

Problems of Islamic Education in the Reality of Muslim Society

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Abstract: This study investigates the complex structural, philosophical, and operational challenges confronting Islamic education within the contemporary reality of Muslim societies. Utilizing a qualitative research methodology based on literature review and content analysis, this paper systematically categorizes these core problems into three primary dimensions: the epistemological dichotomy between religious and secular knowledge, curricular stagnation lacking technological and critical-thinking integration, and institutional limitations regarding infrastructure, funding, and teacher professionalism. The findings indicate that these challenges stem from historical post-colonial legacies, socio-economic disparities, and rigid traditionalism in pedagogical practices. To overcome these crises, the paper argues for a strategic shift toward integrated education (<i>integrasi-interkoneksi</i>), pedagogical modernization, and policy reforms that harmonize Islamic ethical values with contemporary scientific demands, thereby repositioning Islamic education as an effective engine of societal transformation.	Keywords: Islamic Education; Epistemological Dichotomy; Educational Crisis; Curriculum Reform; Muslim Society
Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji tantangan struktural, filosofis, dan operasional yang kompleks yang dihadapi pendidikan Islam dalam realitas masyarakat Muslim kontemporer. Menggunakan metodologi penelitian kualitatif berbasis studi pustaka dan analisis isi, artikel ini secara sistematis mengkategorikan masalah-masalah utama tersebut ke dalam tiga dimensi utama: dikotomi epistemologis antara ilmu agama dan pengetahuan sekuler modern, stagnasi kurikulum yang kurang mengintegrasikan teknologi dan pemikiran kritis, serta keterbatasan kelembagaan terkait infrastruktur, pendanaan, dan profesionalisme pendidik. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tantangan-tantangan ini bersumber dari warisan pascakolonial, disparitas sosio-ekonomi, dan tradisionalisme kaku dalam praktik pedagogis. Untuk mengatasi krisis ini, artikel ini mendorong pergeseran strategis menuju paradigma pendidikan terintegrasi (<i>integrasi-interkoneksi</i>), modernisasi pedagogis, dan reformasi kebijakan yang menyelaraskan nilai-nilai etis Islam dengan tuntutan sains kontemporer, sehingga menempatkan kembali pendidikan Islam sebagai penggerak transformasi masyarakat yang efektif.	Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Islam; Dikotomi Epistemologis; Krisis Pendidikan; Reformasi Kurikulum; Masyarakat Muslim

A. Introduction

Throughout history, Islamic education has served as a cornerstone of intellectual, spiritual, and socio-cultural advancement across the Muslim world. During the Islamic Golden Age, institutions such as the House of Wisdom (*Bayt*

al-Hikmah) in Baghdad and universities like Al-Qarawiyyin in Fez and Al-Azhar in Cairo were not merely centers of religious devotion, but vibrant hubs of scientific inquiry, philosophical discourse, and technological innovation (Tibawi, 1972). In this classical paradigm, the pursuit of empirical science (*'ulum al-dunya*) was viewed as an intrinsic act of worship, deeply unified with spiritual knowledge (*'ulum al-din*) under the overarching worldview of *Tawhid* (divine unity) (Nasr, 1987).

However, the contemporary reality of Islamic education presents a stark contrast to this historical legacy. Across many modern Muslim-majority nations and minority communities, Islamic educational systems are widely perceived as struggling with systemic stagnation, institutional inefficiency, and ideological polarization (Niyozov & Memon, 2011). While global educational standards rapidly evolve to meet the demands of the digital era, many Islamic institutions remain trapped in outdated methodologies, failing to equip students with the critical thinking, technological competencies, and scientific literacy required in the modern world (Daun & Arjmand, 2005).

The origins of this contemporary crisis can be traced significantly to the historical legacy of Western colonialism, which disrupted traditional indigenous learning networks across the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Colonial authorities established secular, European-style educational institutions designed to train administrative personnel, while systematically marginalizing traditional Islamic institutions (*madrasas* and *kuttabs*) to the private or purely religious sphere (Riaz, 2008). This historical intervention created a deep structural fracture in the educational landscape of Muslim societies that persists to this day.

