PAREWA SARAQ: Journal of Islamic Law and Fatwa Review
Volume 5 Issue 2 November 2026: 307-319
E-ISSN: 2964-7878
DOI: 10.64016/parewasaraq.v5i2.162
https://ejournal.sulselmui.com/index.php/PS
This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

Fatwa as a Knowledge Construct: An Epistemological Framework for Assessing Its Validity

Rahmatunnair[1*]
[1]Institut Agama Islam Negeri Bone, Indonesia. E-mail: rahmatunnairbone@gmail.com

[*]Corresponding Author
Article history: Received: June 30, 2026; Revised: September 28, 2026; Accepted: October 31, 2026; Published: November 11, 2026

Keywords:
The Validity of Fatwa;
Knowledge Validation;
Theories Introduction.

How to Cite:
Rahmatunnair. (2026). Fatwa as a Knowledge Construct: An Epistemological Framework for Assessing Its Validity. *Parewa Saraq: Journal of Islamic Law and Fatwa Review*, *5*(2): 307-319. https://doi.org/10.64016/parewasaraq.v5i2.162

Abstract: Fatwas play a role in guiding Muslim responses to emerging social, economic, and technological issues. However, their authority should not be assessed solely through normative religious legitimacy; it also depends on the epistemological quality of the knowledge they produce. This study examines fatwas as constructions of Islamic legal knowledge and develops an integrative framework for evaluating their epistemological validity. Employing a qualitative-philosophical approach through library research, it analyses classical and contemporary works on uṣūl al-fiqh, Islamic legal reasoning, epistemology, and theories of knowledge validity. The analysis focuses on the integration of revealed sources—the Qur'an, Hadith, ijmāʿ, and qiyās—with empirical knowledge relevant to contemporary contexts, supported by istinbāṭ al-aḥkām, maqāṣid al-sharīʿah, and rational, interdisciplinary ijtihād. The study proposes four principal criteria for examining fatwa validity: consistency, coherence, correspondence, and argumentative accountability. These criteria assess conformity with Islamic legal principles, logical soundness, empirical accuracy, and methodological transparency. The framework positions fatwas as normative, rational, systematic, and contextually responsive products of Islamic legal knowledge that remain open to academic examination.

License: *Copyright (c) 2026 The authors (2026)*
This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

Introduction

The development of modern society has given rise to increasingly diverse and complex religious issues across social, economic, political, legal, and technological domains. These dynamics necessitate religious responses that are not merely oriented towards normative legal determinations but are also capable of providing rational, methodological, and contextual arguments in addressing emerging issues. In this context, fatwas occupy an important position as products of religious thought arising from processes of reasoning, interpretation, and the construction of Islamic law in response to the realities of human life (Hasanuddin, 2019). A fatwa is not merely an answer to a legal question raised by society; rather, it also reflects an intellectual activity involving sources of knowledge, methods of reasoning, scholarly authority, and considerations of the surrounding social context (Rahmat, 2016). Therefore, fatwas need to be situated within an epistemological framework to understand how religious knowledge is constructed, developed, and legitimized in terms of its truth claims.

From an epistemological perspective, knowledge cannot be adequately evaluated solely on the basis of the existence of a statement or conclusion. Rather, it must also be examined in terms of its ontological foundations, sources of knowledge, methods of knowledge acquisition, coherence of argumentation, and accountability for the truth claim it advances. This issue becomes particularly relevant when fatwas are positioned as constructs of knowledge. This is because the process of formulating a fatwa essentially involves epistemic activities encompassing the use of evidence from the Qur'an and Hadith, the interpretation of religious texts, the application of *uṣūl al-fiqh* principles, the employment of *istinbāṭ* methods, and consideration of the empirical realities of society (Ibtihajuddin et al., 2025). Accordingly, fatwas possess both normative and epistemic dimensions. The normative dimension concerns the sources of legitimacy derived from Islamic law (Sharia), whereas the epistemic dimension relates to the processes of knowledge production, the validity of arguments, and the methodological consistency employed in formulating legal determinations. This perspective provides an opportunity to understand fatwas not merely as products of Islamic law but also as outcomes of knowledge construction possessing particular structures, procedures, and standards of validity (Hibaturohman, Rusnandar, & Munthe, 2026).

