



Reconstructing the Paradigm of Islamic Education: The Epistemological Dialectic of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas and Amin Abdullah

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Abstract

This article aims to reconstruct the paradigm of Islamic Religious Education through a dialectical approach to the thought of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas and Amin Abdullah. The epistemological tension between Al-Attas's hierarchical-deductive framework and Amin Abdullah's dialogical-historical framework is not an issue to be eliminated, but rather a productive tension that serves as the driving force behind a new paradigm. Through a content analysis approach using descriptive-analytical-dialectical methods, this study formulates the concept of *Maqashid* as a criterion for integration namely, *Al-Maqashid Al-Syariah*, which encompasses *Hifẓ Al-Din*, *Hifẓ Al-Nafs*, *Hifẓ Al-Aql*, *Hifẓ Al-Nasl*, and *Hifẓ Al-Mal* as an original mediating principle that simultaneously respects Al-Attas's ontological-tauhidic foundations and opens space for Amin Abdullah's methodological dialogue. From this, a framework for the dialectical-integrative *adab* paradigm is formulated, consisting of four layers: the ontological-tauhidic foundation; the contextual objectives of forming *al-insan al-adib*; a critical *maqashid* epistemology; and a transformative-contextual methodology. The novelty of this article lies in its bold acknowledgment of the epistemological tension between these two figures a tension that has rarely been explored in the literature. This article proposes the formulation of *maqashid* as criteria for integration as a genuinely new mediating principle, as well as the construction of a dialectical framework that is more dynamic and robust than previous synthesis models.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic religious education in Indonesia is currently facing fundamental challenges in its framework of thought; there are two interrelated issues that are exacerbating the problems within the education system. On the one hand, the legacy of the colonial dichotomy between religious studies and secular studies has resulted in epistemological fragmentation that fundamentally weakens the transformative power of Islamic education. On the other hand, the increasingly intense pressure of modernization and the Westernization of values is slowly eroding the ethical and spiritual foundations that have long been the true strength of Islamic education.

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This situation has produced a generation of Muslims who are intellectually disconnected from the Islamic scholarly tradition, yet at the same time lack the critical perspective needed to engage with the dominant currents of modern scholarly discourse. The urgency of an Islamic education that transcends the dichotomy between religious and secular knowledge is increasingly pressing in the Society 5.0 era (Rozi et al., 2022). This issue is reinforced by Aziz, (2022), who asserts that the existence of Islamic education in the modern industrial era can only be sustained through a bold paradigmatic reconstruction, not merely through piecemeal technical updates.

The crisis facing Islamic Religious Education is philosophical in nature and has deep-rooted causes, namely the absence of a paradigmatic framework capable of simultaneously affirming its ontological and tauhidic foundations while adequately addressing the epistemological complexities of the modern world. Various reconstruction efforts have been undertaken by many contemporary Muslim thinkers; however, most of these efforts tend to be partial and fail to address the true philosophical roots of the problem. The philosophy of Islamic education must be built upon three inseparable pillars ontology, epistemology, and axiology simultaneously (Bahrudin et al., 2025). In line with this, Setyo et al., (2024) emphasize that reconstructing the goals of Islamic education in the modern era requires a serious engagement with the thought of Muslim philosophers, rather than merely adapting Western educational models with an Islamic veneer that fails to address their core principles.

In the body of contemporary Islamic educational thought, the two names most frequently cited in the discourse on paradigm reconstruction are Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas and Amin Abdullah. Al-Attas, through the concept of *ta'dib* and his project of the de-Westernization of knowledge, offers an ontological-axiological foundation rooted in an integral Islamic worldview and positions *tawhid* as the metaphysical principle governing all scholarly activity. Al-Attas's concept of *ta'dib* represents the most coherent epistemological alternative to the *tarbiyah* approach that has long dominated the discourse on Islamic education (Ahmad, 2021). Amin Abdullah, on the other hand, as analyzed by (Tajuddin & Awwaliyah, 2021), offers a paradigm of scientific integration and interconnection that is highly contextual to the reality of Islamic education in Indonesia and stems from a direct engagement with the real institutional dichotomies encountered in the field.

