# Unity of Science As A New Paradigm to Strengthen the Governance and Quality of Islamic Educational Institutions

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***Abstract***
*The concept of Unity of Science has developed as an important paradigm in efforts to overcome the dualism of knowledge that still influences the governance and quality of Islamic educational institutions. This dualism has an impact on the fragmentation of institutional management, the learning process, and the relevance of graduate competencies. This study aims to analyze the application of the Unity of Science as an integrative paradigm in the governance and quality management of Islamic educational institutions, not limited to the curriculum aspect alone. This study uses a qualitative approach based on literature studies with descriptive analysis of sources in the form of scientific journal articles, academic books, and relevant policy documents. The research stages include a review of the theoretical basis of Unity of Knowledge, mapping of the concept of Islamic education governance, and an integrative analysis of the relevance and implementation of this paradigm in a managerial context. The results show that Unity of Knowledge can function as a conceptual framework that strengthens institutional governance through the integration of spiritual values, scientific rationality, and professional practices in education management. This research confirms the theoretical contribution of the Unity of Knowledge as a comprehensive paradigm for the governance and quality improvement of Islamic educational institutions. In conclusion, the application of the Unity of Knowledge paradigm has the potential to improve the quality of Islamic educational institution management to be more adaptive and systematic.*

***Keywords****: Unity of Science; Educational Governance; Islamic Educational Institutions; Knowledge Integration; Islamic Education Management*

## Introduction

The Islamic education system in Indonesia is still faced with the problem of dichotomy between religious knowledge and general knowledge. This condition has resulted in weak integration between spiritual dimensions, scientific rationality, and institutional practices, causing many madrasas, Islamic boarding schools, and integrated Islamic schools to experience difficulties in developing

curricula and governance that are in line with the demands of the times. Various empirical studies show that Islamic education tends to be normative-theological in orientation, while general education emphasizes cognitive and technical aspects without strengthening the spiritual and ethical dimensions (Suhardis et al., 2025). As a result, the integration of science in Islamic education has not been optimally and systematically realized.

A number of previous studies have attempted to bridge this dichotomy through the development of an integration model between Islamic Religious Education and science, particularly at the curriculum and learning levels (Naja et al., 2020 ; Laily et al., 2022). However, the implementation of this integration is generally partial and ad hoc, limited to combining subjects or inserting Islamic values into science learning. Other studies also show that the integration of values, epistemology, and learning methodology is still inconsistent and has not touched on comprehensive institutional transformation (Aulia, 2022).

The main research gap lies in the lack of studies that place science integration as a systemic paradigm that encompasses institutional governance, quality management, education policy, and academic culture. Most research still focuses on pedagogical aspects, while the managerial and institutional dimensions of Islamic education have not been comprehensively discussed. In fact, without structural changes in management, human resources, and institutional orientation, efforts to integrate knowledge have the potential to remain sectoral and unsustainable (Darsyah, 2023). In addition, epistemological resistance between empirical science and religious science among educators also weakens the implementation of full integration (Abdullah, 2022).

Based on these conditions, this article offers a novelty by framing the Unity of Knowledge as a comprehensive paradigm that is not only oriented towards curriculum integration, but also encompasses epistemology, institutional governance, quality management, and educational practices. Theoretically, this research contributes to expanding the understanding of the Unity of Knowledge as a conceptual framework for the development of Islamic education management. Practically, this paradigm is expected to serve as a foundation for Islamic educational institutions in developing more holistic, adaptive governance that is relevant to the needs of society and the competency demands of the 21st century.

As a literature review-based study, this research is not tied to a specific location, but rather examines the scientific landscape and practices of Islamic education in Indonesia conceptually and analytically. The relevance of this research is even stronger considering that Islamic educational institutions are currently undergoing a phase of transformation in response to modernization, globalization, and demands for improved graduate quality. Therefore, an analysis of the Unity of Knowledge paradigm is important as a conceptual alternative capable of uniting spiritual values, scientific rationality, and educational management practices within a single, comprehensive framework.

