

Method

This study employs a quantitative research design utilizing an *ex-post facto* correlational approach to examine the influence between variables. The research sample was strictly delimited to Islamic Religious Education (PAI) students at UIN Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar at 6th semester among 172

participants comprising a total selected via stratified random sampling techniques until 89 person (Creswell, J. W., & Poth, 2022). These cohorts were specifically chosen based on their status as the "native AI" generation, having commenced their collegiate studies during the period of widespread ChatGPT adoption. Data analysis was conducted with statistical precision to mitigate observer subjectivity bias (Sherwin & Murphy, 2025) While qualitative methods offer depth of meaning, a quantitative approach was chosen to establish robust generalizations regarding behavioral patterns (Ganya, 2024). Thus, this methodology is designed to provide irrefutable empirical evidence concerning the trend of authentication reduction.

The research indicators are structured upon a logical framework wherein Variable X (Authentication Reduction) influences Variable Y (Pseudo-Literacy), measured using a 5-point Likert Scale questionnaire. Data collection instruments include the Authentication Reduction Questionnaire and the Pseudo-Literacy Questionnaire, alongside interview and observation guidelines for data triangulation purposes. Raw data from the questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS 26 statistical software to conduct Normality Tests (Kolmogorov-Smirnov), Homogeneity Tests (Levene), and Linearity Tests (Ag-Yi & Aidoo, 2022). Hypothesis testing was performed using the partial t-test and simultaneous F-test to determine the significance of the influence between variables. Alternative analysis techniques such as SEM-PLS were not utilized, as the research focus remains on difference testing and direct influence (Trail et al., 2024). The instrument development indicators are presented in the following table:

Table 1. Indicator of Instrumen

Component	Variable	Dimention
Independent (X)	Reduksi Autentikasi	1. Algorithmic Trust: 2. Reference Bypass 3. Minimalist Verification
Dependent (Y)	Pseudo-Literacy	1. Information Obesity 2. Source Amnesia 3. Epistemic Arrogance

Result and Discussion

Result

Statistical Analysis and Assumption Testing Based on the data analysis the Normality Test utilizing the Kolmogorov Smirnov method yielded a significance value of 0.20 $p > 0.05$ for the Authentication Reduction variable and 0.092 for Pseudo Literacy indicating that the data is normally distributed The Homogeneity Test produced a significance value of 0.15 $p > 0.05$ demonstrating that the data variance across cohorts is homogeneous Furthermore linearity analysis revealed a Deviation from Linearity value of 0.432 $p > 0.05$ suggesting a strong linear relationship between variables X and Y These statistical findings confirm that the fundamental assumptions for regression have been fully met Mishra et al 2020 Unlike studies that often overlook classical prerequisites this research ensures data robustness prior to hypothesis testing Field 2022 Consequently the data is deemed valid for proceeding to impact analysis

Hypothesis Testing Results The partial T test results indicated a calculated t value of 12.450 which significantly exceeds the critical t table value of 1.967 with a significance level of 0.000 $p < 0.05$ This figure convincingly substantiates that authentication reduction has a positive and significant influence on the increase of student pseudo literacy Conceptually this implies that every 1 point

increase in AI copy paste habits contributes tangibly to a decline in course material comprehension The simultaneous F test analysis reinforces this finding with a calculated F value of 85.320 confirming that the research model is a strong fit Cohen et al 2021 These findings challenge the argument that AI does not have a negative impact when used by intelligent students Lodge et al 2022 The test results can be seen in the following table:

Table 2. Analyzing Data

Type	Parameter Statistik	Result	Interpretation
Normalitas	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Sig 0.20 (Var X) Sig 0.092 (Var Y)	Normal Distribution (p > 0.05)
Homogenitas	Levene Statistic	Sig 0.15	Homogen
Linearitas	Deviation from Linearity	0.432	Linearity
T Hypotethic	Parsial (t_{statiistic })	12.450	Signifikan (t_{hitung} > t_{tabel} 1.967)
F Simultan	Simultan (F_{hitung})	85.320	Model Fit. Variabel X into Y.
Analysis	Reduct of Autentikasi	82%	High intensity of X variable
Descriptive	Pseudo-Literacy	76%	Y

