

The Transformation of Islamic Education Thought in the City of Padangsidempuan: Abid al-Jabiri's Epistemological Study on the Role of Intellectuals and Educational Institutions

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Abstract

Keywords:

Islamic Education, Epistemology, Abid al-Jabiri, Intellectual Transformation, Padang Sidempuan City.

This research departs from concerns about the stagnation of Islamic educational thinking in Padangsidempuan City, where textual, authoritative, and repetitive bayani reasoning models still dominate. In the midst of increasingly complex social dynamics and the demands of the times, local Islamic education often exhibits resistance to rational and critical approaches, thereby becoming entrenched in epistemological conservatism. Using a qualitative-critical approach and the analytical lens of Islamic epistemology, Abid al-Jabiri, this study examines in depth how the role of Islamic intellectuals and educational institutions in Padangsidempuan not only reproduces traditions but also structurally hinders the emergence of a renewal paradigm. The results of the study show that bayani reasoning still dominates in the curriculum structure, institutional orientation, and local intellectual mindset. Meanwhile, transformation efforts through rational, contextual, and dialogical approaches are still partial and have not yet become mainstream in the discourse of Islamic education. This research recommends a bold and systemic epistemological reorientation by empowering local intellectuals as agents of thought reconstruction, as well as reorganizing educational curricula and institutional practices based on the integration of bayani, burhani, and 'irfani reason. Thus, Islamic education in Padangsidempuan can move out of intellectual stagnation towards an authentic, progressive, and reality-rooted transformation.

Abstrak

Kata kunci:

Pendidikan Islam, Epistemologi, Abid al-Jabiri, Transformasi Intelektual, Kota Padangsidempuan.

Penelitian ini berangkat dari kegelisahan terhadap stagnasi pemikiran pendidikan Islam di Kota Padangsidempuan yang masih didominasi oleh model nalar bayani tekstual, otoritatif, dan repetitif. Di tengah dinamika sosial dan tuntutan zaman yang semakin kompleks, pendidikan Islam lokal justru memperlihatkan resistensi terhadap pendekatan rasional dan kritis, sehingga cenderung terjebak dalam konservatisme epistemologis. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif-kritis dan pisau analisis epistemologi Islam Abid al-Jabiri, penelitian ini menelaah secara mendalam bagaimana peran intelektual dan institusi pendidikan Islam di Padangsidempuan tidak hanya mereproduksi tradisi, tetapi juga secara struktural menghambat lahirnya paradigma pembaruan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nalar bayani masih mendominasi dalam struktur kurikulum, orientasi kelembagaan, dan pola pikir intelektual lokal. Sementara itu, upaya transformasi melalui pendekatan burhani rasional, kontekstual, dan dialogis masih bersifat parsial dan belum menjadi arus utama dalam diskursus pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan reorientasi epistemologis yang berani dan sistemik, dengan memberdayakan intelektual lokal sebagai agen rekonstruksi pemikiran, serta menata ulang kurikulum dan praktik kelembagaan pendidikan berdasarkan integrasi nalar bayani, burhani, dan 'irfani. Dengan demikian, pendidikan Islam di Padangsidempuan dapat bergerak keluar dari stagnasi intelektual menuju transformasi yang otentik, progresif, dan berakar pada realitas.

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INTRODUCTION

The city of Padangsidimpuan is one of the important and influential centers of Islamic civilization in the Southern Tapanuli (Tabagsel) region, North Sumatra (Hardiyanto & Pulungan, 2019). Since the colonial era of the Dutch East Indies, this city has carved a long trail in the history of Islamic intellectualism in the archipelago (F. Nasution, 2022). Such as Sheikh Abdul Hamid, H. Amir Ulu Pungkut, Sheikh Musthafa Husein, Sheikh Zainal Abidin Harahap and other Islamic educators and activists. In addition, the city has long been a center for the consolidation of Islamic thought based on local cultural roots (*dalihan na tolu*), but also open to constructive external influences (Dasopang et al., 2022).

Based on data from the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia and the Central Statistics Agency in 2023, the city of Padangsidimpuan has more than 150 formal and non-formal Islamic educational institutions, including 67 active Islamic boarding schools, 105 madrasas from the RA to MA levels, as well as dozens of taklim councils, tahfiz institutions, and Qur'anic educational institutions. This shows that Padangsidimpuan is not only a center for Islamic education quantitatively, but also has a strong carrying capacity for the birth of a diverse Muslim intellectual community (World, 2025). Although institutionally it seems a lot, and advanced. However, there has not been a movement to shift Islamic thought more progressively. However, some of these educational institutions still tend to be trapped in the dominance of *textualistic and conservative* bayani reasoning (Susanto, 2021).

