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RECONSTRUCTING CONTEXTUAL FIQH PEDAGOGY: AN CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF FIQH EDUCATION BASED ON ABDURRAHMAN WAHID'S THOUGHT

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ABSTRACTS

Background: The study of fiqh in Indonesia remains largely dominated by a normative-textual approach, limiting its ability to address contemporary social complexities. Existing studies on Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) have not systematically examined his thought as a paradigm for contextual fiqh education. **Purpose of the Study:** This study aims to reconstruct a pedagogical model of contextual fiqh based on Gus Dur's thought as an epistemological foundation for Islamic legal education in Indonesia. **Method:** This literature review employs a descriptive-hermeneutic approach. Data were drawn from Gus Dur's major works on Islamic law, usul al-fiqh, adat, and Islamic thought and analyzed through discourse analysis to reconstruct a contextual fiqh pedagogical framework. **Results:** The study produced two main models of contextual fiqh pedagogy. First, a model of dialogue between fiqh and adat that integrates local culture, community needs, and social dynamics into learning without neglecting the fundamental principles of sharia. Second, a model of textual reinterpretation that guides students to distinguish between universal Islamic teachings (tsawābit) and contextual legal provisions (mutaghayyirāt) through the approaches of ushul al-fiqh, maqāṣid al-syarī'ah, and historical and sociological analysis. The analysis indicates that these models can support case-based learning, to foster contextual legal reasoning, the ability to derive legal rulings (istinbāṭ), and critical thinking in addressing contemporary issues. **Conclusions:** Gus Dur's thought provides a strong epistemological and pedagogical foundation for reconstructing fiqh education in Indonesia. The proposed models bridge textual authority and social reality while maintaining the normative

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objectives of sharia, contributing to a more contextual Islamic legal education.

A. INTRODUCTION

Fiqh within the Islamic education system in Indonesia continues to face challenges in addressing various unresolved contemporary issues (Faiz and Ouich 2025; Adiyono and Sholeh 2025). Indonesian regulations mandate that the teaching of fiqh must refer to the Qur'an as the authoritative source in Islam. However, education developed based on the Qur'an requires a dynamic and innovative approach to address the context of the present day (Faidah and Juwantri 2024). This is because a Qur'an-based approach does not fully address the issues and social dynamics of contemporary society (Syarullah et al. 2025). This reality demands that the development of Islamic law not be based solely on textual interpretation but must also take into account various academic disciplines in determining legal status (Zulfa et al. 2025).

Studies of fiqh in Indonesia reveal a conflict between two opposing forces: on the one hand, some seek to uphold the authority of classical religious sources (Fatarib et al. 2025; Sayyi et al. 2025), while the other seeks to demonstrate how the principles of Islamic law can be applied in today's pluralistic and ever-changing society (Zulian et al. 2026; Khosyi'ah and Rusyana 2022; Sobirin and Khasanah 2023). Most Islamic fiqh education is based on traditional doctrine, yet efforts continue to develop methodologies that allow fiqh to be viewed as ijtihad rather than a final decision (Adrian and Ariani 2025; Rohayana and Muhtarom 2021).

In Indonesia, one of the figures who has paid close attention to Islamic law and the study of fiqh is Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur). Existing studies have so far failed to adequately address the crucial methodological aspects of Gus Dur's ideas, as they tend to focus on his contributions from a biographical or ideological perspective particularly the implications of his thought for the development of fiqh education in Indonesia. Three trends in existing studies can be identified. First, studies focus their analysis on Gus Dur's thought within the broader discourse of the indigenization of Islam, without exploring its specific implications for the methodology of fiqh education (Fuadi et al. 2023; Yasmin et al. 2024; Himmatul Karomah et al. 2026). Gus Dur sought to make people aware that fiqh cannot be separated from the socio-historical context in which it was developed and applied. However, this perspective remains little more than mere discourse (H Kaco and Busrah 2022). Second, many studies position Gus Dur as a proponent of reformist Islam in general in Indonesia, but have not critically evaluated the framework created in the 1980s that forms the basis of his methodology (Mas'ulah et al. 2025; Eriza and Lubis 2025; Basid et al. 2024). Third, while some authors have examined his work within the context of contemporary ijtihad, they have not fully connected this approach to the evolution of fiqh education in Indonesia (Dahlan 2018; Dahlan et al. 2019). As a result of these three trends, most studies have not addressed the methodology developed by Gus Dur in the context of contemporary fiqh instruction.

Developments in fiqh education show a shift from a normative approach to a contextual and participatory one. The trend toward contextual fiqh education, which utilizes Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL), seeks to connect fiqh material with students' real-life experiences. The CTL model in fiqh instruction has the potential to enhance students' engagement and critical thinking skills (Rosady et al. 2023). Another approach used in fiqh instruction is Problem-Based Learning (PBL), which requires

social realities to serve as the foundation for learning. PBL successfully encourages students to actively discuss and connect fiqh concepts with real-life issues (Saefudin and Berdiati 2026; Jazil et al. 2025). In Europe, PBL is considered relevant to the study of Islamic law and serves as an effective pedagogical framework (Khalfaoui 2026). This approach is also used by the MUI Fatwa Commission; by combining PBL with the ijtihad method, it can enhance participation, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills (Syarullah et al. 2025).

This trend aligns with the approach of Islamic legal reasoning and jurisprudential pedagogy as learning competencies Islamic studies in Australia (Abdalla et al. 2022). The jurisprudential pedagogy model has been developed in universities and madrasahs using Islamic legal sources and problem-solving in fiqh instruction (Rahmiati et al. 2021). Syllogistic reasoning is used to develop rational, reflective, and dialogic fiqh instruction by applying general principles to specific issues (Faturrahman et al. 2026). Recent research concludes that fiqh instruction remains at a level between a normative orientation and contextual interpretation, while the application of PBL has not yet been established as an epistemological framework for learning (Ishfaq Amin Parrey 2024).

Gus Dur offers a different conceptual framework among the above learning approaches. He does not merely add "context," but rather positions the relationship between Islamic normativity and social-human realities as an educational process. This concept has the potential to enable students to understand legal status, legal reasoning, and the application of law while taking into account social and cultural realities and human dignity.

This article aims to fill the gap left by other studies regarding how Gus Dur's conceptual framework can be utilized as a key building block in developing contextual fiqh education that is relevant to the Indonesian context. The success of fiqh or Islamic law courses in addressing social issues depends heavily on the extent to which the framework used connects normative sources of Islamic law with Indonesia's socio-historical context. Therefore, an analysis of Gus Dur's conceptual framework must be approached systematically to offer concrete methodological proposals. To that end, the following two questions will be addressed: (1) how did Gus Dur develop his conceptual framework for Islamic law; and (2) how can Gus Dur's methodological ideas contribute to contextual fiqh education? Answering these questions will provide a more systematic understanding of Gus Dur's contribution to developing a methodology for Islamic law that will serve as the foundation for the development of contextual fiqh education.

This study is based on the argument that the failure to develop Islamic law instruction appropriate for Indonesia stems from a fundamental conflict between the normative approach of the classical tradition of Islamic law and the local and contextual socio-historical context of Indonesian Muslim society. Classical fiqh is oriented toward normative provisions that, in many cases, do not take into account the variations in the social contexts where the law is applied. The development of contextual fiqh education requires a methodological framework capable of bridging the gap between textual authority and an ever-changing social reality. This methodology also necessitates an epistemological awareness that the products of fiqh are historical and contextual in nature, rather than entirely absolute and universal. At the same time, the Indonesian Islamic scholarly tradition including the legacy of pesantren and the thought of Nusantara's ulama needs to be integrated as a source of legitimacy in the development of fiqh education grounded in local contexts. Thus, the successful development of fiqh

education relevant to the Indonesian context requires a systematic methodological reconstruction, and Gus Dur's thought offers a suitable framework to serve as a foundation for this reconstruction.

B. METHOD

This research was conducted using a literature review. This study aims to read, understand, and analyze Gus Dur thoughts on Islamic law and the potential of fiqh as a tool for addressing various issues faced by an ever-changing society. The research was conducted in several stages, namely the identification and selection of data sources, thematic coding, discourse analysis, and data validation and credibility assessment.

The data for this study consist of 33 sources, including 7 primary sources by Gus Dur and 26 secondary sources. The seven primary sources are "Muslim di Tengah Pergumulan" (1983), "Pribumisasi Islam" (1989), "Prisma Pemikiran Gus Dur" (2000), "Pergulatan Negara, Agama dan Kebudayaan" (2001), "Islamku Islam Anda Islam Kita: Agama Masyarakat Negara Demokrasi" (2006), "Islam Kosmopolitan: Nilai-Nilai Indonesia dan Transformasi Kebudayaan" (2007), and "Membaca Sejarah Nusantara, 25 Kolom Sejarah Gus Dur" (2010). These sources were purposively selected based on their relevance to the research subject. Meanwhile, 26 secondary sources were obtained through the Scopus and SINTA databases. The keywords used in the secondary data search were: "Gus Dur", "Abdurrahman Wahid", "fiqh", "Islamic law", "custom and adat", "'urf", "textual interpretation", "contextual interpretation", "renewal of Islamic law", "Nusantara/Indonesia fiqh", "indigenization of Islam", and "Islamic education". Secondary data serves a different purpose: 18 sources are secondary data directly related to the research focus, and the other 8 sources support the analysis.

The inclusion criteria used are as follows: (1) written works by Gus Dur that substantively discuss fiqh, Islamic law, customs, interpretation, social change, cultural transformation, or Islamic education; (2) scientific publications indexed in SINTA and Scopus that discuss Gus Dur's thought and are relevant to the research focus; (3) publications in which both the author's identity and bibliographic information can be verified; and (4) sources that contribute substantively to the research focus. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria are: sources that merely mention Gus Dur without substantive analysis, are unrelated to the research focus, and sources that are insufficient for analysis.

The data were obtained through systematic reading and thematic coding in several stages. First, the sources were classified into primary and secondary sources. The seven primary sources constituted the main data, while the 26 secondary sources served as comparative and analytical sources. Second, all sources were read repeatedly to identify relevant concepts, ideas, and arguments. Third, text units related to the research focus were thematically coded. Fourth, related codes were compared and grouped into broader analytical themes.

Data analysis was conducted using Michel Foucault's discourse analysis approach. This approach was used to identify and analyze the substance of Gus Dur's thought as it was constructed and connected to the discourse on Islamic renewal in Indonesia. Foucault's approach is useful for analyzing objects, discursive formations, concepts, and ideas as they are shaped within their surrounding context (Foucault 2012). The analysis was conducted through four interrelated stages. First, the identification of discursive objects, which serves to identify the primary objects formed within Gus Dur's

thought. Second, the analysis of discursive formations, which helps examine the formation of concepts, discourses, and interpretive ideas linked to Gus Dur's works. Third, an analysis of identity serves to examine the positioning of Islamic scholars and the Muslim community within Gus Dur's thought regarding the interpretation of Islamic law. Fourth, an analysis of social and cultural practices will be used to examine Gus Dur's reasoning regarding Islamic law within the context of Indonesian society.

Interpretations of Gus Dur's thought are constructed based on his own works, while other sources serve to provide context, comparisons, and critical scrutiny of these interpretations. In the event of interpretive discrepancies, the analysis will be tested and verified against primary sources as the conceptual foundation for each interpretation.

Meanwhile, data validation and credibility are ensured through source triangulation, intertextual comparison, thematic cross-checking, and theoretical validation. First, source triangulation is conducted by comparing the arguments and primary data used. Second, comparisons are made between texts that recur frequently in Gus Dur's thought, particularly regarding reinterpretation, the relationship between fiqh and adat, Islamic legal education, and the renewal of Islamic law. Third, thematic cross-checking is performed by comparing themes from primary sources with secondary sources, specifically those closely related to the research topic.

Fourth, theoretical validation is conducted by comparing the reconstructed concepts with studies on the renewal of Islamic law, contextual interpretation, Indonesian fiqh, the study of fiqh, and the relationship between Islamic law and culture. This validation is carried out to assess the conceptual and theoretical coherence of the reconstructed concepts.

The research procedure described above is illustrated in the following figure:

Stage	Objective	Main Activities	Sources/Data	Output
1 Identification and Selection of Sources	Identify and select relevant sources that are in line with the focus of the research.	• Determine primary and secondary sources. • Search secondary data through Scopus and SINTA databases. • Keywords: "Gus Dur", "Abdurrahman Wahid", "fiqh", "Islamic law", "custom", "adat", "urf", "textual interpretation", "contextual interpretation", "reform of Islamic law", "Nusantara fiqh", "Indigenization of Islam", and "Islamic education". • Purposive selection based on relevance.	• Total 33 sources: – 7 primary sources by Gus Dur – 26 secondary sources • Primary sources: 1. Muslim in the Midst of Struggle (1983) 2. Indigenization of Islam (1989) 3. Prisma Gus Dur's Thought (2000) 4. The Struggle of State, Religion and Culture (2001) 5. My Islam, Your Islam, Our Islam: Religion, Society, State, Democracy (2006) 6. Islamic Cosmopolitanism: Indonesian Values and Cultural Transformation (2007) 7. Reading the History of the Archipelago, 25 Columns of Gus Dur's History (2010)	List of 33 selected sources (7 primary and 26 secondary) that are relevant to the research focus.
2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria	Establish inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure the quality and relevance of the sources.	• Establish 4 inclusion criteria. • Establish 3 exclusion criteria. • Screen sources based on the criteria.	Inclusion and exclusion criteria are applied to all primary and secondary sources.	Sources that pass selection based on the criteria.
3 Thematic Coding (Data Collection and Processing)	Collect and process data through systematic reading and thematic coding.	• Classify sources into primary (7) and secondary (26). • Read all sources repeatedly. • Code relevant text units. • Group related codes into broader analytical themes.	• 7 primary sources (main data). • 26 secondary sources (comparative and analytical): – 18 sources are closely related to the focus. – 8 sources are supporting the analysis.	Collection of thematic codes and analytical themes.
4 Discourse Analysis (Michel Foucault)	Analyze Gus Dur's thought using Michel Foucault's discourse analysis approach.	Using Foucault's approach through four interrelated steps: 1. **Identification of Discursive Objects:** identify the main objects formed in Gus Dur's thought. 2. **Analysis of Discursive Formations:** examine how concepts, discourses, and interpretive ideas are formed and connected in Gus Dur's works. 3. **Identity Analysis:** analyze the positioning of ulama and Muslim communities in Gus Dur's understanding of Islamic law interpretation. 4. **Analysis of Social and Cultural Practices:** analyze Gus Dur's legal reasoning in the context of Indonesian society.	All coded data are analyzed using the discourse analysis framework of Michel Foucault: Interpretation of Gus Dur's thought is constructed based on his own works, while other sources provide context, comparison, and critical testing. In case of interpretive differences, the analysis is tested and verified on the primary sources as the conceptual basis for each interpretation.	Findings on discourse, concepts, identities, and socio-cultural practices in Gus Dur's thought.
5 Validation and Data Credibility	Ensure the validity and credibility of data through various validation strategies.	1. **Source triangulation:** compare arguments and primary data. 2. **Cross-text comparison:** identify recurring themes (reinterpretation, fiqh–adat, Islamic legal education, and reform of Islamic law). 3. **Thematic cross-checking:** compare themes from primary sources with those from closely related secondary sources. 4. **Theoretical validation:** compare reconstructed concepts with studies on reform of Islamic law, contextual interpretation, Indonesian fiqh, fiqh education, and the relationship between Islamic law and culture.	All primary and secondary sources, as well as relevant theoretical literature.	Validated data and interpretation that are stronger and theoretically consistent.
6 Reconstruction of Conceptual Model	Reconstruct the conceptual model of contextual fiqh education based on Gus Dur's thought.	Reconstruct the conceptual model of fiqh education based on Gus Dur's thought by: • Integrating the findings of discourse analysis and validation. • Establishing systematic relationships among concepts. • Formulating principles, frameworks, and components of contextual fiqh education.	Results of previous analysis and validation in the earlier stages.	**Conceptual model of contextual fiqh education based on Gus Dur's thought.**

