

The Philosophy of Traditional Islamic Education: A Study of Pesantren al-Maqbul in Indonesia in Contextual Dialogue with the Islamic Educational Tradition in Libya

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Article History: Received: March 01, 2022 Revised: April 05, 2022 Accepted: May 15, 2022 Keywords: Islamic educational ontology; Islamic educational epistemology; Islamic educational axiology; traditional Islamic pesantren	This study examines the philosophy of traditional Islamic education with a particular focus on Pesantren al-Maqbul in Indonesia, while conceptually comparing it to traditional Islamic educational institutions in Libya. It employed a qualitative comparative method. For data analysis, an inductive-philosophical approach was used. The findings reveal that the sustainability of the traditional educational system at Pesantren al-Maqbul is inextricably linked to its philosophical foundations. Ontologically, the pesantren adheres to a monistic worldview, positioning revelation (the Qur'an and Hadith) as the sole authoritative source of knowledge. Epistemologically, it employs the <i>Bayani</i> approach—a method characterized by rigorous textual reasoning—in teaching and learning. From an axiological perspective, the pesantren adopts an <i>Irfani</i> orientation, emphasizing the cultivation of ethics, proper conduct (<i>adab</i>), and spiritual dimensions. This approach closely resembles the traditional Islamic education model in Libya, highlighting the authority of revealed texts, the <i>halaqah</i> method of instruction, and Sufi values. The similarities suggest that traditional Islamic educational philosophy is grounded in universally shared principles despite differing geographical and social contexts. The study concludes that traditional educational systems remain relevant due to their solid philosophical foundations and capacity to adapt to contemporary challenges contextually.

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INTRODUCTION

This study responds to the criticism addressed to educational practices organized by Islamic educational institutions, ranging from Elementary and Secondary Education to State or Private Higher Education, Early Childhood Education, both formal and non-formal, Pesantren, Al-Qur'an Education Park (TPQ). Islamic education science is not built on the theory of Islamic education philosophy.¹ The operationalization of Islamic education has implications for educational activities that are fragile, misplaced, and have no character. Ultimately, Islamic education will produce graduates who only emphasize the aspect of formality (Islam) and do not touch on the substantial aspect. The same reality can be found in Islamic Education Sciences books written by Islamic education experts such as Zuhairini. However, if we analyze it seriously, the book is not constructed or does not originate from the philosophy of Islamic education.²

The phenomenon of educational activity that is not based on the philosophy of Islamic education and books entitled Islamic Education Sciences that are not built on the theory of Islamic education philosophy gives the impression that educational activities organized by state or private formal Islamic educational institutions, both non-formal and formal Madrasah Diniah, Al-Qur'an Education Parks (TPQ), do not have an Islamic education philosophical framework that is independent and solid but merely adopts the Western philosophy of education. This reality is also the case with pesantren,³ considered one of the most deeply entrenched Islamic educational institutions.

The relationship between educational philosophy and pesantren is a relationship that cannot be negotiated.⁴ Seeing the reality that pesantren as part of Islamic educational institutions that carry out educational activities are less built from an independent and solid Islamic educational philosophy and have not been constructed from an independent and solid foundation of Islamic education philosophy, as a result, has an impact on the pessimism and uncertainty of the direction and objectives of the implementation of pesantren education. A philosophical foundation of education is to answer the primary and fundamental problems approaching Pesantren education.

The study of pesantren's educational philosophical dimensions focuses on finding solutions to insufficient problems with practical, ad hoc, and practical conclusions, which are sometimes populist, tactical, and effective in the short term. In addition, such conclusions lack fundamental, strategic, and comprehensive ideas. To find solutions to these problems, it is necessary first to direct thinking to a deep exploration of and reflection on a comprehensive understanding, and to find theoretical solutions conceptually.

The reason for choosing pesantren al-Maqbul as the research object is based on the fact that to date, it has maintained the traditional education system, although on March 30,

¹ Abdul Munir Mulkhan, "Filsafat Tarbiyah Berbasis Kecerdasan Makrifat," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 2, no. 2 (2013): 219–239.

² Abdul Munir Mulkhan, "Rekonstruksi Filsafat Tarbiyah: Dasar Pengembangan Ilmu & Teknologi Pendidikan Islam," *Laporan Penelitian, Yogyakarta: Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan, UIN Sunan Kalijaga*, 2012.

³ Fahrudin Fahrudin, "The Existence of Pesantren in the Dutch East Indies Government Pressure," *Cendekia: Jurnal Kependidikan dan Kemasyarakatan* 18, no. 2 (2020): 351–365.

⁴ Mohd Shukri Hanapi, "From Jahiliyyah to Islamic Worldview: In A Search of An Islamic Educational Philosophy," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 3, no. 2 (2013): 213–221.

