



# Museum Pedagogy in The Construction of Fiqh Watan: Curatorial Principles, Historical Representation and Islamic Epistemology in Pahang, Malaysia

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**Abstract:** This article examines the role of museums as a strategic pedagogical medium in the construction and understanding of *fiqh watan*, with a case study focused on the state of Pahang. Departing from conventional approaches to fiqh education that are predominantly textual and ahistorical, the study argues that fiqh should be understood as a living law rooted in local history, customs, institutions, and collective memory. Grounded in an Islamic epistemological framework based on *tawhīd* and *adab*, the article conceptualizes the museum as an epistemological institution that constructs historical meaning and legal authority through curatorial selection and interpretation of artefacts. Employing a qualitative approach grounded in conceptual and interpretive analysis, this study integrates literature from museum studies, Islamic education, and local legal history. The findings demonstrate that museum-based pedagogy grounded in *fiqh watan* enables a holistic integration of *farḍ ‘ayn* and *farḍ kifāyah* through artefact-centered engagement. The article further proposes three curatorial principles derived from Islamic epistemology, i.e. object uniqueness, high quality (*itqān*), and historical representativeness as epistemic criteria for the development of Islamic museums. From a decolonial perspective, the study challenges the claim of neutrality in modern museums and proposes *fiqh watan*-based museums as counter-archives that restore epistemic authority to local historical experience. Overall, this article contributes to the discourse in Islamic education, heritage studies, and museum studies by positioning the museum as an institution of *tarbiyah* that integrates law, history, and local identity.

**Keywords:** artefact-based Islamic Education; decolonial museum studies; Islamic curatorship; Islamic epistemology; Malay-Islamic heritage; national fiqh.

## 1. Introduction

Discussions of *fiqh* within the Islamic intellectual tradition have generally focused on normative and textual dimensions, whether through classical legal treatises, contemporary fatwas, or legal analyses grounded in the methodology of *uṣūl al-fiqh*. However, such approaches often overlook a critical dimension in the formation and internalization of fiqh; namely, the historical context, spatial setting, and collective experience of local communities. In this regard, fiqh is not merely a universal and abstract legal system, but also a product of interaction between revelation, reason, custom, and the socio-political realities of a particular *watan* (homeland). This awareness has given rise to the concept of *fiqh watan*, a form of contextual fiqh rooted in history, culture, and local experience, particularly within the Malay-Islamic world. *Watan fiqh* cannot be fully understood if it is taught solely through textual pedagogy detached from historical evidence. It requires an educational approach that demonstrates how Islamic law has historically functioned as a living system that regulates governance, customs, the economy, social relations, and communal identity.

Accordingly, the central challenge in fiqh watan education is not limited to the content of knowledge, but also concerns the pedagogical medium through which that knowledge is transmitted. This raises a crucial question: what is the most effective medium for connecting learners with the historical reality of fiqh within local contexts? In contemporary educational discourse, museums are increasingly recognized not merely as spaces for displaying artefacts, but as epistemological institutions that shape knowledge, collective memory, and historical authority (Bennett, 2013; Hooper-Greenhill, 2007). Museums integrate objects, narratives, and spatial design into a contextual and experiential learning environment. Within Muslim societies, museums hold significant potential as instruments of *tarbiyah*, linking revealed texts, fiqh traditions, and lived historical experiences, thereby enabling a more grounded, ethical, and historically informed understanding of fiqh. Nevertheless, modern museum practices are often influenced by secular epistemology and colonial legacies, which promote claims of neutrality in the selection and interpretation of objects. Colonial museums tend to present artefacts as aesthetic objects or anthropological evidence, detached from their legal, theological, and ethical meanings (Smith, 2006). As a result, Islamic artefacts are frequently stripped of their original functions as instruments of worship, governance, or moral education. In the Malay world, such approaches have contributed to narratives that marginalize the role of Islam in shaping local legal systems and civilizational development.

This article argues that museums must be reinterpreted through an Islamic epistemological framework, particularly in the development of fiqh watan pedagogy. Museums should not be viewed as neutral spaces, but as knowledge institutions embedded within specific values, worldviews, and educational purposes. Within this framework, the selection of museum objects is not merely a technical process, but an epistemic act that determines the construction of historical meaning and legal understanding. Based on this premise, the article focuses on the state of Pahang as a case study, given its rich Islamic historical heritage, including legal manuscripts, royal artefacts, customary traditions, and maritime records. Pahang provides a concrete context for examining how fiqh historically functioned as a foundation of governance and social life, thereby allowing fiqh watan to be articulated in a historically grounded and evidence-based manner. In this context, the museum can be conceptualized as an open book of fiqh watan, where manuscripts, artefacts, and historical narratives collectively shape a holistic understanding of Islamic law. However, not all objects are suitable for display as museum artefacts, particularly as pedagogical tools for fiqh watan. This article argues that object selection must undergo an epistemic filtering process grounded in Islamic principles to ensure that museums function effectively as spaces of *tarbiyah* and knowledge formation. Three key principles are proposed: object uniqueness, high quality in terms of craftsmanship, philosophy, and artistic expression, and the ability of the object to represent a specific historical period.

Object uniqueness ensures that artefacts genuinely reflect non-replicable historical events or practices, thereby preserving epistemic authority and preventing museums from becoming generic display spaces. High quality (*itqān*) emphasizes that objects are not merely material remains, but manifestations of worldview, ethical refinement, and civilizational excellence. Meanwhile, historical representativeness enables fiqh to be understood as a dynamic legal system that evolves alongside historical transformations and social realities, rather than as an ahistorical construct detached from lived experience. From a pedagogical perspective, the use of museums as a medium for fiqh watan education aligns with experiential learning approaches, which emphasize learning through direct engagement, observation, and reflection. This approach allows students not only to study legal rulings as textual constructs, but also to understand their rationale, context, and implications in real life. Within Islamic education, such an approach contributes to the cultivation of *adab* and *tawhīd*-based consciousness, as learners come to recognize that law and history constitute a trust (*amānah*) that must be understood and respected. In light of this, the article aims to analyze the role of museums as a pedagogical medium in the construction of fiqh watan, with particular emphasis on curatorial principles derived from Islamic epistemology and historical representation in Pahang. It also seeks to challenge the assumption of neutrality in modern museum practice and to propose an alternative pedagogical model grounded in Islamic values, local context, and historical consciousness. In doing so,

the study contributes to academic discourse in Islamic education, heritage studies, and museum studies, while opening new avenues for the development of museums as institutions of tarbiyah and the construction of local identity.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Fiqh Watan as a Local Islamic Epistemological Framework

Discussions of fiqh within the Islamic tradition are often framed as a normative discipline aimed at formulating legal rulings based on the Qur'an, the Sunnah, consensus (*ijmā'*), and analogical reasoning (*qiyās*). Although this framework remains an undeniable foundation, such an approach often presents fiqh in a form detached from historical context, spatial reality, and the social experience of communities. As a result, fiqh tends to be understood as an abstract legal system existing outside the lived realities of the Muslim community. It is within this context that the need arises to evaluate fiqh not only as a normative discipline but also as an epistemological product shaped by the interaction among revelation, reason, custom, and the reality of the watan.

