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The Paradigm of Science Integration in The Development of Higher Education

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Abstract

The paradigm of combining science and Islam is an effort to unite modern knowledge with Islamic religious values philosophically and epistemologically. Until now, higher education in the Islamic world has often separated religious knowledge from general knowledge, which has led to a separation in academic thinking and practice. This study aims to explore the philosophical basis for combining science and Islam, as well as its impact on the development of higher education. Using a qualitative method based on literature review, this study finds that combining science and Islam is not only theoretical but can also be applied in real life. This is done by considering revelation as a source of values and science as a tool for advancing civilization. This paradigm is capable of creating a comprehensive higher education model that focuses on the development of knowledge with ethics and is able to respond to global challenges without losing Islamic identity. Thus, the integration of science and Islam has great potential as a basis for developing curricula, learning strategies, and research directions in Islamic universities.

INTRODUCTION

The development of science and technology in the 21st century has brought significant changes in various aspects of human life, including social, cultural, economic, and educational aspects (Budianto et al., 2021; Camelia, 2020; Elmanisar et al., 2024; Hajita, 2024; Masyitoh, 2020). On the one hand, advances in modern science have provided enormous benefits by bringing about discoveries and innovations that improve the quality of life. However, an excessive focus on rational and empirical approaches sometimes creates tension with spiritual and religious values. Therefore, it is important to find ways to integrate science with Islamic teachings, as this requires in-depth study (Azizah & Widjajanti, 2019; Suprapto & Sumarni, 2022). An integrative approach between science and Islam has emerged due to the realization that science cannot be separated from philosophical, ethical, and theological dimensions. The Qur'an, as the main guide for Muslims, emphasizes the importance of thinking and observing nature as evidence of Allah's greatness (QS. Ali Imran [3]:190-191).

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اِنَّ فِيْ خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ الَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّاُولِى الْاَلْبَابِۙ الَّذِيْنَ يَذْكُرُوْنَ اللّٰهَ قِيَامًا وَّقُعُوْدًا وَّعَلٰى جُنُوْبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ فِيْ خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِۚ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هٰذَا بَاطِلًاۚ سُبْحٰنَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

Meaning: *"Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day are signs (of Allah's greatness) for people of understanding, (namely) those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, or lying down, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth (saying), "Our Lord, You did not create all this in vain. Glory be to You. Protect us from the punishment of Hell."*

This shows that from the beginning, Islam has encouraged its followers to continue to seek knowledge and develop their understanding, while adhering to the principles of faith (Fauzan et al., 2024; Lingga Fahrurrosi et al., 2025). Philosophically, the purpose of integrating science with Islam is to eliminate the misconception that separates religious knowledge and general knowledge. Often, religious knowledge is considered to be only normative, while scientific knowledge is considered to have no spiritual value. In fact, in the classical Islamic scientific tradition, figures such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Al-Ghazali were able to balance the development of knowledge between rationality and spirituality. Thus, this integration seeks to revive the spirit of comprehensive knowledge in Islam.

In the context of higher education, the integration of science and Islam plays an important role (Alawiyah & Sopandi, 2016; Daulay, 2022; Multahada, 2021; Nurcholis, 2021). Higher education institutions, especially those based on Islam, not only function as centers for the development of practical knowledge, but also as places for shaping individuals who are knowledgeable, faithful, and have noble character. Therefore, the curriculum, learning methods, and research in higher education institutions need to be designed in such a way as to produce scientific integration that is ready to face the challenges of the times, while still maintaining noble values. Thus, studies on the paradigm of science and Islam integration and its impact on higher education are very important because they can strengthen the foundation of knowledge while providing direction for the development of a more comprehensive, relevant, and Islamic education.