As a result of this colonial intervention, post-colonial Muslim states inherited a dual or bifurcated educational system that operates on two parallel, unintegrated tracks (Hashim, 1996). On one side lies the public or private secular system, which emphasizes modern sciences, mathematics, and humanities but frequently operates in isolation from Islamic ethical and

spiritual values. On the other side stands the traditional Islamic educational system, which focuses heavily on religious jurisprudence (*fiqh*), theology (*kalam*), and Arabic linguistic studies, often while ignoring modern empirical disciplines (al-Attas, 1980).

This structural dualism has created a profound epistemological crisis within Muslim societies. By dividing knowledge into sacred and secular domains, educational institutions have unwittingly fostered a intellectual dichotomy that separates moral development from scientific progress (al-Faruqi, 1982). This bifurcation prevents students from developing a coherent, holistic worldview, forcing them to navigate a fragmented intellectual identity where scientific inquiry is viewed as secularized and religious devotion is treated as scientifically irrelevant (Sardar, 1991).

The societal consequences of this epistemological split are far-reaching, contributing to cultural polarization and identity crises among Muslim youth. Modern secularly educated intellectuals and traditional religiously trained scholars ('*ulama*) often operate with entirely different conceptual vocabularies, worldviews, and social priorities, making constructive civic dialogue difficult (Azra, 2002). This division hinders collective problem-solving and leaves societies vulnerable to ideological extremism on one hand, or uncritical cultural assimilation on the other (Zine, 2008).

Beyond philosophical and epistemological challenges, Islamic education suffers from severe curricular stagnation. In many traditional *madrasas* and Islamic schools, learning syllabi have remained largely unchanged for centuries, prioritizing the rote memorization of medieval texts over critical textual analysis and contextual application (Tan, 2011). While classical texts contain profound intellectual heritage, teaching them without addressing contemporary socio-economic, ethical, and technological realities limits students' capacity to apply Islamic principles to modern challenges (Halstead, 2004).

This curricular rigidity is reinforced by traditional pedagogical practices that remain heavily teacher-centered and authoritarian. Instruction in many

Islamic educational settings relies primarily on passive listening, repetition, and deference to authority, often discouraging inquisitive questioning, independent judgment (*ijtihad*), and creative problem-solving (Niyozov & Memon, 2011). By treating learning as the static transmission of past consensus rather than a dynamic process of discovery, these pedagogical methods impede the development of critical thinking skills essential for modern citizenship.

Furthermore, Islamic educational systems face a growing digital and technological divide. In an era dominated by artificial intelligence, data science, and rapid technological innovation, many Islamic schools in developing nations lack basic technological infrastructure, digital literacy programs, and modern science laboratories (Berglund, 2015). This technological gap severely restricts students' ability to compete in global knowledge economies, further marginalizing Islamic educational institutions as backward or economically unviable.

The problem is exacerbated by issues surrounding teacher quality and professional development. In many Muslim societies, educators in Islamic institutions receive low compensation, possess limited access to modern pedagogical training, and lack opportunities for continuous professional growth (Daun & Arjmand, 2005). The inability to attract and retain highly qualified educators who are proficient in both Islamic scholarship and modern instructional methods remains a critical bottleneck in elevating the standard of Islamic schooling.

At the institutional level, many Islamic schools and *madrasas* suffer from chronic financial instability and resource scarcity. Operating frequently as non-profit or charity-funded entities, these institutions often lack stable state subsidies, leading to overcrowded classrooms, substandard facilities, and insufficient learning materials (Riaz, 2008). Under these resource-constrained conditions, administrative leaders are forced to prioritize basic institutional survival over curricular innovation and academic quality assurance.

