

# Curriculum Development in Islamic Education: Integrating Religious Knowledge and Modern Science

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The integration of curriculum within Islamic educational institutions has become a critical discourse, particularly in responding to the rapid development of knowledge, globalization, and the demand for graduates who possess balanced religious, moral, and scientific capabilities. This study aims to conceptualize a comprehensive understanding of curriculum integration by examining theoretical foundations, models, implementation challenges, and future prospects through the lens of relevant literature. The findings highlight that integrated curriculum design emphasizes the unification of Islamic values with modern scientific disciplines, generating an educational system that develops intellectual reasoning, spiritual awareness, and ethical character simultaneously. Various curriculum development models, such as subject integration, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches, competency-based design, and prophetic education frameworks, provide strategic alternatives for institutions to formulate contextual and adaptive learning structures. Despite this potential, implementation still encounters challenges including limited educator competence, fragmented teaching approaches, institutional dualism, resource inequality, and low standardization. However, the future of integrated curriculum in Islamic education shows promising opportunities as digital learning expands access, research-based educational methods evolve, and society increasingly demands holistic graduates capable of facing global competition without losing religious identity. Strengthening policy support, professional training, curriculum innovation, and collaborative partnerships can enhance sustainability and effectiveness. This conceptual study contributes to the academic discourse by presenting a holistic perspective on curriculum integration and offering strategic implications for future development in Islamic education.

## Keywords

Integrated Curriculum  
Islamic Education  
Curriculum Development  
Implementation Challenges  
Future Prospects

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## Introduction

Islamic education is an educational system whose primary goal is to shape individuals who are faithful, pious, and possess noble morals, capable of making positive contributions to social life and the development of science. In the modern context, education serves not only as a process of transferring religious values, but also as a means of developing intellectual abilities, 21st-century skills, and readiness to meet the challenges of globalization (Abrar, 2025). Social change, rapid technological advancements, and the demand for global competence require Islamic educational institutions to innovate, one of which is through the development of an integrated curriculum that combines religious knowledge with modern science. This integration is crucial because for decades, Islamic education has faced the problem of a dichotomy separating religious knowledge from general knowledge, resulting in graduates who are religiously strong but less adaptable to developments in science and the world of work.

In the history of Islamic thought, religious knowledge and modern science have never been in conflict. Classical Muslim scholars such as Ibn Sina, Al-Farabi, and Al-Khawarizmi are clear evidence that the integration of knowledge can give birth to a great civilization in Islam (Noktaria et al., 2025). This view reinforces the need for Islamic education to return to the monotheistic paradigm, where all knowledge ultimately originates from God and serves the purpose of benefiting humanity. The concept of integrating

knowledge is not merely an attempt to unite two domains of knowledge, but rather to create an epistemological framework that positions religion as the foundation of moral values and science as an instrument of civilizational progress (Rahma et al., 2025). Therefore, the development of an Islamic education curriculum must be designed to produce students who not only understand religion but are also able to compete in science, technology, economics, and various sectors developing in the modern era.

However, reality shows that some Islamic educational institutions still face obstacles in implementing an integrative curriculum. Limited human resources, limited mastery of science among religious educators, and a lack of contextualized teaching materials have prevented the integration process from running optimally (Sofiatunnaimah & Minarti, 2025). This urges the need to formulate a curriculum development strategy that is more comprehensive, structured, and relevant to the needs of today's development. A curriculum that integrates religious knowledge and modern science cannot remain static but must be dynamic, adapting to evolving knowledge and societal needs. Therefