

**INTEGRATION OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION AND MODERN SCIENCE:
BUILDING COLLABORATION WITHIN THE
ISLAMIC SCIENTIFIC PARADIGM**

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Abstract

The integration of Islamic education and modern science is crucial to overcoming the long-standing dichotomy that positions religious and empirical knowledge as opposing domains. This study aims to examine the conceptual foundation and practical opportunities for building a collaborative scientific paradigm that unites Islamic spiritual values with modern scientific rationality. Using a qualitative descriptive design, this research relies on library studies and content analysis of scholarly works related to Islamic epistemology, the Islamization of knowledge, and integrated education models. The findings show that the dichotomy between Islamic education and modern science stems from epistemological misconceptions influenced by secular educational systems, which separate divine revelation from rational inquiry. Islamic epistemology views all knowledge as originating from Allah and therefore positions religious and scientific disciplines as inherently interconnected. The study identifies three key areas of integration: curriculum development grounded in tawhid, reflective and interdisciplinary learning strategies, and strengthening the role of teachers as murabbi who bridge spiritual and scientific dimensions. This integrative paradigm enables the formation of ulul albab individuals—those who are intellectually critical, spiritually grounded, and ethically responsible in their use of knowledge. Consequently, Islamic education and modern science should be perceived not as competing entities but as complementary pillars that collectively contribute to building a holistic, civilized, and God-centered educational system.

Keywords: Epistemology, Integration of Knowledge, Islamic Education, Modern Science

Introduction

One of the most influential Muslim scholars in the advancement of scientific knowledge is Ibn Sina, whose intellectual legacy not only shaped the trajectory of Islamic civilization but also made substantial contributions to global scientific development (Herlini Puspika Sari, Yuliharti, & Zaitun, 2023: 246). This historical evidence illustrates that the relationship between Islam and science has never inherently been one of conflict; rather, it has been a dynamic synergy that stimulated the flourishing of human civilization. Such a legacy urges contemporary Islamic education to re-examine the relationship between faith and rationality so that both dimensions may collaborate in forming morally upright and intellectually excellent generations.

Education serves as the fundamental pillar for shaping character, knowledge, and the cognitive framework of future generations. Within the Islamic tradition, education is not merely a transfer of information but a holistic process that strengthens faith, morality, and intellectual development. However, the rapid expansion of science and technology in the modern era poses significant challenges to traditional perspectives of Islamic education, which are often framed within normative paradigms. The tension between religious tradition and scientific rationality has contributed to the perception that Islam and modern science stand in a dichotomous and contradictory relationship (Al-Attas, 1993). In reality, Islamic education and modern science need not be viewed as opposing constructs; instead, they can function as complementary domains that contribute to producing learners with strong Islamic values and robust intellectual capacities.

The manifestation of this dichotomy is evident in educational practice. Islamic education systems frequently separate religious knowledge from scientific knowledge, leading to an imbalance in educational aims and experiences. General schools tend to focus heavily on science and technology, while Islamic educational institutions emphasize spiritual and moral formation. This divide creates differing perspectives on the sources and purposes of knowledge, ultimately hindering efforts toward meaningful integration between religious and scientific disciplines (Khozin, 2023: 90–91). Therefore, bridging this divide requires a transformative epistemological approach that places Islamic education within a modern scientific landscape without compromising its spiritual foundations.

Previous studies have proposed several integrative frameworks to address this epistemic tension. Nurwahid & Soleh (2023), for example, highlight how integrated Islamic schools have incorporated Islamic values into science curricula through specific-value integration. Similarly, Suhardis et al. (2023) present various integrative models—including parallel, thematic, and transdisciplinary approaches—that facilitate synergy between Islamic religious education (PAI) and science in primary education. In the context of classroom instruction, the integration paradigm continues to evolve as scholars attempt to respond to the complexities of the modern world and

prepare learners to navigate contemporary realities wisely (Amelia & Rahmat, 2024: 120–121).