Nevertheless, a fundamental issue that requires further examination is the extent to which a fatwa can be regarded as valid as a product of knowledge. To date, the legitimacy of fatwas has often been associated primarily with institutional authority, the scholarly competence of the mufti, and the conformity of legal determinations with the sources of Islamic law (Nazar, Gojali, & Atmaja, 2025). Although these aspects are undoubtedly important, they do not fully address the question of the validity of the knowledge embodied in a fatwa. A fatwa may possess institutional legitimacy while still requiring critical examination in terms of the accuracy of its use of sources, the consistency of its *istinbāṭ* methodology, the logical coherence of its legal reasoning, the relevance of its arguments to empirical realities, and its openness to academic criticism. This is where an epistemological problem emerges concerning the possibility of distinguishing between the normative validity, methodological validity, and rational validity of a fatwa. These three dimensions are not necessarily identical, since a legal determination may be considered consistent with the authority of a particular religious institution, while the arguments and methods underlying its formulation may remain open to debate. This condition highlights the importance of developing a more comprehensive evaluative framework so that the assessment of fatwas does not stop at identifying who issued them but also considers how the knowledge they embody was produced and the extent to which its arguments can be intellectually and methodologically justified (Mubin, 2023).

In response to these issues, this article seeks to examine fatwas as constructs of knowledge by employing the theory of knowledge validity as an analytical perspective for assessing their epistemological legitimacy. The study addresses three principal questions:

first, how is the epistemological structure of fatwas constructed through their sources, methods, and processes of legal reasoning? Second, how can the theory of knowledge validity be employed to examine the consistency, coherence, correspondence, and accountability of fatwa arguments? Third, how can a framework for fatwa validity be formulated to reconcile the normative dimensions of religion with the standards of rationality and scientific methodology? Conceptually, this article is expected to contribute to the development of the epistemology of Islamic law, particularly by broadening the understanding of fatwas as products of knowledge possessing their own structures and standards of validity. Fatwas should not be understood solely as expressions of authority in determining religious law but also as outcomes of intellectual activities that remain open to methodological scrutiny, argumentative evaluation, and the further development of knowledge (Idani, 2026).

Research Methods

This study employs library research with a qualitative-philosophical approach, aiming to examine fatwas as constructs of knowledge and analyze their epistemological validity based on theories of knowledge validity. Library research was selected because the object of this study concerns the concepts, principles, arguments, and epistemological foundations underlying fatwas as products of Islamic legal thought. Through this approach, the study does not focus on collecting empirical data in the field but rather on critically examining various relevant literary sources, including those derived from the Islamic intellectual tradition and contemporary philosophical literature on science and knowledge (Arcanita, Putrajaya, Warsah, & Istan, 2023).

Data collection was conducted through a literature review of various scholarly sources relevant to the research focus (Stapleton, Carter, & Bredahl, 2020). Primary data sources comprise literature on *uṣūl al-fiqh, fiqh*, Islamic legal maxims (*qawāʿid al-fiqhiyyah*), and fatwa documents issued by religious institutions possessing recognised religious authority. Meanwhile, secondary data sources include books on the philosophy of science, epistemology, theories of truth and knowledge validity, as well as scholarly journal articles addressing scholarly authority, knowledge construction, methodologies for Islamic legal determination, and the position of fatwas within the dynamics of contemporary society. The literature search was conducted by considering substantive relevance, source credibility, the scholarly authority of authors or publishing institutions, and their contributions to the development of the study's conceptual framework. All collected literature was subsequently classified according to major themes related to sources of knowledge, methods of reasoning, argumentative justification, and criteria for fatwa validity (Haryono et al., 2024).

Data processing and analysis were carried out through three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and verification and conclusion drawing. First, data reduction involved selecting, identifying, and classifying information from various literary sources according to its relevance to the research focus. At this stage, data concerning the nature of fatwas,

sources of epistemic legitimacy, processes of legal *istinbāṭ*, epistemological arguments, and criteria for knowledge validity were selected and organized to obtain substantive and focused information. Second, data presentation involved systematically arranging and organizing the findings of the literature review according to conceptual categories and relationships among themes. The data were subsequently analyzed critically to identify areas of convergence, differences, and possibilities for integration between the epistemology of Islamic law and theories of knowledge validity. Third, verification and conclusion drawing involved examining the consistency of arguments, the accuracy of interpretations, and the interrelationships among the concepts presented. This final stage was intended to formulate a framework for fatwa validity through an assessment of its normative foundations, argumentative coherence, methodological accuracy, contextual relevance, and rational accountability (Sari, 2021).

