

The Epistemology of Islamic Thought as an Islamic Epistemic Trident in Confronting the Post-Truth Crisis in the Digital Era

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ABSTRACT

This research begins with the post-truth phenomenon in the digital era in shaping public opinion. This phenomenon has triggered a systemic epistemic crisis that threatens the foundations of Islamic knowledge, particularly through the spread of hoaxes, disinformation, filter bubbles, and echo chambers that are rampant on social media platforms. Amid this crisis, the Islamic scientific tradition has a highly relevant epistemological legacy, namely three main paradigms categorized by Muhammad Abed Al-Jabiri: Bayānī (epistemology based on text and revelation), Burhānī (epistemology based on reason and demonstrative logic), and 'Irfānī (epistemology based on intuition and inner enlightenment). This study aims to identify the characteristics of each epistemology as an integrative knowledge verification system, analyze the manifestation of the post-truth crisis in the digital era from the perspective of Islamic epistemology and the epistemic vulnerabilities it exploits, and build an integrated model of the Bayānī-Burhānī-'Irfānī epistemic trident as a synergistic alternative framework to overcome the post-truth crisis. This study uses a qualitative approach with library research accompanied by descriptive, critical, and integrative-constructive philosophical-epistemological analysis. The findings show that the three epistemologies synergistically form a layered verification system: Bayānī as a normative-textual guardian through the principle of tabayyun, Burhānī as an instrument of critical rationality through logical-empirical testing, and 'Irfānī as an ethical-spiritual filter through inner clarity. Their integration produces an epistemic trident model capable of responding to the post-truth crisis in a holistic, proactive, and values-based manner, going beyond a purely technical approach.

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INTRODUCTION

The rapidly developing digital era of the 21st century has given rise to a phenomenon that threatens the epistemological foundations of humanity globally: post-truth. This term was first popularized by Ralph Keyes, who defined it as a condition in which objective facts no longer have a greater influence in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotions and personal beliefs (Keyes, 2004). In the digital context, this phenomenon has intensified with the proliferation of social media platforms, which allow information to spread without adequate verification. Hoaxes, disinformation, and information manipulation are not merely technical problems, but rather a systemic epistemic crisis a crisis in how humans construct, validate, and trust knowledge (Rasiani et al., 2025). This condition is exacerbated by the filter bubble and echo chamber phenomena which encourage individuals to only consume information that is in accordance with their pre-existing views, so that truth becomes relative and subjective.

The post-truth crisis does not stand alone; it is rooted in deeper epistemological issues. Muhammad Lutfi and Suhermanto Ja'far assert that post-truth is fundamentally linked to questions of truth, and therefore, it is an epistemological issue, not simply a social or political phenomenon. (Lutfi & Ja'far, 2023) In cyberspace, post-truth appears in the form of misrepresentation, media bias, information laundering, and manipulation of election results, all of which work by exploiting the human cognitive tendency to believe

what they want to believe. This situation creates what is known as epistemic injustice (Addzaky et al., 2024). A situation in which truth is treated on a par with mere opinion and conjecture, thus destroying the intellectual discipline of treating knowledge proportionally and responsibly. From Al-Attas' perspective, this chaos occurs due to the loss of the concept of *adab*, namely, placing something in its proper place within the realm of knowledge.

Amidst this global epistemic crisis, the Islamic scientific tradition actually holds a highly relevant epistemological wealth that can be used as an alternative framework. The Islamic intellectual heritage contains three main epistemological paradigms known as *Bayānī*, *Burhānī*, and *'Irfānī*, a categorization popularized by the contemporary Arab philosopher Muhammad Abed Al-Jabiri in his work *Naqd al-Aql al-'Arabī* (Al-Jabiri, 2009). *Bayānī*'s epistemology rests on the authority of the text (*naql*) as the source of truth, *Burhānī* relies on the power of reason and demonstrative logic, while *'Irfānī* recognizes the dimensions of intuition and inner illumination (*kasyf*) as valid paths of knowledge (Ulliyah et al., 2024).

These three are not merely stagnant historical legacies, but rather epistemic frameworks that, when synergistically integrated, can form a robust and comprehensive system of knowledge verification. Ulliyah et al. show that *Bayānī* serves as a normative foundation, *Burhānī* as a support for critical rationality, and *'Irfānī* as a builder of spiritual depth in distinguishing truth from falsehood. The urgency of integrating these three epistemologies is even more pressing given that Muslims in the digital age are vulnerable to propaganda and hoaxes disguised as religious narratives. Addzaky, Hasanah, and Syarif Zain conclude that the post-truth era has had a significant impact on Islamic understanding and practice, as it has become increasingly difficult to distinguish authentic religious knowledge from misleading information (Addzaky et al., 2024).

Table 1. Integration of *Bayānī*, *Burhānī* and *'Irfānī*

Stage	Epistemic instrument	Inspection mechanism	Results
1	Bayānī	Verifying sources, authority, the authenticity of the text, and context, as well as conducting due diligence to confirm the facts.	Information can be categorized as having or not having a valid normative basis.
2	Burhānī	Examining logical consistency, supporting evidence, empirical facts, cause-and-effect relationships, and potential fallacies.	Information can be categorized as either rationally verified or not.
3	'Irfānī	Assessing intent, moral responsibility, inner clarity, elements of emotional manipulation, and social impact.	Information is assessed for its trustworthiness and the ethics of its dissemination.
4	Integration	Comparing the results of the three examinations and determining whether they complement or contradict each other.	Final decision: accepted, rejected, or deferred until sufficient evidence is available.

In this context, an epistemological paradigm is needed that does not rely solely on a single path to truth but is able to simultaneously integrate textual authority, clarity of reason, and inner purity. Rasiani et al. added that the post-truth challenge in the context of Islamic education requires a response that extends beyond the technical level of media literacy but must also address a more fundamental epistemological reconstruction (Rasiani et al., 2025). While the integration of *Bayānī*, *Burhānī*, and *'Irfānī* is widely understood as a complementary epistemological framework, a critical issue requiring further study is how the effectiveness of this tripartite integration can be systematically determined when addressing post-truth information. In this study, effectiveness is not defined as a quantitative measure of behavioral changes among digital media users; rather, it refers to the capacity of this epistemological triad to provide mutually complementary verification criteria for assessing the validity of information claims. Consequently, the model's viability is tested through an analysis of three primary dimensions: (1) the **Bayānī** capacity to assess source authority, textual alignment, and informational context; (2) the **Burhānī** capacity to examine logical consistency, evidentiary sufficiency, and the alignment of claims with actionable facts; and (3) the **'Irfānī** capacity to offer ethical-spiritual considerations regarding the motives, impacts, and responsibilities

associated with information dissemination. These three dimensions are then analyzed in an integrated manner to determine whether a claim should be accepted, deferred, or rejected based on the results of this multi-layered verification process. Thus, this study not only proposes an epistemological integration at a normative level but also establishes an analytical mechanism that is both traceable and scientifically accountable.

This research aims to fill this gap by offering the Islamic epistemic trident of Bayānī, Burhānī, and 'Irfānī as a relevant and applicable integrative framework for addressing the post-truth wave in the digital era. By reviving this rich Islamic epistemological heritage, it is hoped that Muslims can respond to the crisis of truth not merely reactively, but with a solid, critical, and characteristic epistemological foundation. Specifically, this study aims to 1) Identify the epistemological characteristics of Bayānī, Burhānī, and 'Irfānī as foundations of Islamic knowledge verification. 2) Analyze the manifestations and epistemic vulnerabilities of the post-truth crisis in the digital era from the perspective of Islamic epistemology. 3) Formulate operational analytical indicators for examining the textual, rational-empirical, and ethical-spiritual dimensions of the three epistemologies. 4) Examine the coherence and explanatory adequacy of the integrated Bayānī-Burhānī-'Irfānī framework through its application to selected illustrative cases of digital post-truth information.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative approach with library research (Hadi & Afandi, 2021), a research method that relies on the analysis and interpretation of existing literature, is non-field-based, and tends to employ an inductive approach with a focus on holistic and contextual exploration of phenomena. This method is based on the conceptual-philosophical nature of the study, where research questions cannot be answered through empirical field data collection but rather require in-depth exploration of texts, intellectual ideas, and epistemological frameworks established within the Islamic scientific tradition. The approach used is a philosophical-epistemological approach, an approach that seeks to understand the nature, sources, and validity of knowledge as constructed within the Islamic tradition of thought, while simultaneously confronting it with contemporary epistemic problems arising from the post-truth phenomenon in the digital era. This approach is relevant because epistemological studies, as stated by Rahmaniah et al., encompass theories of the truth of knowledge, sources of knowledge, methods of acquiring knowledge, and ways of proving the validity of knowledge, all of which are at the core of the issues addressed in this research.

The research data sources were selected purposively based on their relevance to the epistemological and post-truth issues examined in this study. The sources were divided into primary and secondary sources. The primary sources consisted of seven works that directly examine the classification and characteristics of Bayānī, Burhānī, and 'Irfānī epistemologies, with Muhammad Abed Al-Jabiri's *Naqd al-'Aql al-'Arabi* serving as the principal conceptual reference for distinguishing the three epistemological systems. The remaining primary works were selected because they provide contemporary interpretations of the three epistemologies and their integrative relationships. The secondary sources consisted of 15 scholarly publications, including journal articles and academic studies discussing Islamic epistemology, post-truth, digital disinformation, media literacy, and the application of Islamic epistemology in contemporary education and digital contexts. The selection emphasized publications from 2021–2026, while earlier foundational works were retained when they constituted essential theoretical references.

Source selection followed four criteria: (1) direct relevance to Bayānī, Burhānī, 'Irfānī, Islamic epistemology, or the post-truth phenomenon; (2) academic credibility and availability in scholarly publications or established academic books; (3) conceptual or empirical contribution to explaining epistemic validity, information verification, or digital information problems; and (4) sufficient substantive detail to support comparison and synthesis. Sources were considered representative when they collectively covered the three epistemological dimensions, the contemporary post-truth context, and the relationship between Islamic epistemology and digital information verification. This purposive composition was intended to

ensure that the literature did not represent only one epistemological perspective but provided a balanced conceptual basis for constructing and testing the proposed Bayānī–Burhānī–‘Irfānī integrative framework.

The data analysis technique in this study was conducted through four systematic stages: descriptive, critical, operational, and integrative-constructive analysis. These stages were designed to ensure that the proposed integration of Bayānī, Burhānī, and ‘Irfānī was not merely normative, but could be examined through explicit analytical criteria. First, descriptive analysis was used to identify and explain the epistemological characteristics of Bayānī, Burhānī, and ‘Irfānī based on their sources of knowledge, methods of verification, and epistemic functions. The findings were organized into an analytical matrix consisting of three dimensions: textual-normative verification, rational-empirical verification, and ethical-spiritual verification. First, descriptive analysis was used to identify and explain the epistemological characteristics of Bayānī, Burhānī, and ‘Irfānī based on their sources of knowledge, methods of verification, and epistemic functions. The findings were organized into an analytical matrix consisting of three dimensions: textual-normative verification, rational-empirical verification, and ethical-spiritual verification. First, descriptive analysis was used to identify and explain the epistemological characteristics of Bayānī, Burhānī, and ‘Irfānī based on their sources of knowledge, methods of verification, and epistemic functions. The findings were organized into an analytical matrix consisting of three dimensions: textual-normative verification, rational-empirical verification, and ethical-spiritual verification.

