TOWARD AN INTEGRATIVE PARADIGM OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION: BRIDGING CLASSICAL ISLAMIC THOUGHT AND MODERN EDUCATIONAL VALUES

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Abstrak

Studi ini mengeksplorasi transformasi nilai-nilai pendidikan Islam dari konsep klasik ke implementasinya dalam lembaga pendidikan modern di dunia Islam dan Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode tinjauan literatur kualitatif, mensintesis temuan empiris dari jurnal yang ditinjau sejawat dan laporan institusional untuk melacak kesinambungan dan pergeseran dalam paradigma pendidikan Islam. Temuan ini mengungkapkan bahwa pendidikan Islam klasik menekankan kesatuan ilmu (tauhid al-'ilm) dan pembinaan akhlak (tarbiyah al-akhlaq), sementara lembaga-lembaga modern menafsirkan kembali dasar-dasar ini untuk mengatasi tantangan ilmiah, teknologi, dan sosial budaya. Beberapa model pendidikan Islam integratif telah muncul, seperti Kurikulum Pohon Terpadu dan pendekatan holistik di sekolah-sekolah Islam, yang berhasil menggabungkan disiplin ilmu agama dan sains dalam kerangka epistemologis yang terpadu. Studi ini mengusulkan model konseptual pendidikan Islam integratif yang terdiri dari empat pilar: kesatuan epistemologis, kurikulum kontekstual, pedagogi internalisasi nilai, dan keberlanjutan institusional, menawarkan referensi untuk pengembangan kebijakan dan kurikulum di masa depan dalam konteks pendidikan Islam global.

Kata kunci: Pendidikan Islam, Model Pendidikan Integratif, Transformasi Nilai-nilai Islam

Abstract

This study examines the transformation of Islamic educational values from classical foundations to their contemporary implementation within modern educational institutions in the Islamic world and Indonesia. Employing a qualitative literature review, the analysis explicitly traces both continuity and the paradigm shift in Islamic education by critically synthesizing empirical findings from peer-reviewed journals and institutional reports. The analysis demonstrates that, while classical Islamic education was grounded in the unity of knowledge (*tawḥīd al-ʿilm*) and moral cultivation (*tarbiyah al-akhlaq*), modern Islamic educational institutions reinterpret these principles to address scientific, technological, and socio-cultural challenges. The central finding of this study is the identification and formulation of a conceptual model of integrative Islamic education, which constitutes the article's main contribution. This model is structured around four interrelated pillars: epistemological unity, contextual curriculum design, value-internalizing pedagogy, and institutional sustainability. These pillars provide a coherent framework that explains how religious and scientific disciplines can be integrated within a unified epistemological and pedagogical structure. The proposed model offers a conceptual reference for future curriculum development and educational policy in the context of global Islamic education.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education has historically functioned as a central pillar in shaping Islamic civilization, grounding educational practice in ethical formation, spiritual development, and intellectual balance. Classical Islamic educational paradigms, rooted in *ta'dīb* and *tarbiyah*, emphasized the unity between knowledge, morality, and spirituality, positioning education as a means for cultivating a holistic and ethically grounded human being (*insān kāmil*) (Yana et al., 2024). Prominent scholars such as Al-Ghazali, Ibn Khaldun, and Al-Farabi articulated education not merely as knowledge transmission, but as a civilizational process aimed at moral and intellectual refinement. However, the encounter with colonialism and modernization from the nineteenth century onward significantly reshaped Islamic education systems, introducing secular and pragmatic orientations that partially displaced their classical transcendental foundations.

Despite various reform efforts across Muslim-majority societies, a persistent gap remains between the normative ideals of Islamic education and their contemporary implementation. Recent studies indicate that many Islamic educational institutions continue to struggle with integrating spiritual-moral objectives with modern academic standards. International assessments, including UNESCO, (2022) report, highlight an ongoing reliance on rote memorization at the expense of critical thinking and value-based learning, which undermines the holistic educational vision articulated in classical Islamic thought (Safira et al., 2025). In the Indonesian context, although initiatives such as the Moderation of Religion program and the Merdeka Curriculum have been introduced, a significant proportion of Islamic educational institutions still lack systematic integration between religious and general sciences (Sholehah, 2025).

