

Reorienting the epistemology of research in Islamic studies: Critiquing the dominance of modern methodology through the Islamic scholarly *manhaj*

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Abstract

The dominance of modern research methodology in Islamic studies has improved academic research quality but tends to position research methods as the starting point of inquiry, leaving the epistemological foundation rooted in the Islamic scholarly *manhaj* insufficiently addressed. This study aims to examine the dominance of modern research methodology in Islamic studies and formulate an epistemological reorientation from the perspective of the Islamic scholarly *manhaj*. A qualitative conceptual research design was employed using document analysis, conceptual analysis, comparative analysis, and conceptual synthesis of literature on Islamic epistemology and modern philosophy of science. The findings indicate that the primary challenge in Islamic studies lies not in the choice of research methods but in the epistemological paradigm underlying their application. This study proposes a conceptual framework that positions the Islamic scholarly *manhaj* as the foundation for selecting research methods through the integration of the *Islamic Worldview*, Islamic sources of knowledge, epistemological structure, and the *Integration–Interconnection* paradigm, thereby contributing to the development of a more integrative and contextually grounded research methodology for Islamic studies.

Keywords: Epistemology; Islamic studies; Islamic scholarly *manhaj*; Research methodology; *Islamic Worldview*.

Abstrak

Dominasi metodologi penelitian modern dalam studi Islam telah meningkatkan kualitas akademik penelitian, tetapi cenderung menempatkan metode penelitian sebagai titik awal proses ilmiah sehingga fondasi epistemologis yang berakar pada *manhaj* keilmuan Islam belum memperoleh perhatian yang memadai. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis dominasi metodologi penelitian modern dalam studi Islam serta merumuskan reorientasi epistemologi melalui perspektif *manhaj* keilmuan Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain penelitian konseptual melalui studi dokumentasi serta analisis konseptual, komparatif, dan sintesis terhadap literatur mengenai epistemologi Islam dan filsafat ilmu modern. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa persoalan utama dalam studi Islam tidak terletak pada pemilihan metode penelitian, melainkan pada paradigma epistemologis yang melandasi penggunaannya. Penelitian ini menawarkan suatu kerangka konseptual yang menempatkan *manhaj* keilmuan Islam sebagai fondasi dalam menentukan metode penelitian melalui integrasi *Islamic Worldview*, sumber-sumber pengetahuan Islam, struktur epistemologi, dan paradigma *Integration–Interconnection*. Kerangka tersebut diharapkan dapat memperkaya pengembangan metodologi penelitian studi Islam yang lebih integratif, kontekstual, dan selaras dengan karakteristik epistemologi Islam.

Kata Kunci: Epistemologi; Studi Islam; *Manhaj* keilmuan Islam; Metodologi penelitian; *Islamic Worldview*.

Introduction

Research serves as a fundamental instrument in the advancement of scientific knowledge because it provides a systematic means of generating, testing, and developing knowledge (Lederman & Lederman, 2019). In contemporary academic practice, modern research methodology has become the prevailing standard across nearly all academic disciplines, including Islamic studies (Adiyono et al., 2024). Various approaches, such as qualitative research, quantitative research, mixed methods, and library research, have evolved within the tradition of modern philosophy of science, which emphasizes systematic inquiry, objectivity, and scientific validity. Consequently, discussions of research in Islamic studies have tended to focus on the selection of research designs, methods, and analytical techniques rather than on examining the epistemological paradigms underlying the use of those methods. This tendency suggests that research methodology is often positioned as the starting point of the research process, even though every method is fundamentally grounded in particular epistemological assumptions concerning the nature of knowledge and the means through which it is acquired.