Studies that bring these two figures together contain two structural weaknesses that need to be explicitly identified. The first weakness is that the studies are conducted separately, without any systematic attempt at synthesis, so that the richness of their complementarity is never fully explored. The second weakness, which is actually more dangerous philosophically, is that when attempts are made to bring the two together, the approach taken is usually additive that is, taking the strengths of each and adding them together as if there were no fundamental tension. Studies of Al-Attas in the Indonesian context tend to stop at his conceptual relevance without addressing the actual epistemological tensions (Ahmadi et al., 2023). A similar finding was reported by Riwanda (2023) in a comparative typological study, which showed that efforts to reconcile Al-Attas and Amin Abdullah have so far remained superficial, failing to address the fundamental differences in their epistemological frameworks.

It is this gap that serves as the primary motivation for writing this article. A study that explicitly identifies, analyzes, and utilizes the epistemological tension between Al-Attas and Amin Abdullah as a source of theoretical dynamism rather than as a problem to be concealed has yet to be found in the existing literature. Adib, (2022) himself acknowledges that efforts to establish a dialogue between normative and historical approaches in Islamic studies still face serious epistemological

obstacles that have not yet been satisfactorily resolved. Meanwhile, Fahmi & Rohman, (2021) assert that the non-dichotomy of knowledge in Islamic education requires a philosophical foundation far more robust than merely asserting that all knowledge originates from God without an operational and measurable epistemological framework.

The answer proposed in this article is through the formulation of Maqashid as a Criterion for Integration a mediating principle rooted in the tradition of *usul al-fiqh* but applied pedagogically. Al-Maqashid Al-Shariah which encompasses *Hifẓ Al-Din*, *Hifẓ Al-Nafs*, *Hifẓ Al-Aql*, *Hifẓ Al-Nasl*, and *Hifẓ Al-Mal* serves not only as an ultimate goal but also as a normative criterion that provides concrete guidance in every decision regarding scholarly integration. The concept of Islamic education from Al-Ghazali's perspective which gave rise to the maqashid tradition is highly relevant to the contemporary context because it unites spiritual and intellectual dimensions within a coherent framework (Indana & Mustofa, 2024). The relevance of maqashid to the contemporary scholarly context is also emphasized by Mulyo, (2025), who demonstrates that Amin Abdullah's paradigm of integration and interconnection actually requires the foundation of maqashid as a normative anchor to prevent it from slipping into a form of eclecticism that loses its direction.

Based on the above framework, this article formulates three interrelated research questions. First, the epistemological architectures of Al-Attas and Amin Abdullah, respectively, and the location of the tangible tension between them that has long been overlooked. Second, whether the concept of Maqashid as a criterion for integration can function as a mediating principle that resolves this tension without diminishing the depth of each thinker's ideas. Third, the framework of the Dialectical-Integrative Adab Paradigm can be implemented in the context of the transformation of Islamic Religious Education in Indonesia. This underscores that philosophical questions such as these must be answered systematically so that the reconstruction of the Islamic education paradigm does not remain merely at the rhetorical level (Bahrudin et al., 2025). Meanwhile, Hasan et al., (2026) remind us that every proposed new paradigm must be able to demonstrate its concrete relevance to the current reality of Islamic education.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative method using a content analysis approach. What distinguishes this method from conventional literature reviews is its dialectical dimension: this article not only compares and synthesizes the ideas of two figures but also actively identifies the epistemological tensions between them and utilizes those tensions as a source of theoretical productivity (Subagiya, 2023; Engkizar et al., 2023; 3034; 3036; Efendi et al., 2026). (Wachid, 2025) demonstrates that a holistic methodology for Islamic education research indeed requires the integration of Islamic epistemology with an appropriate methodological approach to address the complexity of existing issues. This choice of a dialectical approach is also supported by (Fathurrohman, 2024), who asserts that the paradigm of Islamic education from Thomas Kuhn's perspective requires an epistemological approach that dares to make a shift, rather than merely refining an existing paradigm.

The primary data sources for this study include Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas's original works that are most representative of his philosophical and educational thought. The three main works used as primary references are *The Concept of Education in Islam*, published in 1980 as the most systematic formulation of the concept of *ta'dib*, *Islam and Secularism*, published in 1978 as an epistemological critique of the Westernization of science, and *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam*, published in 1995 as the most comprehensive ontological framework of the Islamic worldview. Ahmadi et al., (2023) emphasize that these

three works must be read intertextually because each constitutes a part of Al-Attas's cohesive intellectual architecture. This intertextual reading is also recommended by (Nafisah et al., 2023), who point out that Al-Attas's concept of Islamic education can only be adequately understood if the Islamic worldview upon which it is based is first comprehensively understood.