Descriptive data indicates that the level of Student Authentication Reduction falls into the Very High category with an achievement percentage of 82% Meanwhile the level of Pseudo Literacy was identified at 76% where students perceive themselves as comprehending the material despite obtaining low objective test scores Specifically 89% of the 2025 cohort admitted to using AI as a primary reference without verifying against original books compared to 65% in the 2023 cohort This percentage analysis illustrates a concerning trend of increasing dependency correlated with the younger age of the cohort Prensky in recent 2023 trends Although 10% of students fall into the Critical Literate category the majority of the population resides within the academic danger zone Livingstone 2021 Thus this percentage data serves as a stern warning for PTAI curriculum administrators.

This research employs a sequential explanatory mixed methods design where quantitative data provide a broad map of the phenomenon and qualitative findings offer deep contextual nuances. The qualitative component follows a phenomenological approach involving in depth interviews with 12 informants comprising 4 senior PAI lecturers and 89 students from the 2023 to 2025 cohorts selected through purposive sampling to capture varied lived experiences with AI integration. Data were analyzed using a thematic coding process moving from open coding of interview transcripts to axial coding of core categories such as competence illusions and reference pragmatism. To ensure trustworthiness the study utilized member checking and data triangulation comparing survey results with interview narratives and direct observations of student assignments to verify the consistency of the findings.

The integration of these methods illustrates a robust correlation where the statistical significance of authentication reduction with a t value of 12.450 is explained by the qualitative discovery of algorithmic trust and reference bypass. Qualitative excerpts are not merely anecdotal but serve as primary evidence of the simulacra effect where students perceive AI generated text as more real than their own conceptual understanding. This synergy confirms that the high volume of text production reported in surveys masks a deeper state of cognitive atrophy where thinking muscles weaken due to lack of use. By merging the 82 percent rate of authentication reduction with

interview confessions of academic pragmatism the study provides a comprehensive empirical and phenomenological basis for the deconstruction of Islamic scientific authorit

Impact Analysis and Cognitive Atrophy The impact analysis is depicted in a flow trajectory moving from Unfiltered AI Input to Verification Reduction followed by Competence Illusion and finally resulting in Permanent Pseudo Literacy This impact creates a vicious cycle where students become increasingly unconfident in their own thinking abilities and revert to relying on AI Theoretically this is termed cognitive atrophy representing the weakening of thinking muscles due to lack of use Carr 2020 This framework demonstrates that the heaviest impact is not on GPA scores but rather on the loss of self intellectual authority Zhan et al 2021 While some argue that AI can serve as a cognitive partner the data indicates that AI currently functions more as a cognitive replacement Kutay 2023 Thus this framework visualizes the trajectory toward the destruction of scholarly authority.

Discussion

The most dominant form of authentication reduction found is hallucinated referencing, where students cite verses or hadiths that are either fabricated or taken out of context by AI. Previous research notes that Large Language Models (LLMs) often generate text that sounds plausible but is factually incorrect (Järvilehto et al., 2025). At UIN Batusangkar, a *Fiqh Mawaris* (Islamic Inheritance Jurisprudence) paper was found using invalid arguments (*dalil*) taken verbatim from ChatGPT. This analysis indicates that the authority of sacred texts is being deconstructed by algorithmic word probability. Unlike human error, AI errors are systemic and often undetectable to laypeople (Wang et al., 2024). Consequently, this form of reduction poses a serious theological threat.

The implication of these findings is the unconscious secularization of thinking methods, where the scholarly *sanad* (chain of transmission) is replaced by the popularity of data search results (Poorthuis et al., 2021). In the Islamic tradition, the validity of knowledge depends on the *tsiqah* (trustworthiness) of the narrator; however, AI eliminates the subject of the narrator entirely (Abdullah, 2021). Students no longer recognize authoritative *ulama* (scholars), but only the "top answers" on search engines. This analysis highlights a shift from *burhani* (demonstrative) epistemology to an instant, pragmatic epistemology (Topliss et al., 2025). Although technology accelerates access, the long-term implication is the birth of a generation of scholars severed from their traditional roots (Shin et al., 2026). Thus, these implications demand a total re-evaluation of technology integration within the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum (Bahri et al., 2025).