The problem becomes more pressing given the scale and societal importance of Islamic education. Indonesia, for instance, hosts more than 82,000 madrasahs with over 11.2 million students (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2023). Many of these institutions face difficulties in harmonizing classical Islamic values with contemporary demands, especially in scientific literacy, digital competence, and character formation. This misalignment contributes to uneven educational quality and limits the transformative potential of Islamic education in responding to modern socio-cultural challenges. Consequently, there is an urgent need for a renewed framework that re-centers ethical formation (*adab*), epistemological coherence, and pedagogical relevance within modern Islamic educational structures.

Previous studies have examined various dimensions of Islamic education reform, including curriculum modernization at Al-Azhar (Umar et al., 2025), the Islamization of Knowledge movement in Malaysia (Salam & Hussin, 2025), and

Indonesia's dual-track Islamic education system (Barokah, et al 2025). However, these studies remain largely fragmented, focusing primarily on policy reform, institutional practices, or curriculum integration in isolation. They tend to overlook a comprehensive epistemological reconstruction that systematically links classical Islamic educational philosophy with contemporary educational transformation. As a result, the literature lacks an integrative analytical framework that bridges classical foundations and modern systemic reform.

This study seeks to address this gap by employing the Islamic world as a conceptual and comparative framework while positioning Indonesia as the primary locus of analysis. By situating Indonesian Islamic education within broader global discourses, the study aims to examine how classical Islamic educational principles can be adapted to specific contexts and institutionalized within modern educational systems. Specifically, the research aims to trace the continuity and transformation of classical Islamic educational concepts in contemporary contexts, analyze key challenges and achievements in integrating these values within modern educational practices, and propose a conceptual model of integrative Islamic education that responds to current global and local challenges. Through this approach, the study contributes to the advancement of Islamic educational epistemology and offers a theoretically grounded reference for policy development and institutional reform in Islamic education.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with the library research method, as the main objective of the study is to analyze and synthesize the development of concepts and the implementation of Islamic educational values from the classical to modern periods, both in the Islamic world and in Indonesia. This approach allows researchers to trace the relationship between Islamic educational theory and practice thru a comprehensive review of scientific sources (Babkin & Ulitin, 2024). The data sources consist of primary and secondary literature relevant to the research focus. The literature review includes reputable journals (Scopus and Sinta), such as QIJIS, Edukasia Islamika, and the Journal of Islamic Education Studies, which discuss the practice of integrating Islamic education during the last five years of publication. Meanwhile, secondary literature includes classical works by figures in Islamic education such as al-Ghazali, Ibn Khaldun, and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, as well as educational policy documents from Islamic countries and Indonesia.

Data analysis was conducted thru content analysis and comparative-descriptive analysis. The analysis process included data reduction, thematic categorization, and conceptual synthesis. Each finding is examined to identify patterns of relationships between classical concepts and modern applications, the

successes and constraints of value transformation, and the formation of an integrative Islamic education model (Nicmanis, 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Relevance of the Concept of Classical Islamic Education to the Modern World

The findings of this study indicate that classical Islamic educational concepts continue to shape modern Islamic education, yet their contemporary implementation reflects a complex pattern of continuity and distortion. Classical scholars such as Al-Ghazali, Ibn Khaldun, and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas conceptualized education not merely as *ta'līm* or knowledge transmission, but as *ta'dīb*, a holistic process aimed at cultivating morally, spiritually, and intellectually responsible human beings (Hidayatullah et al., 2023; Rahimi, 2024). This foundational vision remains influential in modern Islamic educational discourse and is frequently invoked as a normative ideal. However, the literature demonstrates that while these concepts persist rhetorically, their operationalization within modern educational systems is often partial and inconsistent, particularly when confronted with the demands of efficiency, standardization, and market-oriented education.