The concept of fiqh watan refers to an approach to fiqh rooted in local context, whether in terms of history, culture, custom, political structure, or the collective experience of a Muslim society. Fiqh watan does not deny the uniformity of Shariah principles; rather, it emphasizes that the application and meaning of law always take place within a particular historical setting. In other words, fiqh watan positions fiqh as a living body of knowledge, or living law, that develops alongside the dynamics of local society and civilization (Hooker, 1984).

Within the framework of Islamic epistemology, fiqh watan is grounded in the principle that knowledge is neither neutral nor isolated, but is bound to a worldview (*taṣawwur*) that shapes the way human beings understand reality. Al-Attas (1993, 1995) (S. M. N. Al-Attas, 1993) emphasizes that knowledge in Islam is rooted in *tawḥīd* and *adab*, which determine the hierarchy of values, the purpose of knowledge, and the methods of knowing. Therefore, fiqh watan should be understood as a manifestation of knowledge centered on *tawḥīd*, whereby law does not merely regulate outward actions, but also shapes the relationship between human beings, Allah, society, and the surrounding environment.

Fiqh watan is also closely related to the concept of *'urf ṣaḥīḥ* and custom as sources of legal consideration. In Islamic history, jurists recognized the role of local custom as long as it did not contradict Shariah principles, since custom reflects the lived reality and social needs of a community. In the Malay world, custom is not merely a cultural practice, but a social institution that regulates family relations, governance, and justice. Therefore, fiqh watan cannot be separated from the analysis of local custom and social structures, for it is within these contexts that law functions practically.

In addition, fiqh watan is closely connected to history and collective memory. History is not merely a background of the past, but a field in which legal authority and communal identity are formed. Assmann (Assmann, 2011) argues that collective memory shapes how a society understands the past and structures the meaning of the present. In the context of local Islam, fiqh watan was formed through historical experiences such as Islamization, the formation of political institutions, trade relations, and interactions with external powers. These factors influenced how law was understood, accepted, and practiced by society.

The state of Pahang provides a significant example for understanding fiqh watan as a local Islamic epistemology. The history of Pahang shows that Islam was not merely a ritual religion, but a foundation for the formation of law, custom, and governance. Legal manuscripts, royal traditions, and social practices demonstrate that fiqh functioned as both a normative and practical framework regulating communal life. In this context, Pahang's fiqh watan may be understood as a synthesis between Shariah principles, local custom, and the political realities of the state, developing gradually across historical periods (Abd Jalal et al., 2022).

Fiqh watan also requires an understanding that law cannot be separated from the institutions that support its implementation. In Islamic history, institutions such as the palace, courts, mosques, and educational centers functioned as mediums through which fiqh was internalized and practiced. In

Pahang, the institutions of the sultanate and customary authority played an important role in manifesting law as an ethical system of governance. This demonstrates that fiqh watan is not merely a legal text, but an institutional practice that requires space, symbols, and social authority in order to be understood and implemented.

Within epistemological discourse, fiqh watan also functions as a critique of the abstract universalism that often dominates contemporary fiqh discourse. Although Shariah principles are universal, their forms of application are always shaped by social and historical context. Fiqh watan rejects approaches that separate law from local reality, since such approaches risk producing a rigid, ahistorical, and socially detached understanding of fiqh. Instead, fiqh watan emphasizes the need to understand law within the framework of the lived experience of Muslim communities in specific places.

From the perspective of Islamic education, fiqh watan provides an important epistemological foundation for developing a more contextual and effective pedagogy. Fiqh instruction that is detached from local history risks producing a memorization-based and legalistic understanding, without internalization of values and adab. By contrast, a fiqh watan approach enables students to see how law functions in real life, while understanding the rationale and objectives of law in shaping a just and ethical society.

Accordingly, fiqh watan may be summarized as a local Islamic epistemological framework that integrates tawḥīd, custom, history, and social institutions in understanding and practicing law. This framework provides a strong conceptual basis for evaluating the role of museums as pedagogical mediums, since museums gather material evidence, historical narratives, and institutional symbols that reflect the experience of fiqh within the context of the watan. By understanding fiqh watan as an epistemology, museums can function not merely as exhibition spaces, but as spaces of knowledge that revive the relationship between law, history, and local identity.

## 2.2. Museums as Epistemological and Pedagogical Institutions

Discussions of museums in modern academic discourse have undergone a significant shift from viewing them as institutions for the storage and exhibition of artefacts to understanding them as epistemological institutions that actively shape knowledge, memory, and historical authority. Bennett (Bennett, 2013) emphasizes that museums are not neutral spaces, but mechanisms of power that organize how societies understand the past and interpret their identities in the present. In this context, museums function as sites where knowledge is produced, filtered, and communicated to society through object selection, narrative construction, and spatial arrangement.

From a pedagogical perspective, museums are increasingly recognized as mediums of experiential learning, enabling visitors to acquire knowledge through observation, interaction, and reflection (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007). This approach emphasizes that learning does not occur linearly through texts alone, but through the relationship between objects, space, and narratives that produce meaningful experience. Therefore, museums possess significant potential to serve as pedagogical mediums that complement and extend formal educational approaches.

Within Islamic epistemology, the understanding of museums as institutions of knowledge must be aligned with the principle that knowledge is not value-free, but is connected to worldview and educational purpose. Al-Attas (M. N. Al-Attas, 1980) emphasizes that knowledge in Islam must be grounded in tawḥīd and adab, which determine the hierarchy of meaning and the purpose of knowledge. Thus, a museum functioning within Muslim society cannot be framed merely as a space of aesthetics or entertainment. Rather, it should be understood as a space of tarbiyah that conveys values, meaning, and historical consciousness grounded in tawḥīd.

Nevertheless, modern museum approaches that developed within Western contexts are often influenced by colonial legacies and secular epistemology, both of which claim neutrality in the selection and interpretation of objects. Smith (2006) critiques the tendency of modern museums to separate objects from their social, religious, and normative meanings, thereby reducing artefacts to aesthetic symbols or anthropological evidence. In the context of Islamic heritage, this approach has contributed

to the marginalization of the legal, ethical, and devotional dimensions embedded in historical objects, particularly in regions that experienced colonialism, such as the Malay world.