**Methods**

This study uses library research, a method that focuses on searching, reviewing, and synthesizing relevant literature sources related to the research focus (Harahap, 2014). This approach was chosen because the objective of the study was to develop a conceptual framework for the application of the Unity of Knowledge paradigm in Islamic education management, which required an in-depth review of theories, previous research findings, and models of knowledge integration that had been developed.

The selection of literature was carried out systematically by establishing inclusion criteria, namely sources that substantively discuss the integration of science and Islam, Islamic scientific epistemology, Islamic education management, as well as curriculum models and governance based on science integration. Data sources were obtained from national and international scientific journals, academic books, scientific proceedings, and reliable online publications relevant to Islamic education and education management studies. To maintain data quality, priority was given to literature from reputable sources that were methodologically clear and conceptually relevant to the research focus.

Data analysis was conducted through content analysis with the following stages: (1) organizing literature based on thematic categories, such as the epistemology of the Unity of Science, curriculum integration, Islamic educational institution governance, and quality management; (2) comparative synthesis by comparing the views and findings of researchers to identify patterns, similarities, differences, and conceptual gaps; and (3) interpretive analysis to formulate a conceptual framework of Unity of Knowledge as a systemic paradigm in Islamic education management. This process enables researchers to construct coherent and layered arguments without collecting field data (Dr. Amir Hamzah, 2020).

Data validity strategies were pursued through source triangulation, namely by comparing various types of literature (journals, books, and policy documents) and cross-scientific perspectives to reduce interpretive bias. In addition, conceptual consistency and theoretical relevance were the basis for assessing the reliability of the sources analyzed. The analytical framework of this study places the Unity of Science as a conceptual paradigm that encompasses epistemological, managerial, and institutional dimensions, so that the methods used are not only descriptive but also directed at developing a systematic and comprehensive conceptual analysis in the context of Islamic education management.

## Results

Based on a synthesis of national and international literature, this study produced three main findings that distinguish this study from previous research on the integration of knowledge, namely: (1) the dualism of knowledge as the root of structural problems in Islamic education, (2) the pattern of knowledge integration that is still partial and non-managerial, and (3) the potential of the Unity of Knowledge paradigm as a systemic framework for the governance and quality management of Islamic education.

### *The Reality of Scientific Dichotomy as the Root of the Problem*

The synthesis results show that the dualism between religious studies and general studies is not merely a matter of curriculum, but rather a structural problem that affects the direction of policy, governance, and academic culture in Islamic educational institutions. A number of studies confirm that Islamic education is still stuck in a normative-theological orientation, while modern science is positioned separately and instrumentally (Humairoh & Mustafidin, 2025). This epistemological separation, as stated by Al-Attas in (Hendratno & Nuraida, 2023), contributes to conceptual chaos in the institutional vision of Islamic education. These findings indicate that the issue of knowledge integration cannot be resolved simply by adding content or pedagogical approaches, but requires a paradigm shift that touches on the foundations of epistemology and institutional management.

*Partial and Fragmented Patterns of Knowledge Integration*

A synthesis of the literature shows that various attempts at integrating science have been made, but they tend to be sectoral and inconsistent. Table 1 shows a general pattern that science integration is mostly carried out at the curriculum and learning levels, such as combining subjects, linking verses from the Qur'an with science, or instilling Islamic values in learning activities (Adyksa & Sudirman, 2024);(Febril et al., 2023); (Ihsanudin & Nur Soleh, 2023).

However, an important finding from comparing these various studies is that integration rarely touches on managerial aspects, such as strategic planning, institutional policy, quality assurance systems, and organizational culture. Even in Islamic higher education institutions that have adopted the integration-interconnection paradigm, its implementation is still uneven at the policy and institutional governance levels (Syarnubi, 2022).

Thus, the results of this study confirm that the main weakness of science integration lies in the absence of a managerial and systemic framework capable of making science integration a principle of institutional management, rather than merely a pedagogical approach.

