

Reactivation of the Role of Pesantren for the Maslahah of the Ummah : A Study of KH Sahal Mahfudh's Social Fiqh Thought

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Article	Abstract
Article History : Received : July, 13, 2025 Reviewed : Oct, 14, 2025 Accepted : Oct, 22, 2025 Published : Oct, 26, 2025	This study emerges from the observation that many pesantren remain predominantly focused on student care, limiting their broader social impact; this research reactivates the social role of pesantren by situating it within the normative framework of KH Sahal Mahfudh's social fiqh. A qualitative literature-based approach was employed, drawing primarily on KH Sahal's works and peer-reviewed journal articles, analyzed sequentially through open, axial, and selective coding, with library triangulation applied to ensure validity. Findings indicate that KH Sahal's social fiqh prioritizes maqā'id and basic needs fulfillment as practical instruments of ijtihād, enabling pesantren to develop integrated curricula, productive enterprises such as cooperatives and canteens, primary health services, vocational training, and environmental conservation programs. Implications call for institutional reform, enhanced methodological capacity among administrators, transparent waqf management, and supportive local policies to facilitate stakeholder partnerships. The study recommends comparative field testing of the proposed reactivation model. Systematic implementation is expected to improve social inclusion, reduce local economic disparities, and strengthen community resilience through women's and youth participation alongside sustained monitoring and evaluation and institutional learning frameworks also.
Keywords: <i>Islamic boarding school, Social Fiqh, KH Sahal Mahfudh, Maqā'id al-Ummah, Empowerment</i>	

INTRODUCTION

The presence of Islamic boarding schools in many villages has not been optimized as a center for empowering the surrounding community. The pesantren's social program is still focused on religious activities, without mentioning the economic or practical education aspects for residents. Field data indicates that most Islamic boarding schools do not organize technical skills training that can increase local job opportunities. Islamic boarding school facilities are often closed to non-students, so interaction and collaboration with the general public are minimal. The lack of formal partnerships with village governments or non-governmental organizations means that the potential for cooperation in village development programs is neglected. Basic health services or free social consultations for residents are rarely held. As a result, pesantren have not played a significant role in encouraging the socio-economic growth of the surrounding community. Therefore, this study emphasizes the importance of designing concrete strategies to strengthen synergy between pesantren and local communities (Suhud & Islami, 2020).

An academic study revealed that many Islamic boarding schools have not maximized their potential as agents of social empowerment in the surrounding environment. Previous studies have shown that the curriculum of Islamic boarding schools tends to focus on classical religious teaching, so the villagers' economic empowerment program is still minimal. Demographic research shows that vocational skills training initiatives are rare and can increase local communities' productive capacity. The literature also observes the low access of non-

students to pesantren facilities, including meeting rooms, libraries, and sports facilities. Comparative analysis shows that pesantren social programs often run independently without official collaboration with village policy makers and are less coordinated. The study of Islamic education policy highlights the lack of budget allocation for activities outside the institution, so that social activities of Islamic boarding schools are relatively excluded. In addition, some anthropological studies note that the top-down approach in program planning ignores the aspirations of local citizens. The implications of these literature findings confirm the need to reformulate the role of pesantren to be more inclusive and responsive to the surrounding community's needs (Azhar & Haryanto, 2024).

This research aims to explore the concept of reactivation and reformulation of the role of pesantren so that the institution can function more proactively in empowering the surrounding community. This transformation requires a paradigm shift from a pesantren that has been passive to an institution that is agile in responding to local socio-economic challenges. One of the main footholds in this study is KH Sahal Mahfudh's thoughts on social jurisprudence, which emphasizes the urgency of pesantren's social responsibility outside of just teaching classical texts. By referring to Sahal Mahfudh's social fiqh framework, it is hoped that pesantren can design welfare and empowerment programs based on the community's real needs. The research findings are expected to formulate a responsive and inclusive pesantren operational model based on the vision of KH Sahal's reform. Thus, this research not only enriches the treasures of theory, but also provides concrete steps to actualize the social role of pesantren in the contemporary era (Nasrul et al., 2022).

Previous studies have succeeded in mapping the limitations of some pesantren as centers of empowerment, even though in historical records pesantren have a great contribution to the environment outside of pesantren, especially in the struggle for independence (Mulyo, 2022). Previous literature highlights the focus of pesantren on the teaching of students (Uswatun Hasanah & Ainur Rofiq Sofa, 2024), the progress of pesantren alone (Qori, 2019), and the scarcity of direct contributions to society because they still have domestic problems (Triasmoro et al., 2025). In addition, there has been no research that tests how the idea of social jurisprudence, especially the thought of KH Sahal Mahfudh, can be translated into the design of participatory and sustainable Islamic boarding school institutional programs. The gap marks the need for research that moves beyond the description of the problem towards the formulation of implementation mechanisms that integrate contextual *ijtihad*.

This research clarifies the focus on the transformative dimension of social fiqh: namely the role of the principles of *maslahah* and *maqālid* as the basis for designing empowerment interventions. Therefore, this study focuses on the application of social fiqh of KH Sahal as a normative framework as well as a diagnostic instrument for designing economic programs, relevant skills training, and scientific development. The expected contribution is the presentation of operational models and policy recommendations that can bridge the gap between social fiqh theory and community empowerment practices. With an analytical approach that combines in-depth literature studies and empirical verification of pesantren practices, this study seeks to fill the gap in previous research while providing an implementive foothold for strengthening the social role of pesantren for the benefit of the people.