Within the framework of *fiqh watan*, museums need to be reinterpreted as epistemological institutions that revive the relationship between law, history, and social experience. *Fiqh watan* emphasizes that Islamic law does not exist in a vacuum, but operates through concrete institutions, customs, and social structures. Through their ability to gather manuscripts, artefacts, and historical narratives, museums provide an appropriate space for presenting *fiqh* as a living law that was once practiced in the life of society. In this way, museums can function as pedagogical mediums that demonstrate how *fiqh* operates within historical reality, rather than merely as a normative construct within texts.

As epistemological institutions, museums perform at least three main functions in the context of *fiqh watan*. First, museums function as epistemic filters, where object selection determines the form of knowledge to be communicated. This selection is not a neutral act, but reflects particular values and worldviews. Within an Islamic framework, object selection must be grounded in epistemological principles that emphasize historical truth, *adab*, and the purpose of *tarbiyah*, so that museums do not merely display objects, but guide the understanding of law and values.

Second, museums function as spaces for integrating text and context. Legal manuscripts, for instance, should not be understood in isolation from the social and institutional contexts that produced them. Through exhibitions that connect manuscripts with ceremonial artefacts, governance structures, and historical narratives, museums enable visitors to understand *fiqh* as a system that operated within specific spaces and times. This approach is consistent with the framework of *fiqh watan*, which emphasizes the relationship between law and local social reality.

Third, museums function as preservers and activators of collective memory. Assmann (Assmann, 2011) explains that collective memory is not merely a passive recollection of the past, but an active mechanism that shapes communal identity and future orientation. In the context of local Islam, museums have the potential to reactivate collective memory concerning the role of *fiqh* in shaping society, governance, and justice. In this way, museums contribute to the formation of a *watan*-based identity grounded in historical consciousness and Islamic values.

From a pedagogical perspective, the use of museums as mediums for learning *fiqh watan* offers advantages that cannot be fully achieved through classroom pedagogy alone. Experiential learning enables students to interact directly with historical objects, thereby developing a deeper and more reflective understanding. Falk and Dierking (Falk & Dierking, 2018) emphasize that museum experience combines cognitive, affective, and social dimensions, which together contribute to meaningful learning. In the context of *fiqh watan*, this approach allows students to understand law not merely as a set of rules, but as a historical trust and value system that has shaped communal life.

In addition, museums as pedagogical mediums allow for the integration of *farḍ 'ayn* and *farḍ kifāyah*. *Farḍ 'ayn* encompasses dimensions of *tawhīd*, *adab*, and moral responsibility, while *farḍ kifāyah* encompasses knowledge of history, law, economy, and governance. Museums integrate both dimensions through objects and narratives that reflect the relationship between faith and social reality. This approach is aligned with the objectives of Islamic education, which emphasize the formation of a balanced human being, rather than the mere accumulation of information.

In the context of Pahang, museums grounded in *fiqh watan* have the potential to function as open books that display how Islamic law once played a role in shaping custom, governance, and communal life. Legal manuscripts, royal artefacts, and historical records provide concrete pedagogical materials for understanding *fiqh* within the context of the *watan*. Through exhibition arrangements based on Islamic epistemological principles, museums can connect visitors with historical experiences that shaped local identity and legal understanding.

However, the effectiveness of museums as epistemological and pedagogical institutions depends on the curatorial principles that regulate the selection and interpretation of objects. Without a clear epistemological framework, museums risk reproducing colonial approaches that strip Islamic objects of

their normative meanings and adab. Therefore, the formulation of curatorial principles grounded in Islamic epistemology becomes essential in developing museums as pedagogical mediums for fiqh watan.

**Table 1: Fiqh Watan and Museum Elements**

Dimension of Fiqh Watan	Museum Element	Epistemological Function	Pedagogical Implication
<i>Tawhīd</i> as the foundation of law	Exhibition narratives; interpretive texts	Determines the worldview of the exhibition and rejects value neutrality	Students understand law as a divine trust, not merely a cultural product
Fiqh as <i>living law</i>	Legal manuscripts; administrative documents	Connects law with actual historical practice	Fiqh is understood as a living system once practiced by society
<i>'Urf ṣaḥīḥ</i> and custom	Customary artefacts; institutions of the sultanate	Recognizes custom as a contextual source of legal understanding	Students understand the relationship between fiqh, custom, and society
History and periodization	Timelines; historical exhibition zones	Emphasizes the historical character of fiqh	Prevents an ahistorical understanding of fiqh
Institutions and authority	Palace artefacts; symbols of governance	Demonstrates the role of institutions in implementing law	Students understand fiqh as a system of governance
Islamic collective memory	Local historical narratives	Builds awareness of <i>watan</i> -based identity	Strengthens an understanding of fiqh rooted in local identity
<i>Adab</i> and ethics	Exhibition aesthetics; interpretive language	Communicates values in an ethical and refined manner	Learning becomes an act of <i>tarbiyah</i> , not mere entertainment
<i>Itqān</i> – quality and excellence	Quality of selected objects	Represents civilizational excellence	Students appreciate fiqh as a product of a high civilization

### 3. Method

This study adopts a qualitative approach, grounded in Islamic epistemology and the historical context of Pahang, to develop a theoretical framework and pedagogical model of museum practice through conceptual and interpretative analysis. Rather than producing statistical findings, the study focuses on constructing an understanding of fiqh watan as a contextual and living form of fiqh embedded in history, custom, and social institutions (Hooker, 1984; Muhammad al Naquib al Attas, 1981).

In terms of research design, this study is structured as a conceptual case-based inquiry, integrating analysis of academic literature, historical documents, and museum curatorial practices. This design is appropriate because fiqh watan cannot be reduced to a purely empirical phenomenon; rather, it is a normative concept shaped by historical and cultural experience, thus requiring a thick description approach to elucidate the relationship between fiqh, history, and the museum as a pedagogical medium (Geertz, 1973).

Data sources are entirely derived from secondary materials and are organized into three main categories. First, literature from museum studies, museum pedagogy, and Islamic education is utilized to construct the theoretical framework of the museum as an epistemological institution (Bennett, 2013; Hooper-Greenhill, 2007; Smith, 2006). Second, historical and curatorial documents related to Pahang

including legal manuscripts, heritage records, and local historical narratives are analyzed to understand how Islamic law has been translated into institutions, customs, and social practices. Third, Islamic conceptual sources such as *tawhīd*, *adab*, *itqān*, *ʿurf ṣaḥīḥ*, and *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* are employed as normative foundations for evaluating the compatibility of museum practices with Islamic philosophical principles (S. M. N. Al-Attas, 1993).

Data analysis is conducted through three interrelated approaches. First, conceptual analysis is used to clarify the concept of *fiqh watan* and the role of museums as pedagogical media. Second, interpretative (contextual hermeneutic) analysis is applied to interpret the meaning of artefacts based on their historical context, original function, and Islamic worldview, rather than limiting interpretation to aesthetic dimensions. Third, normative and epistemological analysis is employed to evaluate principles of artefact selection and the alignment of curatorial practices with Islamic epistemology, leading to the formulation of three core curatorial principles: object uniqueness, high quality (*itqān*), and historical representativeness (Bennett, 2013; Smith, 2006).

