

INTEGRATIVE AND INTERCONNECTIVE PARADIGMS IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The integrative-interconnective paradigm in Islamic education emerges as a response to the dichotomy between religious and scientific knowledge. This paper aims to explore the philosophical foundations, epistemological structure, and practical implications of this paradigm in the development of Islamic education in Indonesia. Using a library research method, this study analyzes various scientific sources, including works by Amin Abdullah, Al-Faruqi, and Al-Attas. Findings show that the integrative-interconnective paradigm encourages the unity of knowledge based on *wahdat al-'ilm*, which bridges *bayani*, *burhani*, and *'irfani* epistemologies. This paradigm has been applied in several Islamic higher education institutions, such as UIN Sunan Kalijaga and UIN Jakarta, through curriculum reform, research integration, and the development of interdisciplinary centers. This study concludes that the paradigm offers an epistemological and practical framework that strengthens Islamic education toward holistic and transformative learning.

Keywords: *Integrative-interconnective paradigm, Islamic education, integration of knowledge*

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Introduction

The dichotomy between religious and general knowledge has been a long-standing epistemological problem. According to Amin Abdullah (2019), this dichotomy causes Islamic education to lose its social relevance and its epistemology to become closed to changing times. He proposes an integrative-interconnective paradigm as a middle ground to unite these two realms of knowledge through an interdisciplinary approach and epistemological dialogue.

In this context, the integrative-interconnective paradigm is not merely a theoretical idea, but rather a new direction in building an open, rational, and transformative Islamic worldview. This idea rejects scientific reductionism and proposes the principle of ta'dib (the formation of civilized human beings) as the primary goal of Islamic education (Al-Attas, 2014).

Islamic education is an educational system aimed at developing knowledgeable, devout, and morally upright individuals. It emphasizes not only the cognitive aspect but also the affective and spiritual dimensions, integrated into the concept of ta'dib, the process of developing a civilized human being, as emphasized by Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas (2014) in his *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam*. From this perspective, Islamic education is not merely a transfer of knowledge, but rather an effort to unite knowledge, faith, and good deeds. However, throughout its history, Islamic education has faced significant challenges in the form of a dichotomy between religious and general knowledge, rooted in colonialism and the modernization of education in the Muslim world (Azra, 2020).

This dichotomy of knowledge has led to epistemological fragmentation within the Islamic education system. On the one hand, religious institutions such as Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) and *madrasahs* (*madrasahs*) focus more on the teaching of *ulum al-din* (religious sciences), while modern institutions such as Islamic universities lean more towards the rational-empirical Western model of scholarship (Abdullah, 2012). Amin Abdullah (2019) explains that this situation creates a gap between Islamic theological idealism and social realities and modern scientific developments. As a result, graduates of Islamic education often possess strong spiritual competencies but weak analytical and application skills to contemporary issues (Mulyadi, 2022).

Awareness of these epistemological problems has prompted Muslim thinkers to reorient the paradigm of Islamic education. Figures such as Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi (1982) with his concept of the Islamization of Knowledge and Al-Attas (2014) with his concept of Ta'dib offer an integrative approach to restore the unity of knowledge. According to Al-Faruqi, all knowledge must be structured within the framework of a tawhidic vision that views God as the

center of all knowledge. This requires epistemological efforts that not only Islamize modern science but also unify scientific structures based on Islamic values (Saefuddin, 2015).

However, the concept of the Islamization of science proposed by Al-Faruqi and Al-Attas has been widely criticized for stopping at the normative level. It has not fully addressed the practical needs of the Islamic higher education system. In response, Amin Abdullah (2012, 2019) offers a new paradigm called integrative-interconnective, an epistemological approach that seeks to interconnect religious sciences with social sciences, science, and the humanities. This paradigm not only Islamizes science but also fosters a critical and productive dialogue between Islamic epistemology and modern epistemology (Arifin, 2017).

The integrative-interconnective paradigm arose from the realization that knowledge cannot stand alone without being connected to other realities. In the context of Islamic epistemology, this paradigm rests on the principle of monotheism, which has ontological, epistemological, and axiological meanings. This means that all fields of knowledge essentially originate from Allah SWT, so that all knowledge must be developed with an awareness of God's oneness (*wahdat al-'ilm*) (Al-Attas, 2014; Abdullah, 2019). Therefore, the dichotomy of knowledge that separates "religion" and "science" is actually a form of epistemological deviation from the concept of monotheism itself (Anwar, 2019).