The argument of this research departs from the belief that the reactivation and reformulation of the role of pesantren through the social fiqh thinking of KH Sahal Mahfudh can spur the benefit of the people as a whole. KH Sahal emphasized that Islamic boarding schools are obliged to teach religious knowledge and actively solve socio-economic problems in the surrounding environment. By embedding the principles of social jurisprudence into the curriculum and institutional programs, pesantren are expected to be able to design interventions that are appropriate to the local context, such as entrepreneurship training or basic health

services. This assumption is based on the premise that pesantren has substantial social and religious capital to bridge the community's needs and the institution's internal resources. The implementation of this model is believed to increase people's sense of ownership and participation, strengthen solidarity networks, and support sustainable development. Furthermore, reformulating the active role of pesantren through KH Sahal's social fiqh can expand the institution's legitimacy in the public's eyes, making it a strategic partner of local governments. The research hypothesis explains that the practical impact will be increasing access to public services, reducing social gaps, and growing the economy around Islamic boarding schools. Thus, this argument emphasizes that strengthening the social role of pesantren is not only a theoretical effort, but a real step to achieve the common good (Umayah & Junanah, 2021) (Baroroh, 2020) (Sulthon, 2020).

RESEARCH METHODS

The material object of this research includes a series of social fiqh ideas put forward by KH Sahal Mahfudh in the book *Nuansa Fikih Sosial*. The study focuses on translating classical Nash into a contemporary social reality to benefit the people. The research also explores the mechanism of community participation, which he recommends as an essential element of *ijtihad*. In addition, the community's historical context and socioeconomic background are the main components to assess the relevance of thought. Thus, material objects include *turats* texts, pesantren practices, and social dynamics, which are the background for the publication of KH Sahal Mahfudh's social fiqh (Jalaludin & Zahro, 2023).

The research design uses a qualitative approach with literature study techniques as the primary method. This approach allows for in-depth written document analysis without relying on quantitative data. Literature studies were chosen to explore KH Sahal Mahfudh's intellectual heritage, ranging from classic books to modern articles. The analysis process includes criticism and context review. This method also provides flexibility in comparatively reviewing various sources. Through qualitative design, the meaning of social fiqh can be understood holistically and in detail (Adlini et al., 2022).

The primary source in this study is the work of KH Sahal Mahfudh, who is the primary reference for understanding his contextual *ijtihad* framework. As a complement, articles from accredited journals that discuss *maqāḍid al-syarī'ah*, basic needs, and *manhajī* methodology are used. Additional references include the study of modern Islamic boarding schools and the integration of science in the religious curriculum. This blend of resources ensures balanced conceptual and empirical analysis. With a comprehensive library of libraries, the validity of arguments can be improved (Siddiq, 2022).

The data was collected through the collection of official documents, including books, column writings, and transcripts of KH interviews. Sahal Mahfudh was published. Searching for newspapers, religious magazines, and Islamic boarding school digital repositories was also used to obtain writing context. Each text is analyzed using direct quotation techniques and structured paraphrasing. The researcher recorded metadata such as the year of publication and publication forums to see the development of thought. In addition, field records from observations of Islamic boarding schools that apply social fiqh are used as complements. This method guarantees a wealth of data and cross-source perspectives (Hakim, 2022).

The process of analyzing the library data is designed in layers to guarantee the depth and reliability of the findings. The initial stage includes intensive familiarization of the text, repeated reading, recording metadata, and reducing documents into ready-to-code units of meaning. This research applies open coding documented in the codebook, followed by axial and selective coding to map the main themes and relationships between themes. Compilation of matrices, data displays, and comparison tables that facilitate pattern-matching and

visualization of conceptual relationships. To ensure validity, library triangulation is applied: each claim must be confirmed across the type of sources of KH Sahal's work and journal articles. Finally, for the sake of transparency and reliability, the researcher keeps a complete trail audit, conducts inter-code checks when necessary, and presents thick descriptions so that readers can assess the credibility and transferability of interpretation. (Nur & Muttaqin, 2020)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Social Fiqh

Social fiqh combines Islamic law principles with an analysis of the current social conditions of society. In this framework, fiqh rules focus on worship rituals and efforts to create justice and common welfare. Social jurisprudence emphasizes the importance of *maslahah* or the benefit of the *ummah* as a basis for establishing fatwas and legal guidelines. The process of *ijtihad* in social jurisprudence involves contextual evaluation of sociological and economic data that apply in the field. Thus, the formulation of religious law becomes responsive to problems such as poverty, inequality, and environmental crises. This approach encourages community participation in formulating religious solutions to create more inclusive results. Social jurisprudence also integrates the principles of empathy and solidarity as a core value in every legal decision. As a form of adaptation of Islamic teachings, social jurisprudence plays a strategic role in formulating policies relevant to the times' challenges (Mahfudh, 2012).

Social *fikih* emphasizes that every fiqh decision must be built on a deep understanding of local social and cultural dynamics. In contrast to the static normative approach, social jurisprudence makes the background of local customs and values the primary foundation for law-making. In the process of *ijtihad*, fatwas are not produced solely from classical texts, but from direct observation of the daily practices of the community. Thus, religious law responses can answer concrete problems, such as the pattern of rural cooperation or the challenges of urbanization in big cities. This method involves dialogue between scholars, community leaders, and social experts to understand the cultural setting comprehensively. The diversity of customs in each region gives birth to various fiqh decisions that are still based on Sharia principles. This contextual approach ensures that Islamic law is inseparable from the pulse of the lives of its people. With social jurisprudence, religious teachings become more relevant, applicable, and respected by all levels of society (Shihan et al., 2023).

Social fiqh requires that fulfilling basic human needs be the leading benchmark in every determination of Islamic law. Clerics who adopt this framework must review aspects of food, clothing, board, health, and education before formulating a fatwa. By prioritizing basic needs, legal decisions follow classical texts and are responsive to the people's daily reality. This approach prevents the emergence of policies that increase the burden on vulnerable groups. The *ijtihad* process becomes more inclusive by involving dialogue between Sharia experts, sociologists, and economists. The participatory method ensures that the community's aspirations are heard and accommodated in the formulation of the law. Finally, social fiqh based on fulfilling basic needs makes Sharia an instrument of justice and welfare. Thus, Islamic law can present relevant solutions to contemporary challenges sustainably (Mahfudh, 2012).