METHODS

This study fully utilizes the library research method, with a qualitative-descriptive approach (Akem et al., 2025; Engkizar, Jaafar, Masuwd, et al., 2025; Ikhwan et al., 2023; Iskandar et al., 2023; Mutathahirin et al., 2022; Putra et al., 2020). The main focus of this study is to examine the integration of science and Islam: a philosophical study and its implications for the development of higher education through an exploration of scientific works, both classical and contemporary. The data sources in this study consist of: Classical literature, such as the works of Imam al-Syafi'i (al-Risalah), Abu Hamid al-Ghazali *(al-Mustashfa, Ihya' Ulum al-Din*), and books of interpretation and hadith. Contemporary literature, such as the thoughts of Fazlur Rahman, M. Abid al-Jabiri, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, as well as academic papers and journals discussing Islamic epistemology, philosophy of science, and Islamic methodology. Data was collected, classified, and analyzed using the approach (Baroud, 2024; Engkizar et al., 2024). Hermeneutics, to interpret the meaning of the text contextually, both historically and philosophically. Content analysis was used to identify the main themes related to the structure of Islamic epistemology and the relationship between the Qur'an and Hadith. The purpose of this approach was to explore the study of science-Islam integration in the development of higher

education (Engkizar, Jaafar, Alias, et al., 2025; Faddhia et al., 2025; Htay et al., 2025; Okenova et al., 2025).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The word integration comes from the English word integration, which means "wholeness." This term refers to a process of uniting or combining various different elements into a harmonious whole. In terms of meaning, integration is the opposite of separation, where each field does not stand alone, but is interconnected. Etymologically, this term is rooted in the Latin word integer, which means "whole" or "complete" (Giantara & Amiliya, 2021). Therefore, integration can be interpreted as a condition of life that is completely clean, healthy, and prosperous. In a moral context, integration also reflects honesty and fairness; a person with high integrity is able to see reality objectively and convey it as it is.

The term "Islam" has a broad meaning and is used to refer to the religion revealed by Allah to the Prophet Muhammad (Kurniyati & Abdurrohman, 2022). In general, this word has two main meanings: first, salvation or freedom from disturbance; and second, submission, obedience, and acceptance of Allah's will. These two meanings are interrelated and inseparable. Meanwhile, "science" or "knowledge," as explained by Liang Gie, is a series of human activities that use reason and certain methods to produce systematically organized knowledge about various natural, social, and individual phenomena. The goal is to obtain truth, understanding, explanation, and practical application of this knowledge. Etymologically, the term science comes from the Latin word scientia, which means "knowledge," and from the verb scire, which means "to know" or "to study." According to George Saliba, Islamic science is knowledge that grew and developed in the context of Islamic civilization.

This term emphasizes the historical and cultural aspects of Islamic civilization, rather than solely its religious dimension. Muslims succeeded in processing and adapting Greek philosophy and science to be in harmony with Islamic teachings, while Western civilization was unable to obtain superior values from this Greek heritage. Watson argues that the relationship between religion and science can be understood through several forms of interaction (Zaprulkhan, 2013). According to Watson's explanation, Barbour divides this relationship into four types. First, conflict, which arises between scientific materialism and a literal religious view of scripture. Second, independence, which is the view that religion and science stand in their own domains without interfering with each other. Third, dialogue, which highlights the similarities or commonalities in the thinking methods of both. Fourth, integration, which includes natural theology, systematic synthesis efforts, and the use of scientific findings to enrich metaphysical reflection. However, Barbour's approach has not been immune to criticism from contemporary thinkers, both from the Christian tradition, such as Houston Smith, and from Islam, such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr. Both argue that Barbour's model of integration actually places theology under the domination of science, when theology should be the basis for evaluating scientific theories. Meanwhile, Ziauddin Sardar rejects the term "Islamization of science" and prefers the concept of "Islamic science" for four main reasons. First, every civilization has a different form of science. Second, Islamic science has a unique historical identity.