Despite these efforts, several substantive challenges remain. First, at the epistemological level, religion and science operate with different methodologies, standards of validity, and objects of inquiry. Differences in the “ways of knowing” often become the root of conflict. Second, at the institutional and curricular levels, many long-established Islamic educational institutions struggle to reform entrenched curricular structures. Third, teacher competence presents another barrier, as not all Islamic education teachers possess adequate scientific backgrounds, while many science teachers lack sufficient knowledge of Islamic theology or thought.

These challenges give rise to a central research question: Is the integration of Islamic education and modern science feasible, and if so, what collaborative model is most effective and relevant for contemporary Islamic educational institutions? Consequently, the working hypothesis of this study posits that collaboration through integrative—not confrontational—models between Islamic educational philosophy and modern scientific paradigms can produce a holistic educational framework capable of safeguarding Islamic creed (*aqidah*) while enhancing students’ scientific competencies.

Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach with a library research design, as the objective of the investigation centers on conceptual and philosophical analysis of the relationship between Islamic education and modern science. This approach is appropriate for examining abstract constructs, theoretical foundations, and historical developments that underpin the discourse on knowledge integration. As Moleong (2021) emphasizes, qualitative inquiry enables researchers to explore phenomena in depth and to construct meaning based on interpretive understanding rather than numerical measurement.

The data for this research were collected from a wide range of scholarly sources, including books, peer-reviewed journal articles, academic papers, and official documents relevant to the theme of integrating Islamic and scientific epistemologies. The selection of literature followed predetermined inclusion criteria: (1) publications discussing Islamic epistemology, philosophy of science, or integrative education; (2) works published within reputable academic contexts; and (3) sources directly addressing the conceptual encounters between religion and science.

Data analysis was conducted using content analysis, which allowed the researchers to systematically identify, categorize, interpret, and synthesize the principal ideas related to integrative paradigms across the selected literature. Through this method, thematic patterns—such as epistemological foundations, historical trajectories, integrative models, and contemporary

challenges—were extracted to construct a comprehensive understanding of the issue.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, source triangulation was employed by comparing arguments and perspectives from multiple credible scientific references. This process minimized interpretive bias and strengthened the objectivity of the synthesized conclusions. Triangulation also ensured that the final interpretation was built upon convergent evidence from diverse scholarly viewpoints.

This methodological framework enabled the researchers to critically explore the intersection between Islamic values and modern scientific principles. By integrating conceptual reflection with systematic analysis of existing scholarship, this study provides both theoretical and practical contributions to the ongoing efforts to harmonize Islamic education with contemporary scientific development. Ultimately, the chosen method offers a deep and comprehensive understanding of the integrative potential between Islamic education and modern science, ensuring that the research outcomes are not only theoretically grounded but also applicable in advancing collaborative educational paradigms.

Results and Discussion

The Dichotomous Paradigm Between Islamic Education and Modern Science

The dichotomous paradigm between Islamic education and modern science originates from epistemological misunderstandings that artificially separate religious knowledge from scientific inquiry, as if the two domains were inherently incompatible. Within this limited perspective, Islamic education is often associated solely with moral and spiritual cultivation, whereas modern science is perceived as a discipline grounded exclusively in rationality and empirical observation. However, the history of classical Islamic civilization demonstrates a markedly different picture: both domains once interacted synergistically, producing a harmonious advancement of knowledge and contributing to the intellectual richness of the Muslim world. This separation became more pronounced with the rise of Western secularism, which imposed a philosophical and institutional division between science and religion across many Muslim societies (Muhammad & Kerwanto, 2023: 12–13). Consequently, reuniting Islamic education with modern science has become a critical necessity to restore a knowledge paradigm anchored in *tauhid* and the unity of knowledge.

The dichotomy was further reinforced through colonial educational systems introduced into Muslim-majority regions, which established dual-track structures: *madrasah* focusing predominantly on religious sciences and modern schools emphasizing worldly sciences (Hakim et al., 2023: 6). This bifurcation created an epistemological gap that forces students into a

perceived choice between becoming rational scientists or spiritual theologians. Such a division contradicts Islamic teachings, wherein worldly and religious sciences are viewed as interconnected manifestations of divine knowledge (Inayati & Pratama, 2022: 3–4). Therefore, integrating religious and scientific disciplines within a unified epistemological framework is essential to develop individuals who are intellectually competent, spiritually grounded, and ethically oriented.

This view aligns with the argument of Herlini Puspika Sari (2022: 5–6), who asserts that the dichotomy stems from an educational paradigm divorced from divine values. She emphasizes that modern Islamic education must be reconstructed by reinstating *tauhid* as the epistemological foundation, enabling religious and scientific disciplines to interact meaningfully and form a cohesive educational experience. Under this reconstruction, Islamic education becomes not only a medium for moral instruction and worship but also a platform for intellectual development directed toward devotion to Allah.

From the standpoint of the philosophy of Islamic science, separating religious knowledge from modern scientific inquiry contradicts the principle of *tauhid*, which affirms the unity of the sources of knowledge. All realities in the universe, whether textual in the Qur'an or empirical in creation, are considered signs (*ayat*) of God (Istiqomah et al., 2023: 7). To separate religious and scientific knowledge is to disregard the unity of knowledge (*wahdat al-'ilm*). As Yusuf et al. (2019: 8) suggest, Islamic epistemology places revelation, reason, and empirical experience as complementary tools for acquiring truth. Hence, the crisis of knowledge in the Muslim world arises when science is detached from divine values that form the ethical foundations of knowledge production.

In educational practice, the dichotomy is evident in the curricula of Islamic institutions, where science is often treated merely as an auxiliary subject rather than an integral part of the learning system. As a result, interest in scientific research within Islamic educational institutions remains relatively low, reinforcing the misconception that Islam is incompatible with technological advancement (Hakim et al., op. cit., 7). Conversely, classical Muslim scholars such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Al-Khawarizmi exemplified the profound synthesis between faith and scientific rationality (Muhammad & Kerwanto, op. cit., 15). Reviving this spirit requires reconstructing Islamic education through integrative models that unify religious and scientific knowledge within a cohesive epistemological vision.

Addressing this paradigm requires a comprehensive reconstruction of Islamic educational epistemology through integrative approaches. Integration is not merely administrative or curricular blending but involves an epistemic reconceptualization that recognizes all knowledge as originating from Allah (Istiqomah, op. cit., 9–10). In this context, scientific learning becomes a means not only for intellectual development but also for cultivating spiritual consciousness. As Darmana (2019: 35–37) explains, when rooted in *tauhid*, scientific activities become acts of worship because the application of

knowledge is directed toward human benefit and divine obedience. Thus, an integrative Islamic education model can produce learners who combine intellectual competence, spiritual maturity, and ethical responsibility in accordance with the Qur'an and Sunnah.

The Historical Foundations of the Relationship Between Islam and Scientific Knowledge

Since the revelation of the first Qur'anic command, *Iqra'* ("Read!"), Islam has positioned the pursuit of knowledge not merely as an intellectual endeavor but also as a form of worship and devotion to Allah. Qur'an 96:1–5 affirms that reading, learning, and contemplating creation are divinely mandated acts facilitated by God's gift of intellect and the faculty of writing. Contemporary Islamic scholarship interprets this command as evidence that observation, reasoning, and empirical inquiry are intrinsic aspects of the Islamic epistemological tradition (Herlini, Yuliharti, & Zaitun, 2023: 254–255). Accordingly, the search for knowledge in Islam integrates spiritual aspiration with rational investigation, reinforcing the unity of revelation, intellect, and empirical experience.

During the Golden Age of Islamic civilization (8th–13th century CE), the harmony between religious devotion and scientific inquiry reached its peak. Prominent Muslim scholars such as Al-Kindi, Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Al-Khawarizmi not only advanced scientific methodologies but also regarded scientific exploration as a pathway to recognize the majesty of God's creation (Rahman, 2024: 216–221). Qur'an 3:190–191 encourages contemplation of the natural world as a form of *dhikr* and *tafakkur*, reinforcing that scientific reflection is inseparable from spiritual devotion. For these scholars, scientific activity was never detached from faith; rather, it was an expression of spiritual insight through the study of natural phenomena.