2000, through the Decree of the Minister of National Education and the Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia concerning the Traditional Pesantren as a Compulsory Pattern for Nine Years of Basic Education No. 1/U/KB/2000 No. MA/86/2000, the government issued a policy to include general lessons in the education system of pesantren al-Maqbul. The diplomas and graduation certificates issued would be equivalent to those of formal educational institutions. However, the director disapproved of changing the traditional education system that had developed over the years at the Pesantren al-Maqbul.⁵

Traditional Islamic education has a long history of shaping Muslim communities' character, knowledge, and spirituality across various world regions. In Indonesia, the pesantren model has served as one of the primary pillars for transmitting Islamic knowledge, grounded in the authority of revelation, scholarly lineage (*sanad*), and the cultivation of moral character. One prominent example is Pesantren al-Maqbul, which continues to uphold a traditional educational system despite the pressures of modernization. This phenomenon reflects the strength of the philosophical foundations, particularly in the ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions, that support the sustainability of such educational models.

Meanwhile, traditional Islamic education has flourished in Libya through institutions such as madrasahs and zawiyahs, emphasizing text-based knowledge transmission and Sufi spiritual practices. Despite existing within distinct cultural and historical contexts, traditional Islamic education in Indonesia and Libya shares several fundamental similarities, especially regarding their philosophical underpinnings.⁶ This collaborative study aims to explore the commonalities and the unique characteristics of traditional Islamic educational systems in the two countries, thereby enriching the global discourse on Islamic education and demonstrating how traditional values remain relevant in addressing the challenges of the modern era.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study employed qualitative research.⁷ It was more concerned with the mechanisms of community interaction in pesantren al-Maqbul, especially those related to the implementation of education.⁸ The research model was ethnographic⁹ and used to investigate the processes that apply in the life of the al-Maqbul pesantren community, including kiai (the headmaster), santri (students), administrators, and ustadz (teachers). To achieve the purpose of research (to obtain data) about the foundation of the educational philosophy of the Al-

⁵ Muammilul Ulum, Interview, Pesantren al-Maqbul Administrator, June 13, 2021, Office of the Pesantren Roudlotul Muhsinin al-Maqbul, Bululawang, Malang.

⁶ Vedi R. Hadiz, ed., "Islamic Populism in Indonesia and the Middle East," in *Islamic Populism in Indonesia and the Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), i–ii, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/AB526957497BC20B7E21BFD7BB3F38E2>.

⁷ Ahmad Sulton, "Konstruksi Pendidikan Reproduksi bagi Remaja dalam Bingkai Pendidikan Islam," *Jurnal Transformatif (Islamic Studies)* 5, no. 2 (2021): 113–130.

⁸ Ahmad Sulton, "Kurikulum Pesantren Multikultural (Melacak Muatan Nilai-Nilai Multikultural dalam Kurikulum Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Banjarwati Paciran Lamongan)," *Ulul Albab: Jurnal Studi Islam* 16, no. 1 (2015): 1–20.

⁹ Elfi Yuliani Rochmah dkk., "Islamic Religious Education for Children in Javanese Family: A Study of Ethno Phenomenology," *Cendekia: Jurnal Kependidikan dan Kemasyarakatan* 19, no. 2 (2021): 329–344.

Maqbul pesantren, this study required the researcher to live together in the pesantren environment and participate in its activities. The induction approach used in this philosophical study¹⁰ is similar to that of a case study.¹¹ A limited number of clearly observed human cases were analyzed, and their understanding was formulated in general statements. In the context of this research, a case study was conducted at the Al-Maqbul pesantren; data related to educational activities in the pesantren were obtained, analyzed carefully, and concluded in a general statement.

As a key instrument, the researcher traced information related to the philosophy of education in the Al-Maqbul pesantren. Classifying the information into three data groups adapted to the discussion was at least possible, as stated in the problem formulation. The three data classifications were: (1) data related to the issue of the fundamental ontology of education in Pesantren al-Maqbul; (2) data related to the issue of the epistemological foundation of education in Pesantren al-Maqbul; and (3) data related to the issue of the axiological basis of education in Pesantren al-Maqbul.

This study also employed a comparative-conceptual approach by examining traditional educational institutions in Libya. For data analysis, an inductive-philosophical approach is utilized, drawing on George R. Knight's theoretical framework concerning the relationship between philosophy and educational practice, as well as Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri's *turāth* paradigm, particularly about Islamic epistemology, which includes the *Bayani*, *Burbani*, and *Irfani* approaches.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Ontological Foundations of Traditional Islamic Education: A Study of Pesantren al-Maqbul and Islamic Educational Institutions in Libya

The introduction of ontology in pesantren education is essential for readers to know. It examines what humans want to study related to everything. In other words, it is asked how the researched pesantren produces educational materials that regulate its entire educational activities. However, it cannot be ensured that readers will obtain comprehensive information after examining the pesantren's education ontology. Nevertheless, after understanding the discussion of the ontology of pesantren education, they will obtain essential information about the construction of the pesantren education system.

