



Hermeneutical approach in the development of contemporary islamic educational thought

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Abstract. The hermeneutical approach has become one of the important methods in the development of contemporary Islamic education thought. Hermeneutics is used as a way to understand religious texts more contextually in accordance with the times without abandoning the basic values of the Qur'an and Hadits. This article aims to explain the concept of hermeneutics, its application in Islamic education, as well as its contribution to the development of contemporary Islamic education thought. This study uses a library research method with a descriptive-analytical approach. The results of the study indicate that hermeneutics helps Islamic education become more open, critical, dialogical, and relevant to the challenges of modernity. This approach also encourages learning that is not only textual but also contextual so

that Islamic education is able to address social, cultural, and contemporary scientific development issues.

Introduction

Modern developments marked by advances in science and technology, as well as socio-cultural changes, require Islamic education to adapt to the needs of modern society. Islamic education is no longer simply focused on a literal understanding of religious texts; it must also provide a contextual, critical, and relevant understanding of the realities of life. In this context, an approach is needed that bridges the gap between normative Islamic values and the dynamics of contemporary developments, one of which is the hermeneutic approach. Globalization and the acceleration of social change have further intensified the demand for an Islamic education system capable of responding to contemporary challenges without abandoning its normative foundations (Rahman, Khaerudin, & Ahmad Ghozali Syaff'i, 2025).

Hermeneutics, as a theory and method of interpretation, provides a new perspective for understanding texts, particularly religious texts such as the Quran and Hadith. Through this approach, texts are understood not only linguistically but also within their historical, social, and cultural contexts, as well as within their inherent moral purpose. Recent scholarship affirms that hermeneutics offers Islamic studies a methodological framework for moving beyond rigid textualism toward a more contextual and dialogical mode of understanding (Zahrani, 2023). Thus,

hermeneutics can help foster a more open, dialogical, and adaptive understanding of Islam in response to various contemporary issues.

In contemporary Islamic education, hermeneutics plays a crucial role in developing students' mindsets to be more critical, reflective, and tolerant. This approach also encourages the reform of learning methods, which previously tended to be dogmatic, towards a more participatory and contextual approach. Furthermore, hermeneutics is able to integrate Islamic values with modern social realities, so that Islamic education not only produces individuals who understand religious teachings theoretically but also are able to implement them in social life, a process closely tied to the Qur'an's central position in shaping an adaptive and forward-looking educational paradigm (Akhyar, Batubara, & Deliani, 2024).

A number of recent studies have examined hermeneutics within the field of Islamic studies from various angles. Alak (2023) explores the development of Islamic humanist hermeneutics and its relevance for building a more inclusive interpretive tradition, while Ridwan Syafi'i (2024) traces the hermeneutical thought of Sahiron Syamsuddin in bridging classical Qur'anic exegesis with contemporary interpretive needs. Other studies have highlighted the reform of Islamic education curricula toward more open and dialogical models (Falaah, Suryadin, Makmur, Safira, & Purnamasari, 2025). However, most of these studies tend to examine hermeneutics as a general interpretive theory or curriculum reform separately, without systematically connecting the two within the specific context of contemporary Islamic educational thought. This gap underlines the need for a study that explicitly examines how the hermeneutical approach informs and shapes the development of contemporary Islamic education.

Based on this, a discussion of the hermeneutical approach in the development of contemporary Islamic educational thought is important to examine. This study aims to understand the concept of hermeneutics, its application in Islamic education, and its contribution to building a more dynamic, moderate, and relevant Islamic education system to meet global challenges.

Method

This research employed a library research method. Data were obtained from various sources, such as books, scientific journals, articles, and previous research related to hermeneutics and Islamic education. The data analysis technique employed a descriptive-analytical method, which describes the concept of hermeneutics and analyzes its relevance to the development of contemporary Islamic educational thought.

In this library research, the researcher utilized various literature sources as primary sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of the development of hermeneutic theory and its implementation in Islamic educational studies. The collected data were then classified based on specific themes, such as basic hermeneutic concepts, hermeneutical figures, hermeneutical approaches to interpreting religious texts, and their contributions to the renewal of Islamic education in the contemporary era.