Institutions such as the *Bayt al-Hikmah* in Abbasid Baghdad exemplified this integrative spirit. At this intellectual center, major works from Greek, Persian, and Indian civilizations were translated into Arabic and later synthesized within an Islamic intellectual framework ("Transformasi Intelektual Islam," 2019: 50–52). This synthesis catalyzed innovations in astronomy, medicine, mathematics, philosophy, and technology, demonstrating that Islam historically embraced scientific knowledge as an extension of spiritual inquiry.

However, after the decline of the Abbasid period, the harmonious relationship between religious and scientific knowledge gradually deteriorated. Contributing factors included the destruction of intellectual centers such as Baghdad in 1258 CE, diminishing traditions of *ijtihad*, and the spread of colonial educational systems that separated religious and secular knowledge ("Revitalization of Islamic Knowledge," 2023: 15–17). These developments fostered a fragmented epistemology that obscured Islam's original holistic view of knowledge.

Nevertheless, efforts to restore the unity between religion and science persist. Modern thinkers such as Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas and proponents of the Islamization of Knowledge movement advocate re-integrating science with Islamic metaphysics, ethics, and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* ("Islamization of Science," 2022: 30–32). Their ideas emphasize redirecting modern science toward moral and spiritual goals so that scientific advancement aligns with divine purpose and contributes constructively to human well-being.

Meeting Points: Integration of Islamic Epistemology and Modern Science

The integration of Islamic epistemology and modern science represents an intellectual endeavor to unify two complementary sources of knowledge: revelation (al-Qur'an and Hadith) and empirical-rational inquiry. In Islamic thought, the highest source of knowledge is divine revelation, while human reason, sensory experience, and empirical investigation serve as instruments to understand the signs of God in the universe. This foundational belief is clearly reflected in QS. An-Nahl (16): 78, which states that human beings are born without knowledge and are endowed with hearing, vision, and intellect as divine gifts. This verse positions human cognitive faculties as part of the epistemological structure in Islam, indicating that knowledge is both a spiritual trust and an intellectual responsibility. Thus, the integrative epistemology of Islam frames the act of knowing as a sacred process that combines reason, empirical inquiry, and divine guidance (Al-Attas & Naquib, 2018).

Modern science, on the other hand, is fundamentally anchored in secular paradigms that prioritize observation, experimentation, falsifiability, and rational deduction as the primary means of explaining natural phenomena. While this approach has produced significant advancements in technology and human welfare, its secular orientation often detaches scientific activity from metaphysical meaning. Islam, however, offers a worldview in which the natural world is understood as a manifestation of divine signs (*ayat kauniyyah*). QS. Fushshilat (41): 53 emphasizes that the signs of God are embedded "across the horizons and within the human self," affirming that scientific inquiry is a legitimate pathway to recognizing divine truth. According to Al-Attas, the ultimate goal of knowledge in Islam is not only utilitarian mastery of the material world, but also the purification of the intellect and soul through correct understanding of reality (Nurfitriani, 2025: 35–39). Thus, the meeting point between Islam and science becomes evident when scientific exploration is interpreted as an act of *tafakkur*—contemplating the signs of God in nature.

Al-Faruqi, as cited by Syafrizal et al. (2022), conceptualizes the integration of Islamic epistemology and science not merely as a combination of two knowledge systems, but as the emergence of a new paradigm rooted in *tawhid*. Within this paradigm, every scientific discipline is viewed through a unifying metaphysical principle, which ensures that knowledge does not drift into secularism but remains oriented toward divine purpose. In this view,

modern science provides methodological rigor and systematic inquiry, while Islam provides ethical orientation, spiritual meaning, and metaphysical grounding. The two are therefore complementary rather than contradictory.