Amin Abdullah's primary data sources include two major works: *Islamic Studies in Higher Education: An Integrative-Interconnective Approach*, published in 2006, and *Religious Studies: Normativity or Historicity?*, published in 1996. Secondary data sources include 62 references from SINTA-indexed national scientific journals and Scopus-indexed international journals published between 2021 and 2026, selected based on their relevance to the article's main theme. Adib, (2022) explicitly identifies Amin Abdullah's 1996 work as the most appropriate starting point for understanding the epistemological framework of the normative-historical dialogue that lies at the core of his entire paradigm. Meanwhile, Tajuddin & Awwaliyah, (2021) demonstrate that the 2006 work represents the pinnacle of the operationalization of the integration-interconnection paradigm within the most concrete context of Indonesia's Islamic higher education institutions.

The data analysis procedure was carried out in four sequential stages. The first stage involved an internal analysis of each figure's ideas individually to identify the core argument structure, the underlying epistemological assumptions, and the pedagogical implications that could be drawn. Fian & Hidayat, (2023) demonstrate that a careful internal analysis of the integration-interconnection paradigm reveals important nuances that are often overlooked when studies rush too quickly to the comparative stage. The second stage is a dialectical analysis in which the results from the first stage are brought together not merely to seek commonalities, but to carefully identify points of tension that are tangible and to analyze whether they are contradictory and irreconcilable or dialectical and exploitable Bahrudin et al., (2025) emphasize that an honest analysis of tensions between traditions of thought is a methodological prerequisite for formulating a synthesis that is not merely superficial.

The third stage involves the construction of a mediating principle through an exploration of the Islamic *usul al-fiqh* tradition specifically the concept of *al-maqashid al-shar'iyah* to formulate a principle capable of managing dialectical tensions philosophically. This principle is then operationalized pedagogically so that it is not merely an abstract philosophical concept but a concrete normative criterion in every decision regarding interdisciplinary integration. Jauzaa' & Ibrahim, (2025) demonstrate that interdisciplinary integration from Amin Abdullah's perspective actually requires a more robust normative principle than those formulated thus far. The fourth stage is constructive synthesis, in which the overall results of the analysis from the previous three stages are integrated into the framework of the Dialectical-Integrative Adab Paradigm. Rofiah et al., (2025) point out that the challenges of implementing an integrative-interconnective approach in practice demonstrate that the implications of every theoretical framework must be tested in concrete and operational terms.

The validity of the arguments is ensured through two mechanisms that are consistently applied. The first mechanism is source triangulation, whereby every interpretive claim regarding the thoughts of each figure is confirmed by at least three different sources. The second mechanism is the principle of internal consistency, which ensures that the formulated framework contains no logical contradictions and that every claim can be transparently traced back to the sources that support it (Sari & Asmendri, 2020). Setyo et al., (2024) emphasize that studies on the reconstruction of Islamic education that do not apply rigorous validation mechanisms risk producing frameworks that are rhetorically elegant but argumentatively fragile. A methodological limitation that must be honestly acknowledged is that this article is

theoretical and conceptual in nature; therefore, the claims presented require further empirical verification, as also emphasized by Muwaffiqillah et al., (2025) in their study on the integration of classical Islamic thought with the context of contemporary higher education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Al-Attas's Epistemological Design: Hierarchical-Deductive

The foundation of Al-Attas's entire epistemological framework is a Tawhidic ontology that treats the affirmation of God's oneness not merely as a formal doctrinal dogma, but as a metaphysical principle that determines the entire hierarchy of reality. In the worldview that Al-Attas refers to as *Ru'yat al-Islam li al-Wujud*, God is the only being that is self-existent and absolute, while all other aspects of reality are dependent, relative, and meaningful only in relation to God. This ontological principle has far-reaching and determinative epistemological implications, for the way a person knows must always reflect what they know about the most fundamental structure of reality. From this foundation, Al-Attas constructs a hierarchy of sources of knowledge that moves from top to bottom, following the hierarchy of existence itself; thus, revelation occupies the highest position not merely because of social authority but because it reflects the most fundamental truth of existence a truth that cannot be attained by any other source of knowledge.