The dominance of modern research methodology has made a significant contribution to enhancing the academic quality of research in Islamic studies, particularly in terms of systematic procedures, procedural transparency, and scholarly accountability (Sarabioda et al., 2025). Nevertheless, its application also raises important concerns when employed to investigate Islamic subject matter, which encompasses not only empirical and historical dimensions but also normative, philosophical, and transcendental ones. Modern epistemological paradigms generally regard empirical experience and rationality as the primary sources of knowledge (Bowden, 2019), whereas the Islamic scholarly tradition recognizes *wahy* (revelation) as an authoritative source of knowledge with epistemological legitimacy (Syafaq et al., 2023). This difference in orientation indicates that modern research methodology has not yet fully accommodated the distinctive characteristics of the Islamic sciences. Consequently, the central issue in Islamic studies research extends beyond the selection of research methods to the epistemological paradigm that underpins their application.

Against this background, it is necessary to reposition epistemology as the foundation for understanding research methodology in Islamic studies. From its earliest development, the Islamic scholarly tradition has established the concept of *manhaj* as an epistemological framework governing the sources of knowledge, the processes of knowledge acquisition, and the objectives of intellectual development (Syarip et al., 2026). From this perspective, research methods should not be understood as autonomous technical procedures but rather as logical consequences of the epistemological paradigm upon which they are founded. Such a reorientation is essential to ensure that the application of modern research methodologies remains

consistent with the epistemological characteristics of Islam while continuing to satisfy contemporary academic standards. Accordingly, the dialogue between modern epistemology and the classical Islamic intellectual tradition should be directed toward developing a conceptual framework capable of integrating both perspectives proportionately within the advancement of research in Islamic studies.

Research on epistemology and research methodology in Islamic studies has been conducted from a variety of perspectives. Bonaccorsi (2022) demonstrated that modern research methodology enhances the academic quality of research through more systematic and rigorous procedures but remains predominantly oriented toward technical aspects, leaving the discussion of epistemological foundations relatively underdeveloped. Fakhurrozi et al. (2024) found that integrating Islamic sciences with modern disciplines broadens research perspectives and encourages the development of more contextual approaches; however, their study continued to emphasize research methods without clarifying the hierarchical relationship among epistemology, *manhaj*, and research methodology. Likewise, Rahmani et al. (2026) emphasized the importance of reconstructing Islamic research methodology through the integration of revelation, reason, and empirical experience but did not formulate a conceptual framework that explicitly positions the Islamic scholarly *manhaj* as the epistemological foundation for selecting research methods.

In light of these gaps, this study aims to analyze the dominance of modern research methodology in Islamic studies from an epistemological perspective and to formulate a reorientation of research through the Islamic scholarly *manhaj*. This article argues that the fundamental challenge in Islamic studies research does not stem from the limitations of modern research methods themselves but rather from the tendency to regard methodology as the starting point of scientific inquiry without first reflecting upon the epistemological paradigm that underlies it. The significance of this study lies in its effort to develop a conceptual framework that repositions the Islamic scholarly *manhaj* as the epistemological foundation for selecting research methods, thereby enabling research in Islamic studies to meet contemporary academic standards while preserving the distinctive characteristics of Islamic epistemology. Such a framework is expected to enrich scholarly discourse on research methodology and provide a conceptual foundation for developing Islamic studies that are more integrative, critical, and oriented toward the realization of *maṣlahah*.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using a conceptual research design to develop a framework for the reorientation of research epistemology in Islamic studies through the perspective of the Islamic scholarly *manhaj*. Conceptual research focuses on constructing theoretical arguments through the critical analysis of concepts, theories, and paradigms that have evolved within a particular field of inquiry, thereby

producing a conceptual synthesis that contributes to theoretical development. Jaakkola (2020) emphasized that conceptual research extends beyond describing existing theories by developing relationships among concepts to generate new conceptual frameworks. The data sources consisted of scholarly literature relevant to Islamic epistemology, the philosophy of science, research methodology, and Islamic studies, including the works of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, Mohammed Abed Al-Jabiri, Louay Safi, M. Amin Abdullah, Osman Bakar, as well as contemporary references on research methodology and the philosophy of science. Data were collected through documentary research by selecting literature based on its thematic relevance, scholarly authority, and contribution to the focus of the study.

