

## **TOWARDS A TAWHIDIC FRAMEWORK IN ISLAMIC HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA**

**Subhan**

UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, Indonesia

*subhan@uinbanten.ac.id*

**Zaki Ghufron**

UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, Indonesia

*zaki.ghufron@uinbanten.ac.id*

**Mufrodi**

UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, Indonesia

*mufrodi@uinbanten.ac.id*

**Mohamad Khaidir Bin Sahid**

International Islamic University Malaysia, Malaysia

*khaidirsahid@iiu.edu.my*

### **Abstract**

This study aims to explore the key aspects of incorporating Islamic values into the curriculum design for Islamic higher education in Indonesia and Malaysia. By employing a qualitative approach and comparative study, this research examines two educational paradigms: the integration of knowledge and the Islamization of knowledge. Both models aim to bridge the gap of the dichotomy between modern sciences and Islamic values

that has contributed to fragmented graduate competencies. Focusing on Arabic language education, the study highlights its pivotal role among the subjects taught in Islamic universities to facilitate the internalization of Islamic values and a medium for engaging with Islamic literature. As a medium for delivering Islamic teachings, Arabic language education is also essential for exploring Islamic primary texts such as the Qur'an and Hadith. Therefore, a strategically designed Arabic language curriculum is crucial, serving as a critical mechanism for internalizing Islamic values in Islamic universities. The findings reveal that both institutions share common goals: cultivating graduates who embody academic excellence alongside deep-rooted Islamic values and intellectual consciousness.

**Keywords:** Islamic Values, Islamization of Knowledge, Integration of Knowledge, Higher Education Curriculum, Arabic Language Program.

## A. Introduction

The higher education curriculum in the Islamic world currently encounters complex challenges. Among the complex challenges related to the curriculum is the dichotomy of science in Islamic universities, which can be observed in the non-integration of Islamic values across various disciplines taught. The dichotomy of knowledge in Islamic higher education fails to create a balance between modern science and Islamic values. This problem arises because of the tendency toward dehumanization and secularization that separates religion and science, causing an imbalance between the intellectual, spiritual, and social spheres (Al-Attas, 1980; Nasr, 1989; Solih & Ibrahim, 2023). The impact of the separation between religious and general sciences results in fragmented and non-integrative graduate competencies, which then affects the stagnation and backwardness of Muslims in various fields of life (Al-Faruqi, 1989a).

Islamic universities in both Indonesia and Malaysia

are striving to overcome the divide between science and religion. The approach to integrating science varies in these countries. In Malaysia, the Islamization of science program at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) aims to bridge the gap between modern materialistic science and a holistic Islamic worldview. This initiative is expected to significantly contribute to the advancement of human civilization (Berghout, 2011). Meanwhile, the science integration program in Indonesia is conducted in many state Islamic higher education institutions with various variants (Suwendi et al., 2024) to emphasize a harmonious blend of cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions (C. N. Hashim & Langgulang, 2008). The concept of science integration asserts that each scientific structure - religious, social, humanities, or natural - cannot stand alone. Instead, they need cooperation, greeting, correction, and connection (Zahroh et al., 2023) because there are no rigid boundaries between various scientific disciplines (Ba-Yunus, 1988; Kartanegara, 2005).

For example, Islamic State University (UIN, *Universitas Islam Negeri*) Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta employs an integration-interconnection paradigm (Abdullah, 2006), in which the Qur'an and Hadith become the central point that produces an interrelated scientific framework that bridges between Islamic science and modern science (Toisuta et al., 2024). Furthermore, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang adopts the Tree of Science perspective, wherein the foundational trunk of the tree comprises the Qur'an, Hadith, *Sirah Nabawiyah*, Islamic thought, and Islamic history. At the same time, its branches extend into various disciplines, including natural science, social science, and humanities (Suporayogo, 2009).

Similarly, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung operates under a revelation-based paradigm governing scientific inquiry (Natsir, 2013). Another significant framework is the Big Bang Paradigm of integration-comparative-diffusion (Tihami et al., 2018). The concept of diffusion in question means more than integration, which combines religious and scientific knowledge; the diffusion concept entails a deeper fusion of the two into a unified entity. This perspective is rooted in the belief that all knowledge originates from the Sole One (Allah), which subsequently diversifies through a process of intellectual expansion, giving rise to multiple disciplines (Tihami et al., 2018).