Result and Discussion

Developing the Epistemological Structure of Fatwas through Sources, Methods, and Processes of Legal Reasoning

The epistemological structure of a fatwa constitutes a fundamental framework that explains how a religious legal determination is formulated, developed, and obtains its epistemic legitimacy. From an epistemological perspective, a fatwa cannot be understood merely as a product of normative legal determination but rather as the outcome of an intellectual activity involving processes of knowledge acquisition, processing, interpretation, and critical examination (Hibaturohman, Rusnandar, & Munthe, 2026). The formulation of a fatwa embodies an epistemic dimension because it involves the relationship between the knowing subject (the mufti or fatwa institution), the object of knowledge (the legal issue under consideration), and the sources of knowledge employed as the foundation for legal determination. An eclectic and integrative epistemological framework is therefore necessary to produce fatwas that are responsive to social realities (Firdaus & Achmad, 2024). These three elements constitute an interconnected structure through which legal conclusions are formulated. Accordingly, the development of the epistemological structure of fatwas should be directed towards establishing a knowledge system characterised by clarity of sources, methodological accuracy, argumentative consistency, and intellectual accountability.

In terms of sources of knowledge, fatwas are constructed through the integration of normative religious sources and empirical sources of knowledge. The Qur'an and Hadith occupy fundamental positions as the primary sources of Islamic law, while *ijmāʿ* (scholarly consensus) and *qiyās* (analogical reasoning) constitute essential instruments for developing legal arguments within the tradition of *uṣūl al-fiqh*. Furthermore, several legal methods and considerations have evolved within the intellectual tradition of Islamic jurisprudence, including *istiḥsān* (juristic preference), *maṣlaḥah mursalah* (consideration of public interest), *sadd al-dharāʾiʿ* (blocking the means to harm), and *ʿurf* (customary practice). Their application depends on the characteristics of the issues under consideration and the methodological

frameworks of the relevant legal schools or institutions (Jalili, Ulfa, & Sahid, 2023). At the same time, empirical realities constitute an important source of information in the formulation of fatwas, particularly when addressing issues related to developments in economics, medicine, digital technology, the environment, and social relations. Thus, the sources of knowledge underlying fatwas do not rely exclusively on textual interpretations of religious evidence but also require contextual knowledge to ensure an accurate understanding of the legal subject matter (Ilmas, Bahar, Salma, & Huda, 2026). The integration of these two sources enables fatwas to maintain a strong normative foundation while remaining relevant to the evolving realities of contemporary society.

From a methodological perspective, the epistemological development of fatwas requires a structured system of legal reasoning that can be academically justified and accounted for. The method of *istinbāṭ al-aḥkām* constitutes the principal instrument employed to derive and formulate legal rulings from the sources of Islamic law. In this process, a mufti must consider the principles of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, an understanding of *dalālah al-alfāẓ* (the semantic implications of textual expressions), the relationships between general and specific textual evidence, absolute and qualified expressions, as well as considerations of *nāsikh* and *mansūkh* (abrogating and abrogated texts), where relevant. Furthermore, the *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* approach can be employed to understand the fundamental objectives of Islamic law, particularly in promoting public welfare (*maṣlaḥah*) and preventing harm (*mafsadah*). The appropriate application of methodological instruments is essential because differences in methodology may produce different legal conclusions, even when addressing relatively similar issues. Therefore, the methodological validity of a fatwa should be assessed based on the correspondence between the characteristics of the issue, the sources of legal evidence, the interpretative instruments, and the reasoning procedures employed in formulating the legal determination.

Furthermore, legal reasoning constitutes an epistemological dimension that connects sources of knowledge with the conclusions articulated in a fatwa. This process does not occur mechanically through the mere citation of religious evidence; rather, it involves intellectual activities encompassing problem identification, contextual understanding, factual classification, interpretation of legal sources, argumentative analysis, and the formulation of conclusions (Ibtihajuddin et al., 2025). Within the tradition of Islamic law, this process can be realised through ijtihād, whether in the form of individual or collective *ijtihād.* Collective *ijtihād* is particularly relevant when addressing multidimensional contemporary issues because it facilitates the involvement of experts in Islamic jurisprudence, economics, medicine, technology, sociology, and other academic disciplines. Through this mechanism, the formulation of fatwas does not rely exclusively on religious authority but also takes into account the validity of information and the scholarly competence relevant to the subject matter under consideration (Fatarib, Ali, Arifin, Najib, & Fathoni, 2025). Accordingly, legal reasoning in the formulation of fatwas can be understood as an interdisciplinary process that

brings together textual authority, methodological rationality, and empirical knowledge to produce reasoned and contextually relevant legal determinations.

Based on these three dimensions, the development of the epistemological structure of fatwas should be directed towards establishing an integrative, systematic, and critically examinable construction of knowledge. Sources of knowledge provide the foundation for normative legitimacy and empirical information, methods supply the analytical instruments through which these sources are examined, while legal reasoning connects both dimensions to produce accountable conclusions. The relationship among these three elements constitutes an epistemological cycle that enables fatwas to be evaluated not merely on the basis of the authority of the individuals or institutions issuing them but also on the quality of the intellectual processes underlying their formulation (Jalili, Ulfa, & Sahid, 2023). Within this framework, the validity of fatwas should, at a minimum, be assessed according to three criteria: source validity, methodological validity, and argumentative validity. Source validity concerns the authenticity and relevance of the underlying sources of knowledge; methodological validity relates to the appropriateness of the *istinbāṭ* instruments employed; whereas argumentative validity concerns logical consistency and the capacity of legal conclusions to adequately address the issues under consideration. This construction emphasizes that fatwas are products of religious knowledge possessing their own epistemological structures. Consequently, their development requires an approach that extends beyond normative-theological considerations to encompass methodological rigour, rationality, and critical examination (Hibaturohman, Rusnandar, & Munthe, 2026).

The Theory of Knowledge Validity and Its Application to Examining the Consistency, Coherence, Correspondence, and Accountability of Fatwa Arguments

The validity of knowledge constitutes a fundamental issue in epistemology because it concerns the criteria used to determine whether a particular body of knowledge can be accepted as true, rational, and intellectually justifiable. Within the tradition of the philosophy of science, the validity of knowledge is not determined solely by the sources or authorities from which it originates but also by the quality of its arguments, the accuracy of its methods, its correspondence with reality, and its capacity to withstand critical examination. This perspective is particularly relevant to the study of fatwas because a fatwa represents the outcome of an intellectual construction involving the interpretation of normative sources, the application of Islamic legal methodologies, and the reasoning applied to concrete societal issues (Hasanuddin, 2019). Accordingly, the theory of knowledge validity can serve as an analytical instrument for assessing the epistemological quality of fatwas, particularly in determining whether the resulting legal determinations are supported by consistent and coherent arguments, correspond to empirical realities, and are intellectually accountable. The application of this theory also enables a broader perspective in fatwa studies, shifting the

emphasis from normative legitimacy and institutional authority towards a critical examination of the quality of knowledge embodied in a legal determination.

The first dimension that can be employed to examine the validity of fatwa arguments is consistency, which refers to the conformity and stability of an argument in maintaining the principles, premises, and conclusions upon which it is based. In the context of fatwas, consistency concerns the ability of a mufti or fatwa institution to apply legal principles systematically, without contradiction, and with logical regularity throughout the reasoning process. Consistency can be examined through the relationship between the legal foundations employed, the principles of *uṣūl al-fiqh* applied, the *istinbāṭ* methods selected, and the legal conclusions formulated. For example, when a fatwa employs the principle of public interest (*maṣlaḥah*) as the basis of its argumentation, the application of this principle must be methodologically justified and must not contradict other relevant principles of Islamic law. Similarly, when different fatwas address issues with similar characteristics, the differences in their conclusions need to be explained in terms of variations in context, factual circumstances, legal causes (*ʿillah*), or methodological approaches. This process requires rigorous intellectual scrutiny to maintain a balance between revelation and reason in the formulation of legal determinations (Idani, 2026). Therefore, consistency does not mean that all fatwas must produce identical conclusions; rather, differences in legal conclusions must be supported by epistemological and methodological justifications that can be clearly articulated.

