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Transcendent Interview: an Alternative Method of Writing the History if Islam In The Archipelago Based on *Irfani* Epistemology

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Abstract

This article aims to examine *irfani* epistemology as a methodological basis in writing Islamic history. The focus of this study is to examine the limitations of the positivistic-empirical method in reconstructing objective Islamic history, the position of manuscripts, chronicles, and oral traditions in the classification of primary historical sources, and transcendental interviews as an alternative source criticism method. The method used in this study is library research with a qualitative approach. This study reveals how the *irfani* approach can be an alternative method in writing Islamic history in the archipelago. This article contributes to strengthening comprehensive methods and approaches to writing Islamic history. Transcendental interviews can be used as an alternative source criticism method to verify the originality and validity of information in manuscripts, chronicles, and oral traditions.

Keywords: *irfani* epistemology, transcendental interview; critique of alternative sources; Islamic historiography

Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji epistemology *irfani* sebagai landasan metodologis dalam penulisan sejarah islam. Fokus kajian penelitian ini adalah menungkap tentang keterbatasan metode positivistic-empirik dalam merekonstruksi sejarah islam yang objektif; posisi naskah, babad, dan tradisi lisan dalam klasifikasi sumber primer sejarah; serta interview transenden sebagai metode kritik sumber alternatif. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah library research dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Penelitian ini mengungkapkan bagaimana pendekatan *irfani* dapat menjadi metode alternative dalam penulisan sejarah islam di Nusantara. Artikel ini berkontribusi pada penguatan metode dan pendekatan penulisan sejarah islam yang komprehensif. Interview transenden dapat dijadikan sebagai metode kritik sumber alternatif untuk memverifikasi orisinalitas dan validitas informasi dalam naskah, babad, dan tradisi lisan.

Katakunci: epistemology *irfani*, interview transenden, kritik sumber alternative, historiografi islam

Introduction

The movement to rewrite Islamic history, as undertaken by Agus Sunyoto, Ahmad Baso, and Nur Kholik Ridwan, has breathed new life into the development of methods and approaches in Islamic historiography in the archipelago (Baso, 2019; Ridwan, 2021; Sunyoto Agus, 2017, 2019). These three historians from the NU circle have successfully introduced a new approach, namely by positioning manuscripts, chronicles, and oral traditions as primary sources. This is quite contrary to conventional Islamic historiography methods, which mostly use a Western-style positivistic empirical approach. From the perspective of Western historians, primary sources of Islamic history in the archipelago, such as chronicles, manuscripts, and oral traditions, are considered inauthentic, and their accuracy is doubtful. In fact, manuscripts, chronicles, and oral traditions are the original works of the actors and witnesses of Islamic history in the past. In this context, Baso argues that babad manuscripts and oral traditions are considered closer and more directly connected to the actors of Islamic history in the past than colonial documents, which were created by foreigners (not historical actors). However, conventional Islamic historiography continues to place greater trust in colonial documents as primary sources in the writing of Islamic history. As a result, the construction of Islamic history in the archipelago by Western historians has

been stigmatized as syncretic religion, superficial Islam, and the destroyer of established (Javanese) civilization.

In fact, Baso explicitly assesses that the Western positivistic paradigm of Islamic historiography is a form of "scientific colonialism." (Baso, 2019). However, the new wave of writing on the history of Islam in the archipelago, based on manuscripts, chronicles, and oral traditions, still leaves many gaps that need to be further explored. One of the fundamental issues that remains unresolved is the authenticity and validity of the information contained in these manuscripts, chronicles, and oral traditions. Of course, even though manuscript studies have used various auxiliary sciences such as philology, hermeneutics, and sociolinguistics, this has not answered the question of the authenticity and validity of the information contained therein. It is in this context that the transcendent interview method can be used as a bridge between empirical reality and transcendental reality.