Islamic universities aim to integrate modern science with Islamic values, producing graduates with integrity and professionalism (Zarkasyi, 2021), strong character, and noble character (Halstead, 2004) while avoiding dehumanization and secularisation. Naquib Al-Attas argued that education should aim for *'ta'dib'*, which is the process of internalizing adab or praiseworthy behavior based on Islamic values (Al-Attas, 1980), not just paying attention to intellectual aspects, but also paying attention to spiritual, moral, and social dimensions (F. Rahman, 1988).

Similarly, Islam et al. (2023) stated that education should reflect Islamic values and contribute to intellectual development in line with Islamic teachings, not tending to maintain a prescriptive rather than articulate approach, thus lacking the ability to respond to the challenges of the times holistically (Islam et al., 2023; Baba, 2015). Thus, the science integration approach and the Islamization of science are expected to produce graduates who can face global

challenges with a broad and deep perspective and contribute significantly to society by bringing innovative solutions based on Islamic values (Rufai, 2016). This underlines the important role of Islamic higher education as an institution that encourages intellectual excellence and the development of moral and social responsibility in its graduates, helping to create an academically educated generation that deeply understands Islamic values (Al-Faruqi, 1989a). This is in line with the purpose of Islam as "*Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*", which means mercy for all the universe.

Some research studies on scientific development in Islamic universities have been conducted previously to respond to the needs and integrate Islamic education (Achruh & Sukirman, 2024; Chande, 2023; Miftahudin, 2023; H. Rahman & Maisurah, 2024), trying to find alternative solutions to the long debate between the two paradigms of Islamization of science and Islamic science. The dialogical integration paradigm is one of the findings that offers an alternative strategy to bridge the gap between science and religion. It is hoped that these findings will lead to a rethinking of the conceptual relationship between science and religion, as well as a shift in the format that is being attempted to implement the integration of science and religion in educational institutions. Hesaraki (2022) comprehensively describes a new form of Islamization in contemporary Iran. As a result, the program has received criticism from two points of view: first, the defense of the universality of science, and second, the importance of democratic mechanisms in scientific policy (Hesaraki, 2022).

Significantly, the Islamization project is a unique

feature of cultural politics in post-revolutionary Iran. Nasir sees a critical need for a revival of the curriculum taught in higher education institutions in Pakistan (Nasir, 2022). The researchers analyzed the effectiveness of contemporary counter-terrorism approaches and conflict resolution theories to emphasize the role of religion in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. The research recommended that character development programs specifically aimed at Muslim students could be included in the basic curriculum taught at universities. Rohman et al. (2024) found that in Indonesia, the main challenges in Islamic education curriculum development are integrating the national curriculum with local and global diversity and increasing the accessibility of education for people at all levels of society (H. Rahman & Maisurah, 2024). In Pakistan, the main challenge is the accessibility of education, especially in rural areas, and overcoming the limitations of its infrastructure and facilities.

The transformation of the Arabic curriculum is a strategic step in the effort to instill Islamic values in Islamic universities. Arabic as a medium of Islamic teachings is important in exploring religious texts such as the Qur'an and Hadith. Studies show that learning Arabic can significantly improve students' understanding of Islamic texts and form spiritual awareness (Ghufron et al., 2023). According to Zia (2007), Arabic curriculum development based on Islamic values should pay attention to aspects of student needs and content relevance to global challenges. In addition, Basri (2024) shows that this integration process faces various challenges, including different interpretations of Islamic values in various cultural contexts and difficulties in balancing secular education standards and religious teachings; thus, it requires

a flexible and inclusive approach to curriculum development. Therefore, the Arabic curriculum in Islamic universities needs to be designed effectively and comprehensively in order to be able to integrate Islamic values into the learning process. (Edidarmo et al., 2023). In this context, Islamic universities encounter the challenges of developing a curriculum that is adaptive to local culture and responsive to the dynamics of global challenges.

This study aims to compare and describe the development of the Arabic language curriculum conducted at two representative institutions in Indonesia (UIN SMH Banten) and Malaysia (IIUM), including curriculum elements, such as structure, content, teaching methods, evaluation, and learning outcomes between the two universities by carrying out the Islamization of science ala IIUM, and integration-comparative-diffusion ala UIN ntenSultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, both of which are variants of scientific integration as an effort to overcome the dichotomy of science. By understanding curriculum design adjusted to the paradigm of Islamic education in each country, this research is expected to find an effective model for instilling Islamic values through Arabic language education in higher education. This analysis is important to find out how integrating Islamic values in the Arabic curriculum can affect the educational process in Islamic higher education in the two countries. The results of this study are expected to strengthen educational policies in Islamic universities by emphasizing the importance of Islamic values in shaping superior future generations, which can answer the dominance of Western thought that is considered secular, materialistic, and positivistic.

## B. Research Method

This research contributes to the ongoing development of Islamic higher education by examining contemporary scientific paradigms, conceptual frameworks, and institutional programs developed to institutionalize knowledge integration. Methodologically, this research employs a qualitative research design (Creswell, 2013), using a comparative approach to compare the design, implementation, and outcomes of the Arabic language curriculum at two representative institutions: UIN SMH Banten in Indonesia and IIUM in Malaysia. The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA, *Kementerian Agama RI*), through the Director General of Islamic Higher Education (DIKTIS), has a policy for scientific integration in Islamic-based universities, implemented through various paradigms. For instance, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta introduced the integration-interconnection model (Abdullah, 2006), while UIN SMH Banten applied the Big Bang Theory as a metaphorical framework for curriculum integration. The selection of IIUM as a comparative case study is particularly significant, as the university has established itself as a pioneering institution in the Islamization of Knowledge (IoK) paradigm, serving as a global model for Islamic higher education.

This research focuses on three critical dimensions of Islamic higher education: (1) the comparative analysis of educational paradigms (knowledge integration versus Islamization of knowledge), (2) implementation strategies for internalizing Islamic values in Arabic language pedagogy, and (3) institutional challenges and innovative solutions in curriculum design. This research allows for in-depth exploration and offers a new conceptual framework for

designing an Arabic curriculum that is more effective in instilling Islamic values and responding to global challenges. A study conducted by Al-Balushi and Al-Issa (2020) proved that integrating Islamic values in teaching Arabic in higher education enhances both linguistic competence and Islamic identity formation among students.

This study also involved several data collection techniques, including documentary analysis to scrutinize Islamic education theories that support the integration and Islamization of knowledge paradigms, systematic observations of curricular implementations, and in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted with policymakers, lecturers, and various parties in the two countries to obtain direct perspectives. The data obtained were then analyzed using interactive descriptive analysis theory (Miles et al., 2014), which involves four systematic phases: (1) comprehensive data reduction, (2) thematic data presentation, (3) rigorous conclusion drawing, and (4) methodological verification to ensure analytical validity.

### **C. Result**

The approach to integrating Islamic values at the IIUM includes various comprehensive and structured strategies. First, through curriculum integration, IIUM has developed an educational model emphasizing academic excellence and harmonizing contemporary science and Islamic values. The curriculum reflects a comparative approach—comparing Islamic and Western perspectives—as well as an integrative approach that places both views side by side in the learning

process. This is evident in all campus activities, such as lectures and seminars, and non-academic, such as student activities and character building. All faculties (*kulliyah*) and study programs at IIUM design their curriculum based on the framework of the Islamic worldview, with the primary objective of integrating revelation or divine knowledge (revealed knowledge) with rational and empirical knowledge that is developing today. Thus, each academic program is periodically reviewed, including preparing syllabi and teaching materials, to ensure alignment with Islamic values covering aspects of ethics, philosophy, history, and civilization.

This integration not only enriches students' understanding of specific disciplines but also forms a holistic perspective on the realities of life. Similar efforts were also made in Indonesia, especially by UIN SMH Banten, who developed an integrative curriculum to reform Islamic higher education. At the UIN, curriculum development is carried out by adding university, faculty, and study program characteristic courses designed to reflect the character and scientific identity based on Islamic values. One example is the 'Islam and Science' course, which aims to integrate Islamic principles with global issues and encourages students to think critically about contemporary challenges facing humanity. As a result, students in Malaysia and Indonesia are encouraged to develop problem-solving skills that are not only based on rational logic but are also grounded in Islamic values that uphold justice, benefit, and moral responsibility. These skills are crucial in dealing with the complexity of the modern world, which demands ethical sensitivity, intellectual resilience, and adaptability in various global contexts. Therefore, integrating

Islamic values in higher education is a theoretical necessity and a strategic step in shaping a generation of capable, critical Muslims who contribute positively to a multicultural and plural society.

Second, in the aspect of Arabic language teaching applied, the IIUM does not solely emphasize the mastery of grammar structurally and theoretically but instead emphasizes the strategy of understanding and using grammar against authentic Arabic texts containing Islamic values (Al-Qiyam Al-Islamiyah). This communicative and contextual approach aims to make Arabic a means of communication and a medium for internalizing Islamic spiritual and moral values contained in sacred texts and classical Islamic literature. This strategy appears increasingly systematic in preparing materials and syllabi, especially in *Nahwu* courses taught in stages over three semesters and *Sharaf* courses over two semesters. The materials in both courses discuss the language's structure and are arranged for students to understand and analyze religious texts with linguistic and semantic approaches following Islamic values.