Third, Western science is often destructive and can harm humans. Fourth, Western science fails to meet the spiritual, cultural, and physical needs of Muslims. Therefore, the development of Islamic science is seen as part of the effort to rebuild civilization, which must begin with epistemological reconstruction. In line with this, Nasim Butt emphasizes that the core of Islamic science lies in the principles of tawhid, khilafah, and worship, which aim to realize justice and human welfare, while

rejecting injustice. Thus, Islamic science is constructive, not destructive. According to Saswinadi Sasmojo, science is a collection of scientific information that explains the structure and behavior patterns of systems. These systems can be natural systems or man-made systems in social life. Natural systems are called natural sciences, while man-made systems are called social sciences. Integration means combining separate parts into a single entity. with religious values, but also unites perspectives, ways of thinking, and actions. Integration emphasizes exclusively Islamic thinking over secular Western thinking, thereby creating a new, comprehensive, and modern scientific paradigm. Science studies natural phenomena through universal laws and is used as both knowledge and a process for acquiring knowledge. Religion and science differ in methodology and approach, but both share similarities in their scientific mission, namely the aspects of truth, knowledge, meaning, value, and devotion. Religion emphasizes belief, transcendental authority, morality, and behavioral guidelines, while science relies on empirical evidence and rational reasoning. Modern science has produced significant discoveries that have changed the human paradigm, while religion provides moral guidance, ethical values, behavioral guidelines, and diverse spiritual experiences for individuals and groups.

Philosophical Integrity and interconnectivity at the philosophical level in scientific discourse must be given fundamental existential value in relation to other scientific disciplines and in relation to humanistic values. Fiqh, for example, in addition to its fundamental meaning as a philosophy that builds relationships between humans, nature, and God in Islamic teachings, in the study of fiqh, it must also be mentioned that the existence of fiqh does not stand alone or is self-sufficient, but develops along with its accommodative attitude towards other scientific disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, psychology, and so on. The same applies to the study of general sciences such as sociology. As a discipline that studies social interactions between humans, it will be empowered if sociology teachers—as part of the knowledge transfer process also encourage students to review existing theories of social interaction in cultural and religious traditions. This interconnectivity will empower sociology on the one hand and cultural or religious traditions on the other. This school of thought states that true knowledge can only be obtained and measured by reason.

According to rationalism, the errors in empiricism caused by the weakness of the senses can be corrected if reason is used. Large objects appear small because they are far away, so their images appear small to the eye, as do straight objects that appear bent. Humans are becoming more advanced and have the technical knowledge to manipulate or utilize the energy and potential around them. Therefore, the higher the level of knowledge, the higher the level of civilization and culture, which includes thinking, feeling, and willing (aspirations and demands). At this stage, science and technology are increasingly developing, and the activities of thinking (taffakur), studying (muttala'ah), and researching (tadabbur) are becoming more vibrant, as demonstrated by efforts to fulfill both material and spiritual needs. Nature was created by God as a source of material and immaterial consumption, as a giant library and research object that serves as a comparison and lesson for humanity. As stated in QS. Al Isra 'verse 9:

اِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَهْدِيْ لِلَّتِيْ هِيَ اَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا كَبِيْرًاۙ

Meaning: *"Indeed, this Qur'an guides to the most upright path and gives glad tidings to the believers who do good deeds that there is a great reward for them.*

The implementation of integration and interconnection in the material can be done using three models of interdisciplinary scientific interconnection, namely: i)

The model of integration into the curriculum package, as this is related to educational institutions. ii) The model of naming scientific disciplines that shows the relationship between general scientific disciplines and Islam. This model requires that each name of a discipline include the word Islam, such as Islamic economics, Islamic politics, Islamic sociology, Islamic anthropology, Islamic literature, Islamic education, Islamic philosophy, and so on, as a reflection of the scientific integration that has been carried out. iii). The model of integration into the teaching of disciplines. This model requires that general scientific theories be injected into every teaching of Islamic and religious disciplines as a manifestation of the interconnectivity between the two, and vice versa.

Methodology In the context of the scientific structure of educational institutions that are integrative and interconnective, the methodological level is also touched upon. When one discipline is integrated or interconnected with another discipline, for example, psychology with Islamic values, then methodologically, the interconnective science must use approaches and methods that are safe for that science. For example, the phenomenological approach, which provides empathetic appreciation of people's experiences, is considered safer than other approaches that contain anti-religious biases, such as psychoanalysis. In terms of research methods, this does not seem to be a problem because when research is conducted objectively, whether using questionnaires, interviews, or other methods, the results are objectively true. This kind of truth will actually support religious truth itself.