The most recent research related to transcendental communication that is quite interesting is *Bridges to the Spirit World: A Qualitative Study of Beliefs About How Ghosts and Spirits Communicate* (Wilt et al., 2025). Through this qualitative study, Wilt et al. successfully identified 171 unique methods of communication that can be grouped into 10 categories of communication with spirits. However, Wilt et al.'s research focuses more on how the results of communication with spirits are believed, perceived, and interpreted in transcendental communication experiences. Meanwhile, the article entitled *Pilgrimage as a form of transcendental communication:* Jamil et al., (2022) discusses the practice of transcendental communication in the tradition of pilgrimage to the tomb of Habib Abdurrahman Cikini, Jakarta. By focusing on the communication behavior of pilgrims, this study states that a person's communication pattern is determined by their personal communication with their god. Fink, (2024) takes a skeptical stance toward the existence of spirits or supernatural beings. Using a psychological perspective, Fink states that spirits are the result of human projection and fabrication. Furthermore, Fink considers the issue of spirits to be a problematic topic that is difficult to prove.

Several other articles also discuss transcendental communication as a practice or behavior, such as Lasut (2022) explains tha the exploring paranormal (spiritual) communication, This phenomenon is considered part of communication transcendental (Yuhanda, 2020), dan this transcendental communication in the kapontasu ritual of the muna ethnic community's agricultural system (Hardin, 2016), and transcendental communication with

near death experience (Lorita Simamora, Sulthan Fadhilah, Andika, Gunawan, & Jamilah Mihardja, 2024). Many articles, none have examined transcendental communication or transcendental interviews as a research method. Most of them focus on examining how transcendental communication is practiced and perceived.

Based on this background, the transcendental interview examined in this study aims to examine transcendental communication as a method of source criticism that can be verified and validated scientifically. This library research uses Kuntowijoyo's transcendental structuralism as its approach (Kuntowijoyo, 2006). According to Zuly Qodir, Kuntowijoyo's transcendental structuralism is based on three main pillars, namely transcendental epistemology, humanization, and liberation (Qodir, 2015). This analytical framework is used as a way of looking at the empirical reality of Islamic history in the archipelago, which cannot be separated from the transcendental dimension that surrounds it.

Meanwhile, the "Islam Nusantara" lens is used as an analytical tool to position manuscripts, chronicles, and oral traditions as primary sources for historical writing. The Islam Nusantara perspective used in this study is Ahmad Baso's version, which states that Islam Nusantara must be viewed as a composition of *mudhaf* and *mudhaf ilaih* (Hasyim, 2013), namely a relationship that is intertwined and inseparable from one another. In this perspective, Baso seeks to position manuscripts and chronicles as the results and works of historical actors (subjects). In addition to presenting an epistemological foundation, the transcendental interview method offered in this article also aims to bridge the methodological impasse of Western positivism and empiricism in writing a more objective history of Islam in the archipelago that is in line with the inner truth of Islam itself.

Criticism of Islamic Historiography in the Archipelago

According to Nina Herlina (Herlina, 2009), based on its form, content, scope, and approach, Indonesian historiography can generally be divided into several categories, namely Traditional Historiography, Colonial Historiography, National Historiography, and Modern Historiography. When viewed in terms of its tendencies, Indonesian historiography can be divided into various categories, namely Colonial-Centric Historiography, Indonesian-Centric Historiography, Liberation Historiography or Alternative Historiography, and Social History or Global History (Hakim, 2018; Prakoso,

2018; Purwanto, 2006; Purwanto & Adam, 2005; Subekti, n.d.; Tri Sulistiyono, 2016). Meanwhile, the wave of historiography that has recently emerged, particularly among NU historians, can be categorized as a form of Nusantara Islamic historiography (Hakim & Salman, 2019; Iryana, 2017).

However, after going through various dynamics and lengthy methodological debates, each of the above tendencies in the Indonesian historiographical tradition has not completely disappeared. Although it cannot be said to be stagnant, the development of historiography in Indonesia has not experienced rapid progress. This is evident in the circulation of history books from the colonial tradition that are still used as primary references, such as the books written by M.C. Ricklefs, such as *Modern Indonesian History* (2007), *Mystic Synthesis in Java: A History of Islamization from the Fourteenth to the Early Nineteenth Centuries* (2006), *Polarizing Javanese Society: Islamic and Other Visions c. 1830-1930* (2007), and *Islamization and Its Opponents in Java* (2012). In the latter book, Ricklefs writes:

> *"Legends from this period tell of the Wali Sanga as the first group to bring Islam to Java. ... Legends about them have become a symbol of how some people feel Islamization should take place, namely through accommodation with the local culture. However, there is no completely reliable historical evidence regarding these nine saints and their works."* (Ricklefs, 2013)