Furthermore, Arabic language learning at IIUM is consistently integrated with studying the Qur'an, Hadith, and other Islamic sciences that explore the values of divinity, ethics, and society in Islam. In addition to major courses such as *Nahwu* and *Sharaf*, *Al-Balaghah* (the science of Arabic rhetoric) courses also utilize classical Arabic texts, including Qur'anic verses, Hadiths, as well as excerpts from the works of previous Islamic scholars, in order to form language sensitivity and sensitivity of meaning in harmony with Islamic messages. The use of these texts not only enriches students' vocabulary

and grammatical understanding but also instills in them an insight into Islamic values and culture. For prospective students with inadequate Arabic language skills, IIUM provides a preparatory program through the Centre for Pre-University Language and Academic Development (CELPAD). It is designed to equip students with basic to intermediate Arabic language skills to follow regular lectures well. The program includes training in reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills and an introduction to Islamic terminology commonly used in Islamic studies. With this comprehensive and integrated approach, IIUM has successfully established an Arabic language learning system that is linguistically effective, ideologically and spiritually valuable.

In evaluating Arabic learning at IIUM, the author conducted interviews with the Head of the Department of Arabic Education and several lecturers at the Kulliyah of Education at IIUM. The approach used not only focuses on cognitive aspects but also includes affective and applicative dimensions. The evaluation was carried out thoroughly and continuously to ensure that students' mastery of Arabic is not limited to memorizing grammar rules or theories but also reflects an understanding of the meaning and values contained in Islamic texts. Assessment was conducted through various instruments, from Arabic language tests to Arabic language skills, such as *Al-Kitabah*, to maintain the language skills. The curriculum incorporates multifaceted assessment approaches that extend beyond conventional semesterly assignments. Specifically, students engage in value-based pedagogical tasks, including narrative compositions and video productions that explicitly emphasize Islamic values.

Then, students were asked to analyze the aspects of *Nahwu* and *Sharaf*. In addition, students are asked to do *Tamthil*, like what is heard from the video, to rewrite or even convey the message that can be taken as if they were teaching. These practices were implemented in Teaching Arabic as a Second Language (TASL) and the Islamic Education Study Programs. This shows that the assignment is not only limited to Arabic language skills but also involves learning how to become a professional teacher while promoting Islamic values.

Therefore, the IIUM model demonstrates the successful integration of theoretical frameworks and practical implementation of Islamic values and sciences within Islamic higher education. Through its systematic integration of Islamic values across curricular and pedagogical practices, the institution has developed an educational paradigm that cultivates graduates with dual competencies: (1) rigorous academic mastery and (2) the ability to contextualize knowledge within Islamic epistemological frameworks for societal benefit. This approach exemplifies how Islamic universities can effectively bridge the traditional dichotomy between modern sciences and Islamic values.

Based on the findings above, curriculum development through the concept of Islamization of science at IIUM and the concept of scientific integration at UIN SMH Banten refers to the foundation of curriculum development based on Thua'imah (2001), including four essential foundations: the linguistic, educational, psychological, and socio-cultural foundation along with four basic principles of curriculum development: (1) what educational goals must be achieved, (2) how learning experiences are provided in achieving

educational goals, (3) how learning experiences can be managed effectively, and (4) how learning experiences can be evaluated so that educational goals can be achieved.

The value of integration is also implemented in the UIN SMH Banten curriculum by establishing comprehensive learning outcomes for each course taught, including attitudes and values, general skills, specialized skills, knowledge, and graduate profiles. The institution employs contemporary pedagogical approaches, particularly Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and Project-Based Learning (PjBL), designed to facilitate contextual understanding and application of Islamic values. These models aim to cultivate students' social intelligence and develop ethical character grounded in environmental and societal awareness. The integrated values are implemented by the lecturers as the course instructors, the study program, and the faculty as the responsible academic party. However, it has been determined by the curriculum that, in practice, not all lecturers use the learning model regulated by the curriculum because some continue to employ the traditional method, *qawaid wa tarjamah* (grammar translation method). This variance suggests uneven faculty commitment to the university's integration paradigm, highlighting an implementation gap that warrants further investigation in UIN SMH Banten.

