



## Toward an International Model of Islamic Boarding School: Foundational Philosophy, Curriculum Integration, and Educational Transformation

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### Abstract

The internationalization of *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) raises critical questions regarding the balance between global engagement and the preservation of Islamic epistemological and ethical foundations. This study examines how *pesantren* conceptualize and implement internationalization through curriculum integration and institutional transformation without adopting Western-centric educational models. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with *pesantren* leaders and educators, complemented by curriculum and policy document analysis. The findings reveal that internationalization is framed as a civilizational project rooted in universal Islamic philosophy (*al-'alamīyyah*), classical Islamic cosmopolitanism, integrative epistemology, and moderation (*wasathīyah*). *Pesantren* adopt dialogic, interdisciplinary, and contextual curricula that synthesize *turāṭh* with contemporary academic methodologies, rejecting the dichotomy between religious and secular knowledge. Engagement with global academic networks selectively fosters governance reform, research culture, and knowledge exchange while preserving moral and scholarly authority. This study contributes theoretically by positioning *pesantren* internationalization as a normative-critical and holistic educational model capable of bridging Islamic values with global challenges.

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## INTRODUCTION

The globalization of education has driven a paradigm shift in Islamic educational institutions, particularly Islamic boarding schools. From local-based educational institutions to potential actors in the global education ecosystem. This development is marked by increasing demands for graduates who not only have spiritual and moral depth, but also academic competence, global literacy, and the ability to adapt to the dynamics of the international world. Amidst the trend of internationalization of higher education and religious education, Islamic boarding schools are faced with the challenge of maintaining their Islamic scientific identity while meeting global education quality standards (P. G. A. and J. Knight, 2007).

In response to these challenges, a number of Islamic boarding schools have begun to initiate curriculum integration that combines classical Islamic sciences with modern science, technology, foreign languages, and 21st-century competencies. This curriculum integration is further strengthened through the development of global networks with

international universities, transnational Islamic educational institutions, and global organizations engaged in education and human resource development, although it is still partial and sporadic, and often depends on the individual initiatives of *pesantren* leaders. However, these efforts are beginning to take shape as all stakeholders mature in their thinking in facing the challenges of globalization (Azra, 1999).

This indicates that although this is still an ongoing process and requires improvements in various aspects to achieve an ideal model of *pesantren* internationalization, *pesantren* have strong social, cultural, and spiritual capital, even though most still face limitations in terms of global governance, international recognition, human resource capacity, and global-oriented pedagogical transformation. However, Islamic boarding schools have the potential to become world-class centers of Islamic education because they have a strong and sustainable regeneration system. The development of an international model of Islamic boarding schools that integrates curriculum, global networks, and educational transformation is a strategic necessity to respond to global challenges while maintaining the authenticity of Islamic values (UNESCO, 2020).

Although the discourse on the internationalization of Islamic education is growing stronger, many Islamic boarding schools still face structural problems in developing a curriculum that is conceptually and operationally integrated. The curriculum in many Islamic boarding schools tends to be fragmented between the mastery of classical Islamic sciences and the development of global competencies, so that the integration that occurs is additive rather than transformative. As a result, graduates often excel in religious aspects, but are not fully equipped with the critical thinking, global literacy, and cross-cultural skills needed in an international context. This problem highlights the absence of an integrative curriculum framework that can systematically and sustainably synergize Islamic epistemology with the demands of global education (J. Knight, 2008).

Although discussions regarding the internationalization of Islamic education are gaining momentum, many Islamic boarding schools still face structural challenges in developing a curriculum that is conceptually and operationally integrated. Among these challenges are a lack of input during coordination, programs being run by only a handful of people, and weak organizational accountability (Qori, 2020). This is because *pesantren* staff lack a background in higher formal education, particularly in the fields of science and technology, which has an impact on *pesantren* policies (Agustin et al., 2025). The curriculum in many Islamic boarding schools tends to be fragmented between the mastery of classical Islamic sciences and the development of global competencies, resulting in an integration that is piecemeal rather than transformative. As a result, graduates often excel in religious aspects but are not fully equipped with the critical thinking skills, global literacy, and cross-cultural competencies required in an international context. This issue highlights the absence of an integrative curriculum framework that can systematically and sustainably synergize Islamic epistemology with the demands of global education (J. Knight, 2008).

In addition to curriculum issues, the internationalization of Islamic boarding schools is also hampered by weak institutional and sustainable global networks. International cooperation is generally still incidental, based on short-term projects, or dependent on personal relationships between institutional leaders, without the support of a professional

global governance system. This situation makes it difficult for Islamic boarding schools to access academic exchanges, international recognition, and global education quality benchmarking. The weak managerial and international governance capacity limits the scope for transformation of Islamic boarding schools as actors in global Islamic education, despite their significant social and cultural capital (Altbact & Jamil Salmi, 2013).

Another fundamental problem lies in the limited pedagogical and institutional transformation oriented towards globalization. Many Islamic boarding schools still maintain traditional learning approaches that are less adaptive to developments in digital technology, pedagogical innovation, and international quality standards. On the other hand, strengthening human resources—especially educators with global competencies, foreign language skills, and international experience—has not been a strategic priority. This imbalance creates a gap between the vision of internationalization and the reality of implementation in the field, so that Islamic boarding schools have not been able to build a world-class Islamic education model that is integrated, adaptive, and globally competitive (Azra, 1999).