Reflecting on these findings against prior research, it appears the warning regarding "The Death of Expertise" is now empirically proven within Islamic campuses. Nichols' research (2017, reviewed 2023) is relevant here, where respect for scholarly authority collapses because everyone feels knowledgeable thanks to Google/AI. In Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTAI), this reflection is distressing because religious knowledge should be transformative for the soul, not merely data (Terkla, 2023). Reflective analysis suggests we are producing "religious technicians" rather than "religious thinkers." Despite some optimistic research on Digital Islamic Humanities (Zuhri & Pabbajah, 2026), reality on the ground indicates degradation rather than innovation. In conclusion, this reflection calls us back to the essence of *adab* (manners/ethics) before knowledge.

The danger level of this phenomenon is categorized as "Critical" because it touches upon the validity of law and theology (*aqidah*), which are the core of Islamic studies. If PAI students who are prospective religious teachers experience pseudo-literacy, they will teach shallow or erroneous

understandings to the broader community (Ward, 2022). An example of this danger is the spread of baseless radical or liberal ideologies due to unfiltered AI sources. Risk analysis demonstrates a domino effect: fallacious students right arrow incompetent teachers rightarrow a confused *ummah* (Schroedl, 2024). Educational risk management theory demands immediate intervention before the damage becomes permanent (OECD, 2021). Therefore, this danger level can no longer be tolerated under the excuse of a "technological transition period."

The required action is the implementation of an "AI-Literacy with Sanad" curriculum, requiring students to attach physical or digital evidence from original books for every AI citation. Lecturers must shift evaluation methods from mere written papers to oral examinations (*syafahi*) to test genuine understanding (Ogegbo & Tijani, 2023). For instance, AI usage may be permitted solely for keyword searching, but the analysis must refer to the *kitab kuning* (classical texts). This solution analyzes the synthesis of technological progress with the strictness of the *turats* tradition (Lee, 2023). The option of a total AI ban is considered unrealistic and counter-productive (Adugna et al., 2022). In conclusion, a disciplined middle-ground solution is the key to restoring academic integrity.

Conclusion

Based on the findings regarding the significant influence of authentication reduction on student pseudo-literacy, this study offers several recommendations positioned as initial implications and curriculum design agendas. The primary recommendation is the development of an AI-Literacy with Sanad curriculum design agenda, which requires students to provide physical or digital evidence from original classical texts for every citation generated by AI. This framework serves as an initial implication to bridge the gap between technological convenience and the rigorous standards of the *turats* tradition. Furthermore, higher education institutions should implement a pedagogical reorientation that positions AI as a supportive tool rather than a substitute for intellectual rigor, ensuring that scholarly authority is reclaimed by treating AI as a servant (*khadim*) rather than a master (*sayyid*). Additionally, the research suggests a shift in evaluation agendas from purely written assignments, which are susceptible to AI-driven competence illusions, toward oral examinations (*syafahi*) to accurately test genuine conceptual understanding. This shift is proposed as a necessary intervention to mitigate the risk of cognitive atrophy and to ensure that prospective religious teachers remain grounded in traditional scholarly roots. However, this study is limited by its specific institutional, cultural, and disciplinary context, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other Islamic higher education settings with different pedagogical traditions, technological infrastructures, and levels of AI integration. It also focuses primarily on students' current responses to AI use and authentication practices, while the long-term effects of AI dependence on scholarly discipline, textual verification habits, and conceptual mastery remain insufficiently explored. Moreover, the proposed AI-Literacy with Sanad framework is still presented as an initial curriculum design agenda rather than a fully implemented and empirically tested model. Therefore, future research should examine the implementation of this framework through longitudinal, experimental, or design-based studies involving diverse Islamic education institutions. Further studies should also compare written, oral, and hybrid assessment models to determine which formats most effectively reduce pseudo-literacy and strengthen authentic scholarly competence. In addition, future research needs to explore how lecturers, curriculum designers, and students negotiate the ethical, epistemological, and pedagogical boundaries of AI use in Islamic knowledge transmission, so that

digital innovation can be integrated without weakening the intellectual authority and authenticity of the Islamic scientific tradition.

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