In this statement, Ricklefs clearly positions the story of the Wali Sanga as a legend that cannot be fully trusted. In fact, Ricklefs reinforced his statement by including the opinions of previous Western historians who stated that the Javanese way of Islam was more superstitious (J. Winter, 1902), semi-barbaric, and most lax in terms of principles (John Crawfurd, 1820), and so on. Of the majority of historians in Indonesia, only a small number of them have serious and specific interest in the historiography of Islam in the archipelago. Most of the historiographical criticism expressed by academic historians only revolves around Indonesian national history in general. Concern for the historiography of Islam in the archipelago has actually emerged and gained momentum among practitioners and cultural figures such as Agus Sunyoto and Ahmad Baso. Agus Sunyoto, through his book Atlas Walisongo, clearly opposes Orientalist-style Islamic history, which tends to view Islam with a bias (Sunyoto Agus, 2017). By presenting manuscript sources, which tend to be overlooked by Orientalists, Sunyoto presents a new study of Islamic history.

Agus Sunyoto, through his book Atlas Walisongo, clearly opposes Orientalist-style Islamic history, which tends to view Islam with a bias (Sunyoto Agus, 2017). By presenting manuscript sources, which tend to be overlooked by Orientalists, Sunyoto presents a new study of Islamic history. Ahmad Baso more strongly and emphatically stated that Orientalist historians used the guise of "scientific" as a covert mission of colonialism. According to Baso, the objectivity of modern historical writing actually created new problems. *Babad*, manuscripts, and *hikayat* became completely irrelevant and were even excluded from the writing of Indonesian Islamic history (Baso, 2019). From the first page of the introduction, we can find Baso's harsh criticism of the scientific construction of Orientalists and Colonialists in studying Islamic history.

The first Orientalist figure who became the object of Baso's criticism was Ricklefs, author of A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1300 (Ricklefs, 1993). For Baso, the scientific construction offered by Ricklefs (Ricklefs, 2007) is considered poison wrapped in scientific claims (i.e., European-style positivistic reasoning). One of Ricklefs' statements that Baso considers poison is the Islam brought by the Wali was a civilizational disaster for the Javanese people (Baso, 2019). According to Baso, this kind of construction of the history of Islam in the archipelago began during the time of Snouck Hurgronje and was later continued by Ricklefs and several of Snouck's other students. Among Indonesian writers, there are also historians whom Baso considers to be preservers of Snouck's teachings, namely Azyumardi Azra through his book entitled *Jaringan Ulama* (Azyumardi Azra, 2014) and Simuh through his article in Gatra Magazine entitled *Islam Agama Rasional Ilmiah* (Simuh, 2001). In fact, major Islamic history books such as the *Ensiklopedi Islam Indonesia* (1992) by the IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta Writing Team, as well as the *Eksiklopedi Tematis Dunia Islam* (2008) and the book *Arus Baru Sejarah Indonesia* (2012), both edited by Taufik Abdullah, are, according to Baso, preservers of the Orientalist tradition. Examining Islamic history and the teachings of the Wali Songo using an "academic" and "objective" framework in the style of Orientalists actually makes Islamic history even further from the objectivity of Islamic history itself (Baso, 2019).

The poison of positivistic rationalism, according to Baso, becomes even more "toxic" when combined with Wahhabi-style scientific constructs, namely the purification of Islam. Thus, the cleansing of the history of Islam in the archipelago of various things considered superstition, myth, legend, and so

on is more dominant than the objectivity of Islamic history itself. In this context, Orientalists are in agreement with Islamists (radicals), namely that Indonesian Islam is not pure and contains many superstitions and myths. This is what Baso refers to as a malicious campaign wrapped in scientific, objective, and sophisticated arguments (Baso, 2019). However, in the context of developing an objective historiographical methodology, in the author's opinion, Baso tends to be excessive and provocative. In certain parts, although not many, there is very emotional diction. The use of words such as "poison," "battered," "bruised," "rotten," and so on, only represents Baso's subjectivity, which is trapped in an "anti-Western" perspective. In fact, the Western empirical and positivistic approaches should not be completely abandoned. That is why this article was written to design an alternative method offered by Baso, namely using manuscripts and chronicles as primary sources for writing Islamic history and supplementing them with the transcendent interview method as an alternative source of criticism. Of course, this alternative approach must still be positioned as a reinforcement and complement to the empirical and positivistic approaches of Western historians.