Some literature on the internationalization of Islamic education generally focuses on two main streams: first, descriptive studies on the modernization of Islamic boarding schools and their adaptation to formal national education; second, conceptual studies on the internationalization of higher education, most of which originate from the context of secular universities or Western higher education. However, there is still very limited research that specifically examines Islamic boarding schools as unique educational entities with boarding systems, Islamic scientific traditions, and holistic character building patterns within the framework of education internationalization. Furthermore, the existing literature tends to discuss curriculum, global networks, and institutional transformation separately, thus failing to explain how these three dimensions can be integrated into a coherent and applicable international *pesantren* model (J. Knight, 2008).

In addition, research on the internationalization of Islamic boarding schools generally takes the form of single case studies and is locally oriented, without any attempt to develop theoretical generalizations or conceptual models that can be replicated across contexts. The absence of an analytical framework that links the epistemology of Islamic education with global standards—such as outcome-based education, global competencies, and network governance—causes the discourse on *pesantren* internationalization to stop at the level of technical adaptation, rather than paradigmatic transformation. Thus, there is a significant gap between the potential of Islamic boarding schools as actors in global Islamic education and the contribution of scientific literature in formulating a value-based, systemic, and sustainable model of internationalization (P. G. A. and J. Knight, 2007).

This study offers conceptual novelty through the development of an International Model of Islamic Boarding School that integrates three key dimensions: (1) integration of an Islamic epistemology-based curriculum and global competencies, (2) strategies for integrating religious and general curricula in the context of the globalization of Islamic education, and (3) pedagogical and managerial transformation oriented toward internationalization without losing Islamic identity. Unlike previous studies that place internationalization as an external adoption process, this model places Islamic values as a normative foundation that

intrinsically structures the direction, objectives, and mechanisms of *pesantren* internationalization.

The urgency of this research lies in the need to formulate a *pesantren* model that is capable of responding to the demands of educational globalization without losing its Islamic identity. *Pesantren* are required not only to preserve classical Islamic scholarly traditions, but also to transform them into a cosmopolitan, integrative, and globally competitive education system. However, studies on the internationalization of *pesantren* are still partial and have not fully integrated philosophical foundations, curriculum, and pedagogical transformation. This research is important to fill this gap by offering an international *pesantren* model rooted in universal Islamic values, integration of knowledge, and religious moderation.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design conducted at several Islamic boarding schools in East Java that have demonstrated initiatives in developing the internationalization of education. The researcher selected several boarding schools through purposive sampling, namely: (1) Darullughah Wadda'wah Islamic Boarding School, which has an internationalization program through international collaborations with ribats and several universities in the Middle East; (2) Al-Yasini Islamic boarding school, which collaborates with institutions in Malaysia through student exchanges, and (3) Amanatul Ummah Pacet Islamic boarding school, which has an internationalization program through the development of scientific papers. These three Islamic boarding schools were used to gather various data related to the internationalization of *pesantren* education (Creswell, 2014). The selection of locations was carried out purposively by considering Islamic boarding schools that had implemented the integration of Islamic and general curricula, the strengthening of global competencies (such as foreign languages and international literacy), and involvement in cross-border cooperation networks (Meleong, 2017). Research data were collected through in-depth interviews with *pesantren* caregivers, educational institution leaders, curriculum administrators, and educators; participatory observation of learning practices and boarding systems; and analysis of institutional documents, including curricula, internationalization policies, and global cooperation agreements. At each site, the researchers conducted interviews with seven informants, bringing the total number of informants in this study to twenty-one (Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, 2018). This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the contextual dynamics of Islamic boarding schools in East Java as a basis for developing an international model.

Data analysis was conducted thematically through within-case and cross-case analysis to identify patterns of curriculum integration, strategies for strengthening global networks, and forms of pedagogical and institutional transformation that developed in each *pesantren*. The analysis process followed the stages of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing to produce systematic and reflective interpretations (Miles et al., 1994). Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources and methods, member checking, and peer debriefing to enhance the credibility and dependability of the findings (Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, 2018). The research findings were then synthesized into a conceptual framework of the International Model of Islamic Boarding School, which is

rooted in *pesantren* practices in East Java but has theoretical and applicative reach in the context of global Islamic education.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Philosophical Basis for the Internationalization of *Pesantren* Education

The internationalization of *pesantren* education is deeply rooted in the universal philosophical view of Islam (al-‘ālamīyah). The universality of Islam is reflected in educational and social practices that emphasize universal human values such as compassion, justice, and social responsibility, which are applied inclusively without distinction based on religious or cultural background. Leaders view Islam not merely as a local or cultural religion, but as a global value system that is relevant across space and time. The principle of rahmatan lil ‘ālamīn is the main foundation in formulating the vision of internationalization, which is understood as an effort to provide Islamic boarding school education that can contribute to world civilization without losing its Islamic and Indonesian identity. In practice, this philosophy encourages Islamic boarding schools to open themselves to global dialogue, academic exchange, and adaptation to international standards of higher education.