Al-Attas's epistemological hierarchy consists of four levels, each with its own capacity and limitations in accessing truth. Revelation, as the highest source, provides the most fundamental framework of meaning and criteria for truth, which cannot be replaced by any other source. Spiritual intuition, or *ilham* which is a direct emanation of the Divine Light occupies the second level and can only be attained through a disciplined and sustained process of *tazkiyah al-nafs*. Reason, as humanity's highest gift, occupies the third position, possessing an extraordinary capacity to understand reality yet facing inherent limitations because it always operates within the confines of human finitude. The senses, as the most basic source, provide material data about the physical world; however, without guidance from higher levels, the senses are unable to transcend the surface of phenomena to reach a deeper essence. This framework is deductive in nature because true knowledge always moves from the top down from the principle of revelation toward its application in concrete life.

The concept of *ta'dib* as the fundamental goal of Islamic education is a direct and inevitable logical consequence of the hierarchical-deductive epistemological framework described above. Al-Attas's rejection of *tarbiyah* as the core concept of Islamic education is not a trivial semantic debate but a profound epistemological critique, because *tarbiyah* which is rooted in the verb *raba-yarbu* means to grow and develop biologically, and does not inherently contain the ethical-spiritual dimension that is, in fact, the very essence of true human education. *Ta'dib*, by contrast, integrally encompasses three inseparable dimensions: "knowledge" as knowledge of the hierarchy of existence and values; "*amal*" as the consistent application of that knowledge in life; and "*adab*" as the ontological capacity to place everything in its correct and proper "maqam" within the hierarchy of existence established by Allah. These three dimensions are not arranged in a sequential hierarchy but rather operate simultaneously and are mutually dependent on one another.

The loss of *adab* or the loss of the ability to place everything in its proper place within the hierarchy of existence is Al-Attas's primary diagnosis of the most fundamental crisis facing contemporary Islamic civilization. When humans are no longer able to distinguish the essential from the illusory, the primary from the secondary, and the true from the false within the hierarchy of values and existence, the entire order of life both individual and social experiences an ontological disorientation, not merely a moral or social one. The "de-Westernization" of

knowledge that Al-Attas advocates is a direct response to this diagnosis, because modern Western secular epistemology with its Cartesian dualism and logical positivism has systematically erased the transcendent dimension from knowledge. De-Westernization is not a rejection of Western science as a whole but rather the liberation of science from the secular-materialist metaphysical assumptions that shroud it; for Al-Attas, much of modern Western science actually contains partial truths that can be integrated into the Islamic worldview once its secular assumptions are first discarded.

Amin Abdullah's Epistemological Design: Dialogical-Historical

Amin Abdullah constructs his epistemological framework from a starting point that is fundamentally different from Al-Attas's. He does not begin at the pinnacle of the ontological hierarchy but rather in the midst of concrete, directly experienced issues namely, the epistemological dichotomy deeply rooted in Indonesia's Islamic educational institutions between Islamic studies, which employ a normative approach, on the one hand, and modern social sciences and humanities, which employ a historical-critical approach, on the other. This dichotomy is not merely an academic issue confined to an ivory tower; rather, it yields very serious practical consequences in the form of religious scholars who are unable to understand the socio-historical context of Islamic texts and social scholars who are unfamiliar with the depth of Islamic scholarly tradition. As a result, neither group is able to adequately address real-world societal issues, as each holds only a fragment of the bigger picture one that actually requires a comprehensive and integrated perspective.

The spider web metaphor that Amin Abdullah developed as a representation of the integration-interconnection paradigm is a choice rich in meaning and embodies an epistemological position that is very different from the pyramidal model implicitly present in Al-Attas's thought. In the spider web model, no single discipline occupies the top of the hierarchy and controls all the others, because what governs the relationships between disciplines is not authority but rather relevance and contribution to a more comprehensive understanding. At the center of the web lie the classical Islamic sciences, which include the Quran, hadith, fiqh, *kalam*, and *tasawwuf*; these extend to the middle layer, which encompasses the social sciences and humanities such as sociology, anthropology, psychology, and philosophy and finally to the outermost layer, which encompasses the natural sciences and technology. All these layers are connected through methodological and thematic threads that enable productive dialogue without one discipline reducing or negating another in a process that is continuous and never definitively concluded.

