

# Epistemology and Hermeneutics of Islamic Religious Education in Madrasahs and Islamic Boarding Schools: Philosophical Reflections on the Integration of Faith, Reason, and Tradition

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## Abstract

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### Keywords:

Islamic Education, Madrasahs, Islamic Boarding School, Integration.

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Islamic Religious Education in madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools is a dialectical space between classical scientific traditions and the challenges of modernity. Amid the flow of globalization and the secularization of knowledge, there is a need to reinterpret the epistemological and hermeneutical foundations of Islamic education to remain relevant. The imbalance between normative teaching and practical reality necessitates a philosophical approach that harmoniously integrates faith, reason, and traditional heritage. This study aims to analyze in depth the epistemological structure and hermeneutic approach in PAI implemented in madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools, and to examine how both can strengthen the integration of Islamic values in a contemporary context. The method is a qualitative approach, including literature reviews and semi-structured interviews with educators in madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools with backgrounds in classical and contemporary Islamic thought. The study's results show that the epistemology of Islamic education in both institutions remains predominantly textual-normative. Still, there is a new tendency towards a more reflective, contextual understanding through hermeneutic readings of religious texts. Pesantren tend to be strong in the transmission of tradition, while madrasahs are more open to integrating modern rationality into their curriculum. The contribution of this article is to offer an integrative model between the approaches of faith (revelation), reason (rationality), and tradition (classical heritage), so that it can enrich the discourse of Islamic educational philosophy and open up space for a more dialogical, critical, and sustainable PAI curriculum renewal.

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## Abstrak

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### Kata kunci:

Pendidikan Islam, Madrasah, Pesantren, Integrasi

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Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) di madrasah dan pesantren merupakan ruang dialektika antara tradisi keilmuan klasik dengan tantangan modernitas. Di tengah arus globalisasi dan sekularisasi pengetahuan, muncul kebutuhan untuk menafsirkan kembali fondasi epistemologis dan hermeneutika pendidikan Islam agar tetap relevan. Ketimpangan antara pengajaran normatif dan realitas praksis menjadi alasan perlunya pendekatan filosofis yang mengintegrasikan iman, akal, dan warisan tradisi secara harmonis. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis secara mendalam struktur epistemologi dan pendekatan hermeneutik dalam PAI yang dijalankan di madrasah dan pesantren, serta bagaimana keduanya dapat memperkuat integrasi nilai keislaman dalam konteks kontemporer. Metode yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kualitatif dengan studi pustaka dan wawancara semi-terstruktur terhadap para pendidik di madrasah dan pesantren yang memiliki latar belakang pemikiran Islam klasik dan kontemporer. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa epistemologi pendidikan Islam di kedua lembaga tersebut masih dominan bersifat tekstual-normatif, namun terdapat kecenderungan baru ke arah pemahaman yang lebih reflektif dan kontekstual melalui pembacaan hermeneutik terhadap teks-teks keagamaan. Pesantren cenderung kuat dalam aspek transmisi tradisi, sementara madrasah lebih terbuka pada integrasi rasionalitas modern dalam kurikulumnya. Kontribusi artikel ini adalah menawarkan model integratif antara pendekatan iman (wahyu), akal (rasionalitas), dan tradisi (warisan klasik), sehingga dapat memperkaya diskursus filsafat pendidikan Islam dan membuka ruang bagi

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## INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) is a strategic space in shaping the mindset, spirituality, and Islamic identity of Indonesian Muslims (Fahriany & Wahyunengsih, 2025; Fatah et al., 2025; A. A. M. R & Thohir, 2024; A. H. A. R & Kamil, 2025). Amidst globalization, digitalization, and the development of modern rationality, Islamic educational institutions face increasingly complex epistemological challenges, particularly in maintaining a balance between the authority of revelation, the use of reason, and the preservation of Islamic scholarly traditions (Sabic-El-Rayess, 2020). This phenomenon is evident in the continued dominance of textual-normative learning approaches, resulting in students often experiencing a gap between their understanding of religion and contemporary social realities (Humaida et al., 2026; Ningsih et al., 2025; Pambayun et al., 2025; Wulandari et al., 2025). On the other hand, madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools hold a crucial position as they serve as the primary institutions for the transmission of Islamic knowledge and the formation of the character of the next generation of Muslims. Therefore, studies on the epistemology and hermeneutics of PAI are crucial to publish, as they concern the relevance of Islamic education in responding to modern social, cultural, and intellectual changes.