Second, critical analysis was used to examine the epistemic vulnerabilities exploited by the post-truth phenomenon, including the spread of unverified information, manipulation of religious narratives, logical fallacies, emotional appeals, and the weakening of scholarly authority. Each vulnerability was mapped onto the epistemological dimension most relevant to its identification and correction. Third, operational analysis was conducted to formulate explicit verification indicators for each epistemology. The Bayānī dimension was examined through source authority, textual conformity, interpretive context, and the principle of tabayyun. The Burhānī dimension was examined through logical consistency, adequacy of evidence, empirical verifiability, and the identification of reasoning fallacies. The ‘Irfānī dimension was examined through ethical intention, moral responsibility, self-reflection, and the potential social consequences of accepting or disseminating information. These indicators were used as analytical criteria rather than as psychometric measurement scales. Fourth, integrative-constructive analysis was used to examine how the three epistemological dimensions interact in the verification of digital information. The integration was considered substantively coherent when each epistemology contributed a distinct verification function, the criteria did not contradict one another, and the combined framework provided a more comprehensive assessment than any single epistemological dimension alone. The model was subsequently applied to selected illustrative cases of post-truth information, such as misleading religious claims or emotionally manipulative digital narratives, to demonstrate how the verification process operates. The results of this application were used to assess the explanatory and practical adequacy of the proposed epistemic trident model.(Creswell & Creswell, 2023)

Table 1. Operationalization of the Three Islamic Epistemologies

Epistemology	Analytical Dimension	Operational Indicators	Guiding Questions
Bayānī	Textual-normative validity	Source authority, textual conformity, interpretive and tabayyun	Does the claim have an authoritative source context, and is the text interpreted according to its context?
Burhānī	Rational-empirical validity	Logical consistency, adequacy of evidence, empirical verification, and identification of fallacies	Is the claim logically consistent and supported by adequate evidence or verifiable facts?
‘Irfānī	Ethical-spiritual validity	Intention, moral responsibility, self-reflection, and social consequences	Does the claim encourage ethical responsibility and avoid harmful emotional or social effects?
Epistemic	Coherence and Complementarity,	non-	Do the three epistemologies complement one

integration	explanatory adequacy	contradiction, differentiation, comprehensiveness	functional another and provide a more comprehensive and verification process?
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Source: Author's synthesis based on Al-Jabiri (2009), Aswandi et al. (2025), Erdiyani and Firdaus (2025), Ramadhan (2025), Sya'adah (2025), and Ulliyah et al. (2024).

This operational matrix was used as an analytical guide for examining how each epistemology contributes to the verification of digital information. The Bayānī dimension assessed textual and normative validity, the Burhānī dimension examined logical and empirical justification, while the 'Irfānī dimension evaluated ethical and spiritual responsibility. The integration of the three epistemologies was considered coherent when each provided a distinct but complementary function, did not produce internal contradictions, and collectively offered a more comprehensive explanation than any single epistemological approach.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Islamic epistemology has historically developed three scientific paradigms that are not singular and monolithic, but rather complement each other in forming a complete structure of knowledge. The first paradigm is Bayānī, which places the text of revelation (naql) as the primary authoritative source in verifying truth. Aswandi, M.A., and Dewi explain that Bayānī is an epistemological model based on the authority of language and text, where the Qur'an and Hadith serve as the starting point and standard for the validity of knowledge in Islam (Aswandi, M. A., 2025). In this perspective, Bayānī's epistemological work is not merely a literal reading of the text, but rather involves rigorous linguistic-hermeneutic reasoning, encompassing the sciences of nahwu, balaghah, and ushul fiqh, as instruments to uncover the meanings hidden behind the structure of revealed language. Latif emphasized that the strength of the Bayānī tradition in Islamic civilization cannot be separated from the position of the Qur'an as the highest normative source, which makes mastery of the text not only a linguistic competence, but an epistemological obligation (Latif, 2025). Thus, Bayānī serves as a normative foundation that defines the boundaries of truth and legitimacy of knowledge within the overall structure of Islamic epistemology.

The second paradigm, Burhānī, represents the rational-demonstrative dimension of the Islamic scientific tradition, which relies on the power of reason and deductive-inductive logic as instruments for validating knowledge. Unlike Bayānī, which starts from texts, Burhānī works by constructing premises that can be empirically and logically verified, so that the resulting conclusions are necessary and universally accountable. Huda et al. argue that the Burhānī tradition in Islamic thought reached its peak with philosophers such as Al-Farabi and Ibn Rushd, who integrated Aristotelian logic into the framework of Islamic epistemology, so that reason functions not merely as a complement to texts but as an autonomous instrument for discovering truth (Huda, M. A., 2024).

Ulliyah et al. further explain that Burhānī demands a strict verification procedure, where every knowledge claim must pass the test of logical coherence, internal consistency, and conformity to observable empirical reality (Ulliyah et al., 2024). The relevance of Burhanism in the contemporary context appears particularly significant, given that the post-truth trend is precisely the opposite of Burhanism's principles, namely, replacing verifiable arguments with narratives that appeal solely to emotion.

The third paradigm, 'Irfanī, presents the most distinctive dimension of Islamic epistemology because it transcends the boundaries of text and reason to direct experience through intuition, inner illumination (kashf), and spiritual witnessing (musyāhadah). Hasan et al. explain that 'Irfanī does not reject the validity of texts or reason, but rather assumes that there is a deeper layer of knowledge that can only be reached through purification of the soul (tazkiyat al-nafs) and closeness to the source of true knowledge, namely God (Hasan, B. A. B., 2024). Ramadhan asserts that in the Islamic tradition, 'Irfānī has a strong epistemological legitimacy, as reflected in the tradition of Sufism and the philosophy of illumination (isyraqiyyah) developed by Suhrawardi and Ibn Arabi (Ramadhan, 2025). 'Irfanī is not irrational, but transrational; it acknowledges the limits of reason

and text while opening a path to deeper knowledge, which, in the context of verifying truth, functions as a filter against knowledge that is superficial, manipulative, and lacking its spiritual dimension.

These three epistemological paradigms have distinct yet organically complementary characteristics. Aswandi, M.A., and Dewi identify fundamental differences between the three in terms of their sources (masdar), methods (manhaj), and epistemic functions: Bayānī is based on texts using a hermeneutic-linguistic method, Burhānī is based on reason using a demonstrative-syllogistic method, and Irfānī is based on the heart using the method of kashf and inner enlightenment (Aswandi, M. A., 2025).

Erdiyani et al. added that in the classical Islamic scientific tradition, these three epistemologies once developed separately and even experienced internal tensions. The fuqaha dominated the Bayānī tradition, the philosophers built the Burhānī tradition, and the Sufis developed the Irfānī tradition. However, in the golden age of Islam, leading scientists succeeded in integrating the three into one comprehensive scientific system (Erdiyani, Firdaus, 2025). Al-Ghazali, for example, combined Bayānī's meticulousness in fiqh and kalam, Burhānī's acuity in logic and philosophy, and Irfānī's depth in Sufism, making him one of the most monumental examples of epistemic integration in Islamic civilization.

From a contemporary perspective, Al-Jabiri, through his critique of Arabic reason, emphasized the urgency of these three paradigms not as historical artifacts, but as living and relevant epistemic frameworks. Huda et al. explain that Al-Jabiri criticized the unilateral dominance of Bayānī in contemporary Islamic scholarly discourse, which resulted in intellectual stagnation, while simultaneously encouraging the revitalization of Burhānī and Irfānī as necessary counterbalances to present a dynamic, critical, and transformative Islamic reason (Huda, M., 2015).

In line with this, an integrative study in the Pendas journal states that the holistic framework of Bayānī-Burhānī-Irfānī provides a comprehensive response to the complexity of contemporary epistemological problems that cannot be reduced to just one dimension of knowledge (Sya'adah, 2025). The integration of these three principles allows a scientific community to avoid being trapped in rigid scripturalism (Bayanism without reason and intuition), dry rationalism (Burhanism without texts and spirituality), or solipsistic mysticism (Irfanism without textual foundations and rational verification).

The Burhanism dimension has received particular attention in contemporary studies because it is most directly related to modern scientific methods and empirical verification. Hasan et al. examined the application of Burhanism epistemology to the kauniyah verses in the Qur'an and found that the Burhanism approach actually strengthens the Qur'an's relevance in dialogue with contemporary science, as it provides an argumentative framework that can be tested and debated across disciplines (Hasan, B. A. B., 2024). Ramadhan emphasized that the relationship between these three epistemologies is complementary-hierarchical: Bayānī sets normative boundaries, Burhānī validates claims in the realm of reason and empiricism, while Irfānī adds a dimension of depth that ensures that knowledge does not stop at the surface of facts, but rather penetrates to meaning and value (Ramadhan, 2025). Thus, these three epistemologies collectively form a multi-layered system of knowledge verification: textual-normative verification, rational-demonstrative verification, and intuitive-spiritual verification.

As an integrative system of knowledge verification, the epistemic trident of Bayānī, Burhānī, and Irfānī is able to work synergistically because each paradigm has a distinct but not contradictory realm of authority. Ulliyah et al. describe that while Bayānī establishes the legitimacy of knowledge based on its conformity to revealed sources, Burhānī steps in to test whether the knowledge is logically coherent and rationally valid, while Irfānī ensures that the knowledge acquired does not alienate humans from their spiritual dimension (Ulliyah et al., 2024). Latif in his study of the Ma'had Aly curriculum shows that the tradition of higher Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia has organically developed a model of integration of these three epistemologies, where the study of yellow books (Bayānī), logical-philosophical discussions (Burhānī), and spiritual development (Irfānī) run side by side in a holistic scientific ecosystem (Latif, 2025). These findings demonstrate that the integration of Bayānī-Burhānī-Irfānī is not merely a theoretical ideal, but has been proven to be operationalized within Islamic scientific institutions.

Overall, the epistemological characteristics of Bayānī, Burhānī, and 'Irfānī within the Islamic scientific tradition demonstrate that Islam never reduces knowledge to a single source or method. Erdiyani et al. conclude that the integration of these three epistemologies in contemporary Islamic education is not merely an academic necessity, but a civilizational necessity that will determine the ability of Muslims to respond to the complexity of modern world issues (Herdatama, D., 2026).

The study in *Creative: Journal of Islamic Religious Education Thought* further states that the Bayānī-Burhānī-'Irfānī synthesis is the most appropriate integrative epistemological framework to answer the challenges of Islamic science in the 21st century, because it accommodates simultaneously the authority of revelation, the power of reason, and the depth of the heart in one undivided building of knowledge. The study by Al-Mudarris also emphasizes that the epistemological foundation of authentic Islamic education must be based on these three paradigms in a balanced way, so that it can produce Muslim intellectuals who are not only proficient in texts, but also sharp in reason and clear in heart (Rizki, 2026). Thus, the epistemic trident of Bayānī, Burhānī, and 'Irfānī is integratively the most relevant epistemological legacy of Islam to be used as a robust, comprehensive, and characteristic knowledge verification system in facing the challenges of the 21st century including, and especially, the epistemic crisis caused by the post-truth wave in the digital era (Sya'adah, 2025).