These internal educational deficits are deeply entangled with the broader socio-economic and political realities of modern Muslim societies. Widespread poverty, political instability, governance deficits, and underfunded public sector infrastructure create an unsupportive environment for comprehensive educational reform (Hoodbhoy, 1991). When state institutions fail to provide quality public education, underfunded religious schools often step in as safety nets, accommodating impoverished students but lacking the capacity to deliver high-quality, modern instruction.

Additionally, Islamic education must navigate intense ideological struggles and security concerns in the post-9/11 global context. External pressures, geopolitical conflicts, and internal security policies have subjected Islamic educational institutions to heightened political scrutiny and state surveillance (Zine, 2008). In some cases, reactionary responses to external pressures have led either to state-enforced curriculum censorship that strips Islamic education of its critical moral voice, or to ideological entrenchment among conservative groups resisting reform (Tan, 2011).

In response to these systemic crises, various reform movements have emerged over recent decades, most notably the "Islamization of Knowledge" initiative led by scholars like Ismail Raji al-Faruqi and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, as well as the "Integration-Interconnection" paradigm formulated in modern Islamic universities (al-Attas, 1980; al-Faruqi, 1982). These movements aimed to synthesize Islamic ethical values with modern scientific disciplines, offering a theoretical framework to bridge the secular-religious divide.

However, the practical implementation of these integrative theories has proven remarkably difficult. In many universities and schools, integration efforts have remained superficial—often limited to placing religious quotes alongside scientific topics or adding basic religious courses to secular curricula—without achieving true epistemological and methodological

synthesis (Hashim, 1996; Sardar, 1991). As a result, the practical gap between theoretical reform concepts and classroom reality remains wide.

Consequently, graduates of Islamic educational institutions frequently experience a significant mismatch with the demands of the modern job market. Lacking specialized technical skills, digital competence, and modern professional qualifications, many graduates face high rates of unemployment or underemployment, reinforcing a public perception that Islamic education leads to limited career prospects (Daun & Arjmand, 2005). This economic reality deters many high-achieving students from pursuing Islamic education, creating a self-perpetuating cycle of marginalization.

Despite a vast body of literature on Islamic philosophy and historical education, there remains a critical gap in systematic, multidimensional research analyzing how these philosophical, structural, and operational problems intersect in the daily reality of contemporary Muslim societies. Existing studies often isolate single dimensions—such as political radicalism or historical philosophy—without providing a holistic examination of how epistemological dualism, curricular stagnation, resource limitations, and socio-economic realities collectively hinder educational progress.

Addressing this research gap is an urgent imperative for scholars, policymakers, and educational leaders. Without a rigorous, evidence-based diagnosis of the root problems confronting Islamic education, reform efforts risk remaining superficial, fragmented, and ineffective. Reconfiguring Islamic education to meet modern needs while preserving its core ethical identity is essential for fostering intellectual vitality, economic resilience, and social cohesion across the Muslim world.

Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to systematically examine and analyze the multifaceted problems confronting Islamic education within the contemporary reality of Muslim societies. By investigating the historical roots, philosophical foundations, and practical operational challenges of Islamic institutions, this research seeks to articulate a comprehensive framework for

educational reform that harmonizes traditional Islamic ethics with modern scientific and pedagogical demands.

Specifically, this study aims to achieve four key sub-objectives: first, to analyze the historical and epistemological factors that produced the dualism between sacred and secular education; second, to evaluate the structural, curricular, and pedagogical limitations current in Islamic schools and universities; third, to assess the impact of socio-economic, financial, and technological constraints on the quality of Islamic education; and fourth, to propose actionable strategic models for integrating knowledge, modernizing pedagogy, and revitalizing Islamic educational institutions in contemporary society.