The internationalization of Islamic boarding schools is also based on the philosophy of integrating classical Islamic knowledge with modern science. The philosophy of knowledge integration in Islamic boarding schools is realized through an integrated curriculum that links classical Islamic studies (kitab kuning) with modern sciences such as science, social studies, and technology, so that students understand knowledge as a unity that originates from the value of tawhid. Islamic boarding school leaders and academics reject the dichotomy between religious knowledge and general knowledge, emphasizing that both are manifestations of one source of divine knowledge. This philosophy forms the basis for the development of an international curriculum that combines *pesantren* traditions, global academic methodologies, and interdisciplinary approaches. Internationalization, therefore, is not interpreted as Westernization, but rather as an epistemological process to broaden the scientific horizons of *pesantren* students and graduates.

The philosophical basis for the internationalization of Islamic boarding schools rests on the cosmopolitan scientific ethos of classical Islam, namely a scientific tradition that integrates revelation, reason, and empirical experience and encourages openness to cross-cultural and cross-civilizational knowledge. Informants refer to the tradition of earlier scholars who undertook scientific journeys across countries and cultures as a historical model for the internationalization of Islamic education. The values of intellectual openness, respect for differences in madhhab, and commitment to the search for truth are philosophical principles that have been revived in the contemporary context. College-based Islamic boarding schools interpret internationalization as a continuation of the Islamic intellectual tradition, which has always been transnational and dialogical in nature.

The internationalization of Islamic boarding schools is also based on the philosophy of moderation (wasathiyah) and global Islamic ethics, which have been empirically tested in various contemporary Islamic boarding school educational practices. A number of studies show that Islamic boarding schools that integrate wasathiyah values into their curriculum, pedagogy, and institutional culture tend to produce graduates with higher levels of social

tolerance, cultural openness, and interfaith dialogue skills compared to religious educational institutions with a narrow doctrinal orientation. Empirically, deliberative learning practices, the strengthening of contextual Islamic literacy, and the interaction of santri with international academic networks have been proven to contribute to the formation of global ethical awareness without eroding their Islamic identity. The philosophy of *wasathiyah* serves as a normative foundation and operational framework in responding to the challenges of globalization, religious extremism, and the global moral crisis, emphasizing a balance between text and context, tradition and modernity, as well as religious commitment and universal humanitarian responsibility. In this context, the internationalization of *pesantren* education is not merely interpreted as institutional expansion or cross-border cooperation, but as a transformative pedagogical strategy that has been empirically proven to be capable of building santri with a global outlook, adaptable to plurality, and strongly rooted in the values of inclusive Islamic morals and *rahmatan lil 'alamin*.

The results of the above study show that the philosophical basis of *pesantren* education internationalization is normative-transformative, not merely pragmatic-instrumental. Internationalization is understood as a civilizational effort to transform *pesantren* into centers of Islamic knowledge, values, and ethics that contribute to global discourse. *Pesantren* adopt a philosophy of balance between *ḥifẓ al-turāṭ* and *tajdīd*, consistently maintaining the teaching of classical Islamic texts, the scientific authority of *kiai*, and the unique pedagogical traditions of *pesantren*, while simultaneously integrating international curricula through the synergy between *pesantren* and the universities within them. The strengthening of foreign languages and modern learning methodologies are an integral part of the learning process. This philosophy does not erode the identity of *pesantren*, but rather strengthens their role as Islamic educational institutions that are relevant at the global level.

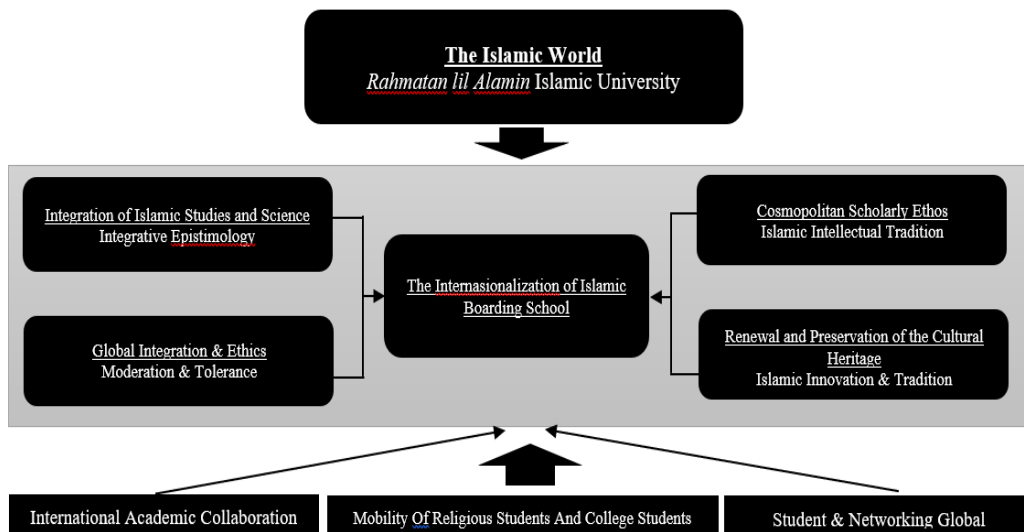


Figure 1. The Philosophical Framework

The above findings show that *pesantren* leaders consistently narrate internationalization as an extension of Islam's universal mission (*al-'alamiyyah*), which positions *pesantren* as actors of global civilization, not merely local educational institutions

(Bakar, 2014). Internationalization is understood not as imitation of the West, but as an expression of communal responsibility in a pluralistic and competitive global space (Fikri, 2018). Islamic boarding schools are positioned as active subjects capable of engaging in dialogue with world civilizations without losing their Islamic identity. In this perspective, the locality of *pesantren* is not negated, but rather used as a cultural foundation for building meaningful global engagement (Harmathilda et al., 2024). This finding reinforces the argument that the principle of *rahmatan lil 'ālamīn* does not stop at the normative-theological level, but is operationalized in institutional vision, academic policy, and the strengthening of international networks. Internationalization thus functions as a medium for articulating universal Islamic values in a diverse global context (Wangsa, 2019). This view is in line with the idea of Islamic cosmopolitanism, which places education as an instrument of civilizational dialogue (Kamali, 2015).