Empirical studies from Indonesia and other Muslim-majority contexts reveal that many Islamic educational institutions have undertaken reform initiatives inspired by classical ideals, such as curriculum integration between religious and general sciences and the adoption of pedagogical models that emphasize ethical and social responsibility (Irwan et al., 2024; Fauzi et al., 2025). These efforts suggest an awareness of the epistemological foundations of classical Islamic education. Nevertheless, a recurring pattern emerges across the literature: classical values such as *adab* and *tazkiyah al-nafs* are frequently confined to moral instruction, character education programs, or extracurricular activities, rather than being embedded within the epistemic structure of knowledge production and learning processes. As a result, integration tends to remain superficial and fragmented, reducing the transformative potential of Islamic education in responding to modern challenges (Baiza, 2022).

The analysis further demonstrates that the core obstacle to meaningful integration lies not at the curricular level, but at the epistemological level. Although many institutions employ the discourse of "Islamization of knowledge," they often lack a coherent framework capable of systematically linking divine revelation with empirical and scientific inquiry (Asman et al., 2025). This gap reflects a deeper contradiction between the *tawhidic worldview* articulated by classical thinkers and the secular-pragmatic logic that underpins modern educational systems. From the perspectives of al-Faruqi and al-Attas, epistemological integration requires situating all forms of knowledge within a unified ontological and axiological framework grounded in *tawḥīd*. The findings of

this study indicate that modern Islamic education frequently adopts externally derived paradigms that prioritize measurable academic outcomes, thereby marginalizing spiritual depth and ethical coherence (Hasim et al., 2025).

This epistemological tension contributes to what Al-Attas characterizes as the "loss of adab," a condition in which education becomes detached from its spiritual and civilizational purpose due to the dominance of secularized worldviews (Muslimah & Khoir, 2025). While *adab* remains a prominent concept in Islamic educational rhetoric, its implementation rarely extends to institutional governance, pedagogical design, or academic culture. Ethical formation is thus treated as a supplementary objective rather than the organizing principle of education. The literature reviewed in this study suggests that this condition persists because modern Islamic education often seeks to attach Islamic values to pre-existing educational paradigms, rather than reconstructing those paradigms from within an Islamic epistemological framework.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the transformation of classical Islamic educational concepts into modern practice requires more than adaptation or incremental reform. It necessitates a process of paradigm reconstruction in which ontology, epistemology, and ethics are reintegrated as a unified foundation of education. Without such reconstruction, efforts at curriculum integration and pedagogical innovation are likely to remain symbolic and limited in impact. The relevance of classical Islamic education to the modern world, therefore, lies not in replicating historical models, but in reactivating their epistemological coherence to address contemporary scientific, technological, and socio-cultural challenges while preserving the spiritual identity and ethical orientation of Islamic education.

Critical Analysis of the Successes and Constraints of Transformation

The findings of recent literature indicate that the transformation of Islamic educational values within modern Islamic institutions reflects a dual pattern of partial success and persistent structural constraints. On the one hand, there is a consistent trend showing that value-oriented integration particularly in the domains of character education, moderation, and selective technological adoption can be effectively implemented when supported by coherent institutional culture and pedagogical alignment. On the other hand, these successes remain localized and uneven, revealing deeper systemic and epistemological limitations. This pattern suggests that the main challenge in transforming Islamic educational values is not the absence of initiatives, but the lack of an integrated paradigm capable of sustaining these initiatives across institutional contexts.