The most fundamental principle in Amin Abdullah's epistemology is that the tension between the normative approach, which upholds the authority of the text, and the historical-critical approach, which emphasizes contextuality, is something that must be actively maintained and wisely managed not eliminated by choosing one and disregarding the other. Eliminating one of them would result in destructive intellectual extremism, where an excessive focus on the normative leads to rigid textualism that fails to respond to changing realities, and an excessive focus on the historical leads to relativism that undermines the authority of Islamic values which are universal and transcend specific historical contexts. The spider web model is capable of accommodating this tension because it does not presuppose a single, final, and definitive point of resolution, but rather an ongoing process of dialogue among various disciplines, each of which brings methodological contributions that cannot be replaced by the others. It is this flexibility and openness that constitute both the strength and the critical point of Amin Abdullah's dialogical-historical framework.

Real Epistemological Tensions

After mapping out each thinker's epistemological framework separately, the next step is to honestly identify the real and genuine points of tension between the

two a step that has almost never been taken explicitly in the existing literature. The first tension concerns the epistemological starting point: Al-Attas operates from a definitive and transcendent starting point namely, revelation as the supreme source and criterion of knowledge that provides direction and boundaries for all scholarly activity. Amin Abdullah, on the other hand, operates from an immanent and procedural starting point namely, interdisciplinary dialogue as a process that continuously produces knowledge that is richer and more responsive to reality. This tension is not merely a difference but a fundamental difference in design, because the choice of starting point determines the entire logic that follows, including how the validity of a knowledge claim is determined and who has the authority to determine it.

The second point of tension concerns the role of the social sciences in understanding religion, an issue that goes to the heart of the differences between the two figures. Al-Attas is very cautious about the use of socio-historical methodologies because he fears they will relativize the truth of revelation and ultimately reduce religion to a mere social phenomenon subject to the laws of historical change alone. Amin Abdullah, on the other hand, views the social sciences as an irreplaceable partner in dialogue, for without them, an understanding of Islam would be trapped in ahistorical universalism, incapable of addressing the concrete problems faced by human beings within their real historical contexts. The third tension touches on the most fundamental question regarding the nature of truth in Islamic education: Al-Attas assumes that Islamic truth is fixed and can be clearly known through revelation, so the task of education is to transmit it accurately, while Amin Abdullah assumes that human understanding of Islamic truth is always a work in progress and develops through a dialogue that is never fully concluded.

What must be emphasized very clearly is that these three identified tensions are real and genuine in the sense that they cannot be resolved simply by stating that the two complement each other at different operational levels, because these tensions actually exist at the same epistemological level. However, this reality is not fatal, and this is where the most important core of this article's argument lies, because even real tensions can be theoretically productive if there is an appropriate mediating principle capable of managing them without reducing the depth of each line of thought to a pale shadow of its true self. This mediating principle cannot come from within the logic of each school of thought itself for if it could, the tension would have been resolved from the outset but must come from a more fundamental source capable of transcending the boundaries of each epistemological framework while remaining grounded in the authentic Islamic scholarly tradition.

***Maqashid* as a Criterion for Integration: An Original Mediating Principle**

The tradition of Islamic *usul al-fiqh* contains a concept with extraordinary potential as a mediating principle for the epistemological tensions that have been identified, namely *Al-Maqashid Al-Shariah*, as developed by Al-Ghazali in *Al-Mustasfa* and later expanded upon by *Al-Shatibi* in *Al-Muwafaqat*, *Al-Maqashid Al-Syariah* identifies five fundamental objectives that constitute the essence of the entire structure of Islamic sharia: *Hifz Al-Din*, *Hifz Al-Nafs*, *Hifz Al-Aql*, *Hifz Al-Nasl*, and *Hifz Al-Mal*. Indana & Mustofa, (2024) demonstrate that this *maqashid* tradition, rooted in Al-Ghazali's work, actually possesses a very strong pedagogical dimension because it unites spiritual and intellectual orientations within a single coherent teleological framework. The relevance of *maqashid* to the context of contemporary scientific integration is also emphasized by Mulyo, (2025), who argues that Amin Abdullah's paradigm of integration and interconnection requires the *maqashid* as a normative foundation to prevent it from slipping into eclecticism a mishmash of disciplines that loses its direction and identity.