The second dimension is coherence, which refers to the logical interconnectedness of propositions, premises, principles, and conclusions that constitute a particular system of knowledge (Thagard, 2022). In the examination of fatwas, coherence concerns the extent to which legal arguments establish logical relationships among normative evidence, textual interpretation, Islamic legal maxims, considerations of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*, and legal conclusions (Ibtihajuddin et al., 2025). A fatwa can be regarded as possessing epistemological coherence when all elements of its argumentation form an interconnected structure of reasoning that mutually supports its constituent components and contains no internal contradictions (Bauer, 2026). For instance, a fatwa concerning digital economic transactions should demonstrate the logical relationship between the principles of Islamic commercial law (f*iqh al-muʿāmalāt*), an analysis of the characteristics of the transaction, the identification of prohibited elements such as *ribā* (usury or interest), *gharar* (excessive uncertainty), or *maysir* (gambling), and considerations of public interest underlying the legal determination. Coherence also requires integration between textual arguments and the fundamental objectives of Islamic law, ensuring that a legal determination is not merely justified through an isolated interpretation of a particular textual source but can also be defended within the broader system of Islamic legal thought. Accordingly, coherence functions as a criterion for examining the integrity of a fatwa's argumentative structure as a systematic and rational construction of knowledge.

The third dimension is correspondence, which refers to the conformity between a proposition or knowledge claim and the objective reality to which it refers. The correspondence theory of truth is particularly important in the examination of fatwas because legal determinations are not concerned exclusively with normative texts but also with the factual and empirical conditions underlying the legal issues being addressed (Kaspers, 2025; Bauer, 2026). In this regard, the validity of a fatwa requires an accurate understanding of reality before the process of legal determination takes place. For example, a fatwa concerning digital financial transactions must be based on an adequate understanding of transaction mechanisms, relationships among the parties involved, payment systems, risk management, and the possible presence of elements that contravene Islamic legal principles. If the empirical facts underlying the legal assessment are not accurately understood, the legal reasoning process may produce conclusions that do not correspond to the actual nature of the issue. Therefore, examining correspondence requires the involvement of empirical knowledge and interdisciplinary expertise to ensure that legal interpretation remains grounded in actual circumstances. From this perspective, correspondence is not intended to replace the authority of revelation with empirical facts; rather, it ensures that the application of Islamic legal norms to a particular issue is based on an accurate understanding of the relevant factual circumstances.

The fourth dimension is argumentative accountability, which refers to the intellectual and methodological obligation to explain the foundations, processes, and reasons underlying a particular legal conclusion. This dimension is closely associated with epistemic transparency, openness to criticism, and the possibility of evaluating the process through which a fatwa is formulated. A fatwa characterized by argumentative accountability must do more than simply declare a particular matter *ḥalāl* (permissible), *ḥarām* (prohibited), *wājib* (obligatory), sunnah (recommended), *makrūh* (disapproved), or *mubāḥ* (permissible). It must also demonstrate the textual and legal foundations, interpretative methods, relevant legal considerations, and logical relationships between the facts examined and the resulting legal determination (Fatarib, Ali, Arifin, Najib, & Fathoni, 2025). Such accountability becomes increasingly important in the context of contemporary societal developments because legal issues frequently involve complex knowledge across multiple disciplines. Consequently, religious authorities need to establish opportunities for dialogue with experts from other fields, evaluate the accuracy of relevant information, and consider contextual changes that may affect the continuing relevance of a fatwa. Ultimately, these four dimensions constitute a framework for examining the epistemological validity of fatwas, encompassing internal consistency, coherence of the argumentative system, correspondence with empirical reality, and methodological accountability. This framework emphasizes that the validity of a fatwa is determined not merely by the authority.

The dimensions of fatwa validity can be described as follow:



Figure 1. The Dimensions of Fatwa Validity

Formulating a Framework for Fatwa Validity: Bridging Normative Religious Dimensions with Standards of Rationality and Scientific Methodology

The formulation of a framework for fatwa validity represents a conceptual effort to establish an integrative relationship between normative religious authority and the principles of scientific rationality. Within the tradition of Islamic law, fatwas occupy an important position as products of legal thought that respond to societal issues on the basis of the sources of Islamic law (Sharia). However, the complexity of contemporary issues requires fatwas to demonstrate not only legitimacy derived from religious authority but also argumentative quality that can be examined through methodological and rational scrutiny. This is particularly important because the issues addressed by fatwas increasingly intersect with developments in science, technology, economics, healthcare, environmental studies, and social dynamics. Therefore, fatwa validity needs to be developed through an epistemological framework capable of integrating normative, rational, and empirical dimensions without compromising the fundamental characteristics of Islamic law. From this perspective, rationality and scientific methodology are not intended to replace revelation as the normative source of Islamic law but rather to serve as instruments for strengthening the processes of understanding, interpretation, and application of Islamic legal norms to the realities of human life (Barkah, 2023).