The integration of classical Islamic studies and modern science in the global era is no longer merely ideological discourse, but is concretely manifested in the curriculum design, learning structure, and academic policies of college-based Islamic boarding schools (P. G. A. and J. Knight, 2007). The development of foreign language courses, interdisciplinary research collaboration, and the strengthening of international academic literacy are key strategies in this process. Informants emphasized that students are encouraged to study *turāṭ* books using modern academic methodological approaches, including critical, historical, and contextual analysis. This practice reflects a conscious effort to synergize 'aqlī and naqlī arguments in an integrative manner. This approach demonstrates a clear rejection of the dichotomy between religious and general knowledge as criticized in the theory of unity of knowledge (al Faruqi, 1992). These findings also reinforce Sodikin's research results, which emphasize the importance of developing the dimensions of knowing, doing, meaning, sensing, and being in the study of *turāṭ* in order to remain relevant to the challenges of the times (Sodikin, & Sirojuddin, 2022). Thus, internationalization functions as a space for transformative epistemological reorientation (Shattock, 2017).

In the epistemological dimension, field findings show a relatively stable balance between preserving textual authority, strengthening scientific rationality, and fostering spirituality. *Pesantren* continue to maintain the study of classical texts as a source of classical scientific legitimacy and transmission of scientific authority (Dhofier, 2011). At the same time, students are encouraged to develop empirical data-based research, scientific methodologies, and rational arguments that are academically accountable (Choirunnisa, 2016). In addition, the internalization of ethical and spiritual values remains an integral part of the educational process. This practice demonstrates a concrete synthesis between the normative, rational, and spiritual dimensions of *pesantren* education. These findings are in line with Abid al-Jabiri's Trilog of Arab Reason: *bayānī*, *burhānī*, and *'irfānī* (Al-Jabiri, 2011). This analysis confirms that the internationalization of *pesantren* does not give rise to epistemic fragmentation, but rather strengthens a holistic and integrative model of Islamic scholarship (M. A. Abdullah, 2006).

However, concerns about the risk of Westernization of values in the process of internationalization remain an important discourse among *pesantren* administrators. These concerns are mainly related to the penetration of secular epistemology, academic pragmatism,

and the reduction of spiritual values in global higher education (P. G. A. and J. Knight, 2007). The response to these concerns is manifested through a strong emphasis on moral education, academic manners, and Islamic global ethics as the foundation of all international activities (Al-Attas, 1993). The informants explicitly emphasized that international cooperation should not sacrifice the values of santri manners for the sake of institutional reputation. This narrative directly reflects Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas' idea of loss of manners as the main crisis of modern education (Syed Naquib al-Attas, 1995). Thus, the internationalization of Islamic boarding schools can be understood as a practice of ta'dīb that places manners as the main orientation. Internationalization is not positioned as a goal, but rather as a means of shaping civilized human beings (Daud, 1998).

In addition, field evidence shows that internationalization opens up an increasingly broad space for interdisciplinary epistemological dialogue. *Pesantren* lecturers and students are reported to actively participate in international academic forums that bring together Islamic studies and contemporary global issues. Issues such as environmental sustainability, digital ethics, world peace, and social justice have become new fields of dialogue for Islamic studies in Islamic boarding schools. This phenomenon indicates a shift in the scientific orientation of Islamic boarding schools from inward-looking to outward-looking. These findings reinforce the paradigm of integration-interconnection that emphasizes dialogue between religious and general knowledge (A. Abdullah, 2006). In this framework, internationalization serves as a medium for scientific transformation that broadens the intellectual horizons of Islamic boarding schools. Islamic boarding schools are not only consumers of global discourse but also producers of knowledge based on Islamic values (UNESCO, 2020).

Furthermore, explicit references to the tradition of *riḥlah ʿilmiyyah* (scholarly journeys) of classical scholars are used as historical justification for contemporary internationalization practices. Islamic boarding school leaders view cross-border academic mobility as a continuation of the Islamic intellectual tradition, which has always been cosmopolitan in nature. The scholarly journeys of classical scholars across regions are understood as the historical foundation for the exchange of knowledge. This finding confirms that internationalization is not a foreign phenomenon in Islamic tradition. On the contrary, it is a revitalization of the value of Islamic cosmopolitanism in the modern global context. This analysis is in line with Osman Bakar's view, which affirms cosmopolitanism as an inherent characteristic of Islamic civilization (Bakar, 2014). Thus, the internationalization of Islamic boarding schools is understood as a continuation of tradition, not a disruption of values.