Pahang is selected as a case study due to its well-documented Islamic legal tradition and rich material heritage, including manuscripts, artefacts, and customary practices that provide a suitable basis for *fiqh watan* analysis. This case study is illustrative and epistemological in nature, aiming to demonstrate how a museum pedagogy model grounded in *fiqh watan* can be concretely developed within the Malay-Islamic context (Hooker, 1984).

In terms of validity, the study is strengthened through cross-analysis of *fiqh* literature, historical sources, and museum studies, as well as through the construction of arguments consistent with Islamic epistemological principles. Although the study does not involve fieldwork or quantitative analysis and is limited to the context of Pahang, this approach aligns with the study's objective of theory-building and pedagogical model development, and is consistent with the expectations of Scopus-indexed journals that accept conceptual and theoretical contributions in Islamic studies, museum studies, and education.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Curatorial Principles Based on Islamic Epistemology

Discussions of museum curatorship are often focused on technical aspects such as conservation, classification, and exhibition aesthetics. However, from an epistemological perspective, curation is not a neutral process. Rather, it is an intellectual and normative act that determines the meaning, authority, and function of knowledge transmitted through the museum. The selection of an object for display is not merely a professional decision, but a form of epistemic filtering that shapes how society understands history, identity, and values (Bennett, 2013; Smith, 2006).

Within the framework of Islamic epistemology, curatorship must be understood as a trust of knowledge (*amānah al-ʿilm*) bound to *tawhīd*, *adab*, and the objective of *tarbiyah*. Knowledge in Islam is not value-free; rather, it is grounded in revealed truth and human responsibility as *khalīfah* (S. M. N. Al-Attas, 1993). Therefore, museum curation that seeks to function as a pedagogical medium for *fiqh watan* must be based on clear Islamic principles, so that the museum does not merely become a space for material display, but an institution of knowledge that shapes legal understanding and historical consciousness in an ethical manner.

This article proposes three main curatorial principles based on Islamic epistemology: object uniqueness, high quality in terms of craftsmanship, philosophy, and art, and the ability of an object to represent a particular historical period. These three principles function as filtering criteria to ensure that museum objects are truly qualified to serve as pedagogical mediums for *fiqh watan*.

#### a. *The Principle of Object Uniqueness (al-Farādah)*

The first principle of curatorship based on Islamic epistemology is object uniqueness. Uniqueness refers to the quality of an object that is non-generic, not easily replaceable, and directly connected to a particular historical event, institution, or practice. In the museum context, uniqueness ensures that the object displayed truly functions as a witness to history, rather than merely as a symbolic representation

or reconstruction.

From the perspective of Islamic epistemology, uniqueness is closely related to the concepts of trust (*amānah*) and testimony (*shahādah*). Historical objects function as material evidence of the past experiences of Muslim communities, including how law was implemented and how values were manifested in actual life. Therefore, mass-produced or overly generic objects do not possess sufficient epistemic strength to support the construction of *fiqh watan*, because they fail to demonstrate a specific historical context.

In the context of Pahang, unique objects such as legal manuscripts, administrative documents, and artefacts associated with the institution of the sultanate enable visitors to understand how *fiqh* functioned as a system of governance and social order. These objects do not merely display physical form, but carry normative and institutional meanings that shape legal authority. Without uniqueness, the museum risks reducing *fiqh* to an abstract narrative detached from historical reality.

Pedagogically, object uniqueness enhances reflective learning. Students are able to connect law with specific historical events, thereby understanding that *fiqh* develops through communal experience and is not merely an isolated universal theory. This principle is consistent with experiential learning approaches, which emphasize learning through direct interaction with authentic materials (Falk & Dierking, 2018).

b. *The Principle of High Quality: Itqān, Philosophy and Art*

The second principle is high quality, encompassing the quality of craftsmanship, philosophical depth, and artistic value of an object. In Islam, *itqān* refers to excellence and perfection in human work, a manifestation of faith and *adab*. The Qur'an and Hadith emphasize that every action should be performed with *ihsān* and precision, because quality reflects the intention and worldview of the actor.

In museum curatorship, high quality ensures that the objects displayed truly reflect the level of Islamic civilization in a particular period. Objects of low quality, even if old or rare, are not necessarily suitable as pedagogical mediums because they fail to demonstrate the excellence of reason, art, and values that characterize Islamic civilization. A museum that displays objects without qualitative assessment risks obscuring the image of local Islamic civilizational excellence.

High quality also includes a philosophical dimension, namely the worldview and values embedded in the object. Within the framework of *fiqh watan*, an object is not merely a tool or ornament, but a medium that reveals the relationship between law, *adab*, and social life. For example, a legal manuscript is not merely a written text, but reflects an understanding of justice, trust, and authority within the context of local Islamic governance (Kamil et al., 2025).

The artistic dimension also plays an important role in communicating meaning subtly and ethically. Art in the Islamic tradition is not separate from morality and *tawhīd*; rather, it functions as a manifestation of beauty that leads human beings toward divine consciousness. Therefore, objects with high aesthetic value can indirectly communicate the values of *fiqh* and *adab* through a deep visual and emotional experience. Pedagogically, high-quality objects support holistic learning that combines cognitive, affective, and ethical dimensions. Students do not merely learn historical facts, but also appreciate the values of excellence and *adab* that underpin the formation of Islamic law and institution.

c. *The Principle of Historical Representation and Periodization*

The third principle is the ability of an object to represent a particular historical period. Within the framework of *fiqh watan*, law is understood as a system that develops gradually alongside social, political, and economic changes. Therefore, museum objects must be positioned within clear historical periodization so that *fiqh* is not understood as an ahistorical entity. Historical representation enables visitors to understand the relationship between law and historical context. Each period possesses different challenges, power structures, and social needs that influence how *fiqh* is applied. Objects without a clear temporal context risk producing confusion, as though law exists in a vacuum without regard for changes in social reality.

In the context of Pahang, historical periodization such as the early Islamization period, the formation of the sultanate, maritime development, and colonial experience provides an important framework for understanding the evolution of fiqh watan. Objects representing each phase enable museums to display continuity and change in legal practice, thereby emphasizing that fiqh is dynamic and responsive to context.