The normative religious dimension constitutes the primary foundation for formulating fatwa validity because the legitimacy of Islamic law originates from revelation and the development of legal thought grounded in the methodological traditions of Islamic scholarship. The Qur'an and Hadith serve as fundamental sources, while *ijmāʿ* (scholarly consensus), *qiyās* (analogical reasoning), and various other *istinbāṭ* methods play essential roles in developing legal interpretations of issues that are not explicitly addressed in the primary sources. Within this framework, the normative validity of a fatwa is determined by the accuracy of textual interpretation, consideration of the contexts of revelation and textual meaning, and the proportionate application of the principles of *uṣūl al-fiqh*. Furthermore, the

maqāṣid al-sharīʿah approach plays an important role in ensuring that legal conclusions remain oriented towards the fundamental objectives of Islamic law, particularly the promotion of public welfare (*maṣlaḥah*) and the prevention of harm (*mafsadah*). Thus, the normative dimension functions not merely as a formal source of legitimacy for legal determinations but also as an epistemic foundation that provides direction, boundaries, and orientation for the entire process of constructing fatwa arguments.

Furthermore, the rational dimension is necessary to ensure that the formulation of fatwas follows a logically structured process and produces arguments that can be intellectually justified. In this context, rationality concerns the ability of a mufti or fatwa institution to establish logical relationships among legal premises, factual circumstances, interpretative instruments, and resulting conclusions. A fatwa should not merely cite religious evidence as the basis for a legal determination; it must also explain the relevance of such evidence to the issue under examination and demonstrate the argumentative relationship between the legal foundations and the conclusions reached (Ilmas, Bahar, Salma, & Huda, 2026). The principles of consistency and coherence serve as essential instruments for examining the quality of this rationality. Consistency requires that the application of legal principles does not generate contradictions in the reasoning process, whereas coherence ensures that all elements of the argument form an interconnected and mutually supportive structure of thought. In this regard, rationality is not positioned as an authority superior to revelation but rather as the intellectual capacity of human beings to understand, interpret, and develop legal knowledge on the basis of accountable normative foundations.

The scientific methodological dimension is also an essential element in establishing a framework for fatwa validity, particularly when the legal subject under examination involves complex empirical phenomena. Scientific methodology provides systematic instruments for identifying problems, gathering information, verifying facts, analyzing relationships among relevant factors, and evaluating conclusions (Bashori, Mutho'am, & Jusoh, 2023). In the context of fatwas, the application of scientific methodological principles can be implemented through strengthening the process of *taḥqīq al-manāṭ*, namely, verifying the existence and accuracy of the application of a legal cause to a particular object or case. This process requires an adequate factual understanding of the issue before the relevant legal norms are applied. For example, fatwas concerning financial technology, genetic engineering, artificial intelligence, or digital economic transactions require knowledge from the fields of technology, medicine, economics, and social sciences. The involvement of experts in the examination of fatwas is therefore essential to avoid errors in understanding the factual circumstances underlying legal determinations (Nazar, Gojali, & Atmaja, 2025). Accordingly, scientific methodology functions as an instrument of empirical verification that strengthens the accuracy of applying religious norms rather than replacing the istinbāṭ methods established within the tradition of Islamic law. In the process of legal istinbāṭ, methodological developments can also be observed in Nahdlatul Ulama, which has developed the *qaulī,*

ilhāqī, and *manhajī* methods of legal determination (Shadiq, Jalaluddin, Azhari, & Hamdi, 2024).

Based on the integration of these three dimensions, a framework for fatwa validity can be formulated through four principal parameters: normative validity, rational validity, empirical validity, and methodological validity. Normative validity examines the conformity of fatwa arguments with the sources and principles of Islamic law; rational validity assesses the consistency and coherence of the relationship between premises and conclusions; empirical validity evaluates the accuracy of the understanding of facts and realities constituting the subject matter of a legal determination; while methodological validity examines the appropriateness of procedures, analytical instruments, and decision-making mechanisms. These four parameters are interconnected and mutually complementary. A fatwa may possess a strong normative foundation; however, if it is formulated on the basis of inaccurate empirical information, its practical application may be inappropriate. Conversely, a legal determination may be supported by empirical data and rational arguments but still requires examination of its conformity with the principles of Islamic law. Therefore, the validity of a fatwa should not be determined through the isolated assessment of a single dimension but rather through the integration of all parameters constituting its epistemological framework.