The data were analyzed in three stages: conceptual analysis, comparative analysis, and conceptual synthesis. Conceptual analysis was employed to identify key concepts, including *Islamic Worldview*, *Bayānī*, *Burhānī*, *Irfānī*, *Alternative Methodology*, and *Integration–Interconnection*. Comparative analysis was subsequently conducted to compare the epistemological paradigms of modern research with those of Islamic epistemology in order to identify areas of convergence, divergence, and critiques of the dominance of modern research methodology in Islamic studies. The final stage, conceptual synthesis, integrated these concepts into a framework for epistemological reorientation that positions the Islamic scholarly *manhaj* as the foundation for selecting research methods. Through these stages, the study not only provides a conceptual description but also offers a theoretical synthesis that contributes to the advancement of research methodology in Islamic studies.

Results and Discussion

The dominance of modern methodology in Islamic studies research: An epistemological review

The development of research in Islamic studies has undergone a significant transformation alongside the increasing adoption of modern research methodologies within academic settings. Various approaches, including qualitative research, quantitative research, mixed methods, case studies, ethnography, and library research, have become standard practices in the preparation of scholarly works across higher education institutions. Through the concept of *Research Design*, Creswell (2018) explained that scientific research should be systematically constructed through the alignment of paradigms, research questions, methods, and analytical techniques. This perspective is reinforced by the concept of *Naturalistic Inquiry* developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), which emphasizes that every research endeavor originates from a particular paradigm for understanding reality. Furthermore, Denzin and Lincoln (2018), in *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, argued that research methodology should no longer be understood merely as a set of technical procedures but as a

representation of a researcher's ontological, epistemological, and methodological positions. This perspective indicates that research methodology is fundamentally a manifestation of the epistemological paradigm underlying the production of knowledge. Within the context of Islamic studies, the dominance of modern methodological paradigms has contributed to improving the academic quality of research while simultaneously raising questions regarding the extent to which these paradigms can accommodate the distinctive characteristics of the Islamic sciences, which integrate normative, historical, empirical, philosophical, and transcendental dimensions.

The epistemological foundations of modern research methodology have been shaped through the dynamic development of Western philosophy of science. Bacon's (2000) concept of *Empiricism* positioned observation as the primary source of scientific knowledge through the inductive method. In contrast, Descartes' (1985) concept of *Methodic Doubt* asserted that certainty in knowledge is attained through rational reasoning free from doubt. The synthesis of empirical experience and rationality was subsequently systematized through Comte's (1974) concept of *Positivism*, which maintains that scientific knowledge should be grounded in objectively observable facts. Nevertheless, Popper's (1959) concept of *Falsification* challenged positivism by arguing that scientific theories are distinguished not by their verifiability but by their falsifiability. This critique was further developed through Kuhn's (1962) concept of the *Paradigm Shift*, which demonstrated that scientific progress occurs through paradigm revolutions rather than the linear accumulation of knowledge. Meanwhile, Feyerabend (1975), through the concept of *Epistemological Anarchism*, rejected the notion of a universally applicable scientific method by advancing the principle of *anything goes*. As an alternative perspective, Lakatos (1978) proposed the concept of *Scientific Research Programmes*, viewing scientific development as a competition among research programmes characterized by a *hard core* and a *protective belt*. Collectively, these developments demonstrate that modern research methodology is the product of a prolonged dialogue among epistemological concepts that has continuously evolved and matured.

These epistemological debates subsequently shaped the development of contemporary research methodology. Through the concept of *Research Design*, Creswell (2018) operationalized diverse philosophical paradigms into systematic research procedures applicable across various academic disciplines. Likewise, Denzin and Lincoln (2018) broadened the scope of research methodology by positioning paradigms as the basis for defining the relationship among the researcher, reality, and research methods. Consequently, modern research methodology is no longer understood merely as a technique for collecting data but as an epistemological construct that determines how knowledge is produced, validated, and scientifically justified. This perspective explains why modern research methodology has become

the dominant standard across nearly all academic disciplines, including research in Islamic studies.