This paradigm was first systematically introduced by Amin Abdullah when he was Rector of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, and later became the primary scientific model for Islamic universities in Indonesia. This model, known as the Integrative-Interconnective Scientific Map, illustrates the synergistic relationship between theology, social sciences, and humanities, and science and technology (Azizah, 2019). Within this scientific map, there is no longer a clear boundary between "religious science" and "general science." Each discipline is seen as interconnected and mutually enriching in addressing humanitarian issues.

In addition to UIN Sunan Kalijaga, this paradigm has also begun to be adopted by various other UINs, such as UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, and UIN Alauddin Makassar (Rahmawati, 2018). Each developed an integration model tailored to its institutional vision and local characteristics. For example, UIN Malang developed the concept of *ulul albab*, while UIN Alauddin developed the *wahdatul 'ulum* (unity of knowledge) approach. This shows that the integrative-interconnective paradigm is not dogmatic but open to adaptation and methodological innovation.

Epistemologically, the integrative-interconnective paradigm is based on three fundamental approaches in Islamic scholarship: *bayani* (textual), *burhani* (rational-empirical), and *'irfani* (intuitionist-spiritual). These three complement each other in building a

comprehensive structure of Islamic knowledge (Abdullah, 2012). The bayani approach provides a normative foundation based on revealed texts, burhani strengthens rationality and scientific methodology, and 'irfani provides ethical and spiritual dimensions that balance the two (Zuhri, 2020). The synergy of these three epistemologies makes the integrative-interconnective paradigm relevant for the development of contemporary, multidimensional Islamic education.

Furthermore, this paradigm also critiques the overly positivist modern approach to understanding science. According to Khalid (2018), modernism tends to remove the transcendent and moral dimensions from science. As a result, science develops without ethical direction, and education loses its spiritual meaning. The integrative-interconnective paradigm seeks to restore balance between the empirical and transcendent aspects, between rationality and spirituality, so that Islamic education produces not only intelligent individuals but also civilized and socially responsible individuals.

Historically, the idea of integrating knowledge is not new in Islamic civilization. During the classical era, Muslim scholars such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Al-Ghazali harmoniously combined religious knowledge with philosophy and science (Nasution, 2019). However, colonialism and the secularization of education in the modern era have led to the separation of these two realms of knowledge (Saefuddin, 2015). Therefore, the integrative-interconnective paradigm can be seen as an attempt to revitalize the classical Islamic intellectual heritage in a modern context.

In the Indonesian context, this paradigm is highly urgent. First, because Indonesian society faces the complex challenges of modernity—globalization, secularization, and a moral crisis (Nata, 2021). Second, because the national education system still separates religious and general education, both institutionally and epistemologically. Yet, Islam views knowledge as an integral part of faith and good deeds. With an integrative-interconnective paradigm, it is hoped that a generation of Muslims will emerge with a balance between intellectual intelligence (IQ), emotional intelligence (EQ), and spiritual intelligence (SQ) (Suyatno, 2020).

Beyond philosophical and epistemological aspects, the integrative-interconnective paradigm also has broad practical implications for curriculum reform, learning methods, and academic research. For example, the integrated research and community service program at several UINs now requires students and lecturers to engage in interdisciplinary approaches in research (Farid, 2023). This means that every social issue must be analyzed from an integrated perspective of religious, social, economic, and ecological perspectives. This aligns with the

demands of 21st-century education, which emphasizes critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication (Mulyadi, 2022).

Thus, the integrative-interconnective paradigm represents a step forward in addressing the epistemological crisis facing modern Islamic education. It is not merely a discourse, but also a practical framework that can shape a generation of Muslim intellectuals capable of integrating faith, knowledge, and good deeds. Therefore, this research focuses on examining two issues: (1) the philosophical and epistemological foundations of the integrative-interconnective paradigm, and (2) the paradigm's implementation in Islamic education in Indonesia.

Methods

This study utilises a library research method with a qualitative-descriptive approach. Data was collected from primary sources covering the concept of knowledge integration in Islam (Amin Abdullah, Al-Attas, Al-Faruqi). Secondary sources included relevant books, scientific journals, and academic articles. The research steps included: identification of primary sources on the epistemological analysis of integrative-interconnective theory and its application model, synthesis and interpretation to find the relevance of this paradigm in the context of contemporary Islamic education. The analysis was conducted thematically and interpretatively, tracing the development of this paradigm in Islamic universities in Indonesia, such as UIN Sunan Kalijaga and UIN Jakarta.