At the practical level, several studies demonstrate that curriculum integration can positively influence students' moral and social development when religious values are embedded within daily educational practices. The case of madrasahs in Ponorogo illustrates how an integrated curriculum linking academic instruction with character formation—through congregational prayer, literacy

culture, and structured social engagement, strengthens students' moral integrity (Noviandari et al., 2024). Similar outcomes are reported in madrasahs in Gresik, where the internalization of values such as tawasuth, tasamuh, and ta'awun contributes to the development of tolerant and socially responsible attitudes (Sholikah & Afifah, 2024). Taken together, these studies reveal a common pattern: Islamic values are most effectively transformed into educational practice when they are operationalized as lived experiences rather than treated as abstract moral content. However, these successes tend to rely heavily on local leadership and institutional commitment, limiting their scalability and long-term sustainability.

From a technological and structural perspective, the literature reveals a contrasting trend. While digital platforms and interactive media are increasingly adopted to support value internalization in the context of Society 5.0, their impact remains constrained by infrastructural inequality and limited human resource capacity (Zainuddin et al., 2024). Empirical data indicate that only a small proportion of schools in frontier and underserved regions possess adequate digital facilities, and many educators lack sufficient digital competence or display resistance to pedagogical innovation (Ritonga, 2025). This condition highlights a structural contradiction: technological integration is promoted as a means of modernizing Islamic education, yet it often reinforces educational disparity and weakens the consistency of value transmission. Without epistemological guidance, technology risks functioning merely as a technical add-on rather than as a medium for ethical and intellectual formation.

At a deeper level, these practical and structural challenges reflect an unresolved epistemological tension within contemporary Islamic education. The literature points to a persistent dilemma between preserving classical Islamic values and responding to global academic and professional competencies, resulting in what has been described as a "value shock," particularly within higher education institutions (Marjuni, 2022). This tension arises because many institutions attempt to integrate Islamic values within educational paradigms that remain fundamentally secular and instrumental. Concepts such as epistemological integration, tawhidic worldview, and adab are frequently invoked, yet they are rarely translated into a reconstructed paradigm that governs curriculum design, pedagogy, and institutional orientation. Consequently, value integration tends to be normative and symbolic rather than epistemic and transformative.

The synthesis of these findings suggests that the success or failure of Islamic educational transformation is ultimately determined by the presence or absence of paradigm reconstruction. Where Islamic values are grounded in a coherent epistemological framework, one that unifies knowledge, ethics, and spirituality, educational innovation becomes meaningful and sustainable. Conversely, when integration is pursued without addressing underlying epistemic assumptions, reform efforts remain fragmented and vulnerable to external

pressures. This implies that the future direction of Islamic education depends not only on policy reform or technological advancement, but on the reconstruction of an educational paradigm rooted in tawḥīd and adab, capable of engaging modern challenges without sacrificing its spiritual and ethical foundations.

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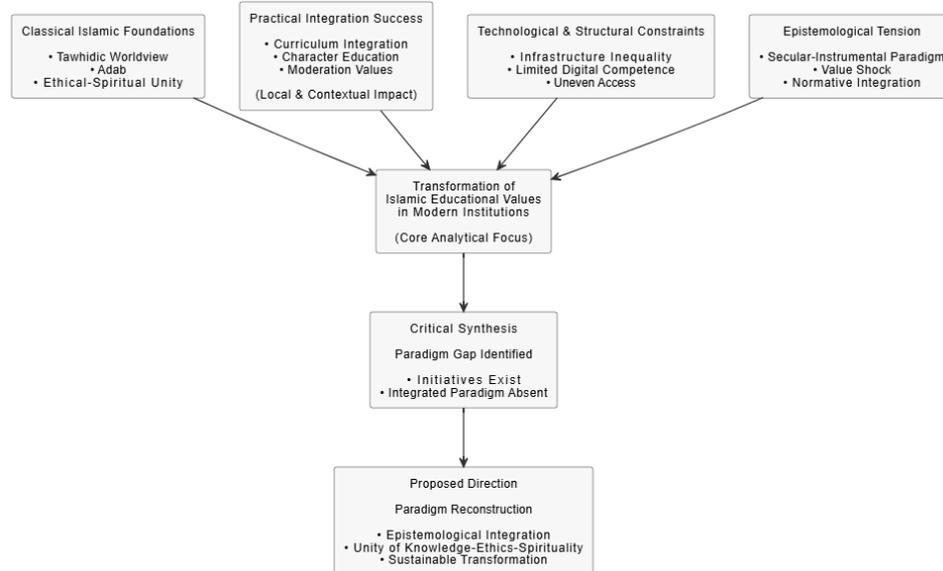