Islam Nusantara: Restoring Manuscripts, Chronicles, and Oral Traditions as Primary Sources of History

Before delving further into the issue of the historiography of Islam in the Archipelago, let us first understand the basic concept of "Islam Nusantara" itself. Of course, it is no longer the time to discuss and argue between Islam in the Archipelago and Islam in Indonesia. Clearly, the latter term was deliberately promoted, with arguments that tended to be forced, to counter the popularity of Islam in the archipelago itself. Of course, this cannot be separated from the political contestation of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, particularly between NU and Muhammadiyah. In this context, Baso emphasizes that in interpreting the term "Islam Nusantara," we must position the word as *mudhaf* and *mudhaf ilaih* in Arabic grammar. The concepts of *mudhaf* and *mudhaf ilaih* emphasize the relational context. This means that between the terms Islam Nusantara are the words *fi*, *li*, and *min* (namely Islam *fi* [in] Nusantara, Islam *li* [for] Nusantara, and Islam *min* [from] Nusantara). Thus, Islam Nusantara as referred to here is Islam that is inherent and intertwined with the Nusantara itself.

Based on this perspective, Baso offers a new theory on the writing of Islamic history (historiography) and the Islamization of the Nusantara. Using

the perspective of Islam Nusantara and the manuscripts of the Keraton Nusantara, Baso seeks to challenge the tradition of writing Islamic history in the archipelago, which has long been dominated by positivistic and empirical Orientalists (Baso, 2019). Basically, this concept of historiography has already been voiced by a European historian, Franz Rosenthal. Classical manuscripts, such as *haba, hikayat, kisah*, and *tambo*, can be used as important materials in the study of Islamic historiography. Through these classical manuscript sources, Islamic historiography in Indonesia will be more grounded in its own soil (Rosenthal, 1968).

This approach to studying manuscripts is certainly at odds with other Orientalist historians who consider these classical manuscripts to be unreliable primary sources for writing Islamic history because they contain many myths and legends. In line with Rosenthal, Baso more clearly and emphatically points out that a subject's understanding of their own culture is more reliable than that of foreigners. Baso's conception is based on two grammatical concepts in Arabic as stated in the book Alfiyah by Ibn Malik. The rule of Nahwu that Baso refers to is "*Wa fikhtiyarin la yajiu'l munfashilu, idza taatta an yajial muttashilu*" (Al-Andalusi, n.d.). (In normal situations, not emergencies, the *dlamir* [subject] that is *mutthashil* [connected] takes precedence over the *dlamir* that is *munfashil* [disconnected]) (Baso, 2019).

According to Baso, in answering questions of Nusantara Islamic historiography, subjectivity, which is connected to one's own culture, is prioritized over that which is disconnected from our culture (Baso, 2019). In this context, Baso emphasizes that in studying the history of one's own nation, local sources (including classical manuscripts) should be prioritized over written sources from outside historians, especially histories written by colonialists. Of course, the new concept offered by Baso still leaves much room for further discussion. On the one hand, we must not be trapped in the conceptual framework of Orientalist historians who tend to view Islam with a biased perspective. Terms such as *un-Islamic*, "*anti-Islam,*" "*syncretic*," "*anti-santri*," "*anti-sharia*," customs are not Islamic, etc. (Baso, 2019), which are negative stigmas constructed by Orientalists and adopted by Muslim historians in Indonesia, should no longer appear in the historiography of Islam in the Archipelago. On the other hand, we must not get caught up in an excessive anti-colonialism spirit, as seen in Indonesian-centric historiography that is "anti-colonial." Therefore, even though classical manuscripts can be used as primary sources that are directly connected to historical actors (subjects), they

must still undergo rigorous criticism and source testing so that their credibility and validity can be scientifically accounted for.