If ontology is related to pesantren education, it will be a study discussing the object of such education. According to Maemonah's view, pesantren educational objects consist of God, humans, and the universe in the context of this study.¹² The first object is metaphysical cosmology (*alam al-ghaib*). This entity cannot be understood through sensory experience but through other potential, such as intuition, ratio, etc. Meanwhile, the second and third objects are called empirical cosmology (*alam al-syahadah*), which can be comprehended using sensory

¹⁰ Ahmad Sulton, "Filsafah Nusantara sebagai Jalan Ketiga Antara Falsafah Barat dan Falsafah Timur," *Esensia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 17, no. 1 (2016): 17–28.

¹¹ Afiful Ikhwani, "Development of Educational Resources in Junior High Schools to Obtain Quality," *Cendekia: Jurnal Kependidikan dan Kemasyarakatan* 18, no. 1 (2020): 1–16.

¹² Maemonah, *Filsafat Pendidikan Agama Telaah Pemikiran Naquib al-Attas dan N. Driyarkara*, 1 ed. (Yogyakarta: FA Press, 2015), 59.

experience. The three formulations were obtained based on an in-depth reading of the meaning of "existence," namely, all entities that build the existence of Pesantren education.

The philosophical foundation of pesantren education can be traced to constructing an educational ontology that includes the concept of God, the universe, and humans. The ontology building of pesantren becomes a solid foundation for thought related to education on a more macro level. This foundation touches on the technical aspects of education and, fundamentally, on its theoretical aspects. The concepts of God, man, and the universe are described below.

First, referring to the data obtained through interviews with informants at the al-Maqbul pesantren, the authors found information that knowledge about God, humans, and the universe was obtained from an in-depth reading of the Qur'an and Hadith. According to the belief of the al-Maqbul pesantren, which the Majelis Masyayikh represents, K.H. Su'adi Muhsin points out that the Qur'an is God's revelation. It is believed to be the only authoritative source of knowledge. Its truth is absolute, and no one, especially students of al-Maqbul, would dare to dispute it.¹³

Second, ontology's theoretical elaboration based on quantity is divided into monism, dualism, pluralism, nihilism, and agnosticism.¹⁴ The ontology of al-Maqbul pesantren education follows the flow of monism. In the simplest and easiest to understand terms, monism is an ontological school that states that substance (nature) amounts to or originates from one existence. In this research, the understanding of monism means that the only authoritative source of knowledge and holds the correct position in the perspective of al-Maqbul pesantren is God's revelation, which is believed to be a sacred religious text.

For al-Maqbul pesantren, a deep and comprehensive understanding of God's revelation (al-Qur'an and Hadith) can be obtained if students learn Islamic religious sciences. As an Islamic religious-based educational institution, Al-Maqbul pesantren positions Islamic religious knowledge as its priority and goal. According to the primary director of the Pesantren al-Maqbul, K.H. Su'adi Muhsin, the motivation for establishing it was the spirit of worshipping Allah by making pure Islamic religious education a priority and goal.¹⁵

Al-Maqbul Pesantren sees the knowledge obtained using rational explanations of scientific and contextual methods as not being substantial (essential) but rather in the form of assumptions (estimates), which experience changes at a specific time. This is a strong reason why general knowledge is not included in the education system of Al-Maqbul pesantren, especially the curriculum as expected by the government on March 30, 2000. In addition, general knowledge is not included in the pesantren curriculum, which is one of the requirements from the government to equalize the diploma of graduates from al-Maqbul pesantren with that of other public schools, which is the concern of changing the primary motive for the establishment of the al-Maqbul pesantren, namely worship, not specific worldly orientations, such as employment or certain social status positions.

¹³ Su'adi Muhsin, Interview, Director of the Pesantren al-Maqbul, June 13, 2021, Pesantren Roudlotul Muhsinin al-Maqbul, Bululawang, Malang.

¹⁴ Landon DC Elkind, "Fraser MacBride, On the Genealogy of Universals: The Metaphysical Origins of Analytic Philosophy," *Journal for the History of Analytical Philosophy* 8, no. 8 (2020).

¹⁵ Su'adi Muhsin, Interview, Director of the Pesantren al-Maqbul, November 15, 2021, Pesantren Roudlotul Muhsinin al-Maqbul, Bululawang, Malang.