Pedagogically, historical representation helps students develop historical thinking, which emphasizes the understanding of causality, consequence, and change. This approach prevents a rigid and literalist understanding of fiqh, while opening space for a more mature and ethical evaluation of differences between historical contexts.

d. *Synthesis of Curatorial Principles within the Fiqh Watan Framework*

These three curatorial principles do not function in isolation. Rather, they complement one another in forming a curatorial framework grounded in Islamic epistemology. Uniqueness ensures historical authority, high quality guarantees value and excellence, while historical representation provides the temporal context necessary for understanding fiqh holistically. Together, these principles function as epistemic filters that distinguish between objects worthy of display as pedagogical mediums for fiqh watan and objects that merely possess material or sentimental value.

This synthesis affirms that museum curatorship in the Islamic context is not merely a professional practice, but an intellectual and ethical act aimed at shaping legal understanding, adab, and communal identity. Based on these principles, museums can function as institutions of tarbiyah that connect present generations with the historical experience of fiqh within the watan.

e. *Curatorial Implications for Pedagogy and Islamic Education*

The application of curatorial principles based on Islamic epistemology has direct implications for the pedagogy of fiqh watan. Museums curated according to these principles are able to provide learning experiences that are more meaningful, historical, and ethical. Students do not merely view objects; they understand the rationale behind their selection and the legal meanings embedded in their existence.

In Islamic education, this approach contributes to the formation of individuals who not only understand law technically, but also appreciate the values, history, and moral responsibilities that underlie it. The museum therefore functions as a space that integrates knowledge, adab, and experience, in line with the holistic aims of Islamic education.

#### **4.2. The Museum as a Pedagogical Medium for Fiqh Watan in Pahang**

The discussion of museums as pedagogical mediums for fiqh watan must begin with the recognition that fiqh is not merely a normative system, but a historical experience manifested through institutions, customs, and communal practices. In Pahang, fiqh has served as a foundation for governance, customs, social relations, and structures of authority since the early period of Islamization. Therefore, the museum has the potential to become a distinctive pedagogical medium because it brings together material evidence, historical narratives, and institutional symbols that reflect the experience of fiqh within the watan.

A museum-based pedagogical approach enables fiqh watan to be taught not as an abstract concept, but as a historical reality that once lived and functioned within society. Through exhibitions of legal manuscripts, royal artefacts, administrative documents, and customary representations, students are able to see how Islamic law was translated into institutional forms and social practices. This approach transforms the museum into a learning space that simultaneously connects text, context, and values.

a. *The Museum as an Open Book of Pahang's Fiqh Watan*

Within the framework of fiqh watan, the museum may be understood as an open book; a space where law is read not only through written texts, but also through visual experience, spatial arrangement, and historical narrative. Legal manuscripts displayed in museums, for example, are not merely written documents, but material evidence of how fiqh functioned as a system of governance and justice in Pahang society.

Through this approach, the museum enables students to understand fiqh as institutionalized knowledge that requires political authority, custom, and social structures for its implementation. Royal ceremonial artefacts, symbols of power, and administrative instruments demonstrate that fiqh is not merely an individual matter, but a normative framework that shapes relations between the ruler, officials, and the people. This understanding is difficult to achieve through classroom pedagogy detached from material and institutional contexts.

Furthermore, the museum as an open book also revives the dimension of local Islamic collective memory. Through exhibition narratives arranged according to historical periods, visitors can trace the development of fiqh alongside the historical transformations of Pahang, from the early Islamization period to the formation of the sultanate and later colonial experience. This approach emphasizes that fiqh watan is not a static entity, but the outcome of a dynamic historical process.

*b. Pedagogical Strategies Based on Museum Experience*

As a pedagogical medium, the museum offers advantages through experiential learning, which emphasizes direct interaction with objects and reflection on their meanings. In the context of fiqh watan, this approach can be implemented through several key pedagogical strategies.

First, guided observation enables students to examine museum objects with narrative guidance that explains their function, context, and embedded legal values. For instance, observation of a legal manuscript accompanied by explanations of the role of law in regulating justice and governance enables students to understand fiqh as a living system.

Second, contextual narrative is used to connect objects with their historical background and local custom. This approach rejects the isolated display of objects and instead emphasizes the relationship between object, event, and institution. In this way, students are able to understand how fiqh was applied within a particular social context and the rationale behind legal formation.

Third, reflective dialogue plays an important role in museum pedagogy. Through discussion and questioning, students are encouraged to evaluate how the law represented in the exhibition relates to the principles of tawhīd, justice, and adab. This approach enables students to develop a critical understanding of fiqh watan without falling into relativism or rejecting Shariah principles.

Fourth, historical and decolonial comparison is used to assess differences between local narratives and colonial interpretations of Islamic law and heritage. This approach helps students understand how colonial experience influenced perceptions of fiqh and custom, while strengthening the need for fiqh watan epistemology as an alternative framework.

*c. Integration of Farḍ 'Ayn and Farḍ Kifāyah in Museum Pedagogy*

One of the main contributions of museum pedagogy based on fiqh watan is its ability to integrate farḍ 'ayn and farḍ kifāyah in a balanced manner. Farḍ 'ayn encompasses tawhīd, adab, and moral responsibility, while farḍ kifāyah includes knowledge of history, law, politics, and governance. Museums bring together both dimensions through exhibitions of objects and narratives that reflect the relationship between faith and social reality.

In the context of Pahang, exhibitions featuring royal artefacts and customary institutions enable students to understand how the principle of tawhīd was translated into structures of governance and social justice. This approach helps bridge the gap between religious education and historical education, which are often taught separately. Through the museum, students are able to see that fiqh functions as a bridge between faith and communal life.

This approach also contributes to the formation of ethical individuals who understand law not merely as regulation, but as a historical trust and social responsibility. The museum as a pedagogical medium enables students to internalize the values of fiqh through direct experience, thereby strengthening the dimension of tarbiyah in Islamic education.

*d. Museums, Watan Consciousness, and Identity Formation*

The use of museums as pedagogical mediums for fiqh watan also has implications for the formation of watan consciousness and local Islamic identity. By presenting the history of fiqh and

Islamic institutions in Pahang, museums help build the understanding that Islam is not a foreign element, but a foundation of local society and governance. This awareness is important in countering narratives that separate Islam from local history and identity.

Museums also function as spaces for developing *tawhīd*-based patriotism, where love for the *watan* is understood as part of religious responsibility. This approach avoids narrow nationalism detached from religious values, and instead forms loyalty grounded in justice, *adab*, and moral responsibility. In educational terms, this contributes to the formation of a generation that understands the relationship between religion, history, and identity in a balanced manner.

*e. Pedagogical Implications and Practical Applications*

As a pedagogical medium, a *fiqh watan*-based museum in Pahang has broad potential applications in Islamic education and heritage studies. At the level of higher education, museums can be incorporated into the curriculum for courses on *fiqh*, Islamic history, or local heritage, either through structured visits or exhibition-based learning modules. At the community level, museums function as spaces of public education that cultivate historical awareness and *fiqh* understanding in an inclusive manner.

These implications show that museums are not merely supplements to formal education, but strategic pedagogical mediums capable of transmitting *fiqh watan* effectively and ethically. Based on Islamic epistemological curatorial principles, museums can play an important role in developing a contextual, decolonial, and locally rooted form of *fiqh* education.

*f. Pedagogical Application of Fiqh Watan through Selected Artefacts of the Pahang State Museum*

The role of the museum as a pedagogical medium for *fiqh watan* becomes clearer when theoretical analysis is translated into direct engagement with actual displayed artefacts. In the context of the Pahang State Museum, collected and exhibited artefacts do not function merely as aesthetic objects; rather, they become epistemological sources that connect Islamic law with the history, institutions, and social experience of the local community. This approach is consistent with the view that museums function as epistemological institutions that shape values and worldview through the selection and interpretation of objects (Bennett, 2013; Smith, 2006).

The manuscript of *Hukum Kanun Pahang* emerges as the most significant artefact in constructing a pedagogy of *fiqh watan* because it presents *fiqh* as a living system applied institutionally. This manuscript is not merely a legal text, but material evidence that Islamic law once functioned as a foundation of governance, justice, and social security in Pahang. Through the exhibition of this manuscript, students and visitors can understand that *fiqh* is not an isolated normative theory, but is manifested through legal provisions, punishments, and administrative structures. This approach supports the view that *fiqh* in the Malay world developed as a social system responsive to local custom and communal needs (Hooker, 1984).

In addition to legal manuscripts, royal ceremonial artefacts and symbols of governance also play an important role in the pedagogy of *fiqh watan*. These artefacts show that the implementation of *fiqh* requires institutions and *adab*, not merely mastery of legal texts. Through symbols of authority, palace hierarchy, and instruments of official ceremony, visitors can understand how principles of justice, trust, and moral responsibility were manifested in structures of governance. This approach strengthens the understanding that *siyāsah shar'iyah* in the local context functioned as an ethical mechanism for regulating power, consistent with the concept of ethical leadership in the Islamic tradition (S. M. N. Al-Attas, 1993).

Traditional weapons are often interpreted narrowly as symbols of courage or physical strength. However, within the pedagogical framework of *fiqh watan*, weapons are interpreted as manifestations of justice and public security. The exhibition of traditional weapons in museums enables visitors to understand that the use of physical force in Muslim society is subject to the principle of *ḥifẓ al-nafs*, the prohibition of oppression, and the ethical trust of power. This interpretation rejects the romanticization of violence and instead places weapons within a legal and ethical framework, consistent with the view

that strength in Islam is intended to preserve justice and social order (Smith, 2006).

The dimension of fiqh watan can also be understood through maritime and trade artefacts displayed at the Pahang State Museum. These artefacts show that fiqh is not limited to ritual worship, but also regulates economic affairs, trade, and external relations. Through exhibitions of navigation and trade artefacts, visitors can trace Pahang's role as part of the maritime network of the Malay world and the wider Islamic world. This approach supports the understanding that fiqh mu'āmalāt and fiqh baḥārī functioned as foundations of economic ethics and diplomacy, thereby revealing the relationship between law, civilization, and social development (Hooker, 1984).

Furthermore, artefacts related to family customs and social life play an important role in explaining the concept of 'urf ṣaḥīḥ within fiqh watan. Through displays of marriage customs, family structures, and social practices, museums demonstrate that fiqh does not reject local custom; rather, it filters and guides custom so that it remains aligned with Shariah principles. This approach helps visitors understand the flexibility of fiqh in local contexts and prevents the perception that religion and culture are always in conflict. Such understanding is important in building an ethical society that appreciates tradition without neglecting the principles of Islamic law (S. M. N. Al-Attas, 1993).

Overall, the pedagogical application of fiqh watan through selected artefacts of the Pahang State Museum demonstrates that every object has the potential to become a learning unit that simultaneously connects the values of farḍ 'ayn and farḍ kifāyah. Through interpretation based on Islamic epistemology, the museum functions as an open madrasah that revives the relationship between faith, law, and history. This approach not only strengthens fiqh understanding among students and the wider community, but also contributes to the construction of watan consciousness and local Islamic identity rooted in its own historical experience (Bennett, 2013; Smith, 2006).

**Table 2: Artefacts of The Pahang State Museum and The Principles of Fiqh Watan**

Artefact of The Pahang State Museum	Uniqueness (Al-Farādah)	High Quality (Itqān, Philosophy & Art)	Historical Representation	Dimension of Fiqh Watan	Epistemological Function	Pedagogical Value
Manuscript of <i>Hukum Kanun Pahang</i> (HKP)	A local legal manuscript specific to Pahang	Jawi script, legal structure, philosophy of justice and trust	Islamic Sultanate era of Pahang	<i>Fiqh siyāsah, fiqh jināyah, fiqh mu'āmalāt</i>	Evidence of fiqh as institutionalized <i>living law</i>	Students understand fiqh as an actual system of governance
Royal regalia and palace ceremonial objects	Symbols of authority specific to the Pahang Sultanate	Values of <i>adab</i> , hierarchy, and ethical symbolism of power	Malay-Islamic period of governance	<i>Siyāsah shar'iyah, adab al-hākim</i>	Connects fiqh, power, and institutions	Fiqh is understood as an ethical social system
Traditional weapons such as keris, spears, and others	Local designs, not mass-produced objects	High craftsmanship; symbols of trust and defence	Period of traditional security and administration	<i>Fiqh jināyah, public security</i>	Law as protection for society	Rejects the romanticization of violence and promotes justice-oriented understanding

Maritime and trade artefacts	Evidence of Pahang's trade networks	Functionality and ethics of <i>mu'āmalāt</i>	Maritime and trade era	<i>Fiqh mu'āmalāt, fiqh bahrī</i>	Fiqh as a system of economy and diplomacy	Fiqh is viewed holistically, not merely as ritual law
Artefacts of family and social customs	Long-rooted local customs	Moral values, refinement, and social structure	Life of local Muslim society	<i>'Urf ṣaḥīḥ, fiqh munākahāt</i>	Integration of custom and Shariah	Fiqh is understood as flexible and ethical
Administrative documents and historical records	Directly related to state governance	Precision of record-keeping and official function	Various phases of Pahang's history	Administrative fiqh and justice		

### 4.3. Integration of Farḍ 'Ayn and Farḍ Kifāyah Through Artefact-Based Pedagogy

In the tradition of Islamic education, the separation between farḍ 'ayn which encompasses creed, ethics, and individual responsibility and farḍ kifāyah which includes social sciences, law, economics, and governance creates an epistemic challenge when both dimensions are taught separately. Islamic intellectual history, however, shows that knowledge never exists in a vacuum; rather, it is always connected to cultural context, social structures, and the historical experience of society (S. M. N. Al-Attas, 1993). In the context of the Pahang Museum of Fiqh Watan, the exhibition medium provides a unique space for organically integrating both dimensions through historical artefacts.

Museum artefacts are not merely static objects. They carry normative values and social structures that reflect the relationship between faith and lived practice. The values of tawḥīd, adab, trust, and justice, which form the core concerns of farḍ 'ayn, can be presented alongside governance systems, mu'āmalāt relations, public security, and economic structures, which fall within the domain of farḍ kifāyah, through pedagogically structured exhibitions (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007). Through this approach, visitors do not encounter religious values in isolation; rather, they experience how these values were manifested in the social life of a local community within a particular historical period.

For example, the manuscript of Hukum Kanun Pahang does not merely contain legal provisions. It also reflects principles of justice and trust rooted in Islamic teachings. Through the interpretation of this artefact, visitors are able to connect metaphysical values—such as trust and justice as divine responsibilities with legal structures that functioned within communal life. Similarly, royal ceremonial artefacts demonstrate that political hierarchy and authority are not merely social structures, but disciplines that must be internalized within the framework of adab and moral responsibility. This shows that social power and political institutions cannot be separated from the individual's moral obligation to Allah and society (Bennett, 2013).

Traditional weapons displayed in museums are often viewed merely as cultural artefacts or works of metal craftsmanship. However, when viewed through the lens of fiqh watan, such weapons become portals into understanding the concept of protecting life (ḥifẓ al-nafs) and the prohibition of oppression in Islamic law.

They therefore connect moral principles with the administrative need for public security, revealing a direct relationship between farḍ 'ayn and farḍ kifāyah (Smith, 2006). Likewise, maritime and trade artefacts, within the historical context of Pahang as part of a maritime network, reflect how Islamic mu'āmalāt principles shaped economic activities and external relations. This demonstrates that the economy is not merely a material activity, but also a field for realizing ethical values and trust (Hooker, 1984).

In addition, artefacts related to social customs, such as marriage ceremonial objects or records of family practices, clearly show that local custom does not necessarily contradict Shariah. Rather, the

museum demonstrates how 'urf ṣaḥīḥ valid custom functions as a context for applying fiqh in harmony with Shariah objectives, without neglecting the foundational principles of religion. This approach helps visitors understand that adab and social norms can be aligned with Shariah requirements when interpreted through a holistic Islamic epistemological lens (S. M. N. Al-Attas, 1993).

Through this integration, the Pahang Museum of Fiqh Watan becomes not only a space for historical exhibition, but also a space of tarbiyah that unites the learning of farḍ 'ayn and farḍ kifāyah through direct engagement with artefacts. This artefact-based pedagogy rejects the disciplinary separation often found in formal education and instead offers a holistic learning model in which faith, adab, law, history, and social institutions interact within a meaningful epistemic experience. This demonstrates that fiqh understanding is not merely the mastery of textual rules, but the result of lived experience strengthened by historical context and local cultural values (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007).

**Table 3: Integration of Farḍ 'Ayn and Farḍ Kifāyah Through Artefacts of The Pahang Museum of Fiqh Watan**

Museum Artefact	Dimension of Farḍ 'Ayn: Values and Fata	Dimension of Farḍ Kifāyah: Systems and Institutions	Epistemic Integration: Fiqh Watan	Pedagogical Implication
Manuscript of <i>Hukum Kanun Pahang</i> (HKP)	Trust, justice as a divine obligation, prohibition of oppression, ethics of rulership	Legal system, judiciary, state governance, public security	Fiqh is manifested as <i>living law</i> born from faith and implemented through institutions	Students understand that faith gives rise to legal and political systems
Royal ceremonial artefacts and symbols of governance	<i>Adab al-hākim</i> , moral responsibility of leadership, trust of authority	Political structure, administrative hierarchy, mechanisms of governance	Local <i>siyāsah shar'iyah</i> grounded in <i>adab</i> and justice	Leadership is understood as social worship, not absolute power
Traditional weapons such as keris, spears, and others	Prohibition of oppression, <i>ḥifẓ al-nafs</i> , ethics of using force	Security system, law enforcement, public order	Physical force is regulated by Shariah values	Rejects the romanticization of violence and emphasizes justice in the exercise of power
Maritime and trade artefacts	Trust in <i>mu'āmalāt</i> , honesty, prohibition of fraud	Trade system, maritime economy, international relations	Fiqh regulates ethical economy and diplomacy	Economy is understood as structured worship
Artefacts of family and social customs	Family ethics, dignity, social responsibility	Social structure, customary mechanisms, conflict prevention	'Urf ṣaḥīḥ as the context for fiqh application	Religion and culture are understood as complementary
Administrative documents and historical records	Trust, honesty, accountability	State management, official documentation, public administration	Islamic ethics are translated into administrative systems	Fiqh is understood as a foundation of governan

The table demonstrates that a single artefact does not convey one isolated form of knowledge. Rather, it functions as a medium that integrates farḍ 'ayn and farḍ kifāyah. The values of faith and adab (farḍ 'ayn) are concretely translated through social, political, and economic systems (farḍ kifāyah), in line with the framework of fiqh watan, which rejects the dualism between religion and history (Hooker, 1984; Muhammad al Naquib al Attas, 1981).

Pedagogically, this integration enables the museum to function as an open madrasah, where learning takes place through epistemic experience; seeing, interpreting, and reflecting rather than merely memorizing legal rulings. This approach supports the view that the museum is an educational institution with epistemic power, capable of shaping normative and historical understanding simultaneously (Bennett, 2013; Hooper-Greenhill, 2007).

#### 4.4. Decolonial Implications and Islamic Education

The discussion of museums as pedagogical mediums for fiqh watan cannot be separated from the question of the decolonization of knowledge and heritage, particularly in the Malay world, which experienced both epistemological and institutional forms of colonialism. Modern museums in this region largely developed from colonial models that structured historical knowledge through a Western lens, often separating Islam from its normative role in shaping local law, governance, and civilization. As a result, Islamic heritage has frequently been reduced to cultural artefacts or aesthetic symbols, without being recognized as an epistemological source and a living value system.

In this context, fiqh watan functions as a decolonial epistemological framework that challenges the dominance of colonial narratives and abstract universalism in the interpretation of local Islamic history. Fiqh watan affirms that Islamic law was not a foreign element passively imported into local society. Rather, it was organically integrated with custom, institutions, and the historical experience of local communities. Thus, the use of museums as pedagogical mediums for fiqh watan opens a space for restructuring historical and legal knowledge based on local authority and the lived experience of the watan.