Several previous studies have addressed Islamic education from various philosophical and pedagogical perspectives. Abdullah highlighted Islamic Religious Education based on religious intersubjectivity from the perspective of phenomenology and philosophy of religion (Abdullah, 2022), while Rosyidah et al. examined Hasan Hanafi's hermeneutics of liberation in the study of religious texts in Islamic boarding schools (Rosyidah et al., 2025). Bosra and Umiarso examined theological moderation in Islamic boarding schools through a prophetic social phenomenological approach (Bosra & Umiarso, 2020), while Fauzi and Hamami discussed Fethullah Gülen's epistemology of Islamic education in the context of integrated Islamic education (Fauzi & Hamami, 2022). Other studies also examine the integration of religion and science in Islamic education and the theoretical implications of Islamic education in the disruptive era. However, these studies still tend to discuss epistemology, hermeneutics, or integration of sciences partially and have not specifically examined the relationship between epistemology and hermeneutics of Islamic Religious Education in the context of madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools in an integrative manner (Azni et al., 2025; Hasibuan et al., 2026; Sholihah et al., 2026). Furthermore, there is still limited research that positions faith, reason, and tradition as the three main elements in philosophical reflection on Islamic education. Thus, there is an academic space that has not been widely explored regarding how these two institutions build knowledge structures, text

interpretation practices, and the integration of Islamic values in facing contemporary challenges.

Based on these gaps in research, this study aims to analyze and reflect on the epistemological foundations and hermeneutical practices of Islamic Religious Education in madrasas and Islamic boarding schools through an integrative philosophical approach (Hakim et al., 2024; Masuwd et al., 2025; Miftahuddin et al., 2024). This research specifically focuses on how faith, reason, and tradition are integrated into learning design, the practice of interpreting religious texts, and the paradigm of Islamic education in both institutions. Unlike previous studies that have focused more on normative or theological aspects, this article seeks to present a synthesis of epistemological and hermeneutical dimensions as a reflective framework for understanding the transformation of contemporary Islamic education. Thus, this research is expected to complement the shortcomings of previous studies while strengthening the discourse on Islamic educational philosophy that is more contextual, dialogical, and transformative.

Through this research, the author aims to test that Islamic education in madrasas and Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) does not stand on a dichotomy between tradition and modernity, but rather possesses integrative potential capable of uniting revelation, rationality, and traditional experience within a unified educational paradigm. This research also examines that the practice of hermeneutics in the study of religious texts does not merely take place in the form of literal interpretation, but develops into a contextual process of meaning influenced by social, cultural, and pedagogical dynamics. Thus, the main argument of this article is that strengthening the epistemology and hermeneutics of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) can serve as the basis for reconstructing Islamic education that is more relevant to current developments without losing the spiritual roots and traditions of classical Islamic scholarship.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a hermeneutic interpretive paradigm, which aims to understand the deep meaning of the practice of Islamic religious education (PAI) in the context of madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools. This approach was chosen because it is in accordance with the objectives of the study which focuses on exploring the epistemological conception and hermeneutic praxis in the Islamic education system. (Akbar, 2021). The interpretive paradigm allows researchers to capture the philosophical dimensions that live in the experiences, traditions, and knowledge structures that develop in the two Islamic educational institutions. By considering the dimensions of meaning and understanding that are contextual, this study does not intend to produce generalizations, but rather to deepen complex and dynamic realities.

This research uses a descriptive qualitative study that uses a hermeneutic phenomenological strategy that prioritizes the meaning of symbols, narratives, and thought structures that underlie the practice of Islamic religious education. (Zuhdiyah et al., 2024). Data collection methods consist of literature studies and in-depth interviews with several important informants. In addition, participatory observation

was carried out limitedly on learning activities, book study, and scientific discussions in madrasah and pesantren environments to capture educational practices naturally. Institutional documents such as syllabi, learning modules, and textbooks were also reviewed as secondary data to complement information from interviews and observations.

The main focus of this research is to examine how the epistemological foundations and hermeneutical principles are implemented in curriculum design, pedagogical approaches, and learning practices in madrasahs and pesantren. This research also pays attention to the intersubjective dimension in the relationship between teachers and students, as well as how the process of interpreting religious texts takes place in the dynamics of teaching. In the context of epistemology, attention is paid to the ways in which institutions define the sources and validity of religious knowledge; while in the context of hermeneutics, the focus is directed at the method of interpreting texts, the context of meaning, and the dialogue between tradition and contemporary challenges. (Ucan, 2019). This research was conducted in depth in order to describe the face of Islamic education as an ecosystem that not only contains the transfer of knowledge, but also the formation of ways of thinking and ways of life.

Content analysis and thematic interpretation were used to analyze the collected data. This method is adapted to the principles of philosophical hermeneutics. The analysis was carried out in several stages: first, data categorization based on major themes such as sources of knowledge, methods of interpretation, and value integration; second, data interpretation by looking at the relationship between themes and their social context; third, critical reflection on the results of the interpretation to gain a deeper understanding. It is hoped that through this approach, the research can contribute theoretically to the development of Islamic educational philosophy, especially in strengthening the epistemology and meaning of hermeneutics in the curriculum and pedagogy of Islamic Education in madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools. Furthermore, this research is expected to be a practical contribution in encouraging the transformation of Islamic education that is rooted in faith and tradition, but also open to reason and the dynamics of the times.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### RESULT

#### *Epistemological Structure of Islamic Education in the Context of Madrasahs and Islamic Boarding Schools*

The epistemology of Islamic religious education (PAI) in madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools is built on a framework that combines revelation, reason, and human experience as sources of knowledge that complement each other. In the Islamic treasury, this model is known as integrative epistemology, as developed by al-Farabi and al-Ghazali. Al-Farabi in *Al-'Aql* emphasized that true knowledge is obtained through the unity of active reason and the light of prophecy, while al-Ghazali in *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* emphasized the role of intuition and purification of the soul as the gateway to true knowledge. Madrasahs reflect a more rational and systematic epistemological approach, by compiling an PAI curriculum based on the integration of religious and general knowledge that is in accordance with the national education framework. (Riyawi & Febriansyah, 2023). In contrast, pesantren maintain an epistemic structure based on the transmission of knowledge (sanad) and mastery of classical texts through methods such as *bandongan*, *sorogan*, and *halaqah*. This structure is based on the classical Islamic epistemological tradition, as compiled by Ibn Khaldun in the

Muqaddimah, where knowledge is acquired through social processes, interactions, and living scientific traditions.

In its implementation, according to Zeinab, madrasas prioritize a cognitive and formal pedagogical approach, where religious knowledge is taught systematically through syllabuses, evaluations and competency-based assessments.(Malizal, 2025). This approach reflects the modern ta'lim model which is epistemologically similar to Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas' idea of ta'dīb, but in practice it is often trapped in the mere transfer of knowledge without forming philosophical awareness or spiritual depth of the students. Meanwhile, Islamic boarding schools apply an existential approach, where the process of seeking knowledge is not limited to activities in the classroom, but is also established through ethical and spiritual relationships between the kiai and the santri..In this context, Islamic manners and habits of life become a unique epistemological medium. This concept is in accordance with the thoughts of al-Attas, who stated that true knowledge must be accompanied by manners so that it bears wisdom and does not lead astray.(Guessoum & Bigliardi, 2023). Therefore, the epistemological structure of Islamic boarding schools is not only oriented towards mastering material, but also towards personality transformation and the formation of sustainable spiritual character.

However, the epistemological dynamics in both institutions are not static, showing a response to the challenges of the times and the demands of reconstructing science in a contemporary context. Madrasahs began to develop a critical approach to religious texts using thematic (maudhū'i), contextual, and even interdisciplinary approaches. According to AbdRozaq, this is in line with Fazlur Rahman's idea of double movement, namely an interpretation method that moves from the context of the past to the present and back again, so that understanding of the text is inseparable from modern social reality.(Rozaq, 2023). Field findings show an epistemic transformation in modern Islamic boarding schools that are beginning to open themselves to academic approaches and the philosophy of science, as well as in madrasas that are beginning to adopt critical and reflective ways of thinking in understanding religious texts. In several leading madrasas, Islamic Religious Education teaching is beginning to be complemented by interdisciplinary dialogue between the interpretation of the Qur'an and contemporary issues such as bioethics, ecology, and digital technology. Meanwhile, in a number of Islamic boarding schools, studies of turats are beginning to be combined with historical analysis methods and modern epistemological discourses, while still maintaining the authenticity of their traditional methodology. This fact shows that the epistemological structure of Islamic Religious Education in Indonesia is undergoing an interesting synthesis process: between maintaining the heritage of classical Islamic knowledge and creative responses to the demands of the times.(Ibrahim, 2022). This is an important opportunity to reconstruct the paradigm of Islamic education that is more contextual, transformative, and philosophical.

#### ***Hermeneutic Practices in Learning Religious Texts***

The practice of hermeneutics in learning religious texts in madrasas and Islamic boarding schools shows the dynamics of interpretation that are not merely textual, but also include the process of meaning that is influenced by the social context, religious experience, and the pedagogical approach used by teachers and kiai. In madrasas, the approach to the Qur'an and hadith is generally textual-literal, but in several modern madrasas, the practice of interpretation has begun to adopt a contextual and thematic approach in order to respond to various actual problems such as pluralism, the

environment, and ethics in technological developments. According to Ebrahim, this practice reflects the influence of Fazlur Rahman's double movement method, namely the reading of texts that moves from the historical context of revelation to universal ethical formulations, then applied to contemporary reality. (Moosa, 2024). Thus, Islamic Religious Education teachers in madrasahs act as hermeneutic mediators who try to bridge the gap between text, meaning, and life experiences of students in modern society.

In contrast, in Islamic boarding schools, hermeneutic practices take place traditionally through the *bandongan*, *sorogan*, and *halaqah* methods, which emphasize literal and grammatical understanding of classical Islamic texts (yellow books). However, in practice, the *kiai* do not only explain the textual meaning, but also provide elaboration of the meaning through the context of the lives of the students and the historical experience of the community. According to Liakos, this process, although not called hermeneutics in the Western sense, contains basic principles similar to Hans Georg Gadamer's idea of fusion of horizons, namely the meeting between the horizon of the meaning of the text and the horizon of the reader (in this case the student). (Liakos, 2024). In the practice of *halaqah*, the dialogical interaction between the *santri* and the *kiai* creates a reflective and transformative interpretive space. As stated by al-Zarnuji in *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, the emphasis on *adab al-muta'allim* adds an ethical and spiritual dimension to the process of interpretation, because knowledge will not be meaningful unless it has a depth of *adab* and an inner connection with the text and teacher. (Razali & Mamat, 2024).

Furthermore, according to Ingvild, the practice of hermeneutics in the study of religious texts in both institutions shows that the approach to texts is not singular and final, but is always open to reinterpretation according to changes in the social context and the needs of the times. (Gilhus, 2021). This finding strengthens the philosophical hermeneutic approach in Islam as developed by Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, who emphasized that sacred texts have layers of meaning that cannot be reduced to one semantic dimension alone. In this case, the text always requires an active reader who is able to place it in its social and historical reality. Madrasahs and pesantrens have developed this tradition in different forms. Madrasahs through thematic curriculum and pedagogy, while pesantrens through oral and cultural practices that are rich in meaning. (Romadhon, 2024). Therefore, the practice of hermeneutics in Islamic Religious Education in Indonesia cannot be separated from the methodological heritage of classical Islam as well as new critical and contextual readings, which pave the way for the reconstruction of religious meanings dynamically and relevantly for modern life.