Figure 1, Research Procedure

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In mapping out his thoughts on Islamic law, Gus Dur drew upon the fundamental tenets of Islam while acknowledging the richness of local traditions as a force that cannot be ignored. With a broad epistemological perspective, he formulated two methodological approaches that are directly relevant to the development of fiqh education. First, fostering a dialogue between fiqh and local customs. Second, developing the application of the nash or reinterpreting.

Dialogue Between Fiqh and Custom: Gus Dur's Epistemological Foundation

Gus Dur's work in the field of Islamic jurisprudence also encompasses the interpretation of law based on how traditional Islamic laws are viewed within their cultural and geographical contexts. According to Gus Dur, revelation is closely tied to space and time, including the way it is interpreted. Because every society has its own unique historical experience and social background, the interpretation of fiqh must be conducted with reference to the historical context (Mawejje 2024; Purkon 2022). On the other hand, although Gus Dur was known for his appreciation of local traditions, his analysis of various issues was not entirely confined to a traditional perspective alone. As part of his overall approach to religious and social issues, as well as related matters, he employed several theories and methodologies from the field of modern social sciences to help develop a comprehensive and holistic perspective on issues related to both religious and social matters.

Before discussing the efforts to revitalize Islamic law further, it is important to understand the main characteristics of fiqh as it has developed to the present day. First, the foundation of fiqh is an intellectual construct developed by Islamic scholars. Thus, the development of fiqh must be linked to specific historical and social circumstances that have contributed to this structure. Second, the evolution of Islamic law occurs primarily through linguistic interpretations of the Quran and Hadith, particularly through textual readings in Arabic, based on the assumption that this method of interpreting the Quran and Hadith most accurately reflects God's will. Third, there is no single authority in Islamic jurisprudence that holds absolute authority to create legislation binding on all Muslims. Consequently, various legal opinions emerge from the diverse methods, contexts, and authorities of these scholars (Wahid 2000).

Based on these characteristics, Gus Dur then formulated a basic framework for developing Islamic law so that it could continue to respond to the dynamics of a constantly changing society that always requires religious legitimacy. In his view, the renewal of Islamic law cannot be achieved without first identifying the factors that hinder the flexibility and development of fiqh. On this basis, Gus Dur proposed three conceptual frameworks as a foundation for revitalizing Islamic law to make it more responsive to social change.

First, the fuqahā' are required to critically determine the boundaries of the scope within which Islamic law is applied. According to Gus Dur, before establishing legal boundaries, decisions must be based not only on established legal provisions but also on an understanding of how society lives and what its needs are. Gus Dur believed that human needs and well-being are the most important considerations in setting legal standards. Furthermore, Gus Dur believed that the development of Islamic jurisprudence must be directed toward ensuring that human rights are incorporated into the processes of legal derivation (istinbāṭ) and the application of law (maqāṣid). Therefore, Islamic law must be formulated in such a way that it not only maintains

fidelity to the textual foundations but also brings justice and goodness to the lives of the community (Wahid 2007).

Second, Gus Dur proposed the establishment of an institution specifically tasked with developing the methodological aspects of Islamic law. This institution could play a crucial role in guiding the process of jurisprudential renewal so that it is well-planned, sustainable, and has a clear direction. Without this institution, the renewal of jurisprudence would depend entirely on the individual efforts of the ulama. Through this institution, it is hoped that further development of Islamic legal methodology can be achieved more effectively and efficiently in response to the challenges of an ever-evolving society (Wahid 2000). Gus Dur emphasized that the renewal of the methods and references used in deriving Islamic law must go beyond traditional or classical Islamic studies. The process of deriving Islamic law must include dialogue with various academic disciplines (such as the social sciences, humanities, and other fields) with the aim of creating innovative methods for formulating legal rulings.

Third, Gus Dur emphasized the importance of developing specific and achievable goals or objectives. This component of the Islamic legal reform agenda provides a crucial foundation for setting the direction of progress. With clear goals, the process of change in developing and amending the law becomes much clearer and thus reduces the likelihood of confusion (Wahid 2000). Gus Dur considered one of the urgent goals here to be expanding the use of ijma' as a source for making Islamic legal decisions. He believed it was important to develop a broader understanding of ijma' beyond the consensus of classical scholars. Instead, efforts should be made to broaden participation in the development and resolution of human issues (Purwanti and Natalis 2026).

Gus Dur viewed the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah (Aswaja) tradition as a flexible one, allowing for the development of new forms of thought based on the needs of different communities in various regions. According to him, this can be achieved by utilizing the methodological tools already available within the body of uṣūl al-fiqh and qawā'id al-fiqh, ensuring that legal reform remains within the framework of Islamic scholarly tradition. In Gus Dur's view, these methodological tools should not be preserved in a static form but must be continuously developed to respond to social change. He emphasized that Islamic legal institutions must be made more dynamic by incorporating relevant new elements, while also providing greater space for the aspirations of the community in the law-making process. In other words, the experiences and social needs of the community must become an integral part of the legal istinbāṭ mechanism (Wahid 2007).