The internationalization of Islamic boarding schools aimed at fostering social sensitivity and global moral responsibility reflects the essential goal of Islamic education, which emphasizes the formation of civilized human beings (ta'dīb), rather than merely the accumulation of knowledge or academic reputation (Al-Attas, 1980), and is in line with research findings that affirm that contemporary Islamic education must be oriented towards strengthening global ethics and social justice (DeCuir, 2019). This orientation is intertwined with the idea of Islamization of knowledge, which places education as a means of social transformation and a normative response to global humanitarian crises such as intolerance, structural inequality, and moral degradation (Al-Faruqi, 1982). From a pedagogical

perspective, the internationalization of Islamic boarding schools requires students to critically and contextually discuss Islamic normative values with the dynamic global reality, as emphasized in Fazlur Rahman's double movement approach, which is widely used in progressive Islamic education studies (Fajlur Rahman, 1984). The involvement of Islamic boarding schools in the global arena requires epistemological openness, cross-cultural and interfaith dialogue, and the ability to nurture plurality as an ethical capital for world peace, as demonstrated in studies on Islamic education and religious pluralism (Sorouseh, 2000). This overall orientation resonates strongly with the concept of prophetic social science, which positions education as a praxis of humanization, liberation, and transcendence, and affirms the role of Islamic boarding schools as agents of social and moral transformation in a global context (Kuntowijoyo, 1991).

(J. Knight, 2008). Based on the data presented above, the internationalization of *pesantren* education based on higher education is an epistemological and civilizational project that is empirically valid and theoretically sound. This process does not erode the identity of *pesantren*, but rather reinforces their role as adaptive, reflective, and future-oriented Islamic educational institutions. *Pesantren* are able to balance *ḥifẓ al-turāṭ* and *tajdīd* within a dynamic scientific framework. Internationalization serves as a medium for articulating Islamic values in the global discourse on education. With a strong epistemological foundation, *pesantren* do not merely follow the tide of globalization, but also help shape its direction and ethics. These findings confirm the strategic position of Islamic boarding schools in the contemporary global Islamic education map (J. Knight, 2008).

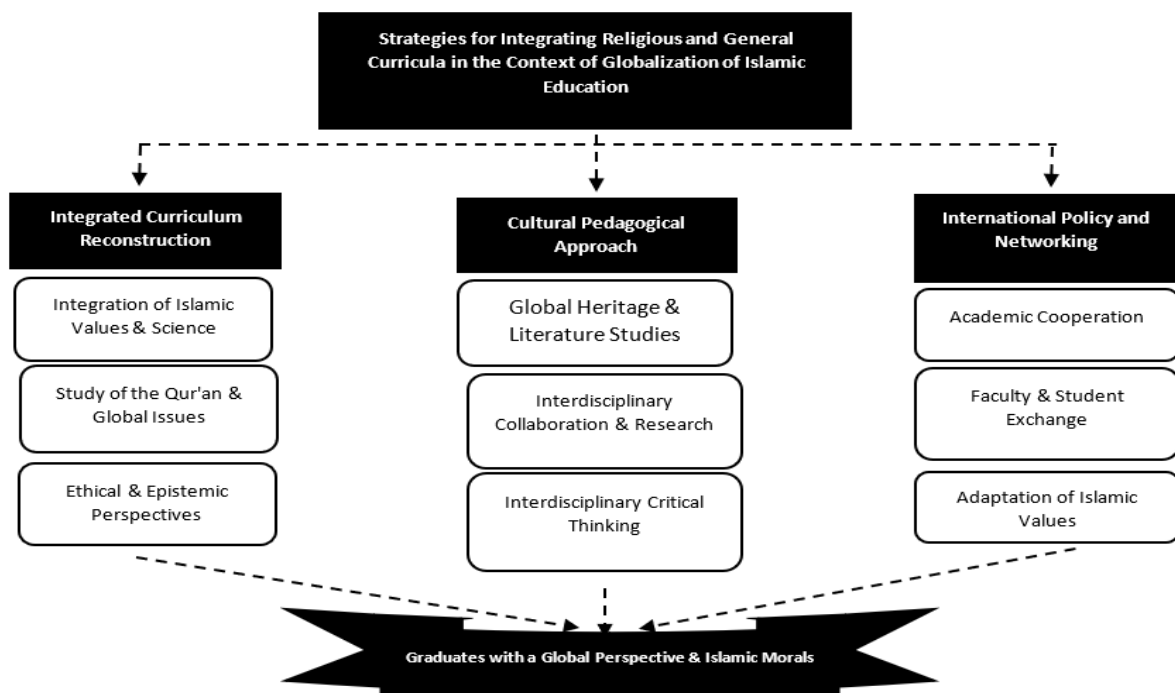
### **Strategies for Integrating Religious and General Curricula in the Context of the Globalization of Islamic Education**

Strategies for integrating religious and non-religious curricula in Islamic boarding schools are carried out through the reconstruction of curriculum designs that reject the structural separation between Islamic and general courses. Curriculum managers emphasize that integration is realized by placing Islamic values as an ethical and epistemological framework for all disciplines, not merely as separate courses. Empirically, this is evident in the development of interdisciplinary courses that link the study of the Qur'an, hadith, and fiqh with global issues such as science, technology, economics, and humanity. This strategy shows that the globalization of Islamic education is not responded to by adopting a secular curriculum, but rather by reinterpreting an integrated curriculum that broadens the scientific horizons of santri and students without eliminating their Islamic identity.