The formulation of a fatwa validity framework that bridges normative religious dimensions with standards of rationality and scientific methodology can contribute significantly to the development of contemporary Islamic legal epistemology. This framework enables fatwas to be understood as products of knowledge possessing theological foundations, argumentative structures, methodological procedures, and empirical orientations. Contemporary fatwas need to be developed through a paradigm that is more responsive to the diverse challenges of contemporary society (Miswanto, 2021). Consequently, the assessment of a fatwa should not be based solely on the identity or authority of the institution issuing it but also on the quality of its sources, the accuracy of its interpretations, the strength of its arguments, the reliability of its information, and its openness to academic evaluation. This approach also creates opportunities for developing more interdisciplinary models of *ijtihād* through dialogue among Islamic scholars, academics, and experts from various fields of knowledge. Accordingly, the integration of revelation, reason, and empirical experience can establish a more comprehensive framework for fatwa validity without reducing the transcendental dimension of Islamic law to positivistic standards of scientific knowledge (Fatarib, Ali, Arifin, Najib, & Fathoni, 2025). Ultimately, fatwas can acquire legitimacy not only as religious legal determinations but also as epistemologically robust products of legal reasoning that are rational, systematic, contextual, and intellectually accountable.

Conclusion

The validity of fatwas constitutes an epistemological construction determined not only by normative religious authority but also by the quality of knowledge sources, methodological accuracy, and the strength of legal arguments. The development of the epistemological structure of fatwas requires the integration of normative sources, namely the Qur'an, Hadith, *ijmāʿ* (scholarly consensus), and *qiyās* (analogical reasoning), with empirical knowledge relevant to contemporary issues. This integration is reinforced through the application of *istinbāṭ al-aḥkām* methods, the *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* approach, and rational and interdisciplinary processes of *ijtihād*. The examination of fatwa validity requires four principal parameters: consistency, coherence, correspondence, and argumentative accountability. These four parameters provide the foundation for assessing a fatwa's conformity with the principles of Islamic law, logical consistency, accuracy of empirical facts, and methodological transparency. Accordingly, fatwas can be developed as products of Islamic legal knowledge that are normative, rational, systematic, contextual, and open to academic scrutiny.

Referenses

Arcanita, R., Putrajaya, G., Warsah, I. & Istan, M. (2023). Kiat Penelitian Dengan Model Pendekatan Telaah Kepustakaan. *TIK Ilmeu: Jurnal Ilmu Perpustakaan dan Informasi*, 7 (1), 117-126. https://doi.org/10.29240/tik.v7i1.6494

Barkah, D. (2023). Negotiating Text and Reality: An Epistemological Analysis of Persis Hisbah Council Fatwas on Contemporary Issues. (2026). *EDUKASI: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Agama dan Keagamaan,* 24(2), 447-465.

Bashori, A., Mutho'am, M. & Jusoh, W.N.H.W. (2023). Epistemology of Fatwas on Digital Transaction in Indonesia. *Jurnal Hukum Islam*, 21 (2), 231-277. https://doi.org/10.28918/jhi_v21i2_02

Bauer, M. B. (2026). Kant on the Concept of Truth: Critical Epistemology between Correspondence and Coherence. *Kantian Review*, 31 (1), 7-25. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415426101241

Fatarib, H., Ali, Z.Z., Arifin, N.A., Najib,A., & Fathoni, M. N. (2025). Progressive Legal Reasoning in Contemporary Islamic Legal Reform: Negotiating the Maqāṣid and Hermeneutic Approaches. (2025). *JURIS (Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah),* 24(2), 277-294. https://doi.org/10.31958/juris.v24i2.16123

Firdaus, S. & Achmad, S. (2024). Studi Epistemologi Hukum Islam dalam Konteks Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia. *Jurnal Pusaka: Media Kajian dan Pemikiran Islam*, 14 (1), 42-55. https://doi.org/10.35897/ps.v14i1.1451

Haryono, E. et. al. (2024). New Paradigm Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan (Library Research) di Perguruan Tinggi. *An-Nuur: The Journal of Islamic Studies*, 14 (1), 1-9. https://doi.org/10.58403/annuur.v14i1.391