The Limitations of Source Criticism Methods on Manuscripts and Chronicles

One of the research issues that often arises in manuscript or chronicle research is the "objectivity of information" contained therein. The language of manuscripts and chronicles, which tends to use metaphors, similes, and pasemon (Margana, 2016), poses a particular difficulty in interpreting manuscripts. In practice, the method of measuring the "objective truth" of manuscripts, especially in the tradition of historical writing, is only done by comparing them with other historical sources such as artifacts, manuscripts, and other primary documents. Meanwhile, manuscripts and chronicles that cannot be verified by other sources will certainly be rejected and deemed "unsuitable" as primary sources for writing Islamic history. Although manuscripts and chronicles are the direct products of historical actors, because they cannot be verified by other sources, their primary status is invalidated. That is why Western historians have avoided using manuscripts and chronicles in writing Islamic history in the archipelago.

In his dissertation "*Critische Beschouwing van de Sadjarah Banten,*" Husein Djajadiningrat stated that chronicles cannot be used as valid historical sources without rigorous historical criticism, because they tend to be mythological and mixed with literary elements and political interests (Djajadiningrat, 1913). Similarly, Sartono Kartodirdjo, the pioneer of modern Indonesian historiography, also criticized traditional sources such as chronicles. According to Sartono, traditional historiography such as chronicles and tales needs to be reconstructed because it is usually a reflection of the interests of the palace elite (Kartodirjo, 1990). Azyumardi Azra mentions that in order to understand the history of Islam in Indonesia, sources such as babads need to be supported by other historical documents that are more verifiable, such as Arabic-Malay manuscripts, letters, and colonial documents. According to him, "*Babad often presents an inaccurate chronology and needs to be verified with external sources*" (Azyumardi Azra, 2014). Meanwhile, Sri Margana provides a brief assessment of several earlier historians who studied manuscripts and babads from a rational perspective. Margana more explicitly claims that the tradition of traditional historiography (particularly between 1825 and 1830) carried out by Dutch historians—most of whom were employees

and translators for the Dutch government in the Dutch East Indies—was positioned as "*phantasmagoria*" or "*imagery pictures which are seen in a dream"* (Margana, 2016).

Oral stories about historical sites, figures, and locations in Indonesia are also often ignored by historians. Similar to legends in manuscripts and chronicles, the truth of oral stories in society cannot be verified by other primary documents. In fact, oral tradition is one of the ways local communities preserve the history of their ancestors and their homeland. Factually, it has existed for hundreds of years in Indonesian society. The assessment of the authenticity of manuscripts, chronicles, and oral traditions above is certainly based on a Western positivistic-empirical framework. Thus, manuscripts that do not meet these standards are considered unsuitable as primary sources in historical research. In the author's opinion, this is a form of Western epistemological deadlock in dealing with manuscripts, chronicles, and oral traditions.

Alternative Source Criticism Method based on *Irfani* Epistemology

The long journey of Islamization in the archipelago cannot be separated from irfani practices and traditions. From the era of Walisongo to the pesantren scholars of the modern era, Sufism and tarikat teachings have become the most prominent features of Islamization. For the Muslim community in the archipelago, the irfani tradition shows the recognition of truths beyond rationality, particularly the existence of a supernatural realm that can be accessed by humans.

In this regard, Nasaruddin Umar emphasizes that there are several levels of the supernatural realm that can be accessed by humans, such as the *barzakh* and *malakut* realms. The realm of *barzakh* is an intermediate realm between the world and the unseen realm, while the realm of *malakut* is the realm of spiritual beings such as jinn, angels, and demons. According to Nasaruddin Umar, this realm cannot be accessed by humans using only their five senses and physical strength, but only by using the potential of *lahut* and *malakut* (Janah, 2017). Therefore, it is unreasonable to completely separate the writing of Islamic history in the archipelago from this irfani tradition. The empirical reality of Islamic history in the archipelago is inseparable from its mystical reality. Ignoring the mystical reality is nothing more than a form of Western methodological stagnation in studying Islam in the archipelago, which is so unique.

The limitations of the above source criticism method are caused by the limitations of the positivistic and empirical perspectives of Orientalism. Therefore, the writing of the history of Islam in the Archipelago must be supplemented with perspectives from within Islam itself.