Social jurisprudence requires that every Islamic law decision pay attention to *maqāḍid al-syarī'ah* as the primary foundation for the goals of sharia to be achieved comprehensively. The fatwa becomes a normative and transformative instrument by prioritizing the preservation of religion, soul, intellect, heredity, and property. This approach ensures that every fiqh policy supports social justice and the welfare of the people. Scholars perform *ijtihad* by referring to *maqāḍid* to test the relevance of fundamental norms in modern life. Therefore, the law-making process involves an in-depth analysis of social impacts and collective benefits. As a result, social jurisprudence decisions can holistically address contemporary issues such as economic

inequality and environmental crises. With maqā'id al-syarī'ah as a framework, sharia becomes responsive and adaptive to the needs of society. In the end, maqā'id-based social jurisprudence strengthens the role of religion in realizing welfare and justice for all people (Agha & Shafii, 2021).

The Maslahah of the Ummah

The Maslahah of the ummah is a systematic effort to maximize the benefits and minimize the harm in collective life. Conceptually, this term is based on the principle of maslahah al-'āmmah, which emphasizes the common interest over the interests of the individual. Classical and contemporary thought agree that benefits include material, spiritual, and social dimensions in an integrated manner. Some researchers emphasize the importance of balancing basic needs and cultural aspirations to maintain the sustainability of the community. In the modern context, the benefit of the ummah is also interpreted as the ability of the community to face global dynamics without losing local identity. Thus, the definition of the benefit of the ummah develops into a multidimensional framework that is always adaptive to the changing times (Sulthon, 2023).

The general social fiqh literature divides the maslahah of the ummah into three primary levels: daruriyyāt (basic needs), ḥājiyyāt (supporting needs), and taḥsīniyyāt (perfectionist needs). The category of daruriyyāt includes aspects of survival such as food, clothing, and shelter, whose existence is absolute for the survival of the ummah. Furthermore, ḥājiyyāt includes easy access to health services and education to improve people's quality of life. Meanwhile, taḥsīniyyāt focuses on developing culture, art, and ethics to enrich civilization. In addition, several studies have also distinguished the benefits of local, national, and transnational scales to adjust implementation strategies. This categorization helps policymakers and scholars formulate priorities for social actions and Islamic law (Faoziyah, 2023).

In practice, the productive zakat program in several Islamic boarding schools is a real example of applying the benefit of the people in the economic realm. Through the cash waqf mechanism and social business management, financial assistance is converted into business capital that empowers underprivileged families. Another case is seen in natural disaster management initiatives, where religious institutions combine donations and mitigation training to build community resilience. In the environment, the reforestation movement in Islamic boarding schools exemplifies a holistic approach between spirituality and nature conservation. In addition, micro-waqf-based financial inclusion projects in remote villages enable access to Islamic banking for vulnerable communities. These various examples show how the benefit of the ummah is realized through the synergy between social fiqh values and policy innovation (Harahap et al., 2022).

Result

Understanding social jurisprudence in depth requires a study of the biography of its author, KH Sahal Mahfudh, because the context of his life and intellectual journey shape the perspective and normative framework he offers. KH Sahal's life, educational tracks, and organizational experience provide important clues about his motives and direction of ijtihad in formulating the concept of fiqh that is in favor of social welfare. His formulation of social fiqh, including its definitions and characteristics, must be read as a synthesis between the classical fiqh tradition and the contextual response to public problems. Thus, the understanding of KH Sahal's social fiqh texts is incomplete without placing them in a biographical frame that explains the rationality, purpose, and programmatic character of his ideas.

Biography of KH Salah Mahfudh

KH Sahal Mahfudh was born on December 17, 1937, in Kajen Village, Margoyoso, Pati, Central Java, in a pesantren family that had given birth to sustainable ulama. From a young

age, he was familiar with the recitation environment at the Maslakul Huda Islamic Boarding School, which would later become the center of his religious activities. In 1999, he was elected Rais 'Aam Syuriah of the Executive Board of Nahdlatul Ulama, the highest position in Indonesia's most prominent Islamic mass organization. A year later, KH Sahal Mahfudh was appointed as the General Chairman of the Indonesian Ulema Council, a position he held until 2010. During his tenure, he was known to consistently distance himself from practical politics to maintain the independence of religious institutions. On January 24, 2014, KH Sahal passed away at his residence in the Maslakul Huda Islamic Boarding School complex, leaving behind a legacy of extensive thought. His body was buried in the courtyard of the Islamic boarding school, among the students whom he had always educated during his life. His life and career story illustrate his total dedication to the education of the people until the end of his life (Rochmat, 2023).

KH Sahal Mahfudh's educational journey began by studying basic knowledge at the Maslakul Huda Islamic Boarding School, which was founded by his father, KH Mahfudh Salam. In 1953, he completed his formal education at Madrasah Mathali'ul Falah, then continued his studies at the Bendo Islamic Boarding School, Pare, Kediri, until 1957. His thirst for the science of ushul fiqh led him to the Sarang Islamic Boarding School, Rembang, to study directly with Zubair scholars until 1960. Throughout his studies, KH Sahal actively participated in cross-disciplinary recitation, from tafsir to Sufism. In 2003, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta awarded him an honorary doctorate in appreciation for his scientific contributions. This academic and religious work formed his methodological foundation in formulating Islamic law. The seriousness of classical and modern studies allowed him to balance texts and contemporary realities. This tiered education became the foundation of social fiqh thinking, which would later be colored by contextual *ijtihad* (Rochmat, 2023).

Outside of pesantren activities, KH Sahal Mahfudh actively leads various religious institutions. Since taking over Maslakul Huda in 1963, he has developed the pesantren into an inclusive Islamic education center. From 1999 to 2014, as Rais 'Aam PBNU, he guided thousands of kiai and NU cadres throughout Indonesia. Meanwhile, his leadership in the MUI (2000–2010) strengthened the council's role in formulating national fatwas. In 2013, he served as the rector of the Nahdlatul Ulama Islamic Institute (INISNU) Jepara, expanding his influence in higher education. Although these positions are strategic, KH Sahal consistently prioritizes scientific studies without being trapped in politicization. Various international forums also often invite him as a speaker on fiqh and socio-culture. The organization's footprint reflects a mature blend of religious and academic leadership (Rochmat, 2023).

KH Sahal Mahfudh's writings include hundreds of fatwas, articles, and fiqh textbooks. He diligently wrote social fiqh columns in national newspapers, providing explanations of Islamic law that were easy for the general public to understand. At the cottage, he developed a curriculum based on ushul fiqh and *maqā'id al-syarī'ah* to train students to think critically. His books on contemporary *ijtihad* became the primary reference for religious researchers and practitioners. In addition, KH Sahal wrote commentaries on classics, such as Fathul Mu'in, to bridge the text and the realities of the times. Some of his works have also been translated into English and Arabic, expanding the reach of his thought. With a straightforward language style, his writings emphasized social pragmatism without abandoning Sharia principles. This intellectual heritage remains the primary reference in Indonesia's study of social fiqh (Rochmat, 2023).

KH Sahal Mahfudh's thoughts on social jurisprudence were born from the awareness of the dynamics of modern society. He argued that Islamic law must respond to basic needs and collective benefits, not just ritualistic rules. In formulating fatwas, he always combines *shari'at* references with empirical analysis in the field, ensuring that the results of *ijtihad* are

relevant and applicable. The concepts of *maslahah 'ammāh* and *maqā'id al-syarī'ah* became the main framework in each of his decisions. KH Sahal also encourages participatory methods, involving community leaders and sociologists to understand the local context. This approach allows social jurisprudence to adapt to technological poverty, environmental crises, and economic inequality. Through this model, Islamic law is not seen as a dogmatic text, but as an instrument of justice and the welfare of the *ummah*. His thinking emphasizes that contextual *ijtihad* is the best way to answer the challenges of the complexity of the times (Yusdani, 2022).

Characteristics of Social Fiqh

Reinterpretation and Contextualization of Fiqh Texts

The contextual reinterpretation of fiqh texts begins with exploring the core meaning of *nash*, which refers to the goals of sharia and the reality of today's society. This process involves a historical analysis of the background of the decline of law and social practices at the time of its formulation. The mujtahids then weigh the relevance of the law to modern challenges, such as the digital revolution or changes in the family structure. Thus, the basic principles of fiqh are not just memorized, but revived through critical thinking and analysis of the needs of the *ummah*. The contextual method combines the study of classical texts and empirical data, resulting in a verdict that touches on real problems. In its application, dialogue between scholars, academics, and social practitioners is the key to enriching the perspective of *ijtihad*. The results of this reinterpretation are expected to minimize norms' rigidity and increase Islamic law's flexibility. Finally, the *Nash* that initially seemed static can be transformed into a dynamic instrument for the welfare of the people (Mahfudh, 2012).

The next step is the implementation of reinterpretation through scientific forums and modern *da'wah* media to bridge the message of tradition and today's expectations. Thematic studies, such as on the ethics of digital transactions or women's rights in the world of work, show how contextual jurisprudence can offer practical solutions. In each phase, social impact verification becomes a benchmark for the success of the adaptation of fiqh texts. Cross-disciplinary collaboration also facilitates the preparation of guidelines that are easy for ordinary people to understand. The main challenge lies in the resistance of conservative groups who fear it will reduce the authority of classical law. However, methodological transparency and openness of arguments can mitigate these concerns. Through the application of the principles of *maqā'id* and basic need, this reinterpretation ensures that religious rules are relevant and just. Thus, contextual jurisprudence can answer contemporary problems effectively and sustainably (Saadah et al., 2023).

Changes in the Pattern of Mazhab

The change in the pattern of *mazhab* from a textual approach (*qaulī*) to a methodological approach (*manhajī*) marked a transformation in the understanding of fiqh among Muslims. In a textual pattern, followers of the school tend to refer directly to the opinions of the founding scholars without considering the context or methodological underpinnings behind the arguments. This approach spurred a rigid tendency of *taqlīd*, so that *ijtihad* space was limited and classical law was often carried out without review. It is different from the *manhajī* pattern, where the emphasis shifts to reasoning methods such as the sorting of evidence, the rules of *ushul fiqh*, and *maqā'id al-syarī'ah* as the foundation of each legal conclusion. *Manhajī* scholars study the structure of argumentation, the validity of *sanad*, and social conditions before deciding on a legal stance. Thus, someone can do "*mazhab*" on the scientific principles of a *mazhab* without having to accept each *qaulī* roughly. This shift facilitates flexibility in responding to contemporary issues the early generations never faced. Practically, the *manhajī* pattern also encourages cross-sectarian collaboration, as the similarity of methodologies allows for comparison and harmonization of laws (Galadari, 2022).

Implementing the manhajī school provides space for the new generation to perform contextual ijtihad without feeling shackled by the legacy of qaulī. Within this framework, fiqh students are required to understand the framework of rules, such as istinbāḥ dalīl and takhrīj nash, to be able to translate the basic principles into relevant fatwas. The shift in mindset from "who says" to "how to think" strengthens ushul fiqh's role as an analytical instrument. As a result, ijtihad pays more attention to general maslahah and maqāḥid, rather than just the literal conformity to the nash. Modern fiqh documents also initially began to show a methodology chapter instead of directly presenting qaulī. Although there are still challenges of resistance from those who feel that the authority of qaulī is threatened, academic dialogue is increasingly open to explaining the validity of the manhajī approach. Today's scholars' training focuses more on the comparative study of schools and applying scientific methods. Thus, this change is expected to enrich Islamic law's treasures and strengthen the relevance of fiqh law in modern life (Roslan & Zainuri, 2023).