### ***Integration of Faith, Reason, and Tradition in the Paradigm of Islamic Education***

An important result of Islamic religious education in madrasahs and pesantren is the conscious effort to integrate elements of faith (spirituality), reason (rationality), and tradition (institutional culture) in the entire educational process. This integration reflects the non-dichotomous orientation of Islamic education, as is often the case in modern educational systems that separate religious knowledge from worldly knowledge. (Al-Razi et al., 2024). In a philosophical framework, according to Ihsan et al., this idea is in line with the thoughts of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas regarding *ta'dib*, namely the educational process that harmoniously unites intellectual, spiritual, and ethical dimensions. (N. H. Ihsan et al., 2024). In madrasahs, this integration is seen in the curriculum that combines religious and scientific studies, as well as in contextual learning that connects Qur'anic values with social phenomena. Meanwhile, in Islamic

boarding schools, the integration of faith, reason, and tradition is realized through the lifestyle of students who unite between learning, worship, and community in an environment full of spiritual values and traditional discipline.

This integrative paradigm is also rooted in the legacy of classical Islamic thought which rejects the dichotomy of knowledge. Al-Ghazali, as pointed out by Ibn Miskawayh in *Tahdzīb al-Akhlāq* and *In al-Munqidz min al-Ḍalāl*, emphasized how important it is for rational science and illuminative-spiritual science to work together. Ibn Khaldun even stated in his *Muqaddimah* that Islamic civilization did not develop only because of political or economic power, but because of education that combined religious knowledge and reason in a balanced way. (Tabatabai, 2024). In the context of modern Islamic boarding schools, this is evident in the opening of formal programs that combine the study of yellow books with science, technology, and even philosophical studies. While in madrasas, learning methods have begun to develop that not only instill dogma, but also train critical reasoning and reflective thinking skills towards Islamic sources. This method not only creates students with broad knowledge, but also builds a personality that is morally and spiritually mature.

According to Ilham, the integration of faith, reason and tradition in Islamic education is not merely structural (curriculum), but also practical and paradigmatic. (Ilham, 2020). This means that the paradigm of integrative Islamic education demands a change in the way educators and institutions think in understanding the purpose of education itself, namely not only the transmission of knowledge, but also human transformation. In the philosophy of contemporary Islamic education, according to Agus, this concept is close to the idea of M. Amin Abdullah about the integration of interconnected knowledge which emphasizes the interconnectedness of all branches of knowledge in the spirit of ethics and monotheism. (Riwanda, 2023). Therefore, both madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools are now starting to re-orient their education, so that they do not only produce graduates who are able to memorize texts, but also are able to interpret reality with prophetic values. Tradition is maintained as the root of identity, but reason is empowered to make religious teachings relevant in contemporary life, and faith is used as a moral foundation in every learning process. In this way, the paradigm of Islamic education not only answers the needs of the times, but is also able to maintain the spiritual and cultural continuity of the people.