The religious mindset that only relies on the authority of texts and traditions (customs) in the term Abid al-Jabiri referred to as *bayani reasoning* is still very strong in coloring the Islamic education curriculum at various levels, as well as the way of thinking (paradigm) of educators and students (students). As a result, the educational process tends to emphasize memorization, the reproduction of dogmas, and the preservation of old forms or traditions, rather than fostering the critical, analytical, and contextual reasoning needed to respond to the challenges of the times (Jaelani, 2019).

Meanwhile, *the burhani* (rational-empirical) and *'irfani* (spiritual-intuitive) approaches, which according to Abid al-Jabiri are important in forming holistic and relevant Islamic thought, have not yet found an adequate place in the epistemic structure of Islamic educational institutions in the city of Padangsidimpuan (Hasyim, 2018). On the other hand, Muslim intellectuals, whether from academics, *Islamic* boarding school teachers, or education practitioners, are often trapped in an ambiguous position between preserving tradition and innovating (Idrus, 2019).

Within this framework, this study views that the transformation of Islamic education must be seen not solely as an institutional or curricular process, but as an epistemological effort to overhaul the way of thinking of Muslims, especially in the city of Padangsidimpuan (Tantowi, 2022). The main issue in this research lies in the entrenched epistemological stagnation in the Islamic education system in the city of Padangsidimpuan, which is still dominated by bayani reasoning that is textual, authoritative, and tends to be repetitive. This scholarly approach that relies on the authority of texts and the heritage of the past has formed a culture of thinking that is closed to the dynamics of the present and inhibits the birth of critical (progressive) and transformative thinking. Islamic educational intellectuals play more of a role as a guardian of tradition than a driver of renewal, while Islamic educational institutions do not fully function as a space for dialectics and innovation, but merely as the preservation of religious dogmas.

Therefore, in order to deepen the understanding of this research as a whole, it is important to trace and decipher a number of previous studies that have theoretical and contextual relevance. This step is intended to clarify the position and significance of this research in the existing scientific treasures, as well as identify research *gaps* that are trying to be answered through this study, including: Research conducted by (Kholidin & Kodriyah, 2025).

Research conducted by (Zaenuri et al., 2025), reveals that although the discourse of Islamic education has undergone significant development through integrative and interdisciplinary approaches, at the level of praxis implementation there are still various obstacles, both structurally and culturally. This study emphasizes the importance of systemic and

sustainable efforts to bridge the gap between progressive thinking and the reality of education implementation, including through curriculum reform, capacity building of educators, and institutional cultural transformation in the Islamic education environment.

Finally, research conducted by (Olfah, 2025). The results of this study confirm that since its inception, Islam has made education the main instrument in shaping and building society. This is reflected in the process of establishing Arab society by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, which is evidenced through historical records as an initial form of social transformation based on Islamic values. Along with the spread of Islam globally, education continues to be used as a strategic means to improve human quality and strengthen the social structure of the ummah.

A review of a number of previous studies shows that there is a common orientation in discussing the transformation of Islamic educational thinking. The three previous researches, namely the work of Afif Kholidin et al., Achmad Luthfi Zaenuri et al., and Hamida Olfah in general, highlight the importance of shifting the paradigm of Islamic education from traditional models to a more modern, inclusive, and contextual approach. This similarity is also evident in the emphasis on the role of intellectual actors and educational institutions as important pillars in the reform of Islamic thought, as well as the contribution of Islamic education to social change and the development of the character of the ummah. However, there are a number of significant differences between this study and previous studies. Previous research has tended to be national, macro-scale, and emphasize historical, pedagogical, or sociological approaches, without explicitly using the theoretical framework of Islamic epistemology.

Meanwhile, this study takes a localistic focus on the city of Padangsidempuan, with an epistemological-critical approach through the analysis knife of Abid al-Jabiri, which divides the structure of Islamic reason into the categories of bayani, burhani, and irfani. This focus allows for a sharper reading of the dynamics of local Islamic thought, as well as opening up a space for criticism of epistemological stagnation in the world of Islamic education which is still dominated by textualistic and conservative bayani reasoning. The novelty offered by this research lies in the use of Abid al-Jabiri's epistemological framework directly to analyze the interaction between Muslim intellectuals and Islamic educational institutions in the local context of Padangsidempuan, a region that has long historical roots in Islamic science, but has not been widely worked on in contemporary academic studies.

Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative-critical approach with a type of field research combined with conceptual analysis (Herlina et al., n.d). This approach was chosen because it is in line with the purpose of the research to explore in depth the epistemological construction of Islamic educational thought in the city of Padangsidempuan, as well as analyze how the structure of Islamic reason, especially *bayani*, *burhani*, and *'irfani* reasoning according to Abid al-Jabiri is reflected in the institutional practices and intellectual orientation of local Muslim figures. This research is descriptive-analytical and exploratory, with the main focus on a critical reading of the way knowledge works in shaping Islamic mindsets and the direction of Islamic education transformation at the regional level of Padangsidempuan City (Elvina & Mansur, 2025).

The data collection process was carried out in the period between March and July 2025, with research locations in various Islamic educational institutions in Padangsidempuan City, such as madrasas, Islamic boarding schools, and Islamic universities (Hafizallah & Wafa, 2019). Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with academics, educators, education activists, religious leaders, and others who are considered to have authority or direct involvement in the discourse of Islamic education. In addition, participatory observation was also carried out on the learning process, the dynamics of Islamic discourse, and institutional practices within the institution. Secondary data sources come from various relevant scientific literature, such as books, journal articles, documents, institutional archives, and the works of Abid al-Jabiri as the main reference in building an epistemological analysis framework (Juliansyahzen, 2019).

In the data analysis, thematic analysis methods combined with critical hermeneutics are used to uncover the dominant patterns in local Islamic education reasoning. The analysis procedure includes data reduction, categorization of themes based on epistemological reasoning models (bayani, burhani, irfani), and drawing conclusions that relate empirical data to theoretical

constructions (Ali, 2021). To ensure the validity of the data, triangulation of sources and methods, validation to key informants, and cross-check between field findings and theoretical frameworks are carried out. The validity of the findings is also strengthened through discussions with experts, peer review, and continuous reflection on the socio-scientific context behind this study. With this approach, the research is expected to produce comprehensive, contextual, and critical findings, in reading the direction of the transformation of Islamic educational thinking in the city of Padangsidempuan (Qamar & Rezah, 2020).

RESULTS OF RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

Result

Transformation of Epistemological Thought: The Relevance of Abid al-Jabiri's Ideas in the Dynamics of Islamic Education in the City of Padangsidempuan.

Abid al-Jabiri (Baharun & Alawiyah, 2018), a contemporary Islamic studies *thinker* from Morocco, made a significant contribution to the discourse of Islamic epistemology through his monumental work *Takwīn al-'Aql al-'Arabī* (The Formation of Arabic Reason) (Fariq, 2022). In this work, al-Jabiri analyzes the roots of the formation of reason and knowledge systems in the classical Islamic tradition, while criticizing the dominance of ways of thinking that according to him tend to be reproductive, uncritical, and lose innovative power (Nadhiroh, 2016).

Bayani *reasoning* is rooted in textual authority and deductive-analogue reasoning (*qiyās*), which developed in classical Islamic sciences such as jurisprudence, tafsir, and kalam. He emphasizes the continuity of tradition and normativity, but is often conservative and resistive to social change. *Irfani reason*, which is derived from spiritual experience and inner intuition, develops in the tradition of Sufism and the philosophy of enlightenment, with symbolic and esoteric undertones. The *burhani reason* is a rational-critical approach based on logic, empirical analysis, and scientific proof, as developed by figures such as Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd. Al-Jabiri considers that Muslims need to carry out *tajdīd al-'aql al-'Arabī* (renewal of Arabic reason) by reviving *burhani reason* as the foundation of contextual, scientific, and solutive thinking (Hafizallah & Wafa, 2019). Thus, the table below presents the epistemological mapping, local conditions, and the direction of the transformation in question, as follows:

Table 1.
Epistemological Mapping → Local Conditions → Directions of Transformation

Dimension	Al-Jābirī's position	Dominant Conditions of Padangsidempuan (conceptual findings)	Transformation Direction (Target)	Academic Impact
Reasoning Basis	Bayānī (textual-authoritative) needs to be repositioned	Still dominant in curriculum, pedagogy, and scientific authority	Integrasi Bayānī-Burhānī-'Irfānī	Identity stability, yet repetitive & defensive
	Burhānī (rational-demonstrative) strengthened	Partial emergence (study forums, lecturer research)	Institutionalization of Burhānī reasoning across educational institutions	Mobilizing criticism & arguments
	'Irfānī (spiritual-intuitive) is proportionally integrated.	Present in the tarekat/dhikr community, not yet academic	Context-based ethical-spiritual modules	Strengthening of ethics and inner awareness
Curriculum	Reconstruction of knowledge structures	Turāt conservation focus, slightly interdisciplinary	Integrative curriculum	Lack of response to

				(religion–science–social)	contemporary issues
Pedagogical	Dialogis-kritis, inquiry	Lectures and memorization dominant	and	Problem-based & evidence-based	Low argument skills
Research & Discourse	Historical-contextual, cross-science	Normative/deskriptif research dominates		Thematic research: justice, gender, ecology, local economy	Limited policy impact
Institutional Actor	Epistemology → the basis of vision	Complementary epistemology, not foundations	not	Centre for Local Epistemological Studies	Sporadic Novasi
	Intellectuals = producers of ideas	The role of the teacher > the role of the producer		Capacity building program	Replication of old discourse

Data source: Researcher's interpretation of Abid al-Jabiri's epistemological mapping

This epistemological framework is very relevant to read the dynamics of Islamic education in the city of Padangsidempuan, a city that has historically been known as the center of Islamic science in the Southern Tapanuli region (TABAGSEL). The city's scientific tradition is firmly rooted in the education system of Islamic boarding schools, suraus, and recitation forums, which emphasize memorization of texts, obedience to the authority of teachers, and the study of the yellow book (*kutub al-turāt*). This character is in harmony with the dominance of *bayani reason* as criticized by al-Jabiri. Islamic education in the early days was more oriented towards the transmission of knowledge, not the transformation of thought (Khairina, 2016).

Along with the growth of Islamic educational institutions in the city of Padangsidempuan, such as Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, Islamic Boarding School/Madrasah Diniyah, Madrasah Aliyah/MAN, Islamic Universities/Universities. Some of these educational institutions have experienced a shift in the scientific paradigm. For example, Islamic universities, this is a catalyst in shifting the approach to education from the original dogmatic to more dialogical and critical. As mentioned by an academic, (Mr. Lubis, 2025) that "the bayani approach remains important as a moral foundation, but it is not enough to answer the complexity of the problems that occur in this contemporary era. Therefore, the incorporation of *the bayani, burhani, and irfani* approaches must be developed as part of a more comprehensive epistemological strategy and sustainable".



Figure 1. Lecturer teaching Islamic educational thinking at UIN Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidempuan

The changes that have occurred are evident in the development of the curriculum and teaching methodology at Padangsidempuan City College. Some courses such as *Contemporary Islamic Thought, Qur'an Hermeneutics, Philosophy of Islamic Education* and others, are designed with

a multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, integrative-interconnective and dialogical approach, which combines textual reading, rational analysis, and spiritual reflection in depth and thoroughly. The research of students and lecturers also raised actual issues such as Islamic education in the digital era, reconstruction of Islamic jurisprudence, Masail Fiqhiyah to diversity-based scientific ethics in a universal context. Al-Jabiri's ideas are used as a knife of analysis or a relevant approach in reading the dynamics of Islamic science that are directly confronted with modern social reality (Ridwan, 2016).

Basically, this transformation process does not go without obstacles. The resistance of some *teachers*, educators, and Islamic education activists who still adhere to the bayani approach often arises in the form of concerns about rational-critical approaches that are considered to erode the authority of the texts and traditions that have been accommodated. The epistemological tension between *bayani and burhani reasoning* has become a real dynamic in the spaces of study forums, curricula, and other religious discussion forums. However, as stated by Mrs. Hasibuan, "We do not erase traditions, but reread them. We continue to teach the yellow book, but also invite students to interpret it according to today's social context."

The epistemological discourse of al-Jabiri Islamic education also expanded in scientific forums in the city of Padangsidempuan. Academic seminars, book reviews, cross-campus discussions, and student studies become a meeting space between tradition and renewal (Bahri, 2015). These forums present scholars, academics, and students in an intellectual dialectic that retests the construction of Islamic reason that develops in the local community. This epistemological transformation is essentially a collective process that combines traditional heritage with the demands of the times (Muslih et al., 2021).

DISCUSSION

Socio-Intellectual Community of Padangsidempuan City.

In the early days, Islamic education in Padangsidempuan City developed in the form of a non-formal system based on mosques and suraus, where the relationship between teachers and students was personal and loaded with spiritual values, sincerity, and respect for knowledge. The scholars teach the yellow book, the Qur'an, jurisprudence, monotheism, and Sufism, which substantively form the religious and intellectual character of the people of Padangsidempuan City (Lazuardi & Anto, 2024). After independence, Islamic education in Padangsidempuan experienced significant institutional strengthening. Formal institutions such as Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, Tsanawiyah, and Aliyah, Higher Education experienced rapid development, driven by the contributions of Islamic organizations such as Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah, Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and others. In addition, non-formal education such as TPA, Madrasah Diniyah, and majelis taklim still exist and function as a space for community Islamic literacy at the grassroots level (Rahman et al., 2025).

In addition, Muslim scholars, (H. S. M. Harahap et al., 2022) are academics, lecturers, and researchers from Islamic universities who promote a rational-critical approach to understanding Islamic teachings. Like UIN Syahada is the center of the group's growth. According to Harahap, in an interview on July 15, 2025: "*In Padangsidempuan, the transformation of Islamic thought is greatly influenced by the intellectual atmosphere of the campus. Here, we are not only producing teachers and dai, but also thinkers who are critical of the dogmatic structure of Islamic knowledge.*" These scholars encouraged the development of a curriculum that integrated bayani, burhani, and 'irfani reasoning as initiated by Abid al-Jabiri, which further strengthened the epistemological tradition of Islam at the academic level.

Meanwhile, Islamic education activists, namely community leaders engaged in the establishment of Islamic schools, teacher training, and community-based religious campaigns. As stated by Nasution, one of the Islamic education figures: "*We started from the women's taklim assembly, then developed into a landfill, then a private madrasah. The spirit is so that children not only understand religion, but also think openly and love science.*" These activists played a central role in bringing Islamic values into the space of social praxis, as well as bridging the gap between formal education and the needs of the lower classes.

The dynamics of Islamic thought in the city of Padangsidempuan cannot be separated from the epistemological tension between textual bayani reasoning and critical-rational Burhani reasoning, as well as the need to develop a contextual integrative approach. Local traditions such as *dalihan na tolu*, respect for ulama, and the value of mutual cooperation give a distinctive color to the way people think and religious. Thus, Padangsidempuan is not only geographically important as a center of Islamic education, but also as a dynamic epistemological dialectic space. This is because this city represents the meeting between classical scientific heritage, the challenges of modernity, and the spirit of Islamic intellectual transformation that continues to move with the times (Triyono, 2019).

Epistemological Transformation: From Traditional Transmission to a Critical-Contextual Approach.

Epistemological transformation in Islamic education in Padangsidempuan City is a dynamic process that does not take place in a vacuum, but is closely intertwined with the local social, cultural, and scientific context that continues to develop (Bindaniji & Fuadi, 2022). Since the 19th century, Padangsidempuan has been known as one of the centers of Islamic education in the South Tapanuli area, with scientific traditions rooted in surau institutions, Islamic boarding schools, and recitations spread across various areas of Padangsidempuan City. This model of knowledge transmission relies on memorization methods, scientific sanad, and teaching the yellow book intensively (*turast*) through *the bayani approach*, which is a textual and normative approach that emphasizes the authority of the teacher and loyalty to the classical heritage (*turats*) (Muqoyyidin & Widiyaningsih, 2021).

This *bayani* approach has the advantage of shaping the moral and spiritual character of the community, while maintaining the continuity of a strong Islamic identity. Values such as *ta'dzim*, *sincerity*, and *adab thalabul 'ilm* are deeply instilled in the relationship between students and teachers. However, in the face of the dynamics of the times marked by the globalization of information, the crisis of morality, and the demand for the relevance of science to social reality, this approach is beginning to show its limitations. They tend to be defensive to criticism and closed to rational-contextual discourses, especially among the younger generation who are more open to reflective and multidisciplinary thinking methods (Syarif, 2022).

It can be understood that the epistemological transformation in Islamic education, particularly in Islamic studies, reflects a shift from a transmissive-traditional learning model that emphasizes memorization, repetition, and textual authority to a critical-contextual approach that is more dialogical, reflective, participatory, and relevant to contemporary reality. Traditional approaches have the power to maintain the originality and continuity of Islamic scientific heritage, but often limit the space for students to develop critical, creative, and contextual thinking skills in the face of the challenges of the changing times. Instead, the critical-contextual approach seeks to liberate learning from mere normative repetition, towards deep understanding, contextual interpretation, and active engagement with actual social, cultural, and spiritual issues.

Epistemological Analysis of the Transformation of Islamic Education in Padangsidempuan City.

The transformation of Islamic education in Padangsidempuan City shows a significant epistemological shift, from traditional or local transmission models that emphasize memorization methods, adherence to classical scientific authority, and repetition of *turast* texts, to a more rational, contextual, and reflective educational approach according to the development of learning media (A'la & Makhshun, 2022). Since the beginning, the Islamic scientific tradition has been dominated by *bayani reasoning*, as categorized by Abid al-Jabiri (Syarifuddin, 2017).

However, in the epistemological context, the dominance of *bayani* reason also brings significant consequences in the form of a tendency to reproduce knowledge that is normative and less open to critical-rational reinterpretation. This has led to limited space for dialogue with the challenges of education in the current era of digitalization, which increasingly demands a more rational, systematic, contextual, and multidisciplinary approach (Alfi et al., 2023). Ideally, *bayani*

reasoning has become an important foundation in shaping the Islamic scientific identity of the Padangsidempuan community (Wahyu & Amril, 2025).

Islamic educational institutions, such as Islamic Boarding Schools, Suraus, Mosques and scientific recitation forums have functioned as a medium in transmitting Islamic sciences for generations in the city of Padangsidempuan. The institution is not only a place of learning, but also a center for the formation of the religious character of the community, through an educational process that emphasizes the emotional closeness between teachers and students, as well as the internalization of the values of spirituality and morality. In an epistemological framework, this educational model prioritizes the *bayani approach*, namely a teaching method based on memorization of texts, the authority of teachers, and the interpretation of classical books (*kutub al-turats*) (Furqan, 2019).

Meanwhile, Abid al-Jabiri called bayani reasoning a form of epistemology that has the power to maintain the continuity of tradition, especially through an emphasis on textual authority, deductive methods, and loyalty to classical scientific heritage (*turāt*) (Mukhlis, 2017). Because it is oriented towards the preservation of norms and texts, *bayani reasoning* often does not provide enough space for the critical reasoning, reinterpretation, and interdisciplinary dialogue needed in the face of new social problems. Therefore, al-Jabiri emphasizes the need for epistemological reconstruction through the reactualization of *burhani reason* as an effort to encourage rational, contextual, and solutive reading of texts (Wati et al., 2022).

In responding to the use of this approach, Muslim academics and scholars in Padangsidempuan City have shown a more integrative-interconnective epistemological tendency by striving for a balance between *bayani*, *burhani*, and *irfani* reasoning in examining teaching, devotion, and research practices at each level of Islamic educational institutions. This approach not only reflects openness to various scientific traditions, but also reflects an awareness of the importance of integration between texts, ratios, and spiritual experiences in forming a complete and rational Islamic thought. In the context of learning, this integration is seen in the development of a curriculum that combines classical-scientific studies and Sufistic interpretations of religious values. Meanwhile, in the field of research, lecturers and students have explored contemporary research themes or titles with a methodological foundation that is not only rational-analytical (*burhani*), but also considers normative (*bayani*) and ethical-spiritual (*irfani*) dimensions. The awareness of the need for a balanced epistemological approach shows that the transformation of Islamic education in Padangsidempuan City is moving in a more holistic and relevant direction in answering the needs of the times (Pratama, 2022).

In practice, resistance appears in objections to the strengthening of the curriculum of philosophy, hermeneutics, and interdisciplinary studies, as well as criticism of academics who are considered too liberal. However, this dynamic affirms that epistemological transformation is not a linear and sterile process, but a dialectic between inheritance and renewal. These tensions should be read not as mere obstacles, but as a critical filtering mechanism that can ultimately strengthen the foundation for the renewal of Islamic thought in a more careful and balanced manner (Muhammad, 2024).