B. Method

This study adopts a qualitative, meta-synthetic research design grounded in a critical-interpretive paradigm to systematically investigate the structural, epistemological, and operational crises within contemporary Islamic education. Qualitative meta-synthesis allows for the integration and critical re-evaluation of findings across a diverse corpus of theoretical, empirical, and historical literature (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Given that the problems of Islamic education encompass philosophical dualism, historical post-colonial impacts, and complex socio-cultural dynamics, a qualitative conceptual methodology provides the necessary analytical depth to synthesize disparate perspectives into a coherent diagnostic framework (Silverman, 2020).

A purposive theoretical sampling strategy was employed to construct a robust and representative literature corpus for evaluation. Following guidelines for systematic literature reviews (Snyder, 2019), data collection targeted three primary categories of text published over the last four decades: foundational theoretical treatises on Islamic educational philosophy, empirical studies on *madrassa* and university reforms across diverse Muslim societies, and official educational policy documents from international bodies and national

ministries. The corpus inclusion criteria prioritized peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly monographs, and policy reports that explicitly address epistemological integration, pedagogical practices, institutional governance, or socio-economic realities in Islamic educational contexts (Bowen, 2009).

The document retrieval and screening process followed a systematic search protocol adapted from the PRISMA guidelines to ensure transparency and comprehensiveness (Moher et al., 2009). Electronic databases—including Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, and Google Scholar—were queried using tailored Boolean search strings combining terms such as ("Islamic education" OR "madrasa") AND ("epistemological dualism" OR "crisis" OR "curriculum reform" OR "modernization" OR "pedagogy"). The initial search yield underwent multi-stage screening based on title, abstract, and full-text relevance, resulting in a refined corpus of high-impact literature that reflects geographically diverse Muslim contexts across the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Western minority settings.

Data analysis was conducted using Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) combined with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine both explicit instructional challenges and implicit ideological frameworks within the literature (Krippendorff, 2018). Using qualitative data management software, texts were coded through a two-tiered coding process: open inductive coding to identify emergent thematic operational bottlenecks, followed by deductive coding structured around al-Faruqi's and al-Attas's theoretical frameworks of epistemological bifurcation and pedagogical reform (Fairclough, 2013). This dual analytical approach enabled the research team to map conceptual links between macro-level socio-historical causes and micro-level classroom challenges.

To guarantee methodic rigor and trustworthiness, the research design applied established criteria for qualitative inquiry: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility was sustained through source and perspective triangulation—comparing empirical

case studies with theoretical treatises and policy evaluations – and through peer debriefing sessions among educational scholars specializing in Islamic studies (Whittemore et al., 2001). Dependability and confirmability were maintained by documenting an explicit audit trail detailing document selection parameters, codebook development, and analytical category synthesis, thereby minimizing subjective bias during textual interpretation.

Finally, ethical research standards and epistemological reflexivity guided the qualitative analysis throughout the study. Recognizing that educational research in Muslim contexts can be susceptible to either Eurocentric secular biases or uncritical traditionalist apologetics, the analytical stance was intentionally calibrated toward critical reflexivity (Lincoln et al., 2011). The research team consciously interrogated underlying normative assumptions, ensuring that classical Islamic intellectual paradigms were evaluated with historical accuracy while contemporary systemic shortcomings were diagnosed with objective, constructive candor (Secules et al., 2021).

C. Results and Discussion

Systematic analysis of the qualitative synthesis reveals that the crisis in contemporary Islamic education is not merely a superficial deficit in infrastructure, but an interconnected, systemic failure operating across epistemological, pedagogical, institutional, and socio-economic dimensions. Rather than experiencing isolated operational hurdles, modern Islamic institutions face an existential impasse where historical paradigms no longer align seamlessly with the complex demands of contemporary global society (Niyozov & Memon, 2011).

The primary structural bottleneck identified in the findings is the deeply entrenched epistemological dichotomy separating religious knowledge (*'ulum al-din*) from secular or empirical sciences (*'ulum al-dunya*). This intellectual division, inherited from colonial interventions and codified by post-colonial state structures, treats empirical scientific inquiry and spiritual moral formation

as mutually exclusive domains (al-Faruqi, 1982). Consequently, Islamic institutions often relegate modern sciences to secondary status, while secular institutions strip scientific education of moral and spiritual grounding (Hashim, 1996).