Differentiation of Basic and Branch

Efforts to verify the basic material of Islam are significant in separating the principle of ushul from the derivative furu. Without systematic verification steps, inaccurate classification can confuse the application of religious law. By affirming the boundary between ushul and furu', scholars can focus on maintaining the purity of fundamental beliefs while still giving flexibility to the branch of law. The process also helps detect whether a fatwa furu' is rooted in a fundamental principle or based only on secondary opinions. In addition to preventing misinterpretations, fundamental verification strengthens the legitimacy of contemporary ijtihad. Thus, a precise classification will guide the people in carrying out the core teachings firmly without losing adaptation to dynamic branch regulations. The urgency of this step is even more felt when modern challenges demand accuracy and depth of understanding of Sharia (Hambari & Ayuniyyah, 2022).

The urgency of differentiation between the central (ushul) and the branches (furu') is essential because disputes at the furu level often extend and touch on the issue of the principle of ushul. This kind of dispute is prone to obscuring the focus of da'wah so that the people are trapped in technical debates. By prioritizing a clear separation, the da'i can divert the energy of the discussion to the application of Islamic social values without being disturbed by doctrinal conflicts. Avoiding ushul discussions to reduce tensions conveys the message of morality and social justice more effectively. This strategy helps to maintain community harmony and prevent fragmentation due to fiqh disputes. In addition, focusing on discussions on furu' can accelerate the implementation of social fiqh in real life. This kind of approach also opens up a space for practical dialogue oriented towards the benefit of the people. Thus, managing the scale of the furu' problem proportionately is a prerequisite for achieving social fiqh without falling into a more sensitive area of ushul (Amri, 2022).

Fiqh as Social Ethics

Fiqh, in essence, is designed to be a moral and social ethical guide that guides the ummah in actualizing Islamic values daily. As an ethical framework, fiqh emphasizes the principles of justice, compassion, and collective responsibility without being institutionalized as state law. By making it a social norm, people can internalize religious teachings through a culture of cooperation, mutual care, and voluntary obedience. When fiqh is positioned as a public ethics, the space for freedom to contribute emerges wider, as individuals are motivated to practice the teachings because of beliefs rather than coercion. In addition, the decontextualization of religious law from the state bureaucratic machinery reduces the potential for abuse of government authority. People who practice fiqh socially are also more adaptable to the diversity and dynamics of the times. The role of religious institutions and communities is central in fostering and educating values, replacing the function of forced enforcement. Thus,

fiqh as a social ethics strengthens vertical relations with God and horizontal relations between people (Mahfudh, 2012).

The fiqh approach as a social ethics affirms that harmonizing collective beliefs and practices is more sustainable than just positive law enforcement. When fiqh norms are internalized in local customs and traditions, they grow organically in people's lives. Daily decisions, from transactions to deliberations, are a tangible manifestation of implementing fiqh without the need for state regulations. It also minimizes conflicts of interest between law enforcement and religious communities. In addition, the status of fiqh as a public ethic provides space for dialogue between religious communities because state law is neutral and fair. Society has a collective consciousness to maintain a moral order based on social agreement. This model allows flexibility in responding to social change and technological advances, as ethics are easier to update than formal legislation. Thus, fiqh as a social ethics opens up opportunities for the fulfillment of the value of the benefit of the ummah in a participatory and adaptive manner (Mahfudh, 2012).

Philosophical Thinking Methodology

The introduction of philosophical methodology in formulating fiqh decisions places the fundamental question of the nature of human beings and society as the starting point of *ijtihad*. With this approach, scholars are fixated on Nash and examine the ontological and epistemological prerequisites that underlie legal norms. In a social context, philosophical methodology encourages the examination of the root causes of problems, such as power structures and the distribution of resources, before establishing fatwas. From a cultural point of view, this step recognizes the variety of local symbols, values, and practices as essential components in understanding community dynamics. The application of the framework of social philosophy allows for a more inclusive and contextual interpretation of Nash, as it considers historical and anthropological variables. Scholars who adopt this method typically use cross-disciplinary dialogue, including sociology, psychology, and ethnography, to enrich perspectives. The argumentation process is also designed to respond to the changing times without sacrificing fundamental principles of Sharia. Thus, philosophical methodology bridges textual traditions and the reality of people's lives (Mahfudh, 2012).

In addition, integrating cultural philosophy in fiqh methodology synergizes the analysis of collective values with religious norms, making the laws formulated more relevant. This approach encourages *ijtihad* based on hermeneutic understanding, where sacred texts are read by paying attention to the horizon of the meaning of today's society. The *mujtahids* will discuss the concepts of justice, benefit, and freedom within the framework of philosophical ethics before establishing practical guidelines. In the social field, such methodologies help to unravel the complexities of urbanization, structural poverty, and gender relations. From a cultural perspective, he facilitates the adaptation of Islamic law to the diversity of customs without causing a clash of identities. With this step, the fiqh fatwa was born from a process of deep reflection involving various parties, including civil society. The philosophical methodology also prioritizes the transparency of argumentation, so that the public can follow the rationality behind each decision. Finally, introducing philosophical frameworks strengthens the legitimacy of fiqh as a responsive and humanist instrument in facing contemporary challenges (Uspitawati & Khaeri, 2022).

Reactivation of the Role of Islamic Boarding Schools

Islamic boarding schools are not only obliged to educate students in religious knowledge, but also shoulder social responsibilities oriented towards the welfare of the surrounding community. Reactivating the role of *pesantren* means expanding the function of the institution to become a center of social innovation that is effective and relevant to public needs. In practice, this role can be realized through contributions to the development of applied

science, the implementation of higher education programs, and the strengthening of the local economy through cooperatives and business incubation. Furthermore, Islamic boarding schools also have the potential to be the spearhead of environmental conservation and implementers of socio-religious service that combines spiritual values with practical solutions for the community.