How does the post-truth crisis manifest in the digital era from the perspective of Islamic epistemology, and where does the epistemic fragility that it exploits lie? *Manifestation of the Post-Truth Crisis in the Digital Era from the Perspective of Islamic Epistemology*

The digital era has brought about fundamental changes in the way humans acquire, verify, and distribute knowledge. The post-truth phenomenon a condition in which objective facts lose influence compared to emotional appeal and personal beliefs is now one of the most serious epistemological challenges facing contemporary Muslims. Lutfi and Ja'far assert that cyberspace has created a paradoxical information ecosystem: on the one hand, expanding access to knowledge, but on the other, blurring the boundaries between truth (al-haqq) and falsehood (al-bathil), thus triggering an epistemological crisis unprecedented in the history of Islamic civilization (Lutfi & Ja'far, 2023).

The most obvious manifestation of this crisis is the proliferation of unverified information on social media platforms. Rasiani et al. identified that young Muslims are particularly vulnerable to the wave of digital disinformation due to limited critical media literacy based on Islamic epistemological values. They found that digital platform algorithms systematically prioritize content that provokes emotional reactions over educational content, thus creating what they call an ideological echo chamber that undermines the critical thinking capacity of the Muslim community (Rasiani et al., 2025). This phenomenon is exacerbated by the rapid spread of information that exceeds the capacity for individual verification, creating conditions where hoaxes and false narratives can shape public opinion before clarification can be disseminated. Within the framework of Islamic epistemology, the post-truth crisis is a symptom of something far deeper than simply the technical problems of information dissemination. An article published in *Insaniyat: Journal of Islam and Humanities* explains that this crisis actually reflects the destruction of the epistemic foundations that have long been the pillars of Islamic civilization: belief in naql (trustworthy transmission of knowledge), aql (structured rational reasoning), and qalb (enlightened spiritual intuition) (Post-Truth and the Epistemological Crisis: Reconstructing Truth in the Evolving Landscape of Social Media., 2025). When these three sources of knowledge are distorted by the unmanaged flow of digital information, Muslims lose their epistemic compass and are easily swept away by the post-truth current that prioritizes subjectivity over objectivity.

The Location of Epistemic Fragility Exploited by the Post-Truth Phenomenon

Epistemic fragility within the Muslim community in the digital age can be traced to several interconnected critical points. Addzaky, Hasanah, and Syarif Zain identified that one of the most fundamental vulnerabilities lies in the weakening of the wasathiyah scientific tradition a moderate and balanced approach to knowledge processing. When this tradition erodes, the Muslim community becomes

vulnerable to epistemic polarization that pushes them toward two extremes: total skepticism of modern science or blind, unfiltered acceptance of Islamic values (Addzaky et al., 2024). Both represent forms of epistemic fragility that post-truth narratives can exploit to distort our understanding of reality.

The second fragility lies in the crisis of scholarly authority in the digital landscape. Lutfi and Ja'far explain that the internet has flattened the epistemic hierarchy that has traditionally been the bulwark of quality Islamic knowledge (Lutfi & Ja'far, 2023). Anyone can now disseminate "knowledge" without going through a rigorous *isnad* (chain of transmission) process, without adequate scientific competence, and without structured moral responsibility. As a result, informal fatwas from social media accounts of unclear origin compete with the opinions of competent scholars, creating widespread epistemic confusion among the community. Rasiani et al. further demonstrate that this situation is exacerbated by the lack of Islamic-based media literacy education capable of equipping the younger generation with the ability to distinguish authoritative sources of knowledge from those that are not (Rasiani et al., 2025).

The third fragility is structural and relates to the unpreparedness of the classical Islamic epistemological framework to respond to the unique characteristics of digital information. Studies in *Insaniyat* suggest that traditional Islamic epistemology is designed to operate in a relatively slow, structured, and hierarchical information environment (Post-Truth and the Epistemological Crisis: Reconstructing Truth in the Evolving Landscape of Social Media., 2025). However, the digital age has brought with it information that is massive, decentralized, anonymous, and moves at a speed that exceeds the ability of individuals to verify it. This condition creates what Essien calls "epistemic well-being degradation," a condition in which individuals gradually lose the ability to form accurate beliefs about reality due to the constant bombardment of conflicting and contradictory information (Essien, 2025).

Epistemological Dimension: Bayani, Irfani, and Burhani Distortions

A thorough analysis of the epistemic fragility of Muslims in the post-truth era necessitates an understanding of how the three fundamental sources of knowledge Islamic text-based, intuition-based, and empirical rationality-based are distorted in the digital ecosystem. Putri and Zalnur explain that these three epistemics should work synergistically and complement each other, but the digitalization of information has disrupted this integration. The bayani epistemic is distorted when fragments of religious texts are taken out of context and disseminated as "truth" without regard to the rules of interpretation and the methodology of valid Islamic hermeneutics (Putri et al., 2023).