Figure 1. Flowchart of the Relationship Between Classical Islamic Education and Modern Islamic Education

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Syntesis and Proposed Model of Intelegegrative Islamic Education

Recent literature reveals a clear pattern indicating that integrative Islamic education has developed conceptually and practically across Indonesia and Malaysia as a response to the long-standing dichotomy between religious and general sciences. The main finding that emerges is that integrative models are increasingly positioned as a strategic framework to unify knowledge, values, character formation, and global competencies within a holistic educational vision. Rather than merely juxtaposing Islamic studies with modern disciplines, these models attempt to reconstruct the epistemological foundations of education so that religious values inform both scientific inquiry and practical engagement with contemporary life. This trend reflects a broader awareness that Islamic education can no longer remain compartmentalized if it aims to remain relevant in modern society.

Empirical studies consistently show that successful integrative models emphasize contextualization and internalization of values rather than doctrinal transmission alone. Research on the integration of science and religion demonstrates that spiritual values are more effectively internalized when learning engages human nature (*tabī'ah al-insān*) and real-life contexts (*tabī'ah al-hayāh*), allowing students to connect religious meaning with lived experience. Similarly, holistic frameworks that integrate inputs, learning processes, and educational outcomes indicate that critical thinking and spirituality are not mutually exclusive but mutually reinforcing. These findings suggest that epistemological integration succeeds when education is designed as a formative process that shapes worldview, ethics, and intellectual capacity simultaneously.

At the institutional level, practical implementations such as the Integrated Tree Curriculum illustrate how epistemological integration can be translated into curriculum design through interdisciplinary coordination and dialogical strategies. Evidence from secondary education further indicates that learning models connecting Islamic values with students' daily experiences enhance both engagement and depth of understanding. However, a comparative reading of the literature reveals that such integrative practices tend to flourish in well-resourced and selectively managed institutions, indicating that success is contingent not only on conceptual clarity but also on institutional capacity and leadership commitment.

Synthesizing these findings, integrative Islamic education can be characterized by four interrelated features: the unification of religious and general sciences at the epistemological level; the reinforcement of Islamic values across curriculum, pedagogy, and institutional culture; responsiveness to social and global challenges; and visionary leadership capable of sustaining reform. Nevertheless, the uneven distribution of these characteristics across institutions exposes a critical contradiction. While integrative discourse is widely embraced at the normative