Table 1. Efforts to Integrate Science and Weaknesses Based on Literature

| Efforts to Integrate Knowledge that Have Been Carried Out | Implementation Form | Weaknesses/Obstacles Found |
|---|---|---|
| Curriculum integration between Islamic Education and Science (Adyksa & Sudirman, 2024). | Combining religious subject content with science concepts | Integration is only at the content level; it has not touched on the epistemology and management of the institution (Dewi et al., 2025). |
| Islamic value-based science learning (Febril et al., 2023). | The teacher connects scientific phenomena with verses of the Qur'an and strengthens the spiritual aspect. | Implementation is highly dependent on teacher competence because not all teachers have an integrative epistemological understanding (Chanifudin & Nuriyati, 2020). |
| Development of an integrated curriculum in integrated Islamic schools (Ihsanudin & Nur Soleh, 2023) | National curriculum + Islamic curriculum+character building | Weak integration in school management; focus more on habitual practices than on developing scientific epistemology (Ayu et al., 2023). |
| Implementation of the scientific integration paradigm at PTKI (UIN/IAIN) (Syarnubi, 2022). | The revelation model guides the science of bayyai, burhani, irfan, integration, interconnection | Strong implementation at the academic level, but uneven at the policy, institutional, and organizational culture levels. (Ayu et al., 2023) |
| Strengthening Islamic values in general learning (Bahagia et al., 2024). | Integration of values with general subjects (Mathematics, Science, Social Studies) | Integration is methodological in nature, not yet a comprehensive educational management paradigm. (Chanifudin & Nuriyati, 2020). |
| Character development through education based on charitable sciences (Soleh et al., 2025). | Program for cultivating religious habits, character, and scientific ethics | Only touches on the affective domain; does not touch on the curriculum structure and institutional governance. |

### Unity of Knowledge as a Systemic Paradigm of Islamic Education

The synthesis results show that the Unity of Knowledge paradigm has strong potential to overcome this fragmentation because it is both epistemological and managerial in nature. Unlike conventional integration approaches, Unity of Knowledge views revelation, scientific rationality, and empirical experience as a unity that shapes the direction of education management (Jamal, 2017).

These findings show that Unity of Science can function as an umbrella paradigm that coherently integrates curriculum, learning, governance, and quality management. The analyzed literature shows that the application of the principles of Unity of Knowledge has implications for strengthening curriculum quality (Sumarni & Suprapto, 2022), meaningful learning (Chanifudin & Nuriyati, 2020), holistic graduate competencies (Irsahwandi & Anas, 2024);(Naja et al., 2020), and more adaptive and value-oriented institutional governance (Darsyah, 2023).

### Discussion

The following discussion interprets the research results by linking literature findings, Islamic education theory, and the empirical context of Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia.

### Unity of Knowledge in Theoretical Perspective and Research Findings

Theoretically, the integration of science in Islamic education has long been discussed within the framework of classical and modern Islamic epistemology. However, the results of this study show that this approach has not been fully translated into institutional practice. Compared to previous studies that focused on pedagogical integration, this study shows that the main problem lies in the absence of a systemic paradigm that connects epistemology, management, and academic culture.

In this context, Unity of Knowledge is not only understood as the unification of scientific content, but as a conceptual framework that guides institutional vision, strategic planning, and quality assurance systems in Islamic education. This position distinguishes this study from previous studies on the integration of knowledge, which tended to stop at the level of curriculum and learning.

### Comparison with Previous Research

Compared to the studies by Naja et al. (2020) and Laily et al. (2022), which focused on the integration of values in learning, this study broadens the scope of analysis by placing the Unity of Science as a governance paradigm. While the studies by (Dewi et al., 2025) and (Chanifudin & Nuriyati, 2020), identify weaknesses in the implementation of integration, this study goes further by synthesizing these findings into a conceptual framework that explains why integration often fails systemically.