Third, the Kulliyah of Education at IIUM consistently endeavors to create an Islamic atmosphere integrated into various aspects of campus life. Establishing a campus environment aligned with the concept of the Islamization of science is deemed very important. In the context of IIUM, implementing Islamization is manifested through curriculum

development that integrates conventional science with Islamic science and creates a campus atmosphere that reflects Islamic values and student development programs to foster Islamic morals. For example, IIUM routinely organizes Al-Qur'an's *tahfidz* and *tahsin* competitions among students, instilling spiritual values in everyday life. With this holistic approach, IIUM aims to produce graduates who not only master science deeply but also possesses a strong awareness of moral and social responsibility. Meanwhile, at UIN SMH Banten, the campus environment supports Islamic values through a boarding school for students (Ma'had 'Aly).

Fourth, the critical aspects examined pertain to institutional management and leadership. Campus management at IIUM is designed based on principles to create an environment that supports the implementation of the IoK through multiple strategic mechanisms. As part of this effort, IIUM established a special committee responsible for managing the IOK agenda, periodically reviewing the curriculum to keep it consistent with its vision and mission. In addition, the university also provides operational guidelines based on the Qur'anic principles—particularly the epistemological primacy of revelation over empirical knowledge. The aspect of leadership is based on the interviews conducted and corroborated by the writing. IIUM is committed to reflecting Islamic values in management and policymaking, such as rewarding employees who are researching the Islamization of science. To strengthen employees' understanding of the Islamization of science, IIUM organizes training for academic staff on Islamic epistemology and its application in learning. In addition, campus leaders are encouraged to be role models

in integrating Islamic values into daily life, thereby fostering an institutional culture permeated by Islamic principles. This stands in contrast to UIN SMH Banten, which has not yet organized routine training to strengthen lecturers' understanding of the concept of scientific integration in the style of UIN SMH Banten. The disparity highlights the critical role of intentional institutional scaffolding in actualizing Islamic educational paradigms.

Fifth, IIUM prepared teaching materials that provide Islamic perspectives on various disciplines, such as the textbooks 'Islamic Perspectives on Contemporary Issues' and 'Qur'anic Ethics in the Modern World,' designed to integrate Islamic values with contemporary knowledge. Through these textbooks, students can learn how to interpret global issues from an Islamic perspective, enabling them to act as agents of change at the global level. Efforts to develop and write teaching materials are not carried out by all faculties and study programs; consequently, this is also a challenge in realizing the Islamization of science, *à la* Al-Faruqi, used by IIUM. The issue of teaching materials that provide an Islamic perspective is still a challenge and opportunity faced by various Islamic universities due to the lack of productivity in producing teaching materials that contain Islamic values.

## **D. Discussion**

The concept of the IoK, pioneered by Ismail Raji al-Faruqi in the early 20th century, aims to integrate Islamic values into various scientific disciplines. This initiative emerged as a response to the need for an education focusing on rational knowledge based on modern science and

promoting Islamic spiritual and ethical values that can guide humanity's intellectual and moral life (Khuza'I et al., 2018; T. Rahman, 2015). Beauchamp (1975) states that values are an important criterion in determining curriculum objectives because the underlying worldview or ideology will strongly influence these objectives. According to Beauchamp, the curriculum is not just a collection of subject matter but must also reflect the values instilled in students. In this case, the Islamic education curriculum needs to be designed to integrate worldly knowledge with *ukhrawi* knowledge so that students are intellectually intelligent and educated in moral and spiritual aspects. In addition, Al-Faruqi (1989) argues that science cannot be separated from the spiritual and ethical dimensions contained in Islamic teachings, as knowledge produced without a solid moral foundation can have detrimental effects on humanity and civilization. Thus, the Islamization of science calls for a re-examination of existing scientific approaches, intending to create a synthesis between contemporary knowledge and Islamic principles derived from revelation and *Sunnah*.

Meanwhile, Schubert's (1986) view of curriculum provides a broader dimension in viewing education. He identified several key concepts related to curriculum, such as curriculum as content or subject matter, which emphasizes the importance of the material being taught; curriculum as a program of planned activity, which describes how various educational activities are designed to achieve predetermined goals; and curriculum as intended learning outcomes, which focuses on the achievement of student competencies and skills. Furthermore, Schubert also sees curriculum as cultural

reproduction, which reflects that curriculum transmits cultural values to the next generation. In this case, the Islamization of science can be seen as an effort to introduce and transmit Islamic values rich in wisdom and guidelines for life through the education curriculum. In addition, Schubert (1986) also proposed a view of curriculum as experience, which shows the importance of the learning process as an experience that shapes students' character and understanding of the world around them. According to this view, curriculum is not only limited to the formal teaching of material but also involves the formation of attitudes and values in students. In the context of the Islamization of science, this experience includes internalizing Islamic teachings that guide students to integrate knowledge with moral actions following religious teachings. Finally, Schubert notes that the curriculum can be seen as an agenda for social reconstruction. From this perspective, education serves as a tool to change society for the better through character-building based on universal Islamic values that support justice, peace, and the welfare of humanity. Therefore, in its implementation, the Islamization of science curriculum is oriented towards individual development and efforts to bring about positive social change in an increasingly complex global society.