Field data reveals that the integration of religious and general curricula is carried out through contextual and dialogical pedagogical approaches. Lecturers and boarding school supervisors report using learning methods that encourage students to read classical religious texts (*turāṭ*) alongside global academic literature, and to relate them to actual problems in international society. This practice is evident in research assignments, class discussions, and collaborative projects that require students to integrate normative Islamic perspectives with empirical and critical approaches. Take the understanding of prayer, for example. Students attempt to explain the arguments for prayer from the Qur'an and Hadith as well as the opinions of fiqh scholars. After understanding prayer normatively, students then explain prayer through scientific analysis. The results of the observation reveal that students are able

to explain the obligation of prayer scientifically because prayer plays a major role in human needs, both biologically and psychologically. This strategy shows that curriculum integration does not stop at the content level, but also touches on the methodological dimension, so that santri and students are equipped with interdisciplinary thinking skills that are relevant to the demands of educational globalization.

The strategy of integrating religious and general curricula in the context of the globalization of Islamic education is also reinforced through institutional policies and international networks. Institutional leaders explain that academic cooperation with foreign universities is utilized as a means of curriculum enrichment, lecturer exchanges, and academic benchmarking, while maintaining the framework of Islamic values. Empirically, the internationalization of this curriculum encourages the emergence of graduates who are not only globally competent academically, but also have strong ethical and spiritual awareness. These findings confirm that the integration of religious and general curricula is positioned as an adaptive-transformative strategy in the face of globalization, which enables Islamic education to contribute substantively to the global education discourse without losing its Islamic character.



**Figure 2. Strategies for Integrating Religious and General Curricula**

Field findings mapped through the conceptual framework of curriculum integration show that the strategy of integrating religion and general knowledge in Islamic education cannot be reduced to a mere technical pedagogical policy. Instead, this integration represents an epistemological project that consciously departs from a fundamental critique of the long-standing dualism of knowledge that constructs a separation between religious and secular knowledge. The integration practices identified in college-based Islamic boarding schools demonstrate a systematic effort to build an alternative scientific paradigm, in which Islamic

values are positioned as a cross-disciplinary normative foundation. These findings affirm the thesis that the internationalization of Islamic education requires a paradigmatic epistemological repositioning, not merely a structural adaptation to technocratic global standards (Al-Attas, 1995).

Empirical analysis reveals that curriculum integration is based on an explicit rejection of the dichotomy between religious and secular knowledge that has long dominated modern education systems. Curriculum administrators and lecturers view modern science as a value-laden construction of knowledge, requiring an Islamic ethical and theological framework to ensure that its orientation remains consistent with the principle of human welfare. This perspective resonates with the concept of unity of knowledge, which affirms the ontological and epistemological unity of all branches of knowledge within the framework of tawhid, while challenging the claim of epistemic neutrality of modern Western science (Al-Faruqi, 1982).

The integration of Islamic values and science identified in the field also reflects a significant shift in the way Islamic texts are positioned in the curriculum. The Qur'an and hadith are not merely taught as normative-doctrinal sources, but are operationalized as ethical and hermeneutical frameworks for reading and responding to contemporary global issues, such as environmental crises, social inequality, and the challenges of digital technology. This practice marks the adoption of a contextual and transformative approach, which views Islam as a dynamic value system that interacts critically with global realities, rather than as a static tradition isolated from social change. (Kuntowijoyo, 1991).

From a pedagogical perspective, field findings show that curriculum integration is realized through dialogical and interdisciplinary learning strategies. Lecturers encourage students to study classical Islamic *turāt* in parallel with global academic literature, and to relate it to current social issues. This practice reflects the integration of the Arab trilogy of reasoning—*bayani*, *burhani*, and *irfani*—as formulated by Abid al-Jabiri, which enables the formation of critical, rational, and reflective thinking patterns. Thus, curriculum integration not only enriches scientific content but also transforms students' intellectual habitus in contemporary Islamic education (Al-Jabiri, 2011).

Curriculum integration is also implemented through the strengthening of collaborative research and academic assignments based on global issues. Students are required to integrate normative Islamic approaches with modern scientific methodologies in their research and academic projects. These findings indicate that curriculum integration contributes significantly to improving the global academic literacy of Islamic education graduates, while strengthening their capacity to participate competitively in the international academic arena without losing their value orientation (Shattock, 2017).

At the institutional level, curriculum internationalization is carried out through selective, value-based global academic networks. This approach is in line with studies on higher education internationalization that emphasize the importance of value-based partnerships and strategic selectivity in global cooperation, especially for non-Western institutions (P. G. A. and J. Knight, 2007). International cooperation is not interpreted as the direct adoption of a global curriculum model, but rather as a process of critical benchmarking against international quality standards—such as learning outcomes, qualification

frameworks, pedagogical approaches, and academic quality assurance practices—which in the literature are understood as reflective mechanisms for institutional quality improvement, not homogeneous convergence (Berings, 2015). The results of the benchmarking are then analyzed in terms of the curriculum to identify elements that are compatible with the vision of Islamic education and the local needs of the institution, in accordance with a context-based curriculum analysis approach and institutional mission (Sterling et al., 2024). Thus, benchmarking serves as an instrument for strengthening academic quality without sacrificing the epistemological autonomy of Islamic educational institutions (Al-Attas, 1993).