Thus, this study does not repeat the theory of science integration, but rather consolidates previous findings to build a new understanding of the need for an integrative managerial paradigm. This discussion confirms that the dichotomy between religious and general knowledge remains a dominant obstacle to the development of Islamic educational institutions. This separation has implications for curriculum formulation, learning strategies, and the direction of institutional management, which are epistemologically divided. (Humairah et al., 2024) revealed that Islamic education is still dominated by a normative-theological approach, while scientific disciplines emphasize cognitive aspects without considering spiritual values. As a result, students do not develop holistically. Al-Attas's view in (Hendratno & Nuraida, 2023).

This reinforces the fact that the dualism of knowledge creates a disorienting vision of education, making it difficult for Islamic educational institutions to realize the unity of knowledge as a basic

foundation. This situation demonstrates the importance of a new scientific paradigm capable of integrating these two areas of knowledge.

### *Contribution and Novelty of Research*

The main novelty of this study lies in the placement of the Unity of Knowledge as a systemic paradigm in Islamic education management, rather than merely a curricular or pedagogical approach. Theoretically, this study contributes to expanding the discourse of the Unity of Knowledge into the realm of governance and quality management in education. Practically, this research provides a conceptual framework that can be used as a basis for policy development, holistic curriculum design, quality assurance systems, and leadership models for Islamic educational institutions.

Thus, this research emphasizes that the transformation of Islamic education requires a paradigm shift from partial integration to Unity of Knowledge as a principle of comprehensive institutional management. In practical terms, the findings of this study provide a conceptual basis for Islamic educational institutions in formulating policies, developing holistic curricula, quality assurance systems, and educational leadership that integrate Islamic values, scientific rationality, and managerial professionalism. This paradigm has the potential to encourage more adaptive, systematic, and relevant governance of Islamic educational institutions in line with the demands of the times.

### *Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Further Research*

The results are still conceptual and have not been empirically tested in Islamic educational institutions. In addition, the limited empirical literature on the application of the Unity of Knowledge in institutional management limits the implementation analysis.

Therefore, further research is recommended to use empirical approaches, such as case studies or field research, to test the application of the Unity of Knowledge paradigm in various types of Islamic educational institutions. Further research can also be directed at developing operational models and evaluation indicators for Islamic education management based on Unity of Knowledge to make it more applicable and measurable.

### Conclussion

This research confirms that the fundamental problems facing Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia lie not merely in technical managerial aspects, but in the scientific paradigm, which is still dominated by a dichotomy between religious and general knowledge. This dichotomy has resulted in weak governance, curriculum fragmentation, low learning quality, and unpreparedness of graduates to face the demands of the 21st century. Through a comprehensive literature analysis, this article demonstrates that the Unity of Science paradigm offers a philosophical and conceptual foundation capable of uniting revelation, reason, and empirical reality within a coherent epistemological framework. With this integrative paradigm, Islamic educational institutions have a significant opportunity to improve strategic planning, strengthen their organizations and human resources, create a collaborative academic culture, and develop a comprehensive quality assurance system.

Research findings also indicate that current efforts to integrate science have not yielded optimal results because they remain partial and confined to the curriculum. Through the implementation of Unity of Science, integration extends beyond pedagogical aspects to systemic institutional governance, including curriculum management, teacher competency enhancement, academic culture development, and improvements to educational policy structures. Thus, Unity of Science holds

significant potential for improving curriculum quality, learning outcomes, graduate competency, and the adaptability of Islamic educational institutions to global change.

While considering the limitations of literature-based research, this study still provides an important contribution as a theoretical foundation for developing a more professional, modern, and values-based model of Islamic education management. Overall, the Unity of Science paradigm can be a new direction in the transformation of Islamic education, enabling it to produce a generation that is intellectually superior, spiritually strong, and competitive in a dynamic global environment. Further research can be conducted using empirical methods to test the application of this paradigm at various levels of Islamic education and to strengthen more applicable implementation models in the field.

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