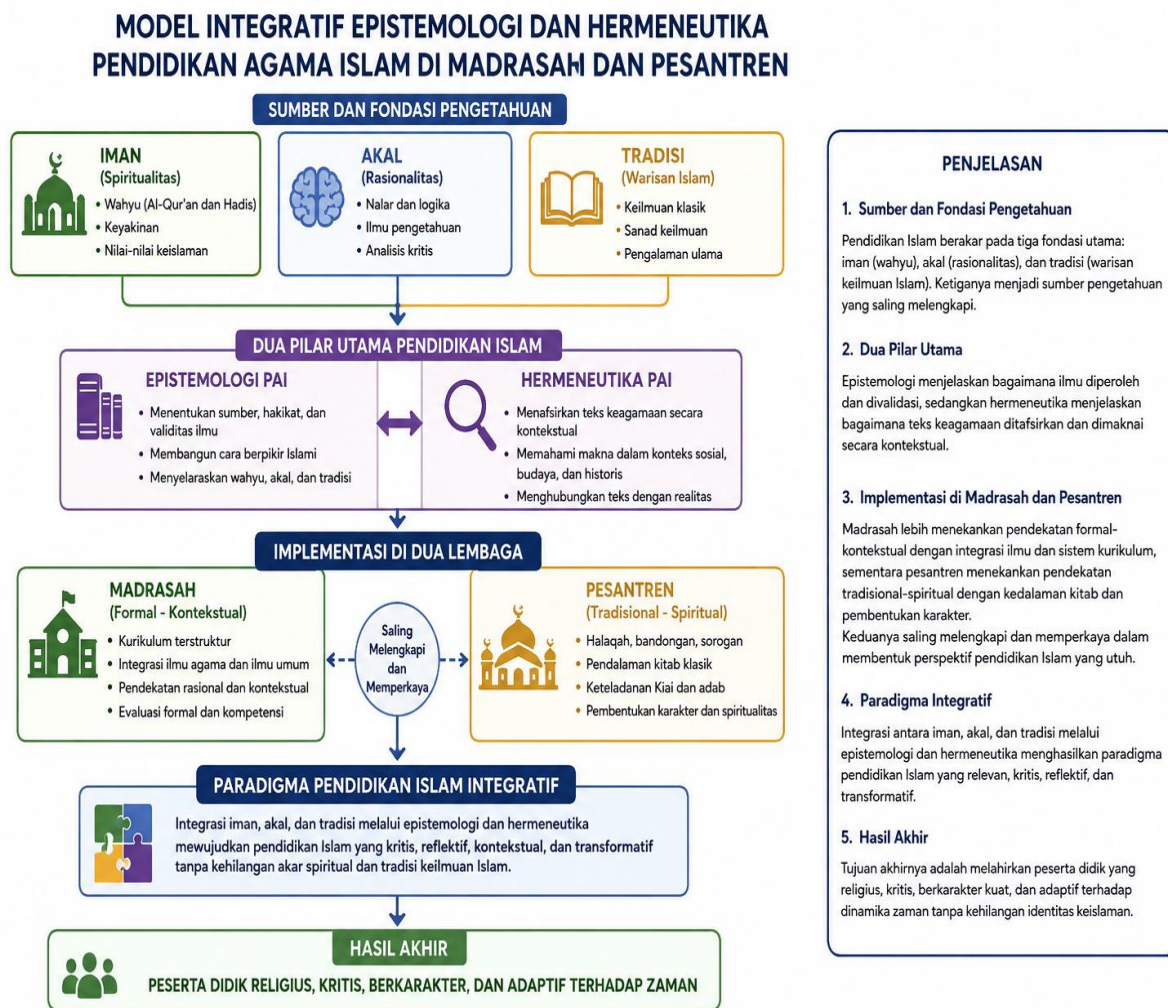


Figure 1. Research Finding

## DISCUSSION

### *Epistemological Structure of Islamic Education in Madrasahs and Islamic Boarding Schools*

#### *The Impact of the Epistemological Structure of Islamic Education in Madrasahs and Islamic Boarding Schools*

The epistemological structure of Islamic Education which integrates revelation, reason and experience in madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools has a significant impact on the formation of students' scientific and spiritual identities (Utari et al., 2025). On the one hand, a more systematic and curricular madrasah approach encourages the creation of a Muslim generation that not only masters religious knowledge, but also has the ability to integrate it with modern knowledge through a logical approach, scientific language, and systematic learning methods. This creates space for the internalization of Islamic values in the context of rational, open, and cross-disciplinary national education (Aslihah & Wasehudin, 2023; Aulia et al., 2025). This epistemic structure supports the creation of madrasah graduates who can play an active role in public spaces by bringing Islamic values into the dialectic of science and civilization (Habibi, 2024).

On the other hand, Islamic boarding schools that focus the transmission of knowledge on the authoritative relationship between kiai and santri with a traditional approach create a long-term impact on the formation of character and the continuity of the classical Islamic scientific tradition (Alam, 2020; Anggraeni et al., 2025; Asweni et al., 2024; Dewi et al., 2025). The epistemological system of Islamic boarding schools instills the values of perseverance, humility, and spiritual depth which become the moral foundation in the lives of students. This approach not only produces deep textual understanding, but also creates individuals who are ethically and religiously stable. Therefore, the impact of the epistemological structure in Islamic boarding schools focuses more on the internalization of values and moral stability than on academic technical abilities alone. In other words, Islamic boarding schools contribute to the regeneration of scholars and guardians of Islamic scientific authority culturally and spiritually (Solihin et al., 2020).