Based on this institutional framework, curriculum analysis shows that international enrichment is implemented through curriculum structure adjustments, integration of global issues into core courses, and strengthening of interdisciplinary and research dimensions. This strategy is in line with the literature on curriculum internationalization, which emphasizes the importance of substantive integration of global content, rather than merely symbolic integration (Shattock, 2017). Curricula are not only compared at the formal structural level, but also at the epistemic level, namely how knowledge is produced, validated, and directed towards specific ethical goals. This approach reflects a critical attitude towards the epistemological assumptions of global education, which often neglect the dimensions of local values and contexts (M. A. Abdullah, 2006). Through this process, Islamic educational institutions are able to adopt global best practices—such as outcome-based education, collaborative research, and internationalization of content—while filtering and recontextualizing them through an Islamic epistemological framework (Bakar, 2014).

At the systemic level, analysis of conceptual maps and field evidence shows that successful curriculum integration depends heavily on synergy between curriculum design, pedagogical practices, and institutional policies. Integration that focuses on only one dimension risks producing symbolic and unsustainable change. These findings reinforce the argument that the transformation of Islamic education in the context of globalization must be understood as a holistic and long-term process, involving simultaneous changes in academic culture, institutional governance, and learning practices (Fullan & Scott, 2014).

From an educational perspective, the main impact of the identified curriculum integration strategy is the production of graduates who not only have global standard academic competencies, but also strong ethical and spiritual awareness. Graduates are positioned as professional actors as well as moral subjects who are able to link their scientific expertise with social responsibility and human values. This finding is in line with the prophetic social science paradigm proposed by Kuntowijoyo, which emphasizes the integration of science, prophetic values, and social praxis as the main objectives of Islamic education (Kuntowijoyo, 1991).

Critically, this overall analysis confirms that the integration of religious and general science curricula in Islamic education is a form of transformative adaptation to globalization, not a compromise of identity. Integration serves as a mechanism for strengthening Islamic epistemology in the global academic sphere, while offering an alternative model of internationalization of education that is civilized, value-based, and universally relevant. Thus, the findings of this study contribute theoretically to the development of a non-dualistic

scientific paradigm and practically to the formulation of policies for the internationalization of Islamic education curricula at the global level (M. A. Abdullah, 2006).

### **Transforming Islamic Boarding School Education Towards an International Model Through Global Networking**

The transformation of *pesantren* education towards an international model begins with the development of a strategic and selective global network. Leaders of university-based *pesantren* actively establish academic cooperation with foreign universities, international research institutions, and networks of global Muslim scholars and intellectuals. This cooperation includes faculty and student exchanges, joint research programs, and joint curriculum development. Informants emphasized that global networks are seen as a means to improve the academic quality and international visibility of Islamic boarding schools, not as a form of passive adoption of foreign education models.

These findings reveal that global networks serve as a medium for the transfer of knowledge, methodology, and international academic culture into the Islamic boarding school ecosystem. Through participation in international conferences, joint publications, and cross-border scientific forums, lecturers and students gain direct exposure to global academic standards, including research ethics, scientific writing, and interdisciplinary approaches. Informants in the field assessed that this process encourages significant changes in the academic thinking of students, from a local-normative orientation to a global-critical perspective without abandoning Islamic values.

The transformation towards an international model through global networks also has an impact on the institutional governance of Islamic boarding schools. Islamic boarding schools have begun to adopt good university governance practices such as academic transparency, quality assurance, and international accreditation as prerequisites for participation in global networks. However, informants emphasized that this adoption was carried out contextually while maintaining the leadership structure characteristic of Islamic boarding schools. In this case, global networks act as catalysts for adaptive institutional reform, rather than as a mechanism for homogenization.

These findings show that global networks contribute to the rearticulation of *pesantren* identity in the international educational landscape. *Pesantren* are no longer positioned solely as local religious educational institutions, but as intellectual actors who contribute to the global discourse on Islam, education, and civilization. Informants view this transformation as a form of dialogical and reciprocal internationalization, in which Islamic boarding schools are not only recipients of global influences, but also producers of Islamic knowledge and values that are relevant to the international community.

The findings of this transformation model show that the internationalization of *pesantren* education through global networks is a paradigmatic change that goes beyond administrative and symbolic aspects. This transformation marks the shift of *pesantren* from local religious educational institutions to global Islamic educational actors that are actively involved in the circulation of international knowledge. Global networks are positioned as a strategic medium for expanding the epistemic space of Islamic boarding schools without detaching them from their Islamic values and classical scholarly traditions. In this context, internationalization is understood as an epistemic and cultural process, not merely a

reputational strategy. These findings confirm that Islamic boarding schools interpret globalization as an opportunity for constructive civilizational dialogue (Syed Naquib al- Attas, 1995).

Analysis of global academic cooperation practices shows that international networks serve as instruments for improving the academic quality of Islamic boarding schools. Faculty and student exchanges, collaborative research, and joint curriculum development encourage the internalization of global academic standards into the *pesantren* system. However, field findings confirm that such cooperation is carried out selectively and based on values so as not to result in the wholesale imitation of Western models. Internationalization is understood as an equal and reflective epistemic dialogue. This approach strengthens the academic autonomy of *pesantren* in the global arena (Shattock, 2017).