K.H. Luqman Muhsin suggests that student's understanding of the Qur'an and Hadith in their entirety can be reflected in the variety of knowledge they learn at the al-Maqbul pesantren, such as Tawhid (Theology), Fiqh (Islamic Law), Tafsir (Interpretation Science), Tasawuf (Mysticism Science), Akhlaq (Ethics Science), Tarikh (History Science), Nahwu, and Shorof (Arabic Grammar Science).¹⁶ The book used to study these sciences is the Yellow Book. The reason is that this book is generally yellow and does not have a shake. At the al-Maqbul pesantren, the Yellow Book is the definitive reference, with no defects. In other words, it does not work if it is subject to criticism or correction. In this regard, Ustadz Mu'amilul Ulum stated that:

When senior students carry out the *bahtsul masa'il* (problem discussion) program, which discusses contemporary problems of Muslims, all participants must prepare *ta'bir* (arguments) obtained from the Yellow Books about the issues discussed in this program. The answer is considered final for issues for which arguments have been found in the Yellow Book.¹⁷

It shows that, like the Qur'an, the Yellow Book is also considered the only authoritative source of knowledge. As it is known, the Yellow Book is the result of the *ijtihad* (a sincere effort to decide a matter that is not discussed in the Qur'an or Hadith on the condition that it uses common sense and careful consideration) of the scholars. It positions the ulama's (experts in Islam) product in the Yellow Book as the final truth, which is rash and ignores historical aspects. The Yellow Book is not to be accepted, but not rejected either. It is an intellectual product in a specific historical range that should not be attached to a sacred label. It is a human product whose character is very human. Therefore, we have the right to criticize it and must even do so.

Referring to the information about the Yellow Book above, a common thread can be drawn that monism tends to be increasingly unequivocal in the educational ontology of the al-Maqbul pesantren. The primary motive of the school for positioning the Yellow Book and the holy text of the Qur'an as the only authoritative source of knowledge is to conserve or protect Islamic knowledge outside of textual reasoning (*Bayani*), such as scientific knowledge, philosophical knowledge, empirical knowledge, and others that are deemed not substantial or essential.

Third, based on the author's analysis, the relationship between God, humans, and the universe is identical to an isosceles triangle. In the simplest sense, an isosceles triangle is a triangle that has two sides of the same length and three ends, as shown in Figure 1.

¹⁶ Luqman Muhsin, Interview, Majelis Masyayikh Pesantren al-Maqbul, September 25, 2021, Pesantren Roudlatul Muhsinin al-Maqbul Complex in Kuwolu Bululawang Malang.

¹⁷ Ulum, Interview.

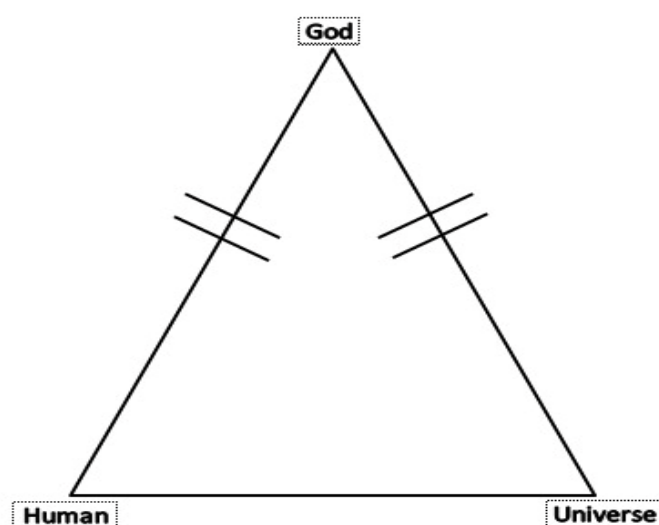


Figure 1. The Relationship of God, Humans, and the Universe

The picture above shows that two sides of the same length are the position of humans and the universe balanced; neither is higher or lower, but both are equal. Therefore, humans as caliphs on earth cannot treat the universe arbitrarily, even though God gives them the authority to meet their daily needs. As shown in the image below, humans cannot exploit the universe without paying attention to ecosystems and balance.

The equilateral triangle has three ends: one upper end and two lower ends, both right and left. The top represents God; Meanwhile, the lower right and left ends symbolize man and the universe, or vice versa. God's position at the top shows that God is the source or creator of all existence, including humans and the universe. While the position of humans and the universe is at the lower end, it shows that humans and the universe are creatures created by God. Therefore, the primary task of humans and the universe is to serve God. This top-down relationship between God and humans does not mean robbing humans of their 'independence' to try to change the fate outlined by God. This is relevant to the view of Asy'ariyah theology, followed by the Pesantren al-Maqbul.