level, its practical realization remains limited by shortages in qualified educators, inadequate infrastructure, and weak policy alignment. This gap highlights that integration often operates as an aspirational ideal rather than a systemic reality, as described on Figure 2.
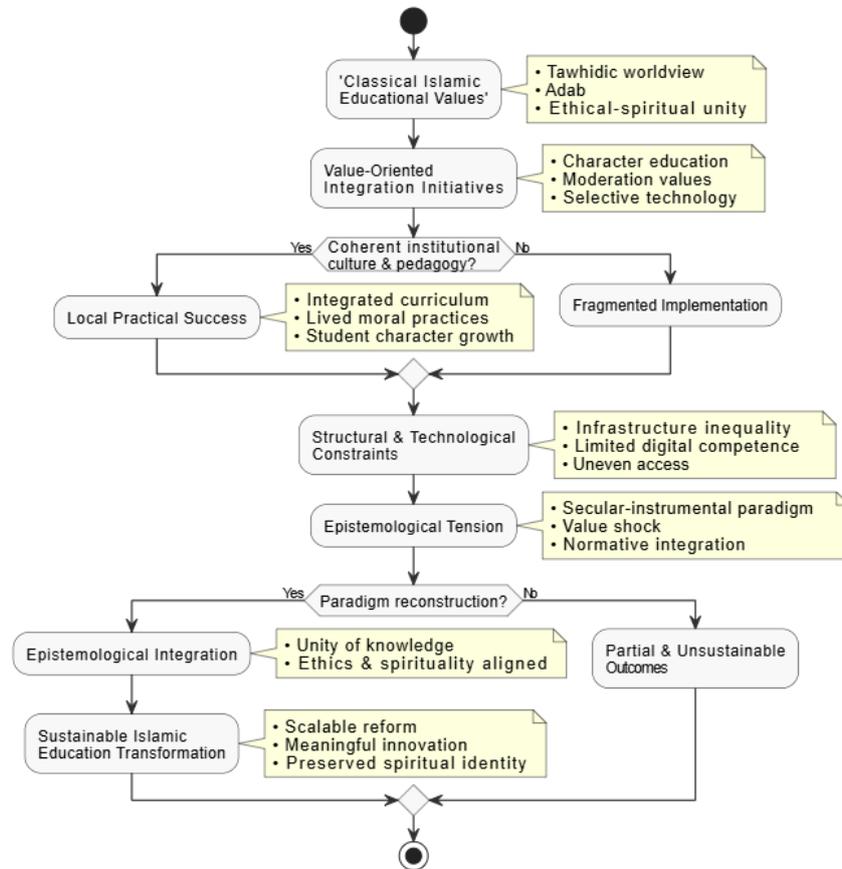
Figure 2. Transformating of Islamic Educational Values

The literature suggests that the effectiveness of integrative Islamic education is closely tied to the adoption of a *tauhidic worldview* that dissolves the artificial separation between religion and science. When knowledge is grounded in *tawḥīd*, ethical reasoning, spirituality, and intellectual inquiry function as a unified whole. However, many institutions invoke terms such as *adab* and epistemological integration without fully reconstructing their educational paradigms. As a result, value education is frequently reduced to moral instruction or symbolic practices rather than being embedded within pedagogical methods and knowledge structures. This explains why integrative efforts often succeed at the level of curriculum content but fail to transform educational culture more deeply.

The persistence of these limitations points to the need for paradigm reconstruction rather than incremental reform. An ideal integrative model must combine a tauhidic epistemology, adaptive and contextual curriculum design, practice-oriented pedagogy, and value-driven institutional governance. Without this comprehensive alignment, digital innovation and curricular integration risk

becoming technical solutions detached from moral and spiritual formation. Studies on digital transformation further affirm that technology can support value internalization only when guided by strong epistemological and ethical foundations; otherwise, it merely reinforces instrumental learning.