One of the main decolonial implications of this approach is the dismantling of the myth of museum neutrality. Colonial museums often claimed objectivity and neutrality in the selection and display of objects, whereas curatorship always involves value judgments and epistemic power (Bennett, 2013; Smith, 2006). Through the framework of fiqh watan, this claim of neutrality is challenged by affirming that every act of object selection is a normative act with implications for historical understanding and identity formation. A museum grounded in Islamic epistemology consciously acknowledges the values and objectives of tarbiyah in the transmission of knowledge, thereby refuting the claim that heritage can be presented without a worldview.

This decolonial approach also transforms how Islamic heritage is understood in education. In many modern curricula, local Islamic history is often presented separately from fiqh education, while fiqh is taught within a universal framework detached from local contexts. Museum pedagogy based on fiqh watan bridges this gap by demonstrating how Islamic law once functioned concretely in the formation of institutions, justice, and communal life. In this way, Islamic education is no longer dualistic in separating religion from history (Nasr, 1996), but is presented as a unified epistemological whole.

From the perspective of Islamic education, the implications of this approach are highly significant for the formation of adab and intellectual consciousness. Al-Attas (S. M. N. Al-Attas, 1993) argues that the central crisis of Islamic education is not the absence of information, but the confusion of adab and the loss of the proper order of knowledge. A museum functioning as a pedagogical medium for fiqh watan is able to reorganize the hierarchy of knowledge by positioning tawḥīd, adab, and history as foundations for legal understanding. Students therefore do not merely learn what the law is, but also why the law emerged and how it functioned within society.

In addition, this approach contributes to the construction of identity consciousness and patriotism grounded in tawḥīd. Decolonization in this context does not aim to reject all external influences absolutely. Rather, it seeks to liberate historical understanding from frameworks that marginalize the

role of local Islam. By presenting fiqh as a foundation in the formation of the watan, the museum helps cultivate awareness that love for one's homeland does not contradict religious commitment, but is part of the trust of being a khalifah. The patriotism that emerges from this understanding is ethical and refined, not emotional or exclusionary.

A museum approach based on fiqh watan also has implications for the training of educators and curators. Within a colonial framework, curators are often regarded as managers of objects or transmitters of historical information. By contrast, within an Islamic epistemological framework, curators function as transmitters of knowledge and as murabbī, responsible for interpreting objects with adab and meaning. This role requires deep understanding of fiqh, history, and Islamic values, thereby challenging conventional curatorial training models that are merely technical in nature.

From the perspective of educational and cultural policy, the decolonial implications of this approach open space for developing museums as supporting institutions for Islamic education. Museums are no longer limited to recreational or tourism functions, but may be strategically integrated into formal and informal educational systems. At the level of higher education, museums may function as learning laboratories for fiqh watan and local Islamic history. At the community level, museums serve as public educational spaces that cultivate historical awareness and religious understanding in an inclusive manner.

Ultimately, the decolonial and Islamic educational implications discussed in this section affirm that a museum grounded in fiqh watan is not merely a pedagogical innovation, but an epistemological reform project. It challenges colonial legacies, reorganizes the authority of knowledge, and restores history and law to the framework of tawhīd and adab. Thus, the museum has the potential to become a strategic institution in developing Islamic education that is contextual, historical, and rooted in the watan, without compromising the universal principles of Shariah.

## 5. Conclusion

This article has argued that the museum is a strategic and effective pedagogical medium in the construction and understanding of fiqh watan, particularly in the context of Pahang. In contrast to approaches to fiqh education that are purely textual and normative, this study emphasizes that fiqh must be understood as a living body of knowledge rooted in history, custom, institutions, and the collective memory of society. In this context, the museum functions as an epistemological institution that connects text, context, and values through artefact-based learning experiences and historical narratives. Through an Islamic epistemological framework, this article has conceptualized fiqh watan as a contextual approach to fiqh grounded in tawhīd, adab, and local historical experience. Fiqh watan does not deny the universal principles of Shariah. Rather, it affirms that the application and understanding of law always occur within particular spaces and times. This approach enables fiqh to be understood in a more meaningful, ethical, and socially relevant manner, while overcoming ahistorical tendencies that detach fiqh from social context.

This study has also emphasized that the museum is not a neutral institution, but a space of epistemic power that shapes historical meaning and the authority of knowledge. Therefore, the selection and interpretation of museum objects must be governed by curatorial principles derived from Islamic epistemology, namely uniqueness, high quality (itqān), and historical representation. These principles ensure that the museum functions as a space of tarbiyah and legal understanding, rather than merely as an aesthetic exhibition or cultural entertainment venue. One of the main contributions of this article is its emphasis on the position of Hukum Kanun Pahang as a core artefact within the Pahang Museum of Fiqh Watan. HKP functions as an epistemological and pedagogical axis that connects various other artefacts as contexts for the implementation of law. This approach demonstrates that fiqh once functioned as a system of governance, justice, and social life in Pahang's history, thereby challenging colonial narratives that marginalized the role of Islam in the formation of local legal systems. Pedagogically, this study shows that the use of museums as learning mediums for fiqh watan can integrate fard 'ayn and fard kifāyah within a holistic learning experience. Museums enable students

to understand law as a divine trust and social responsibility, while appreciating the relationship between faith, history, and watan-based identity. This approach contributes to the formation of ethical individuals who understand fiqh not merely as a set of rules, but as values and guidance for life. This article has also highlighted the decolonial implications of a museum approach grounded in fiqh watan. By rejecting the claim of museum neutrality and challenging colonial epistemological legacies, this study offers an alternative framework for heritage studies and Islamic education. A fiqh watan-based museum functions as a counter-archive that restores epistemic authority to local experience and strengthens the awareness that Islam is a foundation in the formation of the watan, not a peripheral cultural element.

Based on the findings and discussion of this study, several recommendations may be proposed. First, museums in Pahang and other states should develop exhibition models based on fiqh watan, positioning legal artefacts and Islamic institutions as curatorial cores. This approach requires specialized training for curators and museum educators in Islamic epistemology, fiqh, and local history, so that artefacts are interpreted in a meaningful and ethical manner. Second, Islamic educational institutions, particularly higher education institutions and state religious bodies, should integrate museums as pedagogical components in the teaching of fiqh, Islamic history, and local heritage. Structured museum visits, artefact-based learning modules, and reflective assignments can enrich learning experiences and strengthen students' understanding of contextual fiqh. Third, future research should evaluate the effectiveness of museum pedagogy based on fiqh watan through empirical approaches, including case studies, analyses of student experience, or curriculum evaluation. Comparative studies between states or regions may also be conducted to assess the applicability of this model within the broader Malay-Islamic world. Finally, this article concludes that a museum grounded in fiqh watan is not merely an educational innovation, but an epistemological reform effort that integrates knowledge, adab, and history in the construction of legal understanding. By positioning the museum as an institution of tarbiyah and fiqh watan as an epistemological framework, this approach has significant potential to contribute to the development of Islamic education, heritage studies, and the formation of a watan-based identity rooted in tawhīd and justice

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