The analysis was conducted through a process of identification, interpretation, and synthesis of various views found in the literature. This stage aims to identify the relationship between hermeneutic principles and the current needs of Islamic education, which is required to address the challenges of modernity, scientific developments, and ongoing social change. Thus, this research not only explains the concept of hermeneutics theoretically, but also examines how this approach can serve as an alternative in developing a more contextual, critical, and relevant understanding of Islam for modern society.

Through this approach, it is hoped that a more in-depth understanding of the role of hermeneutics in the development of contemporary Islamic educational thought will be obtained, particularly in fostering a dialogical, reflective learning process oriented toward developing students' abilities to understand Islamic teachings comprehensively without ignoring the surrounding social and cultural context. The results of this research are expected to provide academic contributions to the development of Islamic education studies and serve as a reference

for educators, researchers, and education observers in formulating learning models that are more adaptive to the dynamics of the times.

Results and Discussion

A. Understanding Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics comes from the Greek word *hermeneuein*, meaning "to interpret" or "to interpret." Over time, hermeneutics has become understood as a theory and method for understanding the meaning of a text, particularly those with philosophical, literary, or religious significance (Zakirman Zakirman, 2020). Hermeneutics focuses not only on the literal meaning of the text but also seeks to explore broader meanings by considering the historical and cultural contexts, as well as the author's intent.

Much Mahfud Arif defines hermeneutics as a branch of science that studies methods of interpreting texts to understand their meanings in depth and contextually. Hermeneutics not only interprets texts literally but also considers the historical, linguistic, cultural, and social conditions of the author and reader, so that the text's meaning can be understood more comprehensively (Much Machfud Arif, 2024).

In Islamic studies, hermeneutics is also used as an approach to understanding the texts of the Quran and hadith contextually. Sahiron Syamsuddin explains that hermeneutics in Islamic studies aims to connect the meaning of texts with the historical context and the needs of the times without abandoning the fundamental values of Islamic teachings (Syamsudin, 2009). Thus, hermeneutics from an Islamic educational perspective can be understood as a methodological approach that seeks to bridge normative Islamic texts with the ever-evolving socio-cultural reality. This is crucial considering that religious texts cannot always be understood solely textually; rather, they require a deeper understanding to be relevant to the current context.

In the realm of Islamic education, the hermeneutic approach provides space for educators and students to engage in a critical, reflective, and dialogical interpretation of Islamic sources. This process emphasizes not only the transfer of knowledge but also the development of a comprehensive understanding so that Islamic values can be appropriately implemented in everyday life. In other words, hermeneutics encourages the integration of texts (*nash*), context, and contextualization in educational practice (Muhammad Zaki, 2025).

Furthermore, the application of hermeneutics in Islamic education also allows for a renewal of thinking regarding Islamic learning methods that are more adaptive to current developments. Teachers are no longer positioned merely as conveyors of information, but also as facilitators who help students understand the meanings of texts more critically and relevantly. This aligns with the goal of Islamic education, which is to develop not only the cognitive aspects but also the affective and psychomotor aspects of students (Muslim Fikri, 2023).

Therefore, the author concludes that hermeneutics has a significant contribution to the development of contemporary Islamic educational thought, particularly in efforts to provide a more dynamic, contextual, and solution-oriented religious understanding to address various issues facing the community in the modern era.

B. Contemporary Islamic Education

Contemporary Islamic education is an educational process that seeks to integrate Islamic teachings with developments in modern science and the needs of global society. This education emphasizes not only the cognitive aspects but also the affective and psychomotor aspects in a balanced manner (Rahman, Khaerudin, Ahmad Ghozali Syafi'i, 2025).