In the philosophy that developed in India, the universe and humans are understood according to the pattern of monism and pantheism. The universe and humans are emanations from God. Greek philosophy held that God formed the universe and everything in it indirectly. Through a demiurge, the supreme being under God is entrusted with creating the world. The word "form" here is understood to consist of existing material. Matter itself is considered an eternal entity. The matter with everything inherent in it can not be imagined to have existed or ever existed.

The ontological foundation of traditional Islamic education at Pesantren al-Maqbul is rooted in a monistic worldview that positions revelation, notably the Qur'an and Hadith, as the sole authoritative source of knowledge. This conception shapes a perspective in which actual knowledge is understood as transcendental and divine. At Pesantren al-Maqbul, knowledge is believed to originate absolutely from Allah, and the human role is to comprehend, practice, and transmit that revelation throughout life.

A similar orientation is found within the classical Islamic educational tradition in Libya, especially in the *zawiyahs* of the Sufi orders and traditional *madrasahs* spread across the regions of Fezzan and Tripolitania. These institutions likewise place revelation at the center of their educational ontology. Interviews and literature reviews on Libyan education reveal that core texts such as the Qur'an, Hadith, and classical Islamic scholarly works (*turāth*) are sacred and are the foundation for shaping the educational worldview.¹⁸

Thus, in Indonesia and Libya, traditional Islamic education systems are constructed upon an ontological awareness that truth and knowledge do not stem solely from human reason but from the transcendent texts of revelation. This worldview gives rise to an educational orientation that is not only cognitive but also deeply spiritual and devotional.

The Epistemological Foundations of Traditional Islamic Education: A Comparative Study of Pesantren al-Maqbul and the Educational Tradition in Libya

As described in the previous discussion, the educational ontology view of al-Maqbul pesantren influences ideas about educational epistemology. This can be understood because ontology discusses what is thought or the target of thinking. In contrast, epistemology discusses obtaining knowledge from what you want to think. In simple terms, epistemology can be defined as a branch of philosophy that examines the origin or source, structure, method, and validity of knowledge.

The discussion of the epistemology of Pesantren al-Maqbul education cannot be separated from the study of scholarly sources, educational methodologies, and the concept of educational truth. Below, the author will outline critical notes discussing educational epistemology in Pesantren al-Maqbul.

First, referring to the theoretical elaboration found by Abudin Nata, which classifies learning methods into three forms: teacher-centered, student-centered, and teacher-student-centered.¹⁹ The form of learning methods found in Pesantren al-Maqbul tends to be teacher-student-centered. This is evident in the educational activities organized by al-Maqbul using the *bandongan* (learning method in pesantren that teaches explicitly the Yellow Book, in which the *kiai* reads, translates, and explains to the students), *sorogan* (learning method where students can offer the material they want to learn to get guidance individually or specifically), deliberation, or *munadẓarah* (discussion) methods, and the *muhafadhb* (memorization) method. Teacher-centered learning can be seen from the *Bandongan* method, where a *Kiai* or *Ustadz* is dominant in the learning process. Reciprocal communication between the *kiai* or *ustadz* and students almost does not occur. Meanwhile, student-centeredness can be seen in the practice of the *sorogan* method, deliberation or *munadẓarah* (discussion), and the *muhafadhb* (memorization) method. Although the *sorogan* and deliberation methods have intervention from educators in practice, in this case, the *ustadz* or *kiai*, the students still hold the dominant role.

¹⁸ Siti Mutmainah, Supriyanto Supriyanto, and Amrin Amrin, "Problems of Islamic Education: Analysis of Philosophical Perspectives," *Cendikia Media Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan* 14, no. 4 (2024): 448–457, <https://doi.org/10.35335/cendikia.v14i4.4921>.

¹⁹ Abuddin Nata, *Paradigma Pendidikan Islam: Kapita Selekta Pendidikan Islam*, 1st ed. (Jakarta: Grasindo, 2001), 54.

Al-Jabiri's theoretical elaboration, which offers three epistemological concepts in Islam, namely *Bayani*, *Burhani*, and *Irfani* epistemologies, has different characteristics of knowledge. *Bayani* is an Islamic epistemology based on the text's authority (*nash*), directly or indirectly. The *Burhani* Epistemology is an Islamic epistemology that emphasizes the power of reason in producing knowledge. Meanwhile, *Irfani's* Epistemology is an Islamic epistemology based on the power of intuition rather than rational reasoning.²⁰

In Islamic epistemology, the *Bayani* epistemology is appropriate for describing the educational activities organized by the Pesantren al-Maqbul. This is based on the fact that the source of essential knowledge in the Pesantren al-Maqbul is based on the narrative of the primary caregiver, namely K.H. Su'adi Muhsin is not logical reasoning, empirical observation, and the scientific method, but the text of the Qur'an, Hadith, and the Yellow Book.²¹ Al-Maqbul took two paths to acquire knowledge from the Qur'an and Hadith. *First*, use Arabic rules such as the science of *Nahwu*, *Sharaf*, *I'lal*, and *Balaghah*. *Second*, adhering to the meaning helps understand the Qur'an, Hadith, and the Yellow Book text.