Result and Discussion

Integrative-Interconnective Paradigm: Philosophical and Epistemological Foundations

The integrative-interconnective paradigm is based on the view that knowledge originates from a single, unified divine truth (*wahdat al-'ilm*). According to Amin Abdullah (2003; 2019), this paradigm aims to bridge three epistemologies in Islam:

- Bayani (textual-normative),
- Burhani (rational-empirical),
- 'Irfani (intuitionist-spiritual).

All three must interact to build a complete body of knowledge. In the classical Islamic tradition, this integration is evident in the works of Muslim scholars such as Ibn Sina and Al-Farabi, who combined philosophy, science, and theology.

This paradigm is rooted in the concept of tawhid as a primary ontological principle. According to Al-Faruqi (1982), all knowledge must be directed toward realizing the tawhidic vision of knowledge, namely the unity between creator, creation, and knowledge. Meanwhile, Al-Attas (2014) emphasizes the concept of ta'dib—education as the process of forming civilized human beings based on the integration of knowledge, faith, and good deeds.

Integrative-interconnective epistemology seeks to avoid the fragmentation of knowledge that emphasizes only empirical aspects without moral and spiritual dimensions. This paradigm rejects the dichotomy between religious and general knowledge and emphasizes interconnected relationships between disciplines to address the social, economic, and cultural problems of the community.

Implementation of the Integrative-Interconnective Paradigm in Indonesian Islamic Education

a. Curriculum Reform in Islamic Higher Education

This paradigm was first systematically developed at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta through an institutional transformation program (Azizah, 2019). This integration model is realized in an integrative-interconnective scientific map that combines theology, social sciences, humanities, and science.

The curriculum was overhauled so that each study program not only taught religious aspects but also provided space for social sciences and technology from an Islamic perspective. This aligns with Amin Abdullah's (2012) idea that the integration of knowledge requires an "epistemological conversation" between the revealed text and the empirical context.

b. Interdisciplinary Approach in Islamic Studies

According to Mujib & Mudzakir (2020), this paradigm encourages the use of interdisciplinary approaches in Islamic studies, such as combining tafsir methodology with anthropology, or fiqh with economics and sociology. This approach produces a more contextual and applicable understanding of religion to the realities of modern society.

For example, in the study of Islamic law, the integrative-interconnective paradigm enables scholars and academics to view social problems with empirical data, not merely normative ones.

c. Implementation in Primary and Secondary Education

The integrative paradigm is also beginning to be implemented in modern madrasas and Islamic boarding schools, for example, through the integration of religious and general curricula

(Nata, 2021). Religious learning is not separated from the context of science and technology, but rather becomes a source of values that guide the mastery of modern knowledge.

The Research Madrasah Program under the Ministry of Religion is one example of the implementation of this epistemological integration at the secondary level, by encouraging students to research social phenomena from an Islamic perspective.

d. Challenges and Prospects

The main obstacles to implementing this paradigm are resistance to a dichotomous academic culture, limited human resources for interdisciplinary lecturers, and an inflexible educational evaluation system (Mulyadi, 2022). However, this paradigm still holds significant promise because it aligns with the vision of 21st-century Islamic education: developing individuals who are religious, scientific, and globally civilized.

Paradigm Synthesis: Towards Holistic Islamic Education

The integrative-interconnective paradigm demands a shift from simply "teaching knowledge" to "building awareness." Education aims not only to produce religious scholars but also Muslim intellectuals capable of responding to global humanitarian challenges.

Thus, Islamic education should not stop at mastering texts, but must move towards ethical transformation and social engagement.

Conclusion

The integrative-interconnective paradigm is a scientific and spiritual effort to eliminate the barriers between religious and general knowledge. This paradigm is rooted in the principle of monotheism and offers an epistemological approach that combines the bayani, burhani, and 'irfani dimensions. Its implementation in Indonesian Islamic education has brought significant changes to the curriculum, learning methodology, and the development of interdisciplinary research. By strengthening this paradigm, Islamic education has the potential to become a holistic, integrative system capable of addressing global challenges without losing its Islamic identity.

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