Strategy The level of strategy referred to here is the level of implementation or praxis of the integrative-interconnected scientific learning process. In this context, the quality of science and the skills of teachers are key to the success of learning based on the interconnectivity paradigm. In addition to these qualities, teachers must be well facilitated in terms of providing a variety of reading materials and teaching resources in the classroom. Similarly, active learning models with various strategies and methods are a must.

The integration of science and Islam is a tangible combination of Islamic values derived from the Qur'an and Hadith with general knowledge or science. If studied carefully, knowledge in this world can actually be classified into three categories, namely natural science, social science, and humanities. These three types of knowledge (natural science, social science, and humanities) are universally applicable, anywhere. However, among Muslims, they formulate their own knowledge based on the Qur'an and Hadith. The Qur'an describes the creation of the universe in a very systematic way. The verses of the Qur'an describe the process of the creation of the universe, which can be linked to modern scientific theories, such as the Big Bang theory and the process of natural evolution. This is explained, among other places, in Surah Al-Anbiya' verse 30:

اَوَلَمْ يَرَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اَنَّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَتَقْنٰهُمَاۗ وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاۤءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّۗ اَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ

Meaning: *"Do the disbelievers not know that the heavens and the earth were once joined together, then We separated them, and We made everything living come from water? So will they not believe?"*

Islam encourages the growth and development of science. However, a small minority of Muslims have separated religious knowledge from scientific knowledge, so that studies in both the social and exact sciences are often considered less important or even ignored. However, this separation of knowledge is not an Islamic teaching. The phenomenon of the dichotomy of knowledge that has emerged in some communities today is largely due to the influence of non-Muslim thinking that seeks to hinder the progress of Islam. Nevertheless, the practice of dichotomy of knowledge is decreasing and is rarely found anymore. This can be seen from the fact

that madrasas and Islamic boarding schools, as centers of Islamic education, now include science studies in their curriculum. The view that is still ingrained and needs to be maintained in Islamic society is the existence of a hierarchy of knowledge, which is different from dichotomy. The hierarchy of knowledge is a priority order in learning, where some basic knowledge needs to be learned first so that subsequent knowledge is easier to understand. In the context of Islam, fardhu 'ain knowledge should be a priority before studying other knowledge (Atika & Nilwan, 2022; Mutathahirin et al., 2020; Suharjo et al., 2022; Ummah et al., 2025).

In the context of science and religion, integration is generally understood as an attempt to combine the two. J. Sudarminta, SJ., once introduced the concept of "valid integration" but also criticized "naive" integration, which is a superficial matching of sacred verses and scientific findings. This phenomenon is similar to Bucailleism, a defensive apologetic attitude of some Muslim intellectuals. Ideal integration does not mean mixing or erasing the identities of each field, but rather building a constructive relationship so that both enrich each other and produce new contributions to science and religion (Nasiruddin, 2016). The integration between Islam and science is very important. Islam needs science to strengthen its teachings, while science needs Islamic guidance to ensure that its orientation remains focused on human welfare and cosmic balance. As stated by Emanuel Kant and quoted by Suparman Syukur, the senses enable humans to capture information, reason processes it into knowledge, while religion guides that knowledge so that it is useful.

According to theologian John F. Haught, the relationship between religion and science should begin with open dialogue, mutual respect, and mutual learning. Religion offers a theological framework, ethical values, and existential questions, while science provides empirical methods and an understanding of natural phenomena through observation and experimentation. This dialogue allows the two fields to complement each other, deepen our understanding of reality, and reduce the potential for conflict. Religion and science are not always in conflict. Some argue that each has its own domain without subjugating the other. Science answers the question "how," while religion answers "why"; science focuses on facts, religion on meaning; science analyzes, religion synthesizes; science understands nature, religion guides humans toward goodness.

Since the 17th century, modern science and religion have often interacted. However, in the 18th and 19th centuries, some scientists began to ignore the role of God or viewed Him as no longer personal. In the 20th century, this interaction developed dynamically: some religious scholars maintained traditional teachings, some adapted, and some reformulated religious concepts scientifically. In the development of civilization, a cross-disciplinary approach is needed to understand humanity holistically, not only through religious texts, but also through the perspectives of sociology, economics, anthropology, and biology. Thus, the integration of science and Islam allows for comprehensive understanding, avoids stagnation, and continues to respect old traditions while remaining open to new discoveries.