These principles are the basis for transforming Islamic higher education, especially at the IIUM and several Islamic universities in Indonesia. Not only that, Sutrisno explained in his writing that Al-Faruqi is known as a figure who struggles to restore Islamic values in science, which is often affected by Western secularism (Sutrisno, 2023). Al-Faruqi advocates the concept of Islamicizing science, which seeks to integrate

Islamic values into various disciplines, including science, economics, and law, to create a holistic approach to education (Abdallah et al., 2011), which is considered incompatible with Islamic values. In this paradigm, the Qur'an and Hadith are the basic principles guiding science development, aiming to harmonize Western scientific thought with Islamic values (Khuza'i et al., 2018).

Empirical evidence drawn from author-conducted interviews with IIUM stakeholders, corroborated by scholarly research (Ahmad et al., 2021; Maulana, 2017), IIUM has systematically institutionalized the IoK paradigm as a core institutional framework since its founding in 1983. Meanwhile, Wolven (2013) and Zaman (2019) stated that to achieve the desired results, educational institutions must conduct curriculum development so that the transfer of information, skills, values, and knowledge from one era to the next can run effectively. IIUM has developed a curriculum that includes a comparative approach (Islamic and Western paradigms) as well as an integrative approach (teaching Islamic and Western perspectives). All faculties and departments at IIUM design their curriculum based on the Islamic worldview, with the aim of integrating revelation or divine knowledge and contemporary acquired knowledge. To realize this, all academic programs, course syllabi, and teaching materials were reviewed to align with the Islamic worldview. This includes integrating Islamic ethics, philosophy, and civilization into various disciplines. This approach is based on the principle that revelation and reason are not in conflict but can complement each other to produce a deeper understanding of the world. An important illustration of the implementation

of this curriculum is evident in the division of science courses, consisting of university signature courses, faculty signature courses, and study program core courses that lead to the development of study program-based skills (Aziz, 2022).

On the other hand, UIN SMH Banten does the same thing in realizing scientific integration (UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, n.d.) through the development of an integrative curriculum, where there are university, faculty, and study program courses that lead to the development of study program-based skills. These courses not only integrate Islamic principles with global issues but also encourage students to engage in critical thinking about contemporary challenges. Therefore, students at both IIUM and UIN SMH Banten are encouraged to develop problem-solving skills based on Islamic values, which is essential in dealing with the complexities of the modern world. This principle is the basis of the transformation of Islamic higher education, especially at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) and several Islamic universities in Indonesia, such as UIN SMH Banten.

The commitment to overcoming the dichotomy of knowledge can also be seen in the learning methods and models. Lecturers deliver academic material using direct methods (*thariqah mubasyarah*) and emphasize the importance of ethics and morals in professional practice (Hanafi, 2021). Thus, they create a holistic learning environment where students are encouraged to internalize Islamic values. Then, mastery of Arabic as a medium for understanding authentic sources of Islamic teachings, such as the Qur'an and Hadith, is crucial (Maulana, 2017). Limited mastery of Arabic can

hinder the understanding of Islamic teachings. Nonetheless, as described by Hashim and Abdallah (2013), there are concerns regarding mastering skills in traditional Islamic sciences and the Arabic language. However, IIUM addresses this concern through its language institute, the CELPAD, which aims to equip prospective students with the necessary Arabic language skills before starting their academic endeavors. This has also been a policy implemented by IIUM for prospective students. The application of the Arabic learning process, including the Qur'an, Hadith, and other Arabic-written texts that contain Islamic values (Al-Qiyam Al-Islamiyah), is not only limited to Nahwu and Sharaf courses but also extends to other courses, such as Al-Balaghah. This means the theory provided can be seen as only an overview, ensuring that what is practiced is rooted in practical application.

Implementing integration values in the UIN SMH Banten curriculum reflects a systematic effort to align learning outcomes with the Islamic epistemological framework. This integration is reflected through the establishment of learning outcomes that include dimensions of attitudes and values, general skills, specific skills, and knowledge, which are holistically directed to form a graduate profile that is not only academically competent but also has a strong moral character. In this case, the pedagogical approaches, such as PBL (Problem-Based Learning) and PjBL (Project-Based Learning), are constructivist methods that encourage students to actively construct knowledge by solving real problems and collaborative projects (Guo et al., 2020; Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Thomas, 2000). Both approaches have proven effective in developing 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking,

communication, collaboration, and creativity (Siregar, 2025). When applied in the context of Islamic education, PBL and PjBL have great potential in encouraging the integration of Islamic values with contemporary issues facing society. This aligns with the idea (Musthafa & Ulum, 2020) that scientific integration in Islamic education must encourage the creation of a harmonious relationship between revealed knowledge and acquired knowledge and foster students' social, ethical, and spiritual awareness.