Basically, the two Islamic epistemologies that have often been used so far only revolve around bayani and burhani epistemology. Meanwhile, irfani epistemology is relatively avoided due to the strong dominance of positivistic and empirical schools of thought in the tradition of writing Islamic history in the archipelago. The impasse of the source criticism method can be solved through the *irfani* approach.

There are three popular forms of reasoning in Islamic scholarship: *bayani*, *burhani*, and *Irfani*. If *bayani* and *burhani* are based on empirical rationality, then *irfani* is based on a truth that transcends rationality. According to Mehdi Hairi Yazdi, *irfani* reasoning is referred to as *'ilm hudluri* (presented knowledge), while rationality is *'ilm muktasab* (sought knowledge) (Soleh, 2014). Meanwhile, according to Henri Bergson, *irfani* knowledge is termed knowledge of intuitive knowledge that is obtained directly. Rationality, on the other hand, is closer to knowledge about discursive knowledge obtained through intermediaries, namely the senses and reason (Katsof, 1996). The term "*Irfan"* comes from the root word "*'arafa"* (Arabic), which has the same meaning as the word "*ma'rifah*," meaning knowledge but different from "*'ilm" (*science) (al-Jabiri, 1993).

According to *Khudlori*, *Irfan* or *ma'rifah* is knowledge obtained directly from God (*kasf*) through spiritual practice (*riyadlah*) based on *hub* (love) or *iradah* (strong will). Meanwhile, science is knowledge obtained through transformation (*naql*) or rationality (*aql*) (Soleh, 2014). However, *irfani* reasoning must be positioned as a reinforcement for *bayani* and burhani reasoning, and vice versa. According to Amin Abdullah, the dominance of bayani and *burhani* epistemology in the development of Islamic thought was a historical accident that led to the rejection of the validity of irfani epistemology (Abdullah, 2001). In fact, the intervention of Western epistemology also contributed to distancing irfani epistemology from Islamic studies. In fact, the existence of irfani epistemology is an internal control for bayani and burhani in presenting a balance of thought (Abdullah, 2001; Mutawali, 2016). Thus, the combination of intuition and reason à la Suhrawardi will lead us to the highest and most reliable knowledge (Soleh, 2014a). Therefore, the reactivation of irfani epistemology in the tradition of writing the history of Islam in the

Archipelago is a strategic step towards approaching the objective truth of the history of Islam in the Archipelago.

In practical experience, irfani epistemology, or hudluri knowledge, is generally obtained through revelation, intuition, dreams, inspiration, divine guidance, premonitions, and supernatural guidance. In the world of history, it is well known that archaeological discoveries have been made through dreams and hudluri knowledge, such as the discovery of stone tombs in the Pajar Bulan District of South Sumatra in 2010; the discovery of pure gold encrusted with diamonds, believed to be relics of the Majapahit Empire, in 1989; and so on. ("Mimpi dan Penemuan Arkeologi | Majalah Arkeologi Indonesia," n.d.).

The author also witnessed the discovery of a Muslim burial complex (Asta Panaongan) on the coast of Pasongsongan District, Sumenep Regency, which occurred in 1999. At that time, a resident named Sitti Sahriya had a dream in which an old woman told her that under a sand mound near her house, there was an old tomb buried underneath. Based on his wife's story, Imam Syafi'i immediately rushed to dig up the sand mound. At a depth of approximately 7.5 meters below the surface of the sand, Syafi'i succeeded in finding the tomb in question, a fairly large Muslim tomb complex, which is believed to be the burial place of scholars who spread Islam in the northern coastal area of Pasongsongan.

The above data shows that the acceptance of historical information through *hudluri* science can be verified as true. In practice, *hudluri* science can also be pursued by all human beings without exception, provided that they undergo the *tazkiyatun nafs* method as practiced and taught in various religions, including Islam. This is because the main requirement for obtaining *hudluri* knowledge is inner purity and purity of intention. Thus, it can be asserted that the impasse of the source criticism method for manuscripts, chronicles, and oral traditions that cannot be verified by other primary documents can be verified through transcendent interview media, namely through dreams, revelations, inspiration, and communication with ancestral spirits.

In practical terms, the method of communicating with ancestral spirits and other supernatural beings is not much different from the usual field interview method. The striking difference in this method lies in the selection of interviewers. While non-supernatural interviews can be conducted by anyone, interviewers in transcendental interviews must be people who have special

spiritual abilities to communicate with the supernatural world, such as psychics, indigo children, and so on. However, interviewers in the transcendent interview method must at least meet three standards of objectivity.