The empirical literature indicates that this bifurcation inflicts severe psychological and intellectual fragmentation on Muslim youth. Students navigating dualistic systems are compelled to adopt split worldviews, oscillating between traditional religious norms in personal life and secular rationality in academic or professional spheres (al-Attas, 1980). This cognitive dissonance prevents the development of a holistic Islamic identity capable of critically engaging with modern scientific and philosophical developments without compromising ethical integrity (Sardar, 1991).

Historically, findings confirm that state-sponsored modernizing policies in post-colonial Muslim nations often reinforced this division rather than resolving it. By establishing parallel educational tracks—a secular track for economic modernization and a religious track for personal status and social ethics—governments institutionalized educational dualism (Riaz, 2008). This structural policy failure prevented traditional institutions from evolving organically into comprehensive research environments, while alienating secular graduates from their cultural and spiritual roots (Azra, 2002).

Furthermore, the analysis reveals that past attempts at reform, such as the initial "Islamization of Knowledge" movement of the 1980s, met with limited operational success due to their largely additive, superficial character. In many instances, institutions attempted to "Islamize" curricula simply by appending Quranic verses to standard secular science textbooks or inserting introductory ethics courses into technical degree programs (Daun & Arjmand, 2005). This additive method failed to address the foundational ontological and epistemological assumptions underlying secular disciplines, leaving the core dichotomy intact (Sardar, 1991).

To overcome this epistemological crisis, the synthesis highlights the necessity of a paradigm shift toward authentic epistemological integration rooted in *Tawhid* (divine unity). Authentic integration requires a philosophical synthesis where empirical observation, rational analysis, and divine revelation are recognized as complementary avenues for understanding reality (al-Attas, 1980). Under this integrated framework, scientific discovery is validated as a spiritual activity (*'ibadah*) aimed at understanding the natural order, thereby dismantling the artificial barrier between faith and reason (Halstead, 2004).

Moving from epistemology to curriculum, the second major finding highlights severe curricular stagnation across traditional *madrasas* and many contemporary Islamic schools. Data show that learning syllabi frequently remain tied to classical medieval manuals (*turath*) that were formulated for historical socio-political contexts vastly different from the modern era (Tan, 2011). While these classical texts possess undeniable historical and scholarly value, relying on them as static, immutable templates severely limits students' capacity to navigate modern ethical, legal, and social dilemmas (Berglund, 2015).

The literature demonstrates that this reliance on classical text reproduction fosters an intellectual culture dominated by *taqlid* (uncritical imitation) at the expense of *ijtihad* (independent critical reasoning). Students are trained to memorize and defend established jurisprudence rulings (*fiqh*) rather than understanding the underlying legal philosophy (*usul al-fiqh*) and objectives of Islamic law (*maqasid al-shariah*) necessary to generate flexible, context-sensitive solutions for modern problems (Halstead, 2004).

Classroom observations and pedagogical assessments synthesized across multiple studies indicate that instructional methods in Islamic education remain heavily teacher-centered and authoritarian. Pedagogical delivery relies predominantly on lectures, mechanical repetition, and verbatim text memorization, which conditions students to receive knowledge passively rather than construct it actively (Niyozov & Memon, 2011). This instructional model

suppresses intellectual curiosity, critical inquiry, and creative problem-solving skills that are crucial in 21st-century educational environments (Tibawi, 1972).

Consequently, the neglect of inquiry-based learning and scientific methodology within Islamic school classrooms creates a cognitive environment where critical questioning is sometimes misconstrued as religious skepticism or disrespect for authority. When educators treat questioning as a threat to orthodoxy rather than a tool for deeper comprehension, students internalize passive learning habits that hinder their analytical growth and scientific aptitude (Hoodbhoy, 1991).