In this context, active learning methods such as PBL and PjBL allow students to translate Islamic values into tangible actions responsive to social challenges. However, although the curriculum has been designed integratively, in practice, there is still a gap in implementation at the lecturer level. Some lecturers still maintain traditional methods, such as *qawaid wa tarjamah*, emphasizing cognitive aspects and mechanistic mastery of grammar. This method often lacks space for developing critical thinking skills and value reflection. To realize proper scientific integration, the role of lecturers as agents of change is crucial because lecturers are responsible for designing learning that can bridge the gap between scientific substance and Islamic values (Azra & Thaha, 2012). This inconsistency indicates epistemological and pedagogical challenges in internalizing integrative values in the classroom.

As stated by Nasution (1989), curriculum changes will only be effective if supported by a change in the teaching paradigm of educators. In the context of UIN SMH Banten, continuous training and mentoring are needed so that lecturers can have pedagogical competence that is in line with the

integrative vision of the university. In addition, the institution also needs to build a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system to ensure that the principles of integration do not stop at the level of curriculum documents but are actually realized in the learning process in the classroom. Thus, the success of integrating Islamic values into the curriculum does not depend solely on curriculum design but is also largely determined by the epistemological awareness, pedagogical competence, and ideological commitment of educational actors, especially lecturers, who are the spearheads of scientific transformation in Islamic universities.

Hosein et al. (2023) mentioned that the campus environment has an important role in shaping the character and orientation of students, such as *pesantren* for higher level students (Ma'had Aly). These programs aim to improve students' religious competence and support the university's vision to produce graduates who excel professionally and have a solid foundation of Islamic orientation. This effort is in line with the idea of the Islamization of science introduced by Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, one of the Muslim intellectuals whose ideas became an important foundation in establishing IIUM. According to Al-Faruqi, the Islamization of science aims to integrate Islamic values into various scientific disciplines by harmonizing divine revelation and human reason (Al-Faruqi, 1989). Furthermore, Ma'had Aly has a significant role in shaping Islamic values and Muslim character amid the dynamics of modern and global campus life (Mufid & Arifin, 2021); thus, the existence of Ma'had Aly for students is expected to contribute to the acquisition of Islamic knowledge, which can help them for academic and non-academic

growth to be ready to meet local and global demands along with globalization and Westernization while maintaining principles and upholding Islamic values (Al Muiz et al., 2023; Azra, 2014; Harahap, 2019). Moreover, Setyaningsih and Subiyantoro (2017) explained that creating a religious culture on campus could strengthen the internalization of Islamic values. Consequently, it produces graduates with integrity, professionalism, and strong character in instilling Islamic values (Halstead, 2004; Zarkasyi, 2021).

Cultivating Islamic spiritual and ethical values plays an important role in creating students who can face global challenges while adhering to Islamic principles (Darlan et al., 2021). Based on research conducted by Ssekamanya et al. (2011), many IIUM graduates contribute significantly to society by applying Islamic values and professional innovation. Efforts to realize the Islamization of science can also be seen from IIUM's commitment so that the final assignments in all programs, both undergraduate, master's, and doctoral, emphasize the integration of Islamic values to achieve the vision and mission of the institution that has been set (International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), n.d.; Ssekamanya et al., 2011).

One of the crucial aspects of implementing the IOK in Islamic universities is the role of institutional management and leadership. This study found that the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) places management and leadership as the primary foundation in supporting the IOK agenda. This is evident from IIUM's institutional structure, which specifically establishes an IOK committee to ensure that all academic activities, especially the curriculum, are regularly

reviewed to remain aligned with the vision and mission of Islamization (Abdallah et al., 2011). This management shows that epistemological transformation cannot occur effectively without strong structural and managerial support (Al-Attas, 1995; Daud, 1998). In addition to the organizational structure, IIUM adopts a managerial approach based on Islamic values. The university's operational guidelines refer to the principle that revelation has a higher epistemological position than knowledge obtained rationally or empirically. This aligns with the views of Al-Faruqi (1989), who emphasized the need to redefine the epistemology of science within an Islamic framework. This kind of policy positions the university as an entity that produces knowledge and shapes civilization based on divine values.