#### ***Comparison of Epistemological Structures in Madrasahs and Islamic Boarding Schools***

The epistemological structure in madrasahs shows a tendency towards a rational, systematic, and formal curriculum-based approach. (Kabba, 2024). Knowledge is transmitted in a classical system with assessment and competency-based measurements. This model utilizes epistemic sources of revelation and reason explicitly, especially in the integration of religious knowledge and general knowledge. Madrasahs also tend to be open to modern methodologies in religious learning, such as contextual, interdisciplinary methods, and critical reading of religious texts (Aina & Devianty, 2025; Awwaliyah & Hafidz, 2024; Corah et al., 2025). This creates a dialogical epistemology between text and context, which is close to the ideas of Fazlur Rahman and M. Amin Abdullah on the integration of knowledge (Muhsan & Haris, 2022).

On the other hand, the epistemological structure in Islamic boarding schools still prioritizes a traditional approach based on authority and scientific chains. (Yusufali, 2021). Knowledge is transmitted more through teaching yellow books in the halaqah, sorogan, and bandongan methods, which emphasize literal and spiritual understanding of the text. Reason remains used within the boundaries of tradition, while revelation becomes the center of knowledge interpreted within the framework of classical scholars. (Forsthoefel, 2020). If madrasahs direct students to public and academic competence, then pesantrens form individuals with spiritual depth, manners, and strong connectivity to the heritage of Islamic knowledge. Thus, these two institutions show different epistemological structures in terms of method, orientation, and results, but remain within the larger framework of complementary Islamic epistemology.

#### ***Hermeneutic Practices in Learning Religious Texts***

##### ***The Impact of Hermeneutic Practices in Learning Religious Texts***

The practice of hermeneutics in learning religious texts in madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools has a significant impact on the way students understand and interpret Islamic teachings. (Hanafi et al., 2022). A contextual hermeneutic approach opens up a more reflective and relevant interpretation space to current social conditions. In madrasahs, this encourages students not only to memorize texts, but also to interpret their religious meaning in real life through a thematic, critical, and contextual approach. With this method, students are better able to internalize Islamic values as ethical principles in facing the challenges of modernity, such as pluralism, technology, and global social issues. Hermeneutics becomes a bridge between classical texts and contemporary reality. (Hermans, 2019).

In Islamic boarding schools, hermeneutic practices have an impact on strengthening spiritual depth and appreciation of religious values through an interpretive tradition approach that is passed down from generation to generation. Although not packaged in hermeneutic terms, the method of teaching yellow books directly with kiai in halaqah or bandongan contains unique and profound interpretation practices.(Pollefeyt & Richards, 2020). The impact of this practice is the formation of a comprehensive religious understanding based on authoritative sanad, which maintains the intellectual continuity of the Muslim community. Students do not just understand the text literally, but also absorb wisdom and knowledge from the interpretive experiences of the scholars. This process produces a generation that is not only fluent in the text, but also mature in understanding the meaning and morals(Manning et al., 2019).

#### ***Comparison of Hermeneutics Practices in Madrasahs and Islamic Boarding Schools***

In practice, madrasahs tend to use a more methodological and academic hermeneutical approach.(Angeles & Aijazi, 2019). Text interpretation is carried out through linguistic, historical, and socio-cultural analysis, with the aim of forming a rational and applicable understanding. This approach is close to the modern hermeneutic model as developed by Hans Georg Gadamer and continued by Islamic thinkers such as Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, who emphasizes the interaction between the text and the reader's reality.(Akbar, 2021). Thus, madrasahs create an open and adaptive interpretation space to the changing times, and produce students who have social sensitivity and the ability to think critically about religious texts.

Meanwhile, in Islamic boarding schools, hermeneutical practices are more traditional in nature, based on the authority of ulama and the method of teaching classical books which is carried out from generation to generation.(Smith, 2020). Text interpretation is carried out within the framework of understanding of the salaf scholars through the sorogan and bandongan approaches which are communal and full of reverence. However, the process remains hermeneutical because it involves understanding the text in the moral, spiritual, and historical context of the pesantren.(Arif & Lessy, 2023). This comparison shows that despite the different methods and orientations, both madrasahs and pesantren continue to practice hermeneutics in a distinctive style, complementing each other between textual rationalism and traditional spirituality.