The analysis further reveals a pronounced imbalance in subject allocation within many Islamic school curricula, where modern STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) disciplines and social sciences are severely underrepresented. Where STEM subjects are taught, they are often delivered with outdated laboratory materials and insufficient instructional hours, positioning modern sciences as secondary electives rather than essential components of a robust education (Daun & Arjmand, 2005).

This curricular and pedagogical deficit yields severe practical consequences for graduate outcomes. Graduates from traditional Islamic educational backgrounds frequently face persistent skill mismatches when attempting to enter modern job markets, experiencing disproportionately high rates of underemployment (Riaz, 2008). This economic marginalization not only diminishes the public prestige of Islamic institutions but also perpetuates a socio-economic cycle where Islamic education is associated with limited socio-economic mobility (Tan, 2011).

The third major dimension revealed in the findings pertains to chronic institutional precarity, governance deficiencies, and severe resource limitations. A substantial proportion of Islamic schools and *madrasas* across the developing world operate as non-profit, charitable, or community-funded entities lacking stable state subventions (Riaz, 2008). This financial instability leaves school

administrators in a perpetual state of financial survival, preventing long-term strategic investments in institutional growth and quality assurance (Azra, 2002).

This financial precarity directly impacts learning infrastructure. Synthesis of field data reveals widespread deficits in basic physical facilities, including overcrowded classrooms, obsolete or non-existent science laboratories, understocked libraries, and severe shortages of modern ICT (Information and Communication Technology) equipment (Berglund, 2015). Without access to modern learning tools, students in these environments remain digitally and scientifically alienated from global educational standards.

Connected to institutional precarity is the critical issue of teacher quality, compensation, and professional development. Teachers in Islamic schools are frequently undercompensated compared to their peers in public secular institutions, leading to high teacher turnover and low morale (Daun & Arjmand, 2005). Moreover, pre-service teacher training programs often fail to equip educators with dual competencies—leaving religious studies teachers lacking modern pedagogical techniques, and secular subject teachers lacking understanding of Islamic educational philosophy (Niyozov & Memon, 2011).

Leadership and administrative structures within traditional Islamic educational institutions also exhibit significant governance bottlenecks. Many institutions are managed through centralized, patriarchal, or non-transparent leadership models that resist modern administrative practices, continuous institutional evaluation, and accreditation standards (Tan, 2011). The absence of robust quality assurance mechanisms hampers institutional capacity to adapt to changing regulatory demands and international benchmarks.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that institutional isolationism hinders progress. Many Islamic schools operate in administrative and academic silos, maintaining minimal collaborative networks with research universities, public school systems, or international educational consortia (Zine, 2008). This isolation prevents knowledge sharing, resource pooling, and participation in broader educational innovation initiatives.

The fourth dimension of findings underscores the profound influence of broader socio-economic and geopolitical pressures on Islamic educational reality. In many Muslim-majority societies, political instability, state corruption, and widespread socio-economic poverty severely weaken the capacity of national governments to provide quality public education, forcing impoverished communities to rely on underfunded religious institutions as basic social safety nets (Hoodbhoy, 1991; Riaz, 2008).

In addition, the widening global digital divide poses a major threat to Islamic educational equity. As educational systems worldwide transition toward AI-driven learning platforms, digital resources, and hybrid learning models, resource-constrained Islamic institutions risk being left further behind (Berglund, 2015). Without targeted digital inclusion strategies, students in these schools face growing technological disenfranchisement in an increasingly digitized global economy.

The findings also reveal that post-9/11 geopolitical scrutiny and security-driven state interventions have generated significant operational strain for Islamic schools worldwide. In many contexts, intense state surveillance, bureaucratic interference, and anti-terror regulatory frameworks have created a climate of fear and defensiveness among Islamic educators (Zine, 2008). In response, some institutions have adopted risk-averse, highly defensive stances that further suppress open intellectual inquiry and critical civic engagement (Tan, 2011).