One of the major challenges in this integrative project is determining how to reconcile the empirical nature of modern science with the spiritual and metaphysical principles of Islam without compromising the integrity of either domain. Ziauddin Sardar argues, as cited in Sari et al. (2023: 217–218), that Islam must not reject Western science but reinterpret its epistemological foundation to align it with values of humanity, justice, and divine guidance. Through this reorientation, Islam can provide science with moral direction, preventing technological progress from becoming morally neutral or ethically destructive.

In conclusion, the meeting point between Islamic epistemology and modern science lies in the synergistic relationship between revelation and reason. Both serve as complementary paths in humanity's search for truth. Integrative epistemology affirms that scientific knowledge is a divine trust (*amanah*) that must be used to cultivate justice, benefit humanity, and preserve the natural world. Such an approach nurtures a generation of scholars who excel intellectually while possessing spiritual integrity and moral responsibility (Al-Faruqi & Raji, 2019, revised edition). Thus, the integration of Islamic epistemology and modern science is essential for building a holistic, ethical, and civilized scientific culture.

Collaborative Models between Islamic Education and Science in the Modern Era

The rapid advancement of science and technology in the modern era demands that Islamic education move toward a more harmonious and integrated relationship with scientific knowledge. This collaboration does not imply abandoning Islamic values, but rather aligning empirical-rational principles with spiritual and ethical dimensions to create a comprehensive scientific worldview. In Islamic epistemology, scientific activity is not merely the acquisition of empirical facts, but an intellectual form of worship (*‘ibādah ‘aqliyyah*) that strengthens faith through reflection on the signs of God in nature. As Sassi (2020) articulates, an epistemology grounded in *tawhid* positions scientific inquiry as a holistic act that integrates sensory perception, rational analysis, and spiritual awareness in the pursuit of truth.

A key manifestation of this collaboration is found in curriculum integration models that embed Islamic values within scientific subjects. The Islamic Science Curriculum Integration Model aligns scientific concepts with the Islamic worldview, enabling learners to understand the interconnectedness between natural laws and divine will. Empirical research by Kurniawan et al. (2025: 64–65) demonstrates that integrated curricula enhance students' understanding of the unity between religious and scientific knowledge, while strengthening religious character formation. This indicates

that curriculum integration can serve as a strategic foundation for producing learners who are scientifically competent and spiritually grounded.

Beyond the curriculum, collaboration between Islamic education and science also extends to pedagogical methods. Interdisciplinary approaches have proven effective in linking Qur'anic values with scientific concepts within classroom instruction. For instance, when teaching natural phenomena such as rainfall, photosynthesis, or the motion of celestial bodies, teachers can contextualize these phenomena with Qur'anic verses that highlight the signs of divine creation. Arifudin (2016) asserts that integrating scientific inquiry with spiritual reflection fosters holistic awareness that views knowledge as a means to understand divine signs while shaping balanced intellectual and moral development. Thus, integrative teaching methods are not only pedagogically effective but also spiritually enriching.

Moreover, effective collaboration requires a paradigm shift in the role of teachers and educational institutions. Teachers must act not only as transmitters of scientific knowledge but also as *murabbī*—spiritual mentors who cultivate ethical character and guide students toward moral maturity. Educational institutions should serve as centers for integrating modern scientific research with Islamic ethical frameworks. Lestari (2022: 150–153) emphasizes that experiential learning models grounded in *tawhid*-based values foster learners' intellectual-spiritual balance, enhancing critical thinking, creativity, and moral sensitivity simultaneously.

Therefore, collaboration between Islamic education and modern science involves not only conceptual integration but also a transformative reorientation of teaching practices, institutional missions, and knowledge paradigms. This synthesis reaffirms that religion and science are complementary foundations for intellectual and civilizational progress. Ultimately, such collaboration nurtures a generation of *ulul albab*—individuals who think critically, act ethically, and employ knowledge responsibly for the betterment of humanity.