Overall, the analysis indicates that meaningful transformation in Islamic education depends on three decisive dimensions: the clarity of value foundations, contextual relevance to contemporary realities, and institutional readiness to sustain change. The dominance of localized success stories suggests that integrative Islamic education has not yet reached systemic maturity. Future development therefore requires strategic investment in teacher capacity-building, infrastructural equity, and coherent policy frameworks, alongside sustained efforts to cultivate institutional cultures rooted in *adab* and *tawḥīd*. Through such measures, Islamic education can move beyond rhetorical integration toward a transformative model that prepares learners to be intellectually capable, ethically grounded, and socially responsible in a globalized world, as described on Figure 3.
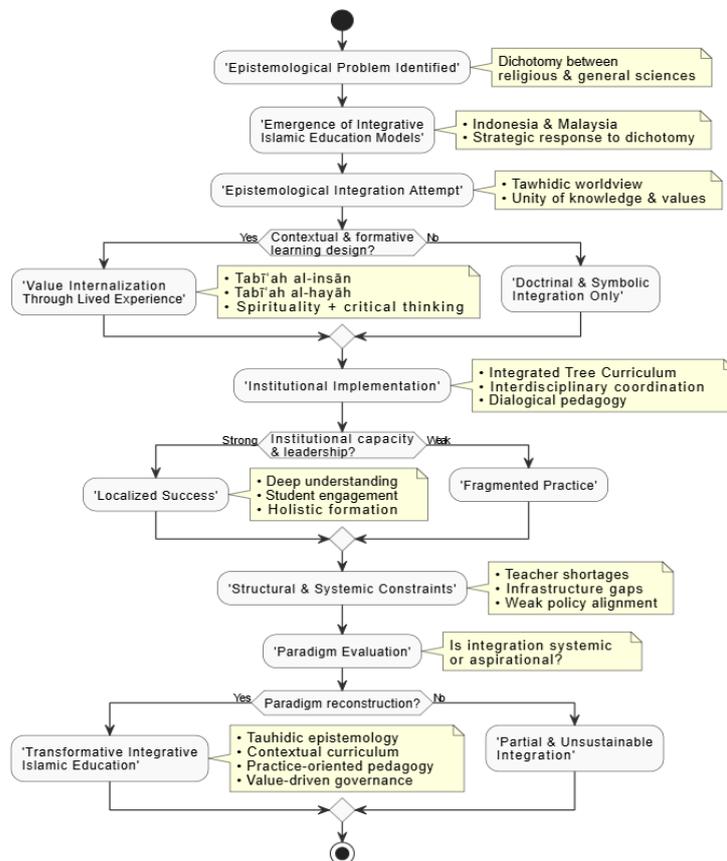

Figure 3. Proposed Model of Integrative Islamic Education

The epistemological problem in modern Islamic education is rooted in the dichotomy between religious science and general science which causes the integration of values to be only normative and has not been implemented systemically (Baiza, 2022). This condition is in line with Muslimah, et al., (2025) who emphasize that the main crisis of Islamic education is epistemological chaos

that can only be overcome through the concept of adab as the foundation for the integration of knowledge and values. Integration efforts through an integrative Islamic education model also reflect the idea of Islamization of knowledge that emphasizes the unification of revelation and rationality in knowledge systems (Hasim, et al. 2025). However, as criticized by Rahimi, (2024), educational reform often stops at the curriculum level without being followed by the reconstruction of institutional methodology and culture. Safira, (2025), shows that the success of integrative education is highly dependent on the power of monotheistic epistemology, institutional leadership, and the internalization of values in daily educational practices. Meanwhile, Noviandari, (2025) emphasized that the transformation of Islamic education in Indonesia often faces structural obstacles such as teacher capacity, institutional coordination, and education policies. Therefore, as illustrated in the conceptual model, a truly impactful transformation requires a paradigm reconstruction based on tawḥīd and adab that unites epistemology, contextual pedagogy, and institutional governance so that the integration of Islamic education does not stop at the symbolic, but becomes systemic and sustainable change.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The study concludes that although classical Islamic educational concepts still normatively influence modern Islamic education, their implementation remains fragmented due to the absence of epistemological integration grounded in a tauhidic worldview. This condition creates a persistent gap between ethical ideals and educational practice, where value integration, curriculum reform, character education, and technological adoption often operate partially and inconsistently. Integrative Islamic education has emerged as a strategic response to overcome the dichotomy between religious and general sciences, yet its effectiveness largely depends on epistemological unity, contextual pedagogy, and institutional capacity. Therefore, meaningful transformation in Islamic education requires paradigm reconstruction based on tawḥīd and adab that reunifies knowledge, values, and spirituality, enabling integrative initiatives to move beyond symbolic efforts toward systemic and sustainable change.

The study contributes to the ongoing development of an Islamic education paradigm that moves beyond mere knowledge transmission toward cultivating insān kāmil: morally grounded, intellectually capable, and globally competitive individuals rooted in Islamic values. And This study is limited by its reliance on a literature-based approach, which restricts empirical validation and practical insights. The focus on Indonesia, with Malaysia as a comparative reference, also limits generalizability. Future research should incorporate field-based empirical studies, broader geographical contexts, and practitioner perspectives.

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