Maqashid as a criterion for integration fulfills three conditions that must be met by an effective mediating principle for the tension between Al-Attas and Amin Abdullah. The first condition is that it must originate from within the Islamic tradition itself so that it can be accepted by Al-Attas, who is highly sensitive to the infiltration of foreign epistemological assumptions. Sholihah et al., (2026) assert that the unity of knowledge, from Al-Attas's perspective, can only be built upon a foundation rooted within the revelatory tradition itself, not from outside that tradition. The second condition is that it must be operational and contextual so that it can be accepted by Amin Abdullah, who emphasizes responsiveness to concrete reality; and the third condition is that it must be able to provide clear criteria regarding when and how modern sciences are integrated so that the integration does not become muddled with ambiguity. Wachid, (2025) asserts that operational and measurable criteria are non-negotiable methodological prerequisites for any truly meaningful effort to integrate Islamic epistemology and modern scientific approaches.

The operationalization of the *Maqashid* as criteria for integration in the context of Islamic education means shifting the central question in every decision regarding the integration of academic disciplines from the often unproductive question namely, whether a given discipline originates from Islam or the West toward a far more substantive question: whether the integration of this discipline contributes tangibly to the realization of one or more *Maqashid* within the specific educational context at hand. Dhobith & Hamami, (2024) emphasize that the urgency of developing an Islamic Religious Education curriculum through an integrative-interconnective approach requires more precise normative criteria than those used thus far, so as not to be trapped in superficial integration. Using these *maqashid* criteria, (Arbi et al., 2024) demonstrate that the integration of disciplines in Islamic educational institutions is, in fact, most effective when it is explicitly oriented toward accountable objectives, rather than merely fulfilling formal curricular structures.

The *maqashid* criteria also function symmetrically as boundaries that are no less important than their role as gateways to integration. An academic discipline or methodology that cannot demonstrate a concrete contribution to the *maqashid* or, furthermore, one that actively contradicts one of the *maqashid* has no place in the Islamic education curriculum, regardless of its academic prestige. (Juhana et al., 2022) point out that the model of knowledge integration proposed by Amin Abdullah and Kuntowijoyo actually already contains a normative dimension that limits integration; however, this dimension has not yet been formulated carefully and systematically, leaving it vulnerable to undesirable relativism. It is this dual function of the *maqashid* as both a gateway and a boundary that makes “*Maqashid* as Criteria for Integration” a more operational principle than any previously proposed principle of integration, as also suggested by (Syamsurizal & Dewi, 2026) in their study on the integration of religion and science from Amin Abdullah's perspective.

The Dialectical-Integrative *Adab* Paradigm Framework

The ontological-tauhidic foundation constitutes the first and most fundamental layer of the Dialectical-Integrative *Adab* Paradigm framework, fully adopting Al-Attas's Islamic worldview as a non-negotiable starting point. Tawhid is positioned not merely as a doctrinal tenet taught in a specific subject but as an ontological principle that determines the hierarchy of reality, the meaning of all scholarly activities, and the orientation of the entire educational ecosystem. Kasmila et al., (2025) assert that the foundation for integrating science and divine values in modern education must stem from a philosophical framework regarding the relationship between humanity, nature, and science that is rooted in Tawhid. The dialectical tension at this level is managed as follows: the monotheistic foundation is an immovable starting point, yet human expressions and understandings of this

monotheistic reality are always historical in nature and require continuous refinement through dialogue. Ghofururrohim et al., (2024) demonstrate that humanity's position in Islamic philosophy of education is indeed always situated within a tension between the fixed transcendent dimension and the ever-changing historical-contextual dimension, and this tension must be managed rather than eliminated.

The second layer is the goal of fostering a contextual *Al-Insan Al-Adib*, following Al-Attas in establishing the civilized human being as the highest goal while enriching the concept of *adab* with the dimension of contextuality proposed by Amin Abdullah. Within this framework, *adab* encompasses three complementary dimensions: individual-spiritual *adab* the ability to properly position oneself in relation to God and others; social-diversity *adab* the ability to live and contribute constructively within Indonesia's highly diverse society; and epistemological *adab* the ability to responsibly utilize scholarly tools from various traditions within the framework of *maqashid*. Ikhwan et al., (2023) demonstrate that the role of Islamic Religious Education in strengthening religious moderation in Indonesia directly reflects this dimension of social-diversity *adab*, which has often been neglected in discourses on *ta'dib* that have focused too heavily on the individual-spiritual dimension. Hidayat et al., (2023) add that Islamic moderation in Islamic Religious Education requires a concept of *adab* that is flexible enough to accommodate diverse contexts without losing its solid normative foundation.