Implications for Curriculum and Learning

The integration of Islamic teachings and scientific knowledge carries substantial implications for curriculum development within Islamic education. A curriculum grounded in *tawhid* perceives all branches of knowledge—religious sciences and natural sciences alike—as interconnected and interdependent. This perspective necessitates shifting from a dichotomous framework to an integrative paradigm in which all subjects collectively cultivate intellectual capability alongside spiritual consciousness. Al-Attas emphasizes that the goal of Islamic education is not merely the transmission of knowledge (transfer of knowledge), but the cultivation of *adab*—the internalization of moral discipline, ethical awareness, and spiritual refinement. Malik (2023: 568) echoes this insight by arguing that contemporary Islamic education must synthesize revelatory epistemology and

scientific rationality to form individuals who are knowledgeable and morally upright.

In practice, this vision requires comprehensive curriculum reconstruction that addresses contemporary challenges while remaining grounded in Islamic principles. Instead of segregating religious knowledge from scientific knowledge, an integrative curriculum embeds Islamic values within scientific inquiry and situates scientific learning within a broader spiritual and ethical framework. This approach aligns with the Integrated Islamic Education model implemented in countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia. Empirical findings by Ahmad and Hidayatullah (2021: 94–96) indicate that embedding Islamic values within general subjects strengthens learners' holistic understanding of the harmony between religion, ethics, and scientific inquiry.

In terms of pedagogy, integration also demands a broader role for teachers. They must function not only as educators but also as *murabbi*, responsible for guiding students' intellectual, emotional, and spiritual development. Integrative learning requires teachers to connect scientific concepts with theological principles and ethical reflections. Studies by Hidayat and Fatimah (2020: 45–47) reveal that integration-based instruction significantly enhances students' learning motivation and strengthens their religious character. This underscores the teacher's pivotal role in fostering an educational environment that harmonizes rational knowledge with spiritual insight.

Furthermore, integrative pedagogy must avoid reliance on rote memorization or mere textual learning. Instead, it should incorporate contextual, reflective, and meaningful learning strategies. Experiential learning, in particular, allows learners to interact directly with the natural world while internalizing Islamic values. Research by Weni, Muspiarman, & Fadriati (2025: 171–172) demonstrates that experiential learning infused with Islamic values cultivates reflective thinking and nurtures balanced development between cognitive and spiritual faculties.

Overall, the relationship between Islam and scientific knowledge provides a transformative foundation for designing holistic, integrative, and future-oriented curricula. A curriculum anchored in *tawhid* nurtures learners who are intellectually competent, spiritually mature, and ethically responsible. Learning processes must therefore connect scientific inquiry with divine awareness to shape a generation of *ulul albab*—individuals who engage in deep reflection, uphold noble character, and contribute positively to global civilization. As affirmed by Hidayat (2015), Islamic education must transcend the dichotomous paradigm and cultivate a model of learning that harmonizes faith and reason. Such integration ensures that education nurtures not only intellectual excellence but also moral and spiritual integrity.

Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the relationship between Islamic education and modern science is fundamentally complementary rather than contradictory. The long-standing dichotomy between the two domains emerges primarily from epistemological misunderstandings that artificially separate religious knowledge from empirical inquiry. From the perspective of Islamic epistemology, all knowledge ultimately originates from Allah and is intended to promote human well-being, cultivate adab, and draw individuals closer to Him. Therefore, the integration of Islamic education and modern science is both a conceptual necessity and a practical imperative for developing a holistic and civilized educational system.

This study further affirms that the synergy between Islam and science can be implemented through integrated educational models that combine Islamic spiritual values with contemporary scientific approaches. Such integration extends beyond curriculum reconstruction and includes reforming educational paradigms, designing student-centered and value-oriented learning strategies, and strengthening the role of teachers as *murabbi*—guiding students intellectually, morally, and spiritually. Collaboration between religion and science in the educational sphere has the potential to cultivate learners with the qualities of *ulul albab*: intellectually capable, spiritually mature, critically reflective, and ethically grounded in the application of knowledge.

Accordingly, the study's hypothesis—that harmonizing Islamic educational paradigms with modern scientific frameworks can produce a comprehensive and contextually relevant educational system—is supported by the findings. These insights provide a conceptual foundation for the development of contemporary Islamic education that remains rooted in divine values while being responsive to advancements in science and technology.

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