The incorporation of modern methodology into Islamic studies has not occurred as an entirely passive process of adoption but rather through a critical dialogue with the Islamic scholarly tradition. Through the concept of *Normativity–Historicity*, Amin Abdullah (1996) criticized the tendency within Islamic studies to separate normative and historical approaches, thereby creating a dichotomous understanding of religion. This critique was subsequently developed through the *Integration–Interconnection* paradigm introduced by Amin Abdullah (2006, 2007), which seeks to establish a more dialogical relationship among the Islamic sciences, the social sciences, the humanities, and the natural sciences. Unlike Amin Abdullah, whose emphasis lies primarily on interdisciplinary integration, Safi (1996), through the concept of *Alternative Methodology*, argued that the reconstruction of Islamic research should begin with the integration of revelation, reason, and empirical experience as complementary sources of knowledge. This perspective was further strengthened by Sirry's (2013) *Historical-Critical Approach*, which demonstrates that Islamic texts and traditions should be understood within their sociohistorical contexts in order to produce more critical and contextual interpretations. Similarly, Rahman's (1982) *Double Movement Theory* explains that the interpretation of Islamic teachings must proceed dialectically between the context of revelation and contemporary realities. Collectively, these scholarly contributions demonstrate that Muslim scholars have not rejected modern research methodology; rather, they have sought to reconstruct its epistemological foundations so that they are more closely aligned with the characteristics of the Islamic scholarly *manhaj*.

The dialogue between modern and Islamic epistemology demonstrates that contemporary debates in Islamic studies research no longer revolve around the question of whether modern research methodology should be accepted or rejected. Instead, the discussion has shifted toward how research paradigms can be constructed so that they not only satisfy the standards of scientific objectivity but also accommodate the sources of knowledge recognized within the Islamic intellectual tradition. Accordingly, the dominance of modern research methodology should not be understood merely as an issue of methodological choice but as an epistemological issue that determines how knowledge is produced, validated, and developed in Islamic studies. On this basis, a conceptual synthesis is required to illustrate the relationship between the development of modern epistemology and the various efforts to reconstruct research methodology in Islamic studies, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Synthesis of the development of modern research epistemology and the epistemological responses of Islamic studies

Scholar	concept	Epistemological orientation	Implications for Islamic studies research
Bacon	<i>Empiricism</i>	Observation as the source of knowledge	Strengthens empirical research on Islamic phenomena
Descartes	<i>Methodic Doubt</i>	Rationality as the foundation of certainty	Encourages logical analysis in Islamic studies
Comte	<i>Positivism</i>	Empirical facts and objectivity	Reinforces scientific approaches while providing limited accommodation for normative dimensions
Popper	<i>Falsification</i>	Critique of verification	Opens space for the critical evaluation of Islamic theories
Kuhn	<i>Paradigm Shift</i>	Transformation of scientific paradigms	Demonstrates the dynamic nature of research methodology
Feyerabend	<i>Epistemological Anarchism</i>	Methodological pluralism	Legitimizes methodological diversity in Islamic studies
Lakatos	<i>Scientific Research Programmes</i>	Competition among research programmes	Encourages the continuous development of Islamic research traditions
Creswell	<i>Research Design</i>	Operationalization of research paradigms	Provides the methodological framework for contemporary research
Lincoln & Guba	<i>Naturalistic Inquiry</i>	Constructivist paradigm	Strengthens qualitative research in Islamic studies
Amin Abdullah	<i>Integration-Interconnection</i>	Integration of knowledge	Connects the Islamic sciences with modern disciplines
Louay Safi	<i>Alternative Methodology</i>	Integration of revelation, reason, and empirical experience	Develops a research methodology grounded in Islamic epistemology
Mun'im Sirry	<i>Historical-Critical Approach</i>	Historical contextualization	Promotes historically grounded and critical interpretations of Islam
Fazlur Rahman	<i>Double Movement Theory</i>	Dialectic between text and context	Strengthens contextual interpretation in Islamic studies research

Source: Synthesized and developed by the authors based on the literature reviewed in this study.