In Islamic inheritance law, normative provisions derived from the Qur'an and Hadith stipulate that, under certain conditions, the share of male heirs is twice that of female heirs. However, societies that practice the system of equal inheritance or joint ownership have a socio-economic structure that differs from that of Arab society at the time these provisions were revealed. In practice, the assets owned by a family are understood as the result of cooperation between husband and wife during their married life. On that basis, before the inheritance is distributed to the heirs, the share that is the right of the surviving spouse is first set aside as part of the joint property.

Gus Dur linked this practice to the views of Nusantara scholars, particularly Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari, who paid close attention to the characteristics of society in Kalimantan. In this social context, the division of assets occurs in two stages. First, half of the joint property is given to the surviving spouse as their rightful share.

Second, the remaining assets, which have become the estate (tirkah), are then distributed to the heirs in accordance with the provisions of Islamic inheritance law (Wahid 2006). For Gus Dur, this approach constitutes a limited form of legal reform namely, an adaptation to social conditions while the fundamental principles of Sharia law remain intact.

Based on this perspective, Gus Dur concluded that the formulation of Islamic law cannot be separated from the spatial and temporal context in which it was formulated. Therefore, the fuqahā' who lived in the Arabian Peninsula two or three centuries ago would very likely have produced legal formulations different from those developed by Kiai Arsyad al-Banjari in South Kalimantan. These differences do not indicate a contradiction with the principles of Sharia, but rather reflect the varying social, cultural, and economic conditions, as well as the needs of the community, which form the backdrop for the emergence of a legal provision. Thus, according to Gus Dur, the diversity of ijtihad outcomes is a logical consequence of the nature of Islamic law, which is always in interaction with the realities of human life (Wahid 2010).

Text Reinterpretation: Efforts to Develop Text Applications

The second approach offered by Gus Dur in the development of fiqh education is the reinterpretation of texts as a method for understanding Islamic law contextually. Contextual understanding allows students to distinguish between universal, unchanging teachings and specific rules that address particular contexts. Without this knowledge, the study of Islamic law would become formalistic that is, treating contextual rules as permanent ones. The approach to studying Islamic law must lead to the understanding that universal Islamic teachings are often expressed through Arab cultural forms; therefore, it is impossible to equate cultural aspects with the substance of Islamic teachings.

According to Gus Dur, an understanding of the Qur'an must be developed by taking into account the social and cultural conditions of society throughout history, in order to ensure that the Qur'an's universal message remains relevant in every era. Therefore, the interpretation of the Qur'an must go beyond the text itself to include an understanding of society's historical experiences and changing social conditions, as well as an anticipation of future challenges. To develop a comprehensive understanding of the Qur'an, the authority of the text must be integrated with historical and social science approaches in order to understand contemporary issues and apply the Qur'an in a manner consistent with its normative principles (Wahid 1983). The application of these interpretations in the social context of daily life is subject to ijtihad, allowing for various interpretations. The reinterpretation of Islamic beliefs is an intellectual activity aimed at adapting divine revelation to the realities of social life. However, this does not alter the core of Islam's fundamental principles (Wahid 2000).

Reinterpretation is essential in the study of fiqh. As Gus Dur stated, if one lacks the skill to interpret, it is difficult to accept that different interpretations may exist, all of which are based on the same Islamic scholarly tradition. Therefore, students must cultivate a critical approach to thinking as they study fiqh, drawing on the dynamic range of opinions and intellectual richness found within the field of Islamic jurisprudence (Wahid 2006). New concepts take a long time to emerge due to ongoing dialogue with history, culture, and diverse ways of life that shape the understanding of Islam and its application in daily life (Wahid 2006).

Gus Dur emphasized that reinterpretation must be understood as a renewal of the paradigm of understanding, appreciation, and application of Islam for the advancement of humanity throughout the ages, not as an effort to change or reform Islamic law. The primary goal of reinterpretation is to ensure continuity in the relationship between changing social realities and the normative principles of Islam (Wahid 2007). For this reason, Gus Dur promoted the development of a critical paradigm of thought regarding social construction, rejecting overly formal and narrow interpretations of Islamic tradition. Within this framework, he developed the concept of "Pribumisasi Islam". This concept challenges an understanding of the Qur'an and Sunnah that focuses solely on cultural and social experiences in Indonesia. Instead, it promotes the development of a more contextual and substantive application of Islamic teachings for the lives of Muslims in Indonesia (Wahid 1989).

Gus Dur's approach to interpreting the Prophet's hadith demonstrates that reinterpretation can shift understanding toward a more contextual perspective. He argued that hadith must be understood in relation to social and historical conditions to ensure that the substance of their teachings remains relevant to future societies. According to Gus Dur's, the Prophet's command to increase the number of children must be understood within the context of early Islam, when Muslims needed to increase their numbers due to high mortality rates and difficult living conditions. In today's society, the focus has shifted from merely the number of children to the quality of the family and future generations. Thus, the message of the hadith is interpreted as an encouragement for responsible family planning, such as limiting the number of children based on a family's capabilities and well-being (Wahid 1989).