#### **Integration of Faith, Reason, and Tradition in the Paradigm of Islamic Education**

##### ***The Impact of Integration of Faith, Reason, and Tradition in the Paradigm of Islamic Education***

The integration of faith, reason, and tradition in the paradigm of Islamic education in madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools has a direct impact on the formation of students' characters that are balanced between religiosity, rationality, and culturality. This integration allows students not only to understand religious teachings textually, but also to be able to interpret them contextually by considering rationality and local cultural values. Faith forms a spiritual and moral foundation, reason develops critical and intellectual power, while tradition maintains the continuity of Islamic values and identity (Muhajir, 2022).

In addition, this integrative paradigm encourages Islamic educational institutions to develop holistic and cross-disciplinary curriculum and pedagogical approaches (Arifin et al., 2025; Kao et al., 2023; Nordin et al., 2024). In the midst of the current of globalization and modern epistemological challenges, the integration of faith, reason, and tradition becomes a strategic force in responding to changes in the

times wisely. This is evident in the strengthening of religious literacy that is not dogmatic, but rather dialogical, contextual, and provides solutions to contemporary issues such as radicalism, moral degradation, and identity crisis (Darder et al., 2023). In the long term, this integration strengthens the position of Islamic education as a system capable of developing a complete human being, encompassing spiritual, intellectual, and socio-cultural aspects harmoniously.

#### *Comparative Integration of Faith, Reason, and Tradition in Madrasahs and Islamic Boarding Schools*

Madrasah, as a formal educational institution, develops the integration of faith, reason, and tradition through a structural approach based on the national curriculum that is adjusted to Islamic values. In madrasah, faith is taught through systematic religious education, reason is trained through general knowledge and formal logic, while tradition is internalized through religious and cultural activities of the school based on Islamic values.(Ucan, 2019). This model emphasizes rationality in understanding religion, and accommodates the development of modern science within the framework of Islamic values. Thus, the integration that occurs in madrasahs tends to be more formal, structured, and institutional.

On the other hand, Islamic boarding schools implement this integration in the form of daily life practices that unite knowledge, manners, and spirituality. Faith is instilled through the exemplary behavior of the kiai and intensive worship activities, reason is formed through the study of yellow books and classical discussions, while tradition is maintained through religious routines and the distinctive culture of Islamic boarding schools. The approach of Islamic boarding schools is more transformative and personal, where values are taught not only through theory, but also through life experiences that shape personality. Thus, this comparison shows that madrasahs are more prominent in the rational and curricular aspects, while Islamic boarding schools are stronger in the spiritual and cultural aspects, both of which complement each other in creating a complete integration of the Islamic education paradigm.(I. Ihsan, 2019).

#### CONCLUSION

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that 1. the epistemological structure of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools is built on the basis of integration between revelation, reason, and experience, with different but complementary characteristics; madrasahs emphasize rationality and formal curriculum systems, while Islamic boarding schools emphasize spiritual depth and classical scientific traditions, 2. The practice of hermeneutics in learning religious texts in both institutions shows the dynamics of contextual and transformative interpretation; madrasahs tend to use a methodological and academic approach, while Islamic boarding schools display a traditional authoritative and spiritual approach, 3. culminates in an integrative paradigm of faith, reason, and tradition in Islamic education that not only forms students with broad knowledge, but also noble characters and is adaptive to the dynamics of changing times, but still adheres to the roots of Islamic identity.

This research contributes theoretically by enriching the treasury of Islamic education studies by elaborating the integration of revelation, reason, and tradition in the epistemological structure and practice of religious learning. While practically, the findings of this study can be a reference for policy makers, educators, and managers of Islamic educational institutions in compiling a curriculum that is more integrated and relevant to the current context, as well as in strengthening the practice of hermeneutics

of religious texts in a more reflective, rational, and relevant manner to the needs of the times.

The limitations of this study lie in the scope of the study which is conceptual and qualitative in nature, so it has not covered a broad implementation test in various types of madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools with diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. This study has also not explored in depth the perspective of gender, digital technology, and a broader interdisciplinary approach in Islamic Religious Education learning. Therefore, further research is expected to use a more comprehensive empirical approach by involving more institutions, educational actors, and quantitative or combined analysis methods, so that the results are more applicable and contribute to the transformation of Islamic education in the contemporary era.

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