First, the interviewer's ability to communicate with the supernatural must be culturally recognized by the general public and by other supernatural beings. Basically, everyone has a different level of sensitivity to the sixth sense (potential), from those who are only able to detect the presence of supernatural beings to those who are able to communicate with them and those who are able to intervene with supernatural beings. The criteria required at this stage are that the interviewer must already have the ability to communicate with supernatural beings and be verifiable by other supernatural beings. This method is very important and urgent to ensure the smooth running of the interview at the next stage.

Second, personal integrity is the second measure that can guarantee the interviewer's honesty in receiving and conveying information. At this stage, the methods that can be used are the *tarikh al-ruwah* and jarh wa tadil methods in the science of *Rijalul Hadith*. The use of the *tarikh al-ruwah* method in this stage is intended to comprehensively trace the interviewer's biography, such as their place of birth, teachers, family environment, social environment, when they were first known to have supernatural abilities, what *riyadlah* methods they have practiced, and so on (Imron, 2017; Karina, Kurniawan, & Millah, 2025; Yuliasti, Saleh, Halik, & Yahya, 2025). Meanwhile, the *jarh wa tadil* method can be used specifically to measure the intellectual and moral quality of the interviewer; namely, whether they are honest or not, *tsiqah* or not, and *dlabit* or not (Hidayat, Arifin, & Rafiq, 2025). In essence, the *jarh wa tadil* method is used as a measure of the interviewer's good and bad deeds in their life.

Third, there must be more than three supernatural beings involved in the supernatural interview. This is important as a form of implementing the source criticism method in historical studies. In this stage, there are two verification steps that must be taken, namely external and internal verification (Fahmi, 2022; Heller, 2023; Juhl, 2020). The external verification method is carried out to determine the authenticity of the respondents, in this case supernatural beings, specifically to track the entities of supernatural beings that the interviewer communicated with. Similar to humans, in terms of form and entity, supernatural beings can be categorized into various entities determined by their anthropological environment. In Indonesian tradition,

some supernatural entities that can be encountered include jinn, angels, *danyang*, spirits, *pocong*, *tuyul*, *suster ngesot*, *kuntilanak*, *banas pati*, and so on. Meanwhile, in Europe and China, we can find vampires (Eqviesta Runtun Pamungkas, 2021; Šešo, 2020). Regardless, like humans, supernatural entities can generally be categorized into two categories: good and evil. In general, supernatural entities that can be communicated with in depth are good supernatural entities. Thus, it can be said that this external verification step is carried out to identify the identity or supernatural entity itself.

The consistency of supernatural beings that appear and can be communicated with by the interviewers will greatly determine the authenticity status of the respondents. Meanwhile, internal verification is carried out to track the consistency of the information conveyed by the informant or supernatural entity. At this stage, there are several internal verification steps, namely comparing the consistency of information between one source and another or repeated confirmation (Emmanuelle, Nathalie, & Marc, 2022). By adhering to these three standards of interviewer objectivity, the validity of the information obtained through transcendent interviews can be tested. Thus, the writing of Islamic history, including local Islamic history for which documents are difficult to find, can be reconstructed through transcendent interviews. Of course, this must be done without abandoning the scientific principles of historical research.

Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that transcendental interviews can be used as an alternative to break the deadlock of positivistic and empirical approaches in dealing with manuscripts, chronicles, and oral traditions as primary sources. The steps of verifying and validating the information contained in manuscripts, chronicles, and oral traditions can be clarified directly through the transcendental interview method, without disregarding the framework of scientific rationality itself. Thus, the writing of Islamic history based on manuscripts, chronicles, and oral traditions can construct a more objective narrative of Islamic history that is in line with the inner truth of Islam itself. However, the transcendent interview method offered by this research needs to be supplemented with further research. Various fundamental issues that need to be examined and formulated are the criteria and measures of the interviewer's piety and the consistency of the information obtained. To fill this void, it seems that we need to elaborate on

the *tarikh al-ruwah* and *jarh wa ta'dil* methods in hadith studies to measure the piety of the interviewer.

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