One excellent example of the reinterpretation of texts in Gus Dur's thought is the issue of polygamy. In other words, he treated polygamy as an issue that is also related to justice. Therefore, he emphasized that the interpretation of justice as a prerequisite for polygamy cannot be viewed statically, but must be understood in light of changing social contexts (Wahid 1989, 86). In the past, justice was largely determined based on established material rights, whereas in the modern era, the concept of justice encompasses respect for women as legal subjects in terms of their dignity, rights, and consent (Wahid 2001).

Another clear manifestation of Gus Dur's reinterpretation of the issue of women's leadership was his condemnation of the views held by certain groups that provided textual justifications for rejecting female leaders. According to Gus Dur's, the verses of the Qur'an and hadiths used as grounds for rejecting female leaders must be interpreted based on the historical and social context in which those verses and hadiths were first revealed; thus, they cannot be applied literally in a modern political system that differs from the one that existed during the time of the Prophet (Wahid 2006). This issue requires a new interpretation of modern leadership systems such as the democratic system practiced in Indonesia and all other forms of modern leadership which differ significantly, both at the micro and macro levels, from the context in which those verses were first revealed and in which the hadiths were first conveyed and transmitted to the community. Therefore, to understand religious texts, one must account for the changing context so that they remain relevant to the principles of justice and welfare. To reinforce his argument above, Gus Dur cited Surah Al-Hujurāt (49): 13. This verse states that Allah created human beings as equals, with the same right to submit to Him, regardless of gender. Gus Dur's argued that "gender" refers to biological differences.

According to Gus Dur, the principle of equality before Allah affirms that all genders have the right to lead (Wahid 2006, 129).

Gus Dur's thought demonstrates the integration of two sources of knowledge: the authority of religious texts and the social science approach. In this regard, these two sources of knowledge function as complementary methods for reinterpretation. They serve as the methodological foundation for addressing various contemporary issues. He positions historical and sociological analysis as essential tools for understanding revelation, thereby enabling the normative foundation to be understood contextually.

DISCUSSION

Dialogue Between Fiqh and Customary Law: An Approach to the Study of Islamic Law

For Gus Dur, accommodation between fiqh and tradition is permitted only in matters of cultural and social life; matters of faith and worship are normative and must not be altered or adapted based on custom (Amri et al. 2026). Therefore, the dialogue between Sharia and culture must continue to safeguard the boundaries established by the fundamental principles of Islamic teachings. The convergence of the two is not intended to merge them, but to build a complementary relationship through an accommodative, adaptive, and dialogical approach (Munawar et al. 2025).

The main focus of this approach is to reinforce the role of fiqh in recognizing local customs, meaning that local customs become a primary consideration in establishing fiqh when they are consistent with the principles of Sharia law (Anshori and Abdurrahman 2025). This approach demonstrates that the renewal of Islamic law, as proposed by Gus Dur, is achieved through the development of interpretive principles capable of synthesizing classical traditions (heritage) of the past with the dynamics of the present. The initial stage begins with the dynamic internalization of ideas through the development of legal methodologies, after which the results are disseminated to the public (Dahlan et al. 2019).

Gus Dur's approach encourages the development of teaching strategies in which we not only teach the meaning or underlying rationale behind legal texts but also inspire students to examine and understand the relationship between religious norms and the social realities in which those norms are applied (Mas'ulah et al. 2025). In this context, when applying this way of thinking to the teaching and learning of Islamic law (fiqh), a more contextual, critical, and practical system is needed one that provides students with the opportunity to master not only the standards but also the objectives, underlying principles, and relevance (Faizi and Ali 2024). Based on the discussion above, the approach used by Gus Dur can be formulated in the following framework.

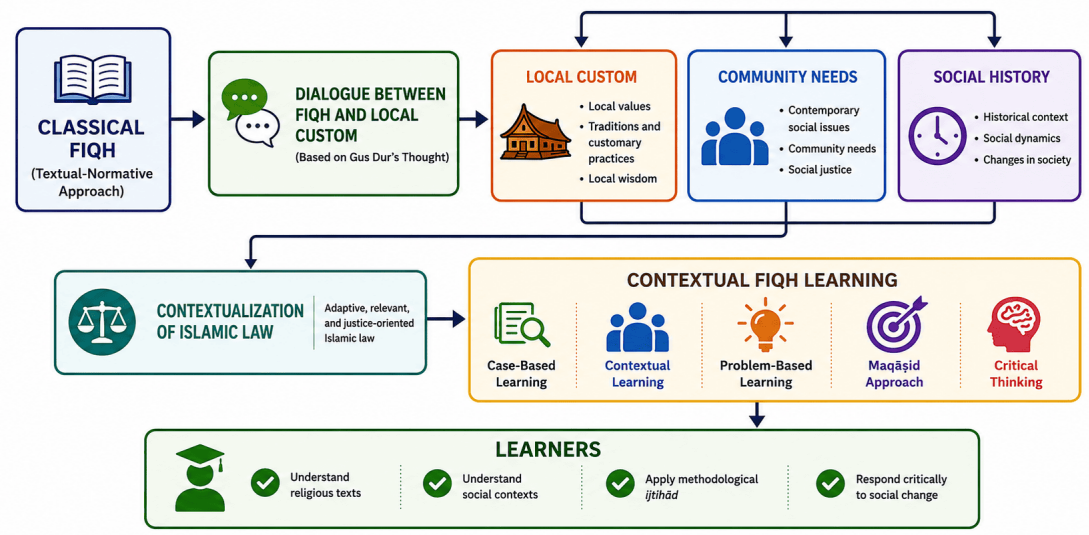

Figure 2, Model of Dialogue between Fiqh and Customary Law in Fiqh Education from Gus Dur's perspective (Source: Developed by the authors based on the analysis of Abdurrahman Wahid's works and relevant literature)