Furthermore, Al-Furqon et al. in their study of Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas's idea of the Islamization of Science reminds us that the contemporary epistemic crisis is essentially rooted in the process of de-Islamization of knowledge that has been going on for centuries due to the hegemony of Western epistemology (Al-Furqon, 2024). In the context of digital post-truth, the legacy of this crisis is exacerbated when digital platforms dominated by capitalist and secular logics become the primary medium for transmitting knowledge among Muslims. This incongruity between Islamic epistemological values and the logic of digital algorithms creates a vacuum in which post-truth narratives can flourish. A study in the *Journal of Modern Islamic Studies and Civilization* concludes that Islamic education needs to shift its orientation from mere knowledge transfer to wisdom cultivation to protect the community from epistemic exploitation in the era of artificial intelligence and post-truth.

In the context of digital post-truth, the legacy of this crisis is exacerbated when digital platforms dominated by capitalist and secular logics become the primary medium for transmitting knowledge among Muslims. This incongruity between Islamic epistemological values and the logic of digital algorithms creates a vacuum in which post-truth narratives can flourish. A study in the *Journal of Modern Islamic Studies and Civilization* concludes that Islamic education needs to shift its orientation from mere knowledge transfer to wisdom cultivation to protect the community from epistemic exploitation in the era of artificial intelligence and post-truth. (Masyitoh, 2020)

The reconstruction of the epistemology of Islamic education studied in the *Maliki Interdisciplinary Journal* emphasizes the need for comprehensive reform in the Islamic education system, starting from the

curriculum to the teaching methodology so that the Muslim generation is able to develop critical digital literacy rooted in the values of Islamic epistemology.

Thus, the manifestation of the post-truth crisis in the digital era from the perspective of Islamic epistemology is not a superficial issue, but rather a reflection of structural fragility stemming from the weakening of Islamic scientific tradition, the crisis of epistemic authority, and the unpreparedness of classical conceptual frameworks in responding to the challenges of digital information. As identified by Rasiani et al., a media literacy strategy based on the foundations of Islamic epistemology is an urgent need for the younger generation of Muslims so that they do not become objects of epistemic exploitation, but become active subjects capable of upholding Islamic standards of truth amidst a sea of unstructured digital information.

How the epistemic trident integration model of Bayānī, Burhānī, and 'Irfānī can function synergistically as an alternative framework in facing the post-truth crisis in the digital era

Conceptual Synthesis of Bayānī, Burhānī, and 'Irfānī as an Epistemic Framework for Responding to Post-Truth

The integration of Bayānī, Burhānī, and 'Irfānī should not be understood merely as an addition of three independent epistemological approaches, but as a complementary epistemic architecture in which each paradigm addresses a different vulnerability of knowledge production in the post-truth era. Al-Jabiri's classification provides the conceptual basis for distinguishing the three modes of Islamic reasoning: Bayānī emphasizes textual authority and linguistic interpretation, Burhānī emphasizes rational-demonstrative reasoning and evidence, while 'Irfānī emphasizes inner experience, spiritual awareness, and purification of the self (Ulliyah et al., 2024). The present study synthesizes these three paradigms into a functional relationship in which Bayānī establishes the normative legitimacy of a claim, Burhānī examines its rational and empirical validity, and 'Irfānī evaluates the ethical orientation and spiritual responsibility underlying the acceptance and dissemination of that claim. Thus, their integration transforms the three epistemologies from separate modes of knowing into a mutually corrective system of truth verification.

The conceptual strength of this synthesis lies in the fact that the post-truth phenomenon attacks truth from several dimensions simultaneously. It does not merely introduce false information, but also manipulates sources, fragments narratives, exploits emotional responses, constructs misleading arguments, and encourages individuals to accept information that corresponds to their prior beliefs. Consequently, a single epistemic instrument is insufficient to respond to the complexity of post-truth. Bayānī responds primarily to the problem of authority and textual legitimacy by asking whether a claim originates from a credible source, whether the text is authentic, and whether it is interpreted according to its linguistic and contextual framework. Burhānī responds to the problem of reasoning and evidentiary validity by testing logical consistency, evidentiary adequacy, empirical correspondence, causal relationships, and possible reasoning fallacies. Meanwhile, 'Irfānī responds to the problem of ethical and affective vulnerability by cultivating self-awareness, moral responsibility, and resistance to information that deliberately exploits anger, fear, hatred, or other emotional tendencies. This functional differentiation makes the three paradigms mutually reinforcing rather than redundant.

From this perspective, the three pillars can be positioned as a process of epistemic control consisting of three interconnected questions: Is the claim normatively legitimate? Is the claim rationally and empirically justified? Is the acceptance and dissemination of the claim ethically and spiritually responsible? The first question represents the Bayānī dimension, the second represents the Burhānī dimension, and the third represents the 'Irfānī dimension. A digital claim should therefore not be regarded as sufficiently valid merely because it cites a religious text, appears logically convincing, or produces an emotional sense of certainty. Its epistemic status becomes stronger when the three dimensions mutually support one another. Conversely, a claim that fails substantially in one dimension requires further examination, qualification, or rejection. This formulation strengthens the principle of tabayyun by extending verification beyond source checking toward rational examination and ethical consideration. The relationship among the three paradigms is therefore best understood as complementary and mutually corrective rather than strictly sequential or hierarchical in the sense of one replacing the others. Bayānī prevents rational inquiry from becoming detached from Islamic normative foundations; Burhānī prevents textual interpretation from becoming rigid, arbitrary, or vulnerable to confirmation bias; and 'Irfānī prevents both textualism and rationalism from being reduced to purely cognitive activities without moral responsibility. In this configuration, the authority of revelation remains the

normative foundation within Islamic epistemology, while reason provides methods for examining claims about reality, and spiritual-ethical awareness regulates the orientation and consequences of knowledge. Such an arrangement is consistent with the argument that the integration of Bayānī, Burhānī, and ‘Irfānī accommodates revelation, reason, and spiritual depth within a unified epistemological framework (Sya’adah, 2025b)