The paradigm that combines science and Islam is an effort to unite two fields of knowledge, namely modern empirical science and Islamic science derived from revelation. This approach stems from the awareness that separating religious knowledge and general knowledge can lead to a fragmented understanding of the world, potentially causing a crisis of meaning in education. Thus, the integration of science and Islam is seen as a way to achieve a holistic civilization.

From a philosophical perspective, the integration of science and Islam is based on three main aspects: Ontological: Islam views the universe as signs that can be analyzed through reason and the senses, but still within the context of the oneness of God. According to I Sudarminta, the integration of science and religion is an attempt

to validly combine the two fields, although there are views that reject this because it is considered to force the verses of the Qur'an to conform to scientific findings. This view differs from the secular approach, which separates reality from spiritual values. Epistemological: The sources of knowledge in Islam do not only come from observation and experimentation, but also from revelation (the Qur'an and Sunnah) and intuition that is in harmony with human nature. Thus, science in Islam combines rational thinking with spiritual values. Axiological: Science in Islam aims for the benefit and service of Allah, unlike secular science, which tends to be neutral towards values.

The integration of science and Islam has important implications for higher education, especially in Islamic universities: Curriculum: It is necessary to design a curriculum that combines religious and modern sciences so that students can think critically while remaining grounded in religion. Methodology: Research should not only rely on empirical scientific methods, but also use reflective approaches and Islamic values. Character Development: Higher education plays a role in shaping individuals who are virtuous, knowledgeable, and have a vision of building civilization, not just professionals. Scientific Innovation: Islamic universities have the potential to create new approaches to science that remain rooted in Islamic values.

However, the application of science and religion integration still faces a number of challenges. One of them is the strong dichotomous paradigm in education, where religious and scientific knowledge are still taught separately. In addition, some academics and scholars feel that an integrative approach can obscure the purity of religious knowledge. Other challenges include the limited literature and methodology that guide the integration of knowledge, dependence on traditional learning models, and limited resources, both in terms of interdisciplinary teaching staff and technological support, resulting in suboptimal implementation.

CONCLUSION

The paradigm that integrates science and Islam is a philosophical attempt to bridge the gap between religious knowledge and general knowledge that has long existed in the world of education. Basically, Islam does not distinguish between revelatory knowledge and empirical knowledge, because both come from Allah; revelation through the Qur'an and Sunnah, while the universe acts as an "open book" that can be studied using scientific methods. In the context of higher education, this integration has several important implications: From a philosophical perspective: It fosters awareness that knowledge is not neutral, but has ethical and spiritual dimensions that must be in harmony with Islamic values. From an academic perspective: It encourages the development of a curriculum that combines modern science with Islamic principles, so that the knowledge produced is more comprehensive. From a practical perspective: Producing graduates who are not only academically competent, but also have noble character, integrity, and a spirit of service to society and the interests of the ummah.

Thus, this paradigm is not merely a theoretical idea, but a strategy to improve higher education so that it is relevant to the demands of the times, without sacrificing Islamic identity. Even so, there is still a perception in society that religion and science are two realms that cannot be united. The two are considered to have different domains, in terms of the objects of study, research methods, criteria for truth, and the roles played by scientists. A popular expression says that science does not care about religion, and religion does not care about science. This arises because of differences in approach and experience: science is abstract, for example mathematics, while religion is closer to everyday life experiences. Science tends to be descriptive as an interpretation of experience, while religion is prescriptive. In addition, another view states that science and religion each have their own advantages and benefits;

Science emphasizes verifiable truths to discover real facts, while religion acknowledges hidden things and relies on certain beliefs. Thus, these two domains should be pursued independently, as the fundamental differences between them have the potential to cause conflict. As a result, combining science and religion is considered logically unrealistic, as they each have their own methods and goals. However, religion remains important for human well-being and as a foundation for achieving eternal harmony.

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