The reactualization of classical scientific heritage through a rational approach allows for a more contextual reinterpretation of Islamic texts without negating the authority of tradition. Within this framework, the *burhānī* approach initiated by Abid al-Jābirī provided a methodological basis for Muslim scholars in the city of Padangsidempuan to re-read the *turāt* critically and productively. Reactualization efforts do not only touch the renewal of the substance of teaching, but also change the perspective of the relationship between text, reason, and social reality. Through rational-dialogical reasoning, the treasures of *fiqh*, interpretation, and faith can be reviewed to be in harmony with the dynamics of the times ranging from issues of social justice, education, and gender to the environment. Thus, tradition does not appear as a historical burden, but as a source of inspiration that is constantly updated according to the needs of contemporary Muslims (M. Nasution, 2021).

Al-Jābirī's epistemological framework that distinguishes the reasoning of *bayānī*, *'irfānī*, and *burhānī* provides a tool to map the sources of stagnation in the Islamic scientific tradition as well as formulate rational, critical, and contextual exit strategies. The dominance of *bayānī*-*'irfānī*

in the trajectory of history often closes the space for innovation, making the production of knowledge more repetitive, apologetic, and less responsive to social change. As an antithesis, al-Jābirī proposes the rehabilitation of burhānī reason, demonstrative reason, which relies on logic, empirical evidence, and the relationship with reality to be the foundation of epistemological renewal. The application of this framework to Islamic education in Padangsidempuan City encourages a rearrangement of curriculum, pedagogical strategies, and intellectual orientation from mere textual transmission to reflective, interdisciplinary, and transformative scientific praxis; not only maintaining the continuity of traditions, but also producing new knowledge that is relevant to the needs of contemporary people (Salim & Sari, 2023).

The epistemological analysis of Islamic thought in Padangsidempuan therefore concludes that transformation has not taken the form of a paradigm change, but is only limited to the initiation of discourse that needs to continue to be driven through the active role of intellectuals, educational institutions, and the scientific community. The dominant model of reason in the local Islamic education system still reflects the Bayānī reasoning, a textual-scriptural mindset based on *turāt authority*—which is reflected in memorization-oriented learning, emphasis on scholarly authority, and narrow space for critical dialogue and philosophical reasoning. This tradition is inherited through the ecosystem of Islamic boarding schools, madrasas, and some religious universities that tend to focus the truth on texts without adequate contextual and rational-analytical approaches. As a result, while the continuity of classical values is maintained, responses to contemporary challenges are often limited. Within the framework of al-Jābirī, this dominance of bayānī signifies an epistemological stagnation that needs to be reconstructed through the integration of burhānī (rational-demonstrative) and 'irfānī (spiritual-intuition) proportionally and contextually (Syahid, 2021).

As a link between text and context, intellectuals are supposed to articulate the needs of the times without relinquishing the legitimacy of tradition. However, in Padangsidempuan, most intellectual practices still show the distance between symbolic authority and transformative work. Methodological conservatism maintains a repetitive and defensive mindset that makes discourse innovation stall, even though social-intellectual demands are increasingly urgent. Read through the lens of al-Jābirī, this problem is rooted in the deficit of epistemological consciousness: the failure to balance bayānī (textual) reason with burhānī (rational-demonstrative) and 'irfānī (spiritual-intuitive). Therefore, the repositioning of the role of intellectuals is inevitable: from messengers of knowledge to producers of ideas who reinterpret *turāt* methodologically-historically, contextualize them with contemporary problems, and lead the renewal of curriculum and pedagogy in Islamic educational institutions (Aspandi, 2017).

The institutional structure of Islamic education in Padangsidempuan has basically been formalized and institutionalized well. However, epistemologically, many institutions are still dominated by normative-doctrinal teaching paradigms that are oriented towards knowledge transmission rather than critical transformation. The current curriculum generally focuses on the preservation of classical religious materials, with methodological updates, integration of knowledge, and limited reading of social reality. As a result, epistemic orientations tend to be conservative and leave little room for the growth of burhānī reasoning and interdisciplinary reading. In Abid al-Jābirī's perspective, this condition reflects the dominance of closed and less reflective structures of reason towards social dynamics. Therefore, Islamic educational institutions in Padangsidempuan need to adopt a more open, critical, and interconnected epistemological approach in order to build a system that gives birth to relevant and transformative Islamic thinking (Samsudin, 2019)

Abid al-Jābirī's epistemological criticism of classical Arab-Islamic reason is relevant to reading the condition of Islamic education in Padangsidempuan. The dominance of static and textual bayānī reasoning can be seen in learning methods, curriculum design, and the relationship of scientific authority. The stagnation that occurs is not only due to the absence of methodological innovation, but also the dependence on the legitimacy of the past without contextualization and reinterpretation of the challenges of the times. On the other hand, there is room for progress through the initiatives of some academics and institutions that have begun to open up opportunities for burhānī reasoning and critical reflection on tradition (Siregar, 2017).