In terms of leadership, IIUM demonstrates institutional commitment to promoting Islamic values through various policies, including rewarding staff who conduct research related to the Islamization of science. In addition, the university organizes regular training on Islamic epistemology and its application in learning as a form of internalization of values for academics. Leadership at IIUM is also directed to be a role model in work ethics and practicing Islamic values in the campus environment. Thus, leadership is not only administrative but also visionary and transformative, a characteristic that, according to Sergiovanni (1990), is essential in shaping a value-based academic culture. In contrast, the comparative results show that UIN SMH Banten has not adopted a systematic institutional approach to training and internalizing integrative values. Although the curriculum has incorporated the concept of scientific integration, its implementation has not been

fully supported by consistent management and leadership in developing the epistemological capacity of lecturers. The main obstacles to developing an integrated academic culture regarding values and epistemology are the irregularity of training, lack of incentives for Islamization research, and the absence of a special institutional structure, such as at IIUM. These findings underline that the success of scientific integration and Islamization of knowledge does not solely depend on curriculum design but is primarily determined by institutional governance and leadership. Effective institutional leadership emerges as a critical determinant in fostering value internalization and encouraging paradigm shifts among academics, which is crucial in shaping a holistic, transformative, and spiritually nuanced academic environment.

## **E. Conclusion**

The efforts of Islamic universities in overcoming the dichotomy of knowledge or sciences continue to be carried out, both in Malaysia (IIUM) with the model of IOK and in Indonesia (UIN SMH Banten) with the Big Bang Theory, which is a metaphorical approach of integration-comparative diffusion, which is believed to be able to bridge the gap between contemporary materialistic science, which has an impact on Islamic education with its tendency to maintain a prescriptive rather than an articulate approach, so that graduates are less able to answer the challenges of the times holistically. Both models are carried out through curriculum development, which seeks to integrate modern science with Islamic values, aiming to produce graduates with integrity

and professionalism while adhering to Islamic values (Al-Qiyam Al-Islamiyyah).

There are similarities and differences in developing the Arabic language education curriculum at the two universities in the components of objectives, teaching materials, methods, and evaluation. First, in the objective component, the Department of Arabic Education of UIN SMH Banten aims for students to master Arabic language skills, while at IIUM, the Arabic language education aims to (1) study and deepen Islamic texts; (2) use Arabic in the delivery of material not only in the Teaching Arabic as a Second Language (TASL) Study Program but also applied to the Islamic Education Study Program; and (3) produce excellent educators. Second, the material components at IIUM include: (1) Islamic literature, Al-Qur'an, Hadith, and other sources of Islamic studies; (2) other materials provided by the institution are delivered using Arabic, which is integrated with Islamic values. In contrast, the materials presented in the Department of Arabic Education of UIN SMH Banten are: (2) other materials provided by the institution, both the rectorate and the faculty, which are not delivered in Arabic. Third, the component of learning methods and models. IIUM uses the direct method (*thariqah mubasyarah*), question and answer, and student-active learning, using Arabic as the language of instruction. Meanwhile, the Department of Arabic Education at UIN SMH Banten uses the *qawaid wa tarjamah* method, active student learning with PBL and PjBL models, with Arabic not being consistently utilized across all courses as the language of instruction. Fourth, the evaluation component applied at IIUM is conducted using (1) *Ilqa Al-Muhadharah*, (2)

preparing teaching plans using Arabic to produce excellent teachers, (3) giving projects in the form of films using Arabic, and (4) routine evaluations every mid-semester of Arabic. The evaluation carried out in the Department of Arabic Education at UIN SMH Banten is in the form of a formative and summative assessment, with mid-term and final exams. Fifth, the approach to integrating Islamic values through the last three factors is a significant challenge for UIN SMH Banten, which, of course, can support efforts to overcome the dichotomy of knowledge.

In addition, among the key factors that influence the differences in the structure and components of the curriculum at the two universities are the differences in the input aspects of students who will study in the Department of Arabic Education. At IIUM, before attending lectures, students are required to take language tests because the Arabic language will be used in introductory lectures as a medium of instruction. In addition, matriculation classes are held at the CELPAD unit for those who do not pass the language tests. After examining the similarities and differences in the curriculum structure of the two universities, the author provides recommendations for curriculum revision in the Department of Arabic Education at UIN SMH Banten. These revisions are intended to enhance the alignment with the primary mission of integrating modern science with Islamic values, which can be appropriately achieved. The objective is to cultivate competent graduates who demonstrate strong moral integrity, professionalism, and a deep sense of their identity as Muslims.

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