The process of transforming contextual fiqh education according to Gus Dur is illustrated in Figure 1. This process begins with classical fiqh as a paradigm that tends to be oriented toward textual and normative interpretation. The pedagogical implications of the process of contextualizing Islamic law (fiqh) are reflected in the emergence of a case-based model of fiqh instruction, which focuses on achieving the objectives of Sharia, or maqāṣid al-Sharia, and can foster critical thinking through problem-solving (Hermawan et al. 2025; Alsenaidi and Alhamidah 2026). With this approach, students must interpret legal arguments, determine the social context of those arguments, identify the intent of Islamic law, and ultimately develop their methodological istinbāṭ skills when addressing modern issues.

Text Reinterpretation: Models of Thinking in Contextual Fiqh Education

Gus Dur emphasized the necessity of reinterpreting texts as an essential part of the tradition of Islamic thought, so that normative teachings remain connected to reality and the changing conditions of life in society. This line of thought aligns with the usul al-fiqh adage stating that social reality is constantly changing, whereas religious texts are fixed (Addzaky et al. 2025). Understanding Islamic law cannot be limited to a literal interpretation of the texts; rather, it must be interpreted in accordance with the changing social environment to achieve the substantive objectives of sharia. This perspective highlights the importance of understanding the Qur'an and Hadith through the social, cultural, and historical contexts of their creation. Armed with this approach, Gus Dur successfully distinguished the symbolic aspects of Arab culture from Islamic values, thereby preserving the core message of Islam intact, while acknowledging that not all aspects of Arab culture are part of Islam (Mudawam 2021).

In his various works, Gus Dur emphasized the urgency of reinterpreting Islamic teachings which have long been considered fixed to make them relevant to the social aspects of life. His main argument was that, as society changes, religion must be reinterpreted so that these texts remain relevant today (Islamy 2021). Gus Dur's view is that interpretation is not something final or completely settled, but rather something that can always evolve further within the context of changing social realities, while remaining rooted in the basic or fundamental values of Islam (Gufron 2025). However,

Gus Dur pointed out that the process of reinterpretation has its limits and can only be applied to the realm of ijtihad, not to the fundamental aspects of religion. The goal is to ensure that the substance of revelation can be applied contextually in response to social change without disregarding its normative values (Ahmed 2025). On the other hand, applying ijtihad to new issues based on a literal interpretation of the text can cause Islamic teachings to lose their relevance (Al-Turabi and Auda 2025).

This creates an opportunity to reinterpret Islamic law so that it aligns with societal developments (Tohari et al. 2022). Gus Dur shifted the focus of Islamic thought from the madhhab (school of thought) to the manhaj (methodology). Thus, the study of fiqh focuses not only on understanding the thoughts of the ulama but also on applying contemporary legal deduction methodologies to address new issues (Gad Makhlouf 2024). Based on this discussion, the model for reinterpreting texts in fiqh education according to Gus Dur can be described as follows.

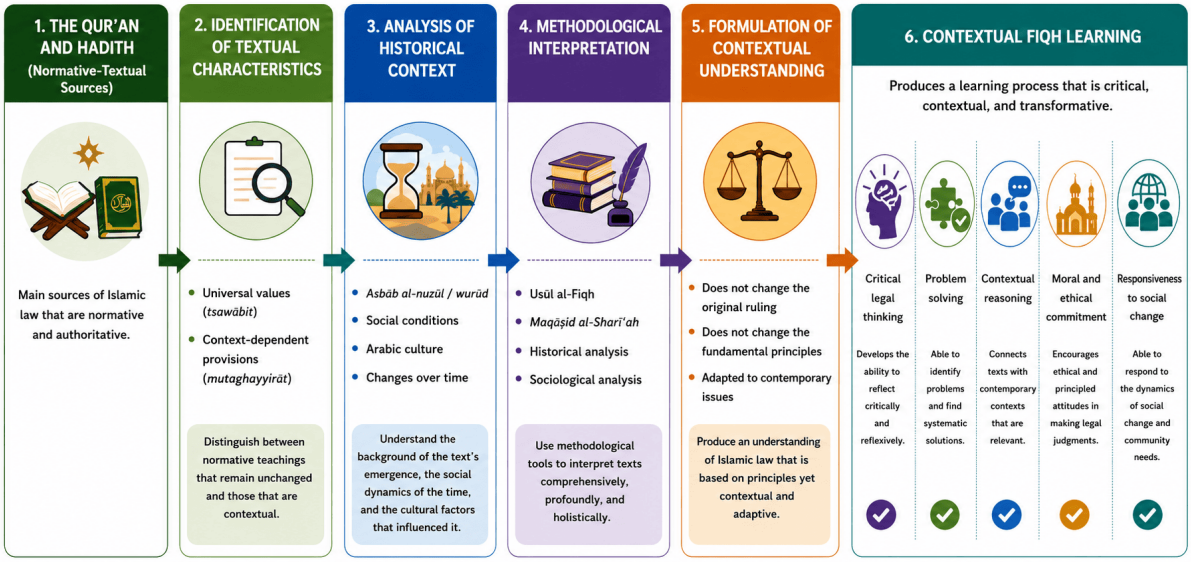

Figure 3, A Model for Reinterpreting Texts in Contextual Fiqh Education According to Gus Dur (Source: Developed by the authors based on the analysis of Abdurrahman Wahid's works and relevant literature)