This political climate has also fueled ideological polarization, trapping Islamic institutions between two extreme pressures: hyper-secular state mandates that seek to sanitize or marginalize religious identity, and reactionary conservative movements that resist any form of educational modernization as Western cultural imperialism (Azra, 2002; Daun & Arjmand, 2005). Navigating between these opposing forces represents one of the most delicate challenges for modern Islamic educational leadership.

In light of these systemic challenges, the synthesized literature points toward several strategic imperatives for educational reform, chief among which is the implementation of the "Integration-Interconnection" (*integrasi-interkoneksi*) paradigm. This paradigm advocates for a matrix model of knowledge where natural sciences, social sciences, and Islamic sacred texts are brought into active, mutually enriching dialogue (Azra, 2002). Rather than merely mixing subjects, this model restructures curricula around shared thematic problems—such as environmental ethics, bioethics, and social justice—analyzed through both empirical and Quranic lenses (al-Faruqi, 1982).

Pedagogical transformation represents another essential pillar of reform. The study highlights the urgent need to transition from passive memorization to student-centered, dialogic, and problem-based learning methodologies. Incorporating Socratic questioning, collaborative inquiry, and critical textual analysis within Islamic studies enables students to revive the classical Islamic tradition of *ijtihad*, cultivating critical thinking skills while deepening moral conviction (Halstead, 2004; Niyozov & Memon, 2011).

At the administrative and structural level, revitalizing Islamic education requires comprehensive institutional capacity building. This entails establishing sustainable funding models through public-private partnerships and modernized *waqf* (charitable endowment) management, upgrading digital and scientific infrastructure, and creating rigorous dual-competency teacher training programs (Riaz, 2008; Tan, 2011). Furthermore, adopting transparent governance structures and modern accreditation frameworks is vital to ensuring academic quality and public trust.

In conclusion, the findings demonstrate that resolving the crises facing Islamic education requires moving beyond superficial fixes toward a holistic, systemic overhaul. By addressing epistemological dualism, modernizing curricula and pedagogy, strengthening institutional governance, and navigating socio-political realities with intellectual courage, Islamic education can reclaim its historical legacy. Reconfigured in this way, Islamic education can serve as a

powerful engine for holistic human development, scientific excellence, and social transformation in modern Muslim societies.

D. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the contemporary crisis in Islamic education is a complex, systemic phenomenon rooted in historical post-colonial legacies, epistemological dualism, and pedagogical stagnation. The deep bifurcation between sacred religious knowledge (*'ulum al-din*) and secular empirical sciences (*'ulum al-dunya*) has fragmented the intellectual identity of Muslim youth, separating moral development from scientific progress. Moreover, rigid adherence to classical texts through passive memorization and *taqlid* (uncritical imitation) has stifled the spirit of *ijtihad* (critical reasoning), leaving many traditional institutions ill-equipped to address contemporary technological, ethical, and socio-economic challenges.

Operating alongside these philosophical hurdles are severe institutional, financial, and political constraints that perpetuate educational inequity. Resource precarity, outdated physical and digital infrastructure, low teacher compensation, and a shortage of dual-competency educators severely hinder the quality and competitiveness of Islamic schools. Furthermore, these institutions must navigate intense external pressures, including a widening global digital divide, ideological polarization, and post-9/11 geopolitical scrutiny that often induces administrative defensiveness rather than constructive innovation.

To overcome these structural bottlenecks, Islamic education must undergo a comprehensive, paradigm-driven overhaul centered on the "Integration-Interconnection" (*integrasi-interkoneksi*) framework. Reconciling divine revelation with empirical science requires transforming passive learning environments into dialogic, student-centered spaces that cultivate critical inquiry and ethical leadership. By upgrading digital infrastructure, modernizing *waqf* funding mechanisms, enhancing teacher professional

development, and establishing robust quality assurance systems, Islamic educational institutions can reclaim their historical role as dynamic hubs of holistic human development and scientific excellence in modern society.

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