Hasanuddin, F. (2019). Ijtihad Maqashidi: Metodologi dan Kontekstualisasi Hukum Islam di Indonesia (Studi Fatwa-Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia). *Al-Mawarid: Jurnal Syariah dan Hukum*, 1(2), 134–153. https://doi.org/10.20885/mawarid.vol1.iss2.art2

Hibaturohman, I., Rusnandar, A. & Munthe, R. F. (2026). Epistemological and Axiological Integration of Legal Maxims with Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah: Advancing Contemporary Islamic Jurisprudence. *Jurnal Iman dan Spiritualitalitas*, 6 (2), 511-524. https://doi.org/10.15575/jis.v6i2.52759

Ibtihajuddin, M. et. al. (2025). Reconstructing Islamic Legal Epistemology: The Performative Logic of Ijtihād Irshādīin the Lajnah Bahtsul Masā'ilof Pesantren Lirboyo. *Justicia Islamica: Jurnal Kajian Hukum dan Sosial,* 22 (2), 461-488. https://doi.org/10.21154/justicia.v22i2.10927

Idani, F. (2026). Integrasi Akal dan Wahyu dalam Penetapan Hukum Islam: Kajian Filosofis atas Pemikiran Kontemporer. *Putro Phang: Journal of Law and Islamic Economics,* 1 (1), 47-64.

Ilmas, Bahar, M., Salma, & Huda, D. S. M. (2026). Kaidah Filsafat Hukum Islam Sebagai Kerangka Ijtihad Kontemporer. *Jurnal Tana Mana*, 7 (3), 112-124. https://doi.org/10.33648/jtm.v7i3.1864

Jalili, I., Ulfa, F. & Sahid, M.M. (2023). Nahdlatul Ulama's Ijtihad Method in Fatwa: Analysis of the Content of Legal Decisions and Their Validity In Indonesia. *Justicia Islamica: Jurnal Kajian Hukum dan Sosial,* 20 (2), 341-360. https://doi.org/10.21154/justicia.v20i2.5971

Kaspers, T. (2025). The Practical Bearings of Truth as Correspondence. *Erkenntnis*, 90. 1477–1497. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10670-023-00765-5

Miswanto, A. (2021). Problematika Fatwa: Mempertimbangkan Tawaran Metodologi Ijtihad Ulama Kontemporer. *Jurnal Hukum Ekonomi Syariah*, 4(2), 137–158. https://doi.org/10.30595/jhes.v4i2.11670

Mubin, Z. (2023). The Epistemological Relevance of The Fatwa of Shaykh Yusuf Al-Qardhawi and Shaykh Ali Jumáh for Fatwa Institutions in Indonesia. *Al-Qalam: Jurnal Kajian Keislaman*, 43 (1), 91-110. https://doi.org/10.32678/alqalam.v43i1.12787

Nazar, R., Gojali, D., & Atmaja, A. (2025). Authority Vis-à-vis Scientific Logic: A Critique of the Epistemological Foundations of Fiqh. *Santri: Journal of Pesantren and Fiqh Sosial*, 6(2), 221-236. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.35878/santri.v6i2.1862

Rahmat, A. R. (2016). Metode Ijtihad Komisi Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia. *Nukhbatul 'Ulum: Jurnal Bidang Kajian Islam*, 2(1), 159-166. https://doi.org/10.36701/nukhbah.v2i1.11

Sari, R. K. (2021). Penelitian Kepustakaan dalam Penelitian Pengembangan Pendidikan Bahasa Indonesia. *Jurnal Borneo Humaniora*, 4 (2), 60-69. https://doi.org/10.35334/borneo_humaniora.v4i2.2249

Shadiq, G. M., Jalaluddin, Azhari, F. & Hamdi, F. (2024). Telaah Metodologi Istinbath dan Corak Hukum Islam Lembaga-Lembaga Fatwa di Indonesia (LBMNU, Majelis Tarjih Muhammadiyah dan Komisi Fatwa MUI). *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Jurisprudence,Economic and Legal Theory,* 2 (2), 684-699. https://doi.org/10.62976/ijijel.v2i2.546

Stapleton, J., Carter, C., & Bredahl, L. (2020). Developing Systematic Search Methods for the Library Literature: Methods and Analysis. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship,* 46 (5), 102190. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2020.102190

Thagard, P. (2022). Coherence, Truth, and the Development of Scientific Knowledge. *Philosophy of Science,* 74 (1), 28-47. https://doi.org/10.1086/520941