Bayani's character is apparent in the educational epistemology at Al-Maqbul pesantren. In this research, these characteristics can be observed in the school's perspective regarding the knowledge of *fiqh* (Islamic law), the favorite subject in this pesantren. The knowledge of Islamic law taught to all students of al-Maqbul is constructed from the rules of *ush al-fiqh*. Furthermore, as a methodology of Islamic law, *Usul al-Fiqh* (method of law) formulates the legal provisions described in *Fiqh*. The provisions of Islamic law originating from the Qur'an, Hadith, consensus of scholars (*ijma*), and *qiyas* are strictly adhered to by the Pesantren al-Maqbul. Any problems Muslims face related to Islamic law are sought for solutions from the book of Islamic law texts. There is no room for ratios to produce knowledge and truth; ratios only function as explanations and defenders of knowledge produced by texts.

In addition, *Bayani's* character in the epistemology of education can also be traced from the educational methods of the Pesantren al-Maqbul. Based on the information found by the author, the educational methods that the Pesantren al-Maqbul still maintains are the *Sorogan* and the *Bandongan* methods. The similarity between the *Sorogan* method and the *Bandongan* method at the Pesantren al-Maqbul is that educators, in this case, senior *Santri*, *Ustadz*, and *Kiai*, occupy an active and dominant position compared to the *santri*. *Kiai* and *Santri* rarely even dialogue with each other; if there are questions, the questions are generally limited and not far from the explanation of the book they are studying.

Knowledge obtained from the text of the Yellow Book using the *Sorogan* and *Bandongan* methods adheres to the texts read by the teacher or the students themselves. If the editorial meaning of the text is not found by the teacher or student who reads the Yellow Book, the way to take it is to equate (*qiyas*) with something that has a precise meaning. In general, the knowledge of students and teachers is not far from the contents of the Yellow Book. Questions and answers conducted by students and *kiai* were reduced to only the content of the Yellow Book. Finally, knowledge and truth are returned to the text (*Bayan*) of the Yellow

²⁰ Muhammad Abed Al-Jabiri, *Bunyab Al-'Aqli Al-Arabi: Dirasah Tabliliyah Naqdiyyah Li Nudzumi Al-Ma'Rifah Fi Ats-Tsaqofah Al-Arabiyah* (Beirut: al-Markaz al-Tsaqafi al-'Arabi, 1991), 38.

²¹ Muhsin, Interview, November 15, 2021.

Book at the Pesantren al-Maqbul. This phenomenon emphasizes Bayani's powerful tendency in the Pesantren al-Maqbul school's epistemology of education.

The epistemology of education at Pesantren al-Maqbul is characterized by the *Bayani* approach, which prioritizes textual sources as the primary reference for acquiring and verifying knowledge. Learning methods such as *bandongan* and *sorogan* reinforce the teacher's authority (*kiai*) as the transmitter of knowledge from classical Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*), with the text itself holding an absolute position in determining truth.

This closely mirrors Libya's traditional Islamic education system, where the Bayani approach is likewise predominant. In many Libyan madrasahs, educational methods such as *talaqqi*—the direct transmission of knowledge from teacher to student—and the memorization of classical texts, such as *al-Risālah* by Ibn Abi Zayd and *al-Muwatṭaʾ*, are integral to the learning process. Much like the *kiai* in Indonesia, Libyan teachers serve as intermediaries in the chain of scholarly transmission (*sanad*), conveying not only textual knowledge but also moral authority.²²

Through conceptual dialogue with research partners from Libya, it was found that although there are differences in the selection of texts, the *Bayani* approach remains the dominant epistemological method. The emphasis on the continuity of *sanad*, the centrality of authoritative texts, and students' diligence demonstrates that the epistemological structure of traditional Islamic education in Indonesia and Libya is remarkably similar, despite their distinct cultural contexts.

The Axiological Foundations of Traditional Islamic Education: A Comparative Study of Values between Pesantren al-Maqbul and the Sufi Educational Tradition in Libya

The last discussion that is no less essential than the educational philosophy of the Pesantren al-Maqbul is the axiological basis of education. In the study of philosophy, axiology is known as a sub-system of philosophy. Apart from axiology, other philosophical systems are ontology and epistemology. Axiology is a value theory that discusses the considered object's benefits, uses, and functions. Ontology is a theory about "being," which is about what is thought, the object of thought. At the same time, epistemology is a theory of knowledge that discusses obtaining knowledge from the object being thought. Therefore, these three sub-systems are usually mentioned sequentially, starting from ontology, epistemology, and axiology.