The synthesis also clarifies why the framework is particularly relevant to the post-truth environment. Post-truth operates by collapsing distinctions between fact and opinion, authoritative knowledge and personal assertion, as well as evidence and emotional persuasion. The Bayānī–Burhānī–‘Irfānī framework reconstructs these distinctions through three epistemic safeguards. Bayānī restores the distinction between authoritative and non-authoritative sources through tabayyun and contextual interpretation. Burhānī restores the distinction between evidence-based claims and unsupported assertions through logical and empirical verification. ‘Irfānī restores the distinction between ethically responsible communication and emotionally manipulative dissemination by placing intention, self-control, and social consequences within the process of judging information. Therefore, the framework does not merely determine whether information is “true” or “false”, but establishes a more comprehensive process for determining whether a claim is normatively legitimate, rationally justified, and ethically responsible (Ramadhan, 2025). On this basis, the Bayānī–Burhānī–‘Irfānī synthesis can be formulated as an Islamic epistemic trident for post-truth response. Bayānī functions as the normative anchor, Burhānī as the critical verifier, and ‘Irfānī as the ethical-spiritual regulator. The three functions operate through a principle of complementarity: Bayānī provides normative direction, Burhānī provides evidentiary accountability, and ‘Irfānī provides moral-spiritual orientation. Their integration consequently produces a form of epistemic resilience that is not limited to the ability to detect misinformation, but also develops the capacity to resist manipulation, suspend judgment when evidence is insufficient, and assume moral responsibility for information circulation. In this sense, the epistemic trident is potentially applicable as a guiding framework for Islamic education, digital literacy, and digital da’wah because it addresses not only the question of what should be believed, but also how belief should be justified and how knowledge should be ethically acted upon. Accordingly, the conceptual contribution of this study is not the claim that Bayānī, Burhānī, and ‘Irfānī individually constitute new solutions to post-truth, but that their functional integration creates a more comprehensive epistemic response. The framework connects three dimensions that are frequently separated in contemporary digital literacy: normative authority, critical rationality, and ethical-spiritual character. Such integration is particularly important in the Islamic context because the post-truth crisis is simultaneously a crisis of information verification, epistemic authority, and moral responsibility. The Bayānī–Burhānī–‘Irfānī trident therefore provides a conceptual basis for reconstructing an epistemic culture in which truth is not determined by popularity or emotional intensity, but examined through authoritative sources, rational evidence, contextual interpretation, and ethical responsibility.

Bayānī as the First Guard: Text Verification and Tabayyun

Within the epistemic trident framework, Bayānī occupies a normative foundational position, serving as the first line of information verification. Bayānī epistemology emphasizes the authority of the Qur’an, Hadith, and Arabic linguistic rules as sources of narrative and normative truth (Addzaky et al., 2024). The principle of tabayyun, taught by the Bayānī tradition, is the earliest textual verification mechanism in Islamic history; it requires clarification of the source, sanad, and context before any information is accepted and disseminated. In the digital context, this principle is relevant as an information literacy protocol, requiring media users to identify the origin and authority of a source before believing or disseminating content (Putri, dkk 2025).

Bayānī’s function in the trident integration model also includes a hermeneutical aspect: it provides a non-arbitrary interpretive framework, as it is tied to linguistic methodology, historical context, and the hierarchy of maqāṣid (objectives). Thus, Bayānī prevents free interpretations that are vulnerable to manipulation by political or ideological interests one of the main strategies of disinformation in the digital space (Erdayani Firdaus, 2025). Bayānī’s ability to distinguish between authoritative texts and those falsely claimed to be authoritative makes it the first epistemic bulwark against the wave of fabricated religious content on social media (Ulliyah et al., 2024)

Burhānī as an Instrument of Critical Rationality

After Bayānī established textual legitimacy, Burhānī assumed the role of an instrument of critical rationality that validated claims through demonstrative logic, empirical analysis, and causal reasoning. Within

the Islamic scientific tradition, Burhānī constituted an epistemology that absorbed the Aristotelian mantiq tradition and integrated it into the fabric of Islamic science (Ramadhan, 2025). In the post-truth era, Burhānī functions as a "logic detector" capable of identifying logical fallacies, statistical manipulation, and data fabrication, the main modus operandi for spreading disinformation in the digital ecosystem (Addzaky et al., 2024).

Furthermore, Burhānī, in the trident integration model, serves as a counterbalance to Bayānī, preventing the textual tradition from falling into rigid dogmatism. Through demonstrative reasoning, a claim imbued with textual authority must still pass the test of logical consistency and empirical confirmation before being accepted as truth (Mastori, A. T., et al., 2025). This Bayānī-Burhānī synergy creates a much more robust double verification mechanism: information must be both textually-normatively valid and rationally-empirically valid, so that information that relies only on one dimension can be identified as incomplete or potentially misleading. (Ramadhan, 2025)

Irfānī as an Ethical-Spiritual Filter

The third dimension of the epistemic trident, 'Irfānī, occupies a unique and irreplaceable position in facing post-truth, because it operates at a level that cannot be reached by text or logic alone, namely the dimensions of the heart, intuition, and inner cleanliness (Pangestu, E. D., 2026). Post-truth exploits human cognitive biases and emotional tendencies to spread lies; 'Irfānī responds to this vulnerability by cultivating an inner clarity (ṣafā al-qalb) that prevents one from being easily swept away by emotional narratives designed to manipulate. The spiritual awareness cultivated through 'Irfānī produces an ethical sensitivity capable of sensing irregularities in information even before textual or logical analysis is performed (Meilina et al., 2025)

In synergy with Bayānī and Burhānī, 'Irfānī functions as a third layer that ensures that the process of seeking truth is not only cognitive, but also ethical and transformative. Someone who possesses the depth of 'Irfānī is not only able to verify information textually and rationally, but is also morally motivated to reject and fight the spread of lies, because he understands that spreading disinformation is not only an epistemic error but also a spiritual sin (Herdatama, D., 2026). This dimension makes the trident model not only a verification method, but an epistemic character rooted in values (Rasiani et al., 2025).