Table 1 demonstrates that the development of modern research methodology represents the outcome of a long process of epistemological evolution rather than a mere accumulation of research techniques. Concepts such as *Empiricism*, *Methodic Doubt*, *Positivism*, *Falsification*, and the *Paradigm Shift* illustrate that every

methodological development has been preceded by a transformation in the understanding of the nature of knowledge. In other words, research methodology is a logical consequence of the epistemological paradigm from which it originates. Consequently, the dominance of modern methodology in Islamic studies research should not be interpreted solely as the adoption of research procedures but also as the adoption of an epistemological paradigm that carries particular assumptions concerning the sources, validity, and criteria of scientific knowledge.

This issue is particularly significant because Islamic epistemology is founded upon a framework distinct from that of modern epistemology. Modern philosophy of science generally establishes the validity of knowledge through empirical experience, rationality, and scientific consensus. In contrast, Islamic epistemology maintains that knowledge derives not only from empirical experience (*tajribah*) and reason (*'aql*) but also from *wahy* (revelation), which possesses normative epistemological authority. This difference in orientation explains why modern research methodology is often adequate for investigating the social and historical dimensions of Islam but remains insufficient for fully explaining its normative and transcendental dimensions, which constitute the defining characteristics of the Islamic sciences. Accordingly, the principal challenge in Islamic studies research does not lie in choosing between qualitative and quantitative methods but in ensuring that the epistemological paradigm underlying those methods is appropriate.

Recognition of these epistemological differences has encouraged numerous efforts to reconstruct research methodology in Islamic studies. Through the *Integration-Interconnection* paradigm, Amin Abdullah (2006, 2007) sought to eliminate the dichotomy between religious and secular sciences by fostering a dialogical relationship among academic disciplines. Meanwhile, Louay Safi (1996), through the concept of *Alternative Methodology*, shifted the focus from interdisciplinary integration to the integration of the sources of knowledge—namely revelation, reason, and empirical experience. This approach was further enriched by Mun'im Sirry's (2013) *Historical-Critical Approach*, which positions historical context as an essential element in interpreting religious texts. This perspective closely aligns with Fazlur Rahman's (1982) *Double Movement Theory*, which explains that textual interpretation must proceed through a reciprocal movement between the context of revelation and contemporary realities. The dialogue among these scholars demonstrates that reconstructing Islamic research methodology is not intended to reject modern methodology but rather to reposition it within the broader framework of Islamic epistemology.

Nevertheless, these reconstruction efforts continue to leave a fundamental issue unresolved. Most discussions remain focused on integrating academic disciplines or research methods, while the role of the Islamic scholarly *manhaj* as the epistemological

foundation of research has received insufficient attention. As a result, Islamic studies research has often succeeded in adopting modern research methods without fully establishing an epistemological framework rooted in the Islamic scholarly tradition. This situation indicates that the principal challenge facing contemporary Islamic studies is no longer simply to expand the diversity of research methods but to reorient its epistemological paradigm so that the methodologies employed genuinely emerge from the Islamic scholarly *manhaj*. Based on this argument, further discussion is required to formulate a reorientation of research epistemology in Islamic studies through the perspective of the Islamic scholarly *manhaj* as the conceptual foundation for the development of contemporary research methodology.

Reorienting research epistemology in Islamic studies through the Islamic scholarly *manhaj*

The preceding discussion demonstrates that the dominance of modern research methodology is rooted in Western epistemological paradigms that regard empirical experience, rationality, and social construction as the primary foundations of knowledge production. While these paradigms have successfully generated systematic research approaches, they have not fully accommodated the distinctive characteristics of the Islamic sciences, which recognize *wahy* (revelation) as an authoritative source of knowledge. Consequently, the principal challenge in Islamic studies research lies not in the selection of qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods but in the epistemological paradigm underlying the use of those methods. Safi (1996) described this challenge as the need for the reconstruction of Islamic research methodology through the concept of *Alternative Methodology*, whereas Amin Abdullah (2006), through the *Integration-Interconnection* paradigm, argued that the renewal of Islamic studies must begin with the reconstruction of its scholarly paradigm rather than merely combining different research methods. Accordingly, the reorientation of epistemology constitutes a fundamental step toward positioning research methodology as a consequence of the Islamic scholarly *manhaj*, rather than as the starting point of the research process.