The image illustrates Gus Dur's concept as a model for reinterpreting texts in fiqh education. The end result is a contextual understanding of Islamic law one that preserves the unchanging aspects of faith and worship while allowing room for ijtihad on matters of muamalah. In the context of education, this model was developed to facilitate the development of critical thinking skills, contextual legal reasoning, a methodological approach (manhaj) to schools of thought, and students' ability to respond to social change without deviating from the normative values of Sharia.

Building on these two conceptual models, Gus Dur argued that contextual fiqh education should not stop at textual understanding; rather, he emphasized the ability to connect the text with sociocultural realities and to apply Islamic legal reasoning in addressing societal issues. The contribution of this conceptual model becomes clearer when comparing the various approaches to fiqh education that have emerged. As will

be presented in the following table comparing these approaches and highlighting Gus Dur's conceptual contributions:

Table 1. Comparison of Fiqh Learning Approaches and Conceptual Contributions of Gus Dur's Contextual Fiqh Model (Source: Developed by the authors based on the analysis of Abdurrahman Wahid's works and relevant literature)

Learning Approach	**Key Characteristics**	**Limitations**	**Gus Dur's Conceptual Model Contribution**
Textual Fiqh Learning	Oriented toward classical legal texts and literalist interpretation.	Less responsive to changes in society.	Bridges texts and social realities through reinterpretation and sensitivity to societal contexts.
Contextual Learning (CTL)	Connects learning with real-life contexts and learners' experiences.	Lacks a systematic Islamic legal methodological foundation, particularly uṣūl al-fiqh.	Integrates social contexts with uṣūl al-fiqh and principles of Islamic legal reasoning.
Problem-Based Learning (PBL)	Focuses on solving authentic problems through critical, analytical, and collaborative thinking.	Does not specifically explain the process of legal reasoning and istinbāṭ.	Adds the dimensions of istinbāṭ and maqāṣid al-sharī'ah to the process of solving legal problems.
Case-Based Learning	Uses real-world cases to understand legal principles and their application.	Highly dependent on the quality and design of cases used in learning.	Integrates dialogue between fiqh and customary law ('urf) while considering socio-cultural contexts in case analysis.
Gus Dur's Conceptual Model of Contextual Fiqh Education	Integrates texts, socio-cultural contexts, and Islamic legal methodology through uṣūl al-fiqh, istinbāṭ, maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, fiqh–customary law dialogue, and textual reinterpretation.	Remains conceptual and requires validation in actual learning settings.	Produces a conceptual model of contextual fiqh education grounded in Gus Dur's thought.

Table 1 shows that the conceptual contribution of the contextual fiqh education model based on Gus Dur's thought lies in the integration of textual authority, sociocultural context, and the methodology of Islamic legal reasoning. Unlike learning approaches that primarily emphasize textual understanding, contextual experience,

problem-solving, or case analysis, this model connects all these dimensions with uṣūl al-fiqh, istinbāṭ, maqāṣid al-syarī'ah, fiqh-adat dialogue, and textual reinterpretation. Gus Dur's conceptual model expands the role of the sociocultural context which was originally viewed merely as a backdrop for learning, into a process of legal reasoning designed to help students understand and formulate answers to fiqh issues in society.

D. CONCLUSION

Gus Dur's thought is relevant as a source of knowledge that can be applied to the development of Islamic legal studies in Indonesia. The methodological contributions made by Gus Dur are not limited to the concept of Islamic legal reform but also provide a pedagogical paradigm that can connect the authority of religious texts with the dynamic realities of society. This study aims to reconstruct the concept of contextual fiqh education based on Gus Dur's thought, which bridges religious texts and societal dynamics. Gus Dur offers a pedagogical paradigm that influences the role of fiqh as a process of reasoning and legal understanding for the common good. This study identified two main conceptual models. First, a dialogue between fiqh, sharia, and adat through the integration of textual and sociocultural elements while still accommodating the principles of sharia. Second, the reinterpretation of texts; this concept guides students to distinguish between universal Islamic values (tsawābit) and particular ones (mutaghayyirāt), supported by uṣūl al-fiqh, maqāṣid al-syarī'ah, and sociological analysis. These two conceptual models were formulated to facilitate the development of contextual fiqh education supported by students' critical thinking, legal reasoning, and istinbāṭ competencies. However, the limitation of this study lies in the fact that the designed models are conceptual in nature and have not yet been tested in actual classroom implementation. Therefore, future research needs to empirically validate the proposed conceptual models in classroom settings and assess students' abilities in contextual legal reasoning, critical thinking, and istinbāṭ competencies.

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Data availability: All data generated or analyzed during this study are included in this published article.

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