Science Development

Traditional Islamic boarding schools are now increasingly dynamic by integrating science studies into each level of learning. The Kiai works closely with physics, biology, and mathematics teachers to design a balanced syllabus between classical texts and scientific experiments. Simple laboratories began to be built in various dormitories to facilitate hands-on practice, such as solution pH testing or microscopic plant cells. The practicum activity helps students translate theoretical concepts into real experiences in the laboratory. Through an integrated teaching method, students are invited to see the relationship between the natural verses in the Qur'an and contemporary scientific phenomena. Interdisciplinary discussions between Turat's texts and experimental results encourage critical skills and appreciation of the greatness of creation. This approach opens up the students' insights so that they not only memorize but also formulate and test hypotheses. Finally, the learning process becomes more contextual and relevant to the challenges of the times (Ali et al., 2022) (Kamaliyah et al., 2025).

As a result of the curriculum innovation, many alumni of the Islamic boarding school are now continuing their studies at prestigious science and engineering faculties. Some Islamic boarding schools even signed a memorandum of understanding with universities to conduct collaborative research in biotechnology and renewable energy. This collaboration allows final students to write scientific papers presented at national and international seminars. In addition, the experimental modules are constantly updated to meet the needs of science and industry development. Kiai and guest lecturers regularly organize workshops on modern laboratory skills, such as tissue culture techniques or statistical data processing. As a result, pesantren are not only a place for religious learning, but also an incubator for scientific innovation. The image of the pesantren has also changed to a balanced institution combining faith and reason. With a foundation like this, pesantren is ready to give birth to a generation of students who excel academically and professionally (Shahzadi, 2023).

Organizer of Higher Education

KH Sahal Mahfudh put forward a strategic idea so that pesantren could evolve into university organizers, and that students who have mastered the classical heritage would get the highest formal academic level. According to him, establishing a pesantren-based university can strengthen the scientific credibility of students in modern society. The college is designed to offer a combination of religious study programs with social science and humanities disciplines relevant to the times' needs. The curriculum will combine Turat's studies with critical and theoretical approaches from various contemporary sciences. With this kind of educational structure, boarding school graduates not only master Islamic literature but are also ready to compete in the professional field. KH Sahal emphasized the need for official accreditation to ensure quality standards and competitiveness of graduates. In addition, he encouraged cooperation with international universities so that students have a global network. Thus, the tradition of sanad and modern scientific methodology can complement each other in one institution (Afifah & Asyadulloh, 2021).

In KH Sahal's vision, government support is the primary key to officially recognizing Islamic boarding schools with academic status. He hopes that the Minister of Education will formulate regulations that facilitate the establishment of Islamic boarding schools without ignoring the principle of religious autonomy. This step will open access to scholarships and research funds for the Islamic boarding school academic community. Furthermore,

international cooperation can present student and lecturer exchange programs and cross-disciplinary research collaboration. Transparency in management and quality evaluation is also the basis for this new institution to be considered equal to conventional universities. KH Sahal believes the synergy between traditional and modern scientific methods will give birth to comprehensive Islamic scholars. Ultimately, this proposal reflects the spirit of renewal in the tradition of Islamic boarding schools that dare to look to the future. Pesantren also has the potential to become the center of a knowledge ecosystem that can answer global challenges (Umayah & Junanah, 2021) (Arifin, 2022).

Economic Promotor

Pesantren often becomes the center of microeconomic activities around it, one of which is through canteens managed by students and alumni. This canteen business not only meets the needs of students' dishes, but also serves the surrounding villagers, thus increasing the income stream of the local community. The profits obtained are then reinvested in the development of Islamic boarding school facilities, such as classroom renovation and scholarship financing. In addition, some of the profits are allocated to social programs, such as educational assistance for underprivileged families. Through this mechanism, pesantren play a role as the driving force of the village economy. From an early age, students are taught entrepreneurial practices, from operational management to simple financial management. The involvement of alumni in canteen operations also creates a broader business network. That way, the Islamic boarding school canteen develops into a sustainable business with a social impact (Agus et al., 2023).

In addition to the canteen, several Islamic boarding schools initiated agricultural cooperatives to market organic crops from waqf land. This program encourages students to farm modernly with environmentally friendly principles and Islamic values. Organic products, from vegetables to spices, are marketed directly to consumers or through cooperative partners in nearby cities. The resale proceeds are channeled for waqf land maintenance and sustainable agriculture training. The existence of this cooperative reduces the local unemployment rate because villagers are involved in the cultivation and distribution process. Transparency of cooperative financial statements increases members' trust among students and the general public. Establishing collaboration between Islamic boarding schools and non-santri residents strengthens social ties in rural environments. With this kind of economic model, pesantren maintains spiritual values and shows business pragmatism that empowers the people (Muhyiddin et al., 2022).

Environmental Conservation

Pesantren are now increasingly active in planting thousands of trees in madrasah areas and waqf land, as part of conservation initiatives that contain the rate of erosion and absorb carbon dioxide. Every time the reforestation season arrives, students are directly involved in nurseries, planting, and tree maintenance, fostering ecological awareness from an early age. In addition to reforestation, an integrated waste management system separates organic and inorganic waste. Organic waste is processed into quality compost in Islamic boarding school gardens, while plastic and metal are collected for recycling. This program is a small laboratory for students to understand the waste cycle and the circular economy. Through these activities, pesantren teach that protecting the environment is a form of worship and moral responsibility. Mass cleanliness activities are also routinely held, involving villagers, so mutual awareness is closely intertwined. With this pattern, pesantren becomes a community that enriches the soul and cares for nature (Safei & Himayaturrohman, 2023) (Quddus, 2020) (Erlangga et al., 2025).

On the other hand, the energy-saving movement received special attention with installing solar panels on the roofs of dormitories and meeting halls. LED lighting and automatic switches are installed to reduce daily electricity consumption. In addition, the pesantren held organic farming workshops for the surrounding community, practicing natural

fertilizers and environmentally friendly planting techniques. The students participated in accompanying local farmers, sharing knowledge about crop rotation and plant-based pesticides. Collaboration with non-governmental environmental organizations adds technical resources and financial support so that the program can run sustainably. This training also includes rainwater management and the creation of biopores to prevent flooding. These concrete steps encourage Islamic boarding schools to transform into ecological advocacy centers, where spiritual values and nature conservation go hand in hand. With this spirit, the pesantren becomes a green oasis that brings coolness to the earth and heart (Irawan, 2022) (Ubab, 2022).