This reorientation begins by affirming that *manhaj* is not synonymous with research methodology. Al-Attas's (1995) concept of *Islamic Worldview* demonstrates that scholarly activity is invariably shaped by a worldview that determines how reality is understood, the purpose of knowledge, and humanity's position in acquiring knowledge. This philosophical perspective is given a more operational epistemological form through Al-Jabiri's (1991) classification of *Bayānī*, *Burhānī*, and *ʿIrfānī*. Whereas Al-Attas explains the philosophical foundation that shapes the orientation of Islamic scholarship, Al-Jabiri elucidates the epistemological mechanisms through which textual authority, rationality, and intuition operate synergistically in the acquisition of knowledge. The synthesis of these two perspectives demonstrates

that *manhaj* constitutes an epistemological framework that precedes research methodology. In other words, research methods function merely as operational instruments, whereas *manhaj* determines the direction, orientation, and validity of the entire research process.

An important implication of this understanding is the need to broaden the sources of knowledge employed in Islamic studies research. Through his classification of *ḥiss*, *ʿaql*, *khavar al-ṣādiq*, and *kashf*, al-Ghazālī demonstrated that Islamic epistemology has, from its inception, recognized a plurality of complementary sources of knowledge. Safi (1996) subsequently contextualized this perspective through the concept of *Alternative Methodology* by integrating revelation, reason, and observation as the foundations of contemporary research methodology. The synthesis of these two perspectives indicates that empirical experience and rationality continue to occupy important positions; however, neither stands independently, as both derive their epistemological legitimacy from *wahy* (revelation) as the normative source of knowledge. Consequently, research in Islamic studies should not be directed solely toward producing empirical explanations of particular phenomena but also toward developing understandings that are consistent with the principles of Islamic scholarship. This reorientation positions scientific validity not merely in terms of methodological rigor but also in terms of the coherence among research methods, sources of knowledge, and the epistemological orientation underpinning the research.

Table 2. Implications of the reorientation of research epistemology in Islamic studies through the Islamic scholarly *manhaj*

Research aspect	Dominant paradigm	Reorientation through the Islamic scholarly <i>manhaj</i>	Implications
Sources of knowledge	Empirical and rational	Integration of <i>wahy</i> , <i>ʿaql</i> , <i>ḥiss</i> , and <i>khavar al-ṣādiq</i>	Research produces not only empirical findings but also normative legitimacy grounded in Islamic epistemology.
Research paradigm	Positivist, interpretive, and pragmatic	Synergy among <i>Bayānī</i> , <i>Burhānī</i> , and <i>ʿIrfānī</i>	Analysis becomes more comprehensive through the integration of textual authority, rationality, and spiritual intuition.
Knowledge integration	Interdisciplinary	<i>Integration–Interconnection</i>	Promotes productive dialogue among the Islamic sciences, the social sciences, the humanities, and the natural sciences.
Research orientation	Scientific objectivity	<i>Islamic Worldview</i> , <i>taʿdīb</i> , and <i>maṣlaḥah</i>	Research is directed not only toward the advancement of knowledge but also toward the

			cultivation of ethics, civilization, and the public good.
Method selection	Based on research design	Based on Islamic epistemology and the Islamic scholarly <i>manhaj</i>	Research methods are selected as logical consequences of the epistemological paradigm, making them more appropriate for the characteristics of Islamic subject matter.

Source: Synthesized and developed by the authors.