Muhaimin explained that contemporary Islamic education must eliminate the dichotomy between religious and general knowledge, creating an integrative educational system (Muhaimin, 2019). In this context, contemporary Islamic education is also required to respond to rapidly evolving social, technological, and cultural changes. This means that the educational

process is no longer static and textual, but rather dynamic, contextual, and adaptive to the realities of students' lives. Thus, Islamic values are not only understood normatively but also actualized in everyday life through learning approaches relevant to the challenges of the times.

Furthermore, the learning approach in contemporary Islamic education needs to prioritize participatory and dialogical methods. Teachers are no longer positioned as the sole source of knowledge, but rather as facilitators who guide students to think critically, reflectively, and creatively. In this case, the integration between religious texts and life contexts is very important so that students are able to understand Islamic teachings more deeply and not get trapped in merely textual understanding (Falaah, M., Suryadin, A., Makmur, M., Safira, A., & Purnamasari, 2025).

In line with this, contemporary Islamic education also allows for a hermeneutic approach to understanding religious texts. This approach helps students interpret Islamic teachings more contextually, in accordance with the social realities they face, without abandoning the fundamental values of sharia. Thus, Islamic education not only produces individuals who are ritually devout but also capable of becoming agents of social change grounded in Islamic values (Muhammad Zaki, 2025).

Based on various expert opinions, it can be concluded that contemporary Islamic education is an educational system that seeks to integrate Islamic values with developments in science, technology, and the needs of modern society. Islamic education focuses not only on mastering cognitive aspects but also balances the development of students' attitudes, morals, and skills comprehensively. In its implementation, contemporary Islamic education strives to eliminate the dichotomy between religious and general knowledge, creating an educational process that is integrative, contextual, and relevant to the challenges of the times.

C. The Hermeneutic Approach in Islamic Education

The hermeneutic approach in Islamic education is carried out by understanding religious texts through three main aspects: understanding the text, both in the Qur'an and the Hadith. This is not only understood from a linguistic perspective, but also from the purpose and deeper meaning contained within. In hermeneutics, the text is viewed as something open to interpretation based on the depth of the reader's understanding and the interpretative method used (Syamsudin, 2009). Hermeneutics also understands context; interpretation is carried out by considering the social, cultural, and historical background of the revelation of the verses (*asbabun nuzul*). This is important so that Islamic teachings are not understood solely textually but can be contextualized with the realities of modern society (M. Amin Abdullah, 2019). Understanding relevance helps hermeneutics connect Islamic values with contemporary educational issues such as democracy, human rights, tolerance, and technological developments. Thus, Islam becomes a religion that is responsive to changing times without abandoning its fundamental principles (Abdullah, 2012).

In practice, these three aspects are interrelated and inseparable. Understanding the text is the primary basis for exploring the divine messages contained in the Qur'an and Hadith. The hermeneutical approach also encourages students to think critically and dialogically. Islamic education encompasses more than memorization, but also a deep understanding of the meaning of Islamic teachings (Firdaus Adila Sera, 2025). Thus, the hermeneutical approach in Islamic education can be understood as a methodological effort to develop a more open, contextual, and solution-oriented educational mindset. This approach is expected to produce an Islamic education system that is oriented not only toward knowledge transfer but also toward developing critical understanding and students' ability to adapt to global challenges.

D. Contribution of Hermeneutics to the Development of Contemporary Islamic Educational Thought

In the context of contemporary Islamic education, hermeneutics makes a significant contribution in developing new perspectives on Islamic texts such as the Qur'an and Hadith, so that they are not merely understood textually, but also contextually and dynamically according to the times. This opens up a contextual understanding of Islamic texts. The main contribution of hermeneutics in Islamic education is shifting the paradigm of textual understanding from a literal approach to a contextual one. In traditional Islamic education, texts are often understood normatively without considering socio-historical conditions.

Through hermeneutics, teachers and students are encouraged to understand that each text has a historical background (*asbabun nuzul*) and moral objectives that can be flexibly applied in a modern context. This makes Islamic education more adaptive to changing times without losing its fundamental values (Syamsudin, 2009). With this approach, Islamic education is expected to shape a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also possesses critical thinking, tolerance, and noble character. The development of critical reasoning in Islamic education, namely hermeneutics, also contributes to developing students' critical reasoning.