Social Religious

Pesantren plays an active role as a center for religious activities open to all levels of society, starting with routine recitation and taklim assemblies held in the hall or pendopo of the pesantren. Through local da'i training, pesantren prepare da'wah cadres who understand the local social context so that da'wah becomes more relevant and practical. When a resident dies, students and pesantren administrators quickly help with the funeral process, from providing coffins to tahlil at the funeral home. This sensitivity establishes emotional closeness between the pesantren and the residents. In natural disasters, the entire pesantren complex often switches functions to become the main post, coordinating logistical and volunteer assistance. The scholarship program policy for children of underprivileged families ensures that access to education is not interrupted while fostering new hope. In addition, Islamic boarding school mediation based on wisdom and deliberation is an alternative to resolving conflicts between groups of residents. With these various initiatives, pesantren affirms its role as a spiritual and social bridge that embraces all groups (Qusyaeri et al., 2023) (Arif et al., 2022).

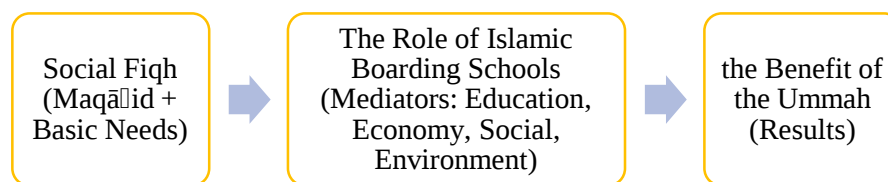
At special moments such as Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr, Islamic boarding schools launched a series of social services in the form of compensation for orphans and the distribution of food packages to disadvantaged families. This program provides material assistance and presents togetherness through breaking the fast together and mass gatherings. These activities strengthen social bonds, foster empathy, and foster solidarity between people. Pesantren also routinely holds social entrepreneurship training to empower the community to be economically independent. Through this movement, residents learn to make creative products that have selling value and community benefits. The involvement of students as volunteers in every social program creates an authentic culture of cooperation. Finally, the existence of Islamic boarding schools goes beyond the function of formal education, becoming a pillar of virtue that touches all aspects of people's lives. This sustainable commitment is what makes pesantren an agent of change and a unifier in the social order (Mardiani, 2022).

Summary of the research results:

Component	Principles / Objectives (Social Fiqh)	Role & Practice of Islamic Boarding Schools (Implementation)	Impact on the Benefit of the People (Indicators)
Maqā'id al-Syarī'ah	To protect religion, soul, intellect, lineage, property; priority on basic rights.	Preparation of maqā'id-based curriculum; contextual fatwas; Character Education.	Basic Rights; normative legitimacy; Reduction of value-based conflicts.
Basic Needs (Kebutuhan Pokok)	Fulfillment of food, health, education, access to water/energy.	Islamic boarding school cooperatives, scholarships, clinics/health practices,	Improved access to basic services
Manhajī / Contextual Ijtihad	The reasoning method is based on local context and empirical evidence.	Scholar-Academic Dialogue Forum; applied research; Scientific pedagogy.	Fatwa is relevant; legal adaptability; public acceptance.

Fiqh as Social Ethics	Internalization of values: justice, compassion, mutual cooperation.	Open da'wah program; local dai training; conflict mediation.	Social cohesion increases; Non-violent dispute resolution.
Science Development & Higher Education	Harmonizing modern texts and science for real solutions.	Integration of science in the curriculum; establishment of Islamic boarding schools; collaborative research.	quality human resources; local innovation; scientific legitimacy.
Local & Circular Economy	Economic empowerment based on ethics and collective welfare.	Economic canteens, agricultural cooperatives, productive waqf management.	Job creation; funding streams for social services.
Environmental Conservation	Environmental maintenance as part of worship and public interest.	Greening programs, solar panels, waste management, organic farming training.	Environmental resilience; local green economic models; reduced disaster risk.
Socio-Religious & Disaster Response	Solidarity, social responsibility, preparedness.	Islamic boarding school disaster post; Compensation; Volunteer Training.	Community resilience; Quick response in times of crisis.

From the summary table, it can also be concluded that the diagram for the preparation of research results can be concluded as follows:



Social jurisprudence is positioned as a legal framework that places maqālid and the fulfillment of basic needs as the top priority in the formulation of norms, so that the purpose of law is directed to ensure the basic welfare of the ummah. This approach demands an adaptive manhajī, a contextual ijtiḥad that reads the text with due regard to social, economic, and empirical evidence in order to keep the law relevant and responsive. The reinterpretation of the text is carried out through the harmonization between ushul and furu' and the review of rigid madhhab patterns, not by ignoring tradition, but to open up space for practical solutions. The enrichment of discourse with philosophical thinking confirms fiqh as a framework of social ethics that guides collective action in public life. This framework also emphasizes the indicators of meeting basic needs as one of the measures of legal success, so that normative priorities can be measured and evaluated.

Pesantren acts as a vehicle for normative translation where curriculum, training programs, and business units become concrete channels to realize social fiqh in daily practice. In its implementation, pesantren integrates religious teaching with applied science and local research so that graduates have technical skills to answer community problems. In the economic and social fields, cooperative activities, productive waqf management, and pesantren health services function to meet the basic needs of the community in a structured manner. Conservation programs, sustainable agriculture, and disaster response posts show how environmental ethical values extracted from social jurisprudence are translated into concrete mitigation and adaptation actions. In addition, pesantren as mediators facilitate dialogue between scholars, the government, and the community so that local policies are based on contextual norms that can be accounted for.

The benefit of the ummah is born from the role of social jurisprudence in reactivating the multidimensional role of pesantren in nature: increasing social cohesion, improving local economic welfare, expanding access to basic services, and strengthening environmental sustainability. Social cohesion is realized through increased community participation, reduction of value conflicts, and the opening of inclusive public spaces. The economic impact can be seen from the increase in household independence, the increase in local employment, and the availability of revolving funds for social services. Access to basic services is measured through indicators of primary health coverage, local food availability, and more equitable access to education and clean water. Environmental sustainability and resilience to disasters indicate that the ethical norms of social fiqh are able to direct environmentally friendly and adaptive practices.

Discussion

The results of this study reveal that KH Sahal Mahfudh's social jurisprudence has translated classical *nash* into concrete solutions to contemporary problems, such as economic inequality and environmental issues. A review of the literature shows that there is consistency between the principle of *maslahah al-‘ammah* and the application of basic needs in each of his fatwas. The participatory model proposed by KH Sahal has been proven to increase the legitimacy of legal decisions in the eyes of the pesantren community. The shift in the pattern of *madhhab* from *qauli* to *manhajī* shows an increase in the flexibility of *ijtihad* to the development of the times. The findings also emphasized the importance of distinguishing between *ushul* and *furu'* so that legal discourse is not trapped in principled issues. Overall, the research successfully mapped the methodological construction of social fiqh applied by KH Sahal Mahfudh.

The findings show that integrating empirical data into the *ijtihad* process provides a responsive force to Islamic law. This contextual approach requires a balance between respect for sacred texts and the ecological-social reality of the people. The success of community participation affirms the active role of the ummah in formulating norms, not just being the object of fatwas. This reflects the transformation of pesantren from a passive educational institution to a dynamic center of socio-religious studies. However, the reflection also highlights the challenge of resistance from conservatives who still hold strong *qauli*. This requires a more inclusive *da'wah* communication strategy so that social fiqh innovations can be widely accepted (Arrasyid et al., 2023) (Othman et al., 2022).

In terms of interpretation, the results show that *maqāḍid al-syarīlah* and basic needs serve as the primary analytical lens in answering contemporary problems. This framework affirms that Islamic law is not just a ritual, but also an instrument of justice and welfare. KH Sahal's interpretation of the *turats* text positions the law as a means of achieving *maslahah*, not just formal compliance. Thus, *ijtihad* moves from the level of literal proof to the ethical-social dimension. Modern contexts, such as digital transactions and the climate crisis, are used as a test point for the validity of the social fiqh approach. This interpretation affirms the relevance of religion in facing the complexity of the 21st century through the reactivation of the role of Islamic boarding schools (Darma et al., 2022).

One of the main obstacles to the application of social jurisprudence in the modern pesantren environment is the normative resistance of groups that still hold strongly to *taqlid qauli*, so that the space for contextual *ijtihad* is often hampered by the desire to maintain traditional authority (Jakfar et al., 2023). Limited institutional capacity, including limited funding for applied research, lack of integration of science-religion curriculum, and limited methodological training for scholars, make it difficult for many social fiqh initiatives to achieve the scale and depth required. In addition, the threat of politicization or instrumentalization of pesantren socio-economic programs risks shifting the focus from the goal of *maslahah* to an

external pragmatic agenda. Measuring the impact of *maslahah* also poses methodological challenges because welfare indicators are contextual and often difficult to operationalize consistently. Therefore, the application of social fiqh requires institutional reform, methodological transparency, and strong participatory and evaluative mechanisms so that normative transformation truly has an impact on the welfare of the *ummah* in a sustainable manner (Ridho, 2022).

Compared to previous research, KH Sahal's thinking emphasizes sociological participation and adaptation more than that of other social jurisprudence figures who tend to focus solely on *maqā'id*. Meanwhile, the basic needs framework in KH Sahal fills a gap in the generally still theoretical literature. The *manhajī* approach he uses is also more structured than case studies in other Islamic boarding schools. These comparisons show that KH Sahal's social jurisprudence has a strong pragmatism dimension. Thus, his contribution marked a real evolution in the development of contemporary Islamic law (Jamrozi et al., 2022).

As a follow-up, the research needs to conduct field studies to evaluate the effectiveness of KH Sahal's participatory model in various geographical contexts. Qualitative research based on in-depth interviews can explore the perception of students and the community towards implementing social fiqh. In addition, comparative analysis with Islamic boarding schools outside Central Java can enrich understanding of adaptation variations. Quantitative studies on the impact of economic and environmental programs initiated by Islamic boarding schools are also essential to see the real contribution to benefits. Further research is recommended to integrate secondary data from the reports of zakat and waqf institutions. That way, KH Sahal's social fiqh framework can be tested holistically and recommended for national religious policy (Muhaimin, 2023).

CONCLUSION

This study found that the application of the principles of social jurisprudence by KH Sahal Mahfudh provides a foothold that allows *pesantren* to transform into measurable socio-economic empowerment actors based on normative legitimacy. Empirical results and literature review show that concrete practices such as Islamic boarding school cooperatives, vocational programs, productive waqf management, and environmental conservation initiatives have the potential to improve access to basic services and local economic resilience. The research also revealed significant obstacles, including the resistance of rigid *qaulī* patterns, limited institutional capacity and funding, and weak formal coordination with village policy makers. The scientific contribution of this study lies in the methodological mapping of contextual *ijtihād* and the preparation of an operational model of *pesantren* reactivation that connects *maqā'id*, basic needs, and institutional mechanisms. Theoretically, this study enriches the discourse of social fiqh by placing a participatory approach as a bridge between sharia norms and practical social interventions. For further research, it is recommended that comparative field studies be conducted between regions, quantitative evaluation of the impact of economic and environmental programs, and the integration of data from zakat and waqf institutions to validate the scale of impact. The scope of this study is limited to literature studies enriched by empirical verification limited to *pesantren* practices so that the findings are indicative and context-specific. Thus, this research demands more extensive replication and field evaluation so that the proposed model can be tested, refined, and adopted as a *pesantren* empowerment policy that has an impact on the benefit of the people.

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