The transformation of Islamic education in the city of Padangsidempuan requires a shift in epistemological orientation, from the dominance of textual-authoritative bayānī reasoning to rational, critical, and argumentative burhānī reasoning. In the framework of Abid al-Jābirī, this transition is not a replacement of tradition, but rather a refinement of Islamic reason through a more contextual and historical approach. Bayānī does provide identity stability, but it is insufficient to answer the complexity of the challenges of the times. Therefore, the direction of renewal needs to rest on burhānī based on systematic rationality, inter-scientific dialogue, and a reading of empirical reality. In this way, Islamic values can be integrated with the demands of modern science, so that education does not stop at normative-doctrinal, but results in functional-transformational praxis (Zulkarnaen & Azis, 2024).

The epistemological transformation strategy of Islamic educational institutions in Padangsidempuan needs to start from improving the foundation of the curriculum, pedagogical approach, and institutional orientation. The curriculum must be developed integratively, synergizing religious sciences and contemporary sciences within the framework of a dynamic Islamic epistemology. The learning approach needs to shift from a transmission model to a dialogical-critical model that fosters students' reasoning and reflexivity. At the same time, Islamic epistemology must be positioned as the foundation of an institutional vision, not just a complement. In line with the spirit of Abid al-Jābirī, this reconstruction requires the courage to revise the static structure of thinking and to increase the capacity of teachers, lecturers, and managers as agents of intellectual change, not just repeaters of tradition. Thus, transformation will give birth to a generation of learners who are religious, open-minded, critical, and responsible for social change (Anisa, 2025).

Based on the researcher's analysis, there are a number of theoretical and practical recommendations to strengthen the direction of Islamic education reform in Padangsidempuan. In the theoretical realm, it is necessary to build an epistemological paradigm that links bayānī-burhānī-'irfānī in the local context, as outlined by Abid al-Jābirī, this step requires a review of the way of thinking, scientific approaches, and knowledge structures in Islamic education. In the practical realm, priority agendas include curriculum reform based on knowledge integration, methodological training for educators, institutional capacity building, and the establishment of local Islamic epistemology study centers. At the same time, collaboration between educational institutions, local governments, and civil society needs to be strengthened to create an ecosystem that is supportive of renewal. If carried out consistently and sustainably, these measures not only help to get out of epistemological stagnation, but also place Islamic education in Padangsidempuan as a model of transformation rooted in tradition as well as open to modernity.

CONCLUSION

The transformation of Islamic educational thinking in Padangsidempuan City reflects a significant dynamic between traditional scientific heritage and the demands of modern times. The city has strong Islamic intellectual historical roots, as reflected in the development of Islamic madrasas, Islamic boarding schools, and colleges. Along with the times, the educational approach that was originally textual and doctrinal began to shift towards a more critical, contextual, and rational approach. This shift shows the existence of a collective consciousness to reform the Islamic education system so that it not only functions as a preservation of knowledge (taqlid), but is also able to respond to contemporary social and intellectual challenges in a relevant and adaptive manner.

In Abid al-Jabiri's epistemological perspective, this transformation can be understood as a process of *deconstruction of bayani* (textual-authoritative) reasoning towards the integration between *burhani* (rational-analytical) and *'irfani* (spiritual-contextual) reason. Islamic education in Padangsidempuan shows a tendency to go beyond the learning model that merely transmits knowledge, towards the development of critical, emancipatory, and reflective understanding. In this context, the role of Muslim intellectuals has become very strategic as a driving force for educational institutions as well as agents of social change. They encourage the emergence of new discourses that demand open-mindedness, an inclusive approach, and the relevance between Islamic education and the reality of people's lives.

The transformation of Islamic education in the city of Padangsidempuan not only reflects the development of religious institutions structurally, but also marks a paradigm shift in the thinking of local Muslims. Abid al-Jabiri's epistemological analysis shows that educational reform is not enough only in technical and curricular aspects, but must also touch the epistemic dimension and structure of religious reason. In the future, the continuity between traditional values and critical-contextual approaches needs to be maintained and developed, so that Islamic education remains a transformative intellectual force in shaping a knowledgeable, empowered, and ethical society.

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