Global networks have also proven to be a means of transferring academic knowledge and culture that has a direct impact on transforming the way of thinking of *pesantren* communities. Exposure to international research practices, reputable publications, and global scientific forums encourages a shift in academic orientation from a normative-textual approach to a critical and reflective approach. This transformation is evident in the increased analytical and argumentative abilities of *pesantren* students. Thus, global networks serve as a catalyst for strengthening a critical academic culture. These findings are in line with the integration of bayani, burhani, and irfani reasoning (Al-Jabiri, 2011).

From an epistemological perspective, field findings show that the transformation of Islamic boarding schools through global networks strengthens the integration between Islamic and modern sciences. *Pesantren* no longer position science and social sciences as external entities, but rather as fields of scientific *ijtihad* that need to be guided by the values of tawhid and Islamic ethics. This approach affirms the ontological unity of knowledge in Islam. Internationalization actually expands the space for epistemic integration, rather than deepening the fragmentation of knowledge. This is in line with the principle of unity of knowledge (al Faruqi, 1992).

Pedagogical transformation has become an important dimension in the identified model. Global networks encourage the adoption of dialogic, research-based, and problem-oriented learning methods that require Islamic boarding school students to relate Islamic texts to global realities. This approach contributes to the development of critical thinking and global literacy skills. In addition, learning is no longer memorization-oriented, but rather focused on the production of meaning and solutions. These findings indicate a shift in the pedagogical paradigm towards transformative education (Fullan & Scott, 2014).

In the institutional realm, field findings show that global networks have triggered reforms in *pesantren* governance towards a more professional and accountable model. The application of good university governance principles such as academic transparency and quality assurance has become a prerequisite for global engagement. However, these reforms remain contextualized within the unique leadership structure of Islamic boarding schools. Modernization is not interpreted as institutional secularization. Thus, Islamic boarding schools are able to maintain their moral authority while increasing their global competitiveness (A. Abdullah, 2006).

Critical analysis shows that global networks not only have an impact on structural aspects, but also on the rearticulation of *pesantren* identity. *Pesantren* have begun to position themselves as producers of globally relevant Islamic knowledge. This identity is reflected in the contribution of *pesantren* to the discourse on Islamic moderation, global ethics, and values-based education (Nasution, 2023). Global networks open up space for identity affirmation, not erosion of tradition. These findings reinforce the role of Islamic boarding schools in the discourse of contemporary Islamic civilization (Bakar, 2014).

However, field findings also reveal potential tensions in this transformation process. Integrating global standards with *pesantren* traditions requires a high degree of adaptability, especially in terms of human resources and academic culture. Without a strong philosophical framework, internationalization risks becoming symbolic and instrumental. Therefore, visionary leadership is a key factor in the success of this transformation. These findings confirm the criticism of hegemonic globalization in education (Syed Naquib al- Attas, 2019).

The long-term impact of transformation through global networks is the emergence of Islamic boarding school graduates with dual identities: strongly rooted in Islamic tradition while also competent in the global arena. Graduates are not only projected as professionals, but also as ethical and intellectual agents. They are expected to be able to bridge Islamic values with the challenges of globalization. This finding is in line with the prophetic science paradigm that emphasizes social transformation. Thus, Islamic boarding schools contribute to the development of a civilized global civilization (Kuntowijoyo, 1991).

This analysis confirms that the transformation of Islamic boarding school education towards an international model through global networks is a transformative adaptation that is normative-critical in nature. Global networks do not function as a mechanism for homogenization, but as a space for civilizational dialogue. This model enables Islamic boarding schools to expand their contribution to global education and scholarship. With a strong epistemic foundation, Islamic boarding schools can become global actors without losing their identity. This model offers an alternative for the sustainable internationalization of Islamic education (Al-Faruqi, 1982).

## CONCLUSION

Based on research findings, the internationalization of Islamic boarding school education is a process of epistemological, pedagogical, and institutional transformation that is deeply rooted in the universal philosophical foundations of Islam (al-‘ālamīyah). Internationalization is understood as a civilizational effort that positions Islamic boarding schools as global intellectual actors through the principles of rahmatan lil ‘ālamīn, the integration of Islamic and modern knowledge, classical Islamic cosmopolitanism, moderation (wasathiyah), and global Islamic ethics. The strategy of integrating religious and general science curricula is carried out substantively through a dialogical, interdisciplinary, and contextual approach that synergizes Islamic turāṭ with modern academic methodologies, rejects the dichotomy of knowledge, and produces graduates with global academic competence as well as strong ethical and spiritual awareness. The transformation of *pesantren* education towards an international model through global networks serves as a catalyst for improving academic quality, reforming governance, and strengthening the identity of

*pesantren* in the global arena. International networks are selectively utilized for knowledge transfer, internalization of global academic standards, and strengthening of research culture without sacrificing moral authority and scientific tradition. Thus, Islamic boarding schools do not become objects of globalization, but rather active and reflective subjects of civilizational dialogue, producing graduates with dual identities: strongly rooted in Islamic values while also competent in the global arena. This model emphasizes transformative, normative-critical, and holistic adaptation that is relevant to the development of sustainable, inclusive, and civilized internationalization of Islamic education. However, this study has several limitations that should be noted, particularly because it focuses on a specific context in a few selected *pesantren*, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to *pesantren* with different characteristics. Furthermore, the dynamics of global challenges, such as geopolitical factors, digital transformation, and policy constraints have not been comprehensively analyzed, and the perspectives of key stakeholders, particularly students and global partners, have not been fully accommodated.

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