Trident Synergy: Operational Model for Facing Post-Truth

These three epistemologies do not operate in a rigid sequential manner, but rather synergistically and simultaneously, forming a layered and mutually reinforcing system of epistemic verification. Their operational model can be described as follows: when someone receives information in the digital space, Bayānī immediately demands questions about the source and authority; Burhānī encourages logical analysis of consistency and evidence; while 'Irfānī provides ethical considerations about the impact and intention of disseminating the information (Putri, dkk 2025). This three-layer synergy is what distinguishes the trident model from the usual digital literacy approach which only works at the technical-rational level (Mastori, A. T., et al., 2025).

In practice, this epistemic trident integration model is relevant for application in the development of Islamic education curriculum, value-based digital literacy training, and the design of responsible digital da'wah platforms (Erdiyani & Firdaus, 2025). In the midst of the rapid flow of information that is hitting cyberspace, this model offers an alternative that is not just reactive in filtering hoaxes after they spread but is proactive and transformative, namely building humans who are epistemically strong because they maintain a balance between obedience to the text of revelation, clarity of reason, and inner cleanliness (Pangestu, E. D., 2026). The interaction between Bayānī, Burhānī, and 'Irfānī approaches can be operationalized through a verification mechanism linking three key questions: whether the information possesses normative legitimacy, whether it can be substantiated through rational-empirical means, and whether its reception and dissemination are conducted ethically. This third question serves as a basis for evaluating digital content that potentially involves disinformation, religious manipulation, or claims deliberately crafted to sway public emotion. At the Bayānī stage, information users are guided to examine the origins of the information, the

authority of the source, the authenticity of the text, and the context of interpretation. In the case of religious information circulating on social media, for instance, claims citing Quranic verses or hadith cannot be accepted immediately simply because they reference religious sources. Such information requires scrutiny regarding the accuracy of the citation, the contextual meaning, and alignment with accountable interpretive methodologies. Thus, the Bayānī approach serves to prevent the use of religious symbols and authority as a false legitimization for misleading information. At the Burhānī stage, information that has undergone normative scrutiny is analyzed based on logical consistency, the sufficiency of evidence, the alignment between claims and facts, and the potential for flawed reasoning. For example, a claim stating that a specific phenomenon is the direct result of a particular group's policies or actions must be tested against data, causal relationships, and comparative evidence. This stage guards against conclusions drawn solely from spurious correlations, overgeneralizations, or the repetition of information lacking empirical support. At the ‘Irfānī stage, the verification process focuses on examining intentions, managing emotional impulses, and upholding moral responsibility when receiving or disseminating information. Users must question whether they accept a claim based on adequate evidence or because it aligns with their own prejudices, anger, fear, or group preferences. This dimension is crucial because the "post-truth" phenomenon operates not only through misinformation but also through psychological states that predispose individuals to accept and spread information without proper scrutiny. Within this framework, the Irfānī approach acts as a moral check against the tendency to disseminate information that could incite slander, hatred, or social harm. The analysis indicates that these three stages need not be understood as rigid, linear procedures; rather, they can operate simultaneously and serve to cross-check one another. If information originates from a seemingly authoritative source yet lacks sufficient supporting evidence, the *Burhānī* approach may warrant withholding acceptance. If information presents a logical argument but is disseminated to incite hatred or hostility, the “‘Irfānī” dimension provides an ethical basis for rejecting its spread. Conversely, if information raises rational doubts, the “Bayānī” approach can help refocus the inquiry on relevant normative sources and contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Bayānī, Burhānī, and ‘Irfānī constitute complementary epistemological dimensions within the Islamic scientific tradition. Bayānī provides normative legitimacy through textual authority and contextual interpretation; Burhānī establishes rational and empirical accountability through logical reasoning and evidence; while ‘Irfānī contributes ethical-spiritual orientation through self-reflection, moral responsibility, and inner awareness. The analysis demonstrates that their integration should not be understood merely as the coexistence of three approaches, but as a mutually corrective epistemological framework. The post-truth crisis is identified as a multidimensional epistemic problem involving the manipulation of sources, the weakening of evidentiary reasoning, and the exploitation of emotional and moral vulnerabilities. In response, the integrated framework reconstructs three forms of epistemic resilience: normative resilience through Bayānī, rational-empirical resilience through Burhānī, and ethical-spiritual resilience through ‘Irfānī. These dimensions enable information to be assessed not only according to its apparent truthfulness, but also according to its legitimacy, evidentiary justification, and ethical consequences.

The principal conceptual contribution of this study is the formulation of Bayānī, Burhānī, and ‘Irfānī as an alternative epistemological framework for facing post-truth in the digital era. The framework does not replace digital literacy or empirical verification, but strengthens them through the integration of revelation, critical reasoning, and moral responsibility. Its practical relevance lies in developing educational and digital communication practices that encourage source verification, critical evaluation, emotional self-regulation, and responsible information dissemination. However, this study is based on library research and conceptual analysis. Therefore, the proposed framework requires further empirical examination through educational implementation, digital literacy programs, or case studies of religious disinformation. Future research may

investigate how the three epistemological dimensions can be translated into measurable learning competencies, verification practices, and ethical communication behaviors in different digital communities.

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