The synthesis presented in Table 2 demonstrates that the reorientation of epistemology is not intended to replace modern research methodology but to reposition it within the framework of the Islamic scholarly *manhaj*. Al-Attas's (1995) concept of *Islamic Worldview* provides the philosophical orientation regarding the purpose of knowledge, while the *Bayānī–Burhānī–ʿIrfānī* epistemological structure articulated by Al-Jabiri (1991) offers a framework for integrating multiple modes of knowing. This framework is further enriched by Safi's (1996) concept of *Alternative Methodology*, which connects revelation, reason, and observation as the foundations of research, and is given practical expression through Amin Abdullah's (2006) *Integration–Interconnection* paradigm, which facilitates dialogue between the Islamic sciences and contemporary academic disciplines. Accordingly, the proposed transformation lies not in replacing research methods but in redefining the paradigm that governs their selection and application.

This epistemological reorientation also creates opportunities for developing more adaptive research methodologies without compromising the epistemological identity of Islam. From Osman Bakar's (1998) perspective, the concept of *Unity of Knowledge* affirms that all branches of knowledge ultimately originate from the same source of truth and therefore should not be viewed dichotomously. This perspective complements Amin Abdullah's (2006) *Integration–Interconnection* paradigm, which emphasizes integration at both the academic and practical levels of research. The synthesis of these perspectives demonstrates that qualitative research, quantitative research, mixed methods, case studies, and library research all remain relevant, provided that their selection is grounded in the Islamic scholarly *manhaj*. Accordingly, the quality of research is determined not only by methodological validity, as emphasized by Creswell (2018), but also by the coherence among worldview, sources of knowledge, scholarly objectives, and the realization of *maṣlaḥah* through research.

Based on the synthesis of these scholarly perspectives, this article argues that the Islamic scholarly *manhaj* constitutes the epistemological foundation that precedes the selection of research methods. The integration of Al-Attas's *Islamic Worldview*, Al-Jabiri's epistemological structure, al-Ghazālī's sources of knowledge, Safi's *Alternative Methodology*, and Amin Abdullah's *Integration–Interconnection* paradigm demonstrates

that research in Islamic studies requires the reconstruction of its epistemological paradigm before determining the methodological approach to be employed. Consequently, research methodology should be understood as a logical consequence of the underlying epistemological paradigm rather than as the starting point of the research process. This reorientation is expected to foster Islamic studies research that not only satisfies contemporary academic standards but also faithfully represents the distinctive characteristics of the Islamic scholarly *manhaj*, thereby making a more substantive contribution to the advancement of knowledge and Islamic civilization.

Conclusion

This study critiques the tendency in Islamic studies research to position modern research methodology as the starting point of the scientific process, despite the more fundamental issue lying in the epistemological paradigm that underpins the use of such methods. Through a synthesis of the scholarly perspectives of Al-Attas, Al-Jabiri, al-Ghazālī, Louay Safi, Amin Abdullah, and Osman Bakar, this study proposes a framework for the reorientation of research epistemology that positions the Islamic scholarly *manhaj* as the foundation for determining research methods. This reorientation is achieved by integrating the *Islamic Worldview*, the Islamic sources of knowledge (*wahy*, *ʿaql*, *ḥiss*, and *khavar al-ṣādiq*), the epistemological structure of *Bayānī*, *Burhānī*, and *ʿIrfānī*, and the *Integration–Interconnection* paradigm into the research process. The findings demonstrate that research methods do not constitute the starting point of research but rather represent a logical consequence of the epistemological paradigm adopted by the researcher. Accordingly, Islamic studies research can continue to employ a wide range of modern methodological approaches without compromising the distinctive characteristics of the Islamic scholarly *manhaj* as its epistemological identity.

The principal contribution of this study lies in the development of a conceptual framework that repositions the Islamic scholarly *manhaj* as the epistemological foundation for selecting research methods, thereby expanding the discourse on research methodology in Islamic studies from a predominantly procedural perspective to a more philosophical and epistemological one. Nevertheless, this study is limited to a conceptual analysis based on the synthesis of the existing literature; consequently, the proposed framework has not yet been validated through empirical research or applied across different branches of Islamic studies. Future research is therefore encouraged to develop operational indicators of the Islamic scholarly *manhaj*, implement them across diverse research designs, and evaluate their effectiveness in generating research methodologies that are more integrative, contextually grounded, and consistent with the distinctive characteristics of the Islamic sciences.

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