In connection with the discussion of educational axiology, the author has described the values of education in the Pesantren al-Maqbul. The author realizes that specific values are contained in various aspects of Pesantren al-Maqbul education. The same thing was explained by Santi Marlina, who stated that education is a process of forming students' character. Hence, the cultivation of values, the area of axiology, is part of the nature of education itself.²³

²² Nabaz Mawlood Ali, Ahmad Taki, and B. Painter, "Comparative Study of Traditional and Contemporary Islamic Dwelling Design: The Case of Benghazi, Libya," 2020, <https://doi.org/10.2495/gd170041>.

²³ Santi Marlina, "Structural Constraints Faced by Teachers in Forming Student Character in School (Case Study of High School in Pauh District Padang City)," *International Journal of Progressive Sciences and Technologies* 18, no. 2 (2020): 201–205.

Ethical and aesthetic values, part of the axiological study of Pesantren al-Maqbul education, can be categorized into normative theory. The reason is that ethical values include faith, *khidmah* (devotion), *ta'dzim* (respect), and *ta'awun* (please help), as well as aesthetic values depicted in music, fine arts, martial arts, calligraphy, and other arts bound by certain norms. In this context, the norm in question is Islam. Activities such as recitations, *Burdah*, *Dhikr*, *al-Barzanji*, and so on are carried out and follow the provisions of the Islamic religion.

In al-Jabiri's view, the ethics of the Pesantren al-Maqbul are closely related to the tradition of Sufism (*Irfani*). The nuances of Irfani are evident in the tradition of the Pesantren al-Maqbul. This reality can be seen from the appreciation (award) made by al-Maqbul students to the vast *Masyakih* assembly as illustrated in *khidmah* (devotion) and *ta'dzim* (respect). *Khidmah* (devotion) and *ta'dzim* (respect) of students are sometimes carried out excessively and are challenging to understand. They still think that by doing devotion and respect to the kiai, such as cooking, cleaning the *ndalem* (kiai's home), gardening, and others, without carrying out learning activities, students can master religious sciences and benefit society if they return to their respective hometowns.

Great devotion and respect for the Kiai from the perspective of Irfani al-Jabiri's epistemology is called *al-Laduniyyah*, which is the process of acquiring knowledge experienced by a person directly without thinking, observation, scientific methods, and understanding the text (*Bayan*). This type of knowledge in the Islamic tradition is often equated with intuitive knowledge (*Israq*) or *Hudhuri* (knowledge that comes). Despite the small numbers, traditional Pesantren, including al-Maqbul, still strongly believe in this knowledge.

Departing from the theoretical elaboration developed by al-Jabiri, who divides Islamic ethical thought into four, namely: *akhlāq at-Ṭā'ah* (ethics of obedience/obedience), *akhlāq as-Sa'ādah* (ethics of happiness), illuminative ethics (*akhlāq al-Fanā'*), and ethics of self-respect (*akhlāq al-Murū'ah*), the ethical tendencies in Pesantren al-Maqbul are closer to *akhlāq at-Ṭā'ah* and *akhlāq al-Fanā'*. Through in-depth analysis, the tendency of *akhlāq at-Ṭā'ah* can be found in the respect and devotion of a santri to the kiai at the Pesantren al-Maqbul. The tendency of *akhlāq at-Ṭā'ah* can also be found in the devotion of Santri al-Maqbul to his Kiai. *Akhlāq al-Fanā'* can be found in the tradition of the santri at the Pesantren al-Maqbul.

From an axiological perspective, Pesantren al-Maqbul emphasizes Sufi values such as *khidmah* (devotion in service), *ta'dzim* (reverence), and *ta'awun* (mutual assistance) as integral components of character formation among students (*santri*). This axiological orientation reflects an *Irfani* model, where knowledge and values are acquired through the purification of the soul, spiritual closeness to the teacher, and inner, experiential practice of Islamic teachings.

A similar tradition is found in Sufi institutions in Libya, particularly within Sufi orders such as the Sanusiyyah. In these settings, spiritual values are cultivated through practices such as *dhikr* (remembrance of God), *khidmah*, and *murābaṭah* (spiritual commitment to one's teacher). Students in Libya not only seek intellectual knowledge but also undergo rigorous spiritual discipline aimed at internal transformation.²⁴

²⁴ Siti Mahmudah and Hasyim Muhammad, "Sufistic Values in Cupping Therapy from the Sufi Healing

Discussions with Libyan research partners confirm that Sufi values remain a central component in both countries' axiological framework of traditional Islamic education. Despite cultural variations, both traditions share a common educational goal: cultivating noble character and spiritual piety, rather than acquiring intellectual skills.