The third layer critical *maqashid* epistemology is the most original layer of this framework and the focus of this article's primary conceptual contribution. Critical *maqashid* epistemology operates on two concurrent principles: the principle of *maqashid* criteria, which requires that every decision regarding scientific integration be justifiable through its contribution to the *Maqashid Al-Sharia*, and the principle of historical criticality, which requires that the application of *maqashid* in a concrete context always be accompanied by a deep understanding of the socio-historical context. Sufratman, (2022) demonstrates that the integration of religion and science at State Islamic Universities is actually most successful when it has clear criteria regarding what is to be achieved through such integration. An educator operating within a *maqashid*-critical epistemology no longer poses binary questions of "Islamic or non-Islamic," but rather more nuanced questions about how this knowledge contributes to the preservation of the *maqashid* in the context of today's Indonesian students. Ayu et al., (2024) emphasize that, according to Amin Abdullah, the implications of interdisciplinary integration for Islamic higher education institutions are most meaningful when they produce graduates capable of addressing concrete societal issues through an integrated perspective.

The fourth layer is a contextual-transformative methodology that integrates three mutually reinforcing pedagogical traditions. The first tradition is *tadabbur-tafakkur* from the classical Islamic tradition that is, the ability to reflect on the texts of the Quran and the realities of the universe as Allah's verses that illuminate one another. The second tradition is critical-dialogical thinking from Amin Abdullah's paradigm the ability to pose incisive questions and engage in dialogue among various perspectives without prematurely dismissing any of them. The third tradition is *maqashid*-based project learning that is, the active involvement of students in real-world projects oriented toward one of the *maqashid* relevant to the actual issues facing Indonesian society. Destriani, (2022) demonstrates that effective Islamic Religious Education grounded in religious moderation actually employs a similar combination of approaches integrating normative depth with tangible contextual engagement. (Syafaruddin, 2025) adds that ecotheology from an Islamic educational perspective is a concrete example of how *maqashid*-based learning particularly *Hifẓ Al-Nafs* in its ecological dimension can be implemented in a pedagogically relevant and meaningful way for the younger generation.

CONCLUSION

This article has demonstrated that the reconstruction of an authentic and robust paradigm for Islamic Religious Education cannot be achieved through an additional synthesis that obscures the epistemological tension between Al-Attas and Amin Abdullah, but only through a dialectical approach that honestly acknowledges, thoroughly analyzes, and harnesses that tension as a source of productive theoretical dynamism. The tension between Al-Attas's hierarchical-deductive framework centered on tawhid and revelation as the absolute starting point and Amin Abdullah's dialogical-historical framework centered on interdisciplinary dialogue as an ongoing process is a reality that cannot be reduced to overly neat formulations. However, this tension is productive and can be managed through an appropriate mediating principle namely, *maqashid* as a criterion of integration which simultaneously respects the authority of revelation and opens space for methodological dialogue that is responsive to the ever-changing context of life.

The dialectical-integrative *adab* paradigm framework formulated in this article represents a major theoretical innovation contributed to the body of knowledge in the field of Indonesian Islamic philosophy of education. This framework consists of four interrelated layers: a non-negotiable ontological-tauhidic foundation; the goal of forming *Al-Insan Al-Adib*, which encompasses individual-spiritual, social-diversity, and epistemological dimensions; and *maqashid* critical epistemology as the most original layer that manages the tension between normativity and historicity through clear and measurable teleological criteria; and a contextual-transformative methodology that integrates the Islamic traditions of *tadabbur* and *tafakkur* with critical-dialogical thinking and *maqashid*-based project learning. The fundamental difference between this framework and previous synthesis models lies in its dialectical nature that is, it maintains a productive tension between the constant and the changing as the driving force behind the dynamism of Islamic education, rather than reducing that tension to a false and misleading harmony.

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