Contemporary Islamic education no longer emphasizes mere memorization but also analytical and interpretive skills. With a hermeneutic approach, students are trained to question, interpret, and understand texts reflectively. This aligns with the needs of 21st-century education, which demands critical, creative, and solution-oriented thinking skills in addressing the challenges of modern life (Faiz, 2015). This approach provides an understanding that these differences are part of the intellectual dynamics of Islam, which must be addressed with openness and mutual respect. Thus, contemporary Islamic education not only shapes intellectually intelligent students but also emotionally and socially mature ones. The integration of Islamic values with social reality, another contribution of hermeneutics, is its ability to bridge normative Islamic values with contemporary social reality. Islamic education is not only oriented towards ritual aspects, but also social, cultural, and humanitarian aspects.

Through hermeneutics, Islamic teachings can be interpreted more inclusively, thus addressing modern issues such as democracy, human rights, gender justice, and pluralism without deviating from basic Islamic principles (Hanif, M., & Syarifah, 2022). The reform of the Islamic education curriculum, which encompasses hermeneutics, also encourages reform of the Islamic education curriculum to be more open and dialogical. The curriculum contains not only dogmatic material but also space for discussion and interpretation (Fidia, S. N., Usman, 2025). This enables students to understand Islam as a living religion, not just a static doctrine. Thus, Islamic education becomes more relevant and contextual in responding to the challenges of globalization (Mustaqim, 2010). Therefore, hermeneutics plays a crucial role in building an academic culture that respects differing views and fosters tolerance within the Islamic educational environment. By encouraging moderate and tolerant attitudes, specifically within the context of a multicultural society, hermeneutics contributes to the formation of moderate (*wasathiyah*) and tolerant attitudes. A flexible interpretation of religious texts can reduce religious extremism. Hermeneutics-based Islamic education will produce a generation capable of appreciating differences and coexisting peacefully in a pluralistic society (Umniatuz Zahro, 2024). Therefore, hermeneutics-based Islamic education can be one way to create a generation of moderate, tolerant Muslims capable of maintaining harmony in society.

According to the author, the contribution of hermeneutics to contemporary Islamic education is a highly relevant and important approach to address the dynamics of contemporary developments. Developing critical reasoning through a hermeneutical approach is a strategic step in shaping students who are not only ritually obedient but also possess strong intellectual abilities. Furthermore, the integration of Islamic values with social reality through hermeneutics can strengthen Islam's position as a religion of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (blessing for all the worlds).

Therefore, hermeneutics contributes not only to the intellectual realm but also to the formation of character and social ethics in contemporary Islamic education.

Conclusion

Hermeneutics is an interpretive approach that goes beyond merely understanding texts literally, but also considers the historical, social, and cultural contexts, as well as the intended meanings contained within them. In Islamic education, hermeneutics is a crucial method for bridging Islamic texts with the realities of modern life, allowing Islamic teachings to be understood more contextually and relevantly. Contemporary Islamic education fundamentally demands the integration of Islamic values with developments in science, technology, and the needs of global society. Therefore, the hermeneutic approach makes a significant contribution to developing a more open, critical, and dialogical approach to Islamic education. Through hermeneutics, students are not only guided to memorize religious teachings but also to deeply understand their meaning and values. The contribution of hermeneutics to contemporary Islamic education is evident in several aspects, such as the formation of a contextual understanding of religious texts, the development of critical reasoning in students, the integration of Islamic values with social realities, the reform of the Islamic education curriculum, and the growth of moderate and tolerant attitudes in community life. This approach makes Islamic education more adaptive to changing times without abandoning the fundamental principles of Islamic teachings. Thus, hermeneutics can be understood as a relevant approach to the development of contemporary Islamic education. This approach contributes not only to the intellectual realm but also to the formation of character, social ethics, and moderate religious attitudes, thereby producing a generation of Muslims who are critical, humanistic, and capable of wisely facing global challenges.

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