The Integration of Ontology, Epistemology, and Axiology in Traditional Islamic Education: A Comparative Perspective between Indonesia and Libya

The relationship of different ontological and epistemological viewpoints with educational practices at the Pesantren al-Maqbul will, in turn, lead to a particular value orientation. The views of ontology, epistemology, and axiology of education in Pesantren al-Maqbul will jointly determine the goals to be achieved in the educational process. These goals will, in turn, lead to selecting methods and particular curriculum emphases.

Differences in the philosophical beliefs of education in Islamic boarding schools will also lead to differences in the formulation of the concept of the nature of students and educators from the perspective of Pesantren al-Maqbul. One thing to note is that educators need to select, select, and develop educational practices that align with the philosophical beliefs of education. Picture 2 shows an integration of ontology, epistemology, and axiology of education in Al-Maqbul Islamic boarding school to determine educational goals.

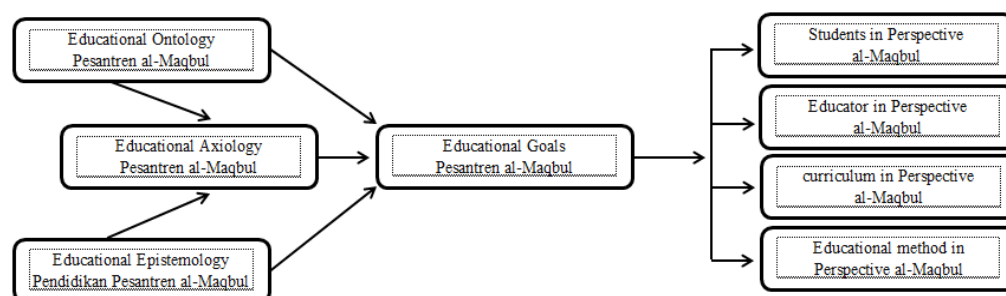


Figure 2. Integration of ontology, epistemology, and axiology of education in Pesantren al-Maqbul

It should be noted that philosophy is not the only determinant of specific educational practices. Other elements in education play a significant role in determining educational practice. For example, several factors, including political power, economic conditions, labor market demands, and social conceptions of citizens, significantly influence educational practice. Philosophy provides essential boundaries (signs) for the best educational practices for community groups. Within those limits, adjustments are made to specific situations in everyday life. Private and religious education sometimes exists when a subset of community members builds a system of philosophical underpinnings and educational boundaries that differ from the broader cultural and philosophical foundations system. In this situation, the observer hopes to find fundamental differences between the public (state) school system and the private one because they are built on different belief systems.

Integrating ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundations at Pesantren al-Maqbul produces a comprehensive and purposeful educational system. The belief that

revelation is the ultimate source of truth (ontology) directs the educational method toward the *Bayani* approach (epistemology), which in turn shapes the Sufi spiritual values embedded within the educational process (axiology). This demonstrates that the goal of education is not merely to produce intellectually capable students, but also morally and spiritually pious individuals.

Cross-national discussions reveal that this integration of the three philosophical dimensions is also evident in Islamic educational institutions in Libya. There, the philosophy of Islamic education does not exist as a separate theoretical framework but is deeply embedded in religious and social praxis. Both contexts affirm that traditional Islamic education is a comprehensive civilizational system for holistic human development.²⁵

This collaboration strengthens the argument that, although traditional Islamic education systems are often perceived as outdated, they fundamentally offer a solid, integrative, and relevant philosophical foundation to address the fragmented crisis of modern education.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the traditional Islamic education system at Pesantren al-Maqbul endures because it is supported by a holistic philosophy: a monistic ontology, a *Bayani* epistemology, and an *Irfani* axiology. These values are also found within the Islamic educational tradition in Libya, highlighting a shared philosophical foundation despite differing cultural contexts. This collaboration enriches the understanding that traditional Islamic education is not merely a legacy of the past, but a relevant system for shaping the character and spirituality of the modern individual. Therefore, strengthening the philosophical approach within Islamic education is key to maintaining its relevance and sustainability in the global era.

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²⁵ Mohammad Ridlo Masyhary and Bin Jamil, "Maqashid Sunnah as a Philosophical Foundation for Developing Progressive Islamic Education in the Digital Era," *Progresiva Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pendidikan Islam* 13, no. 01 (2024): 35–56, <https://doi.org/10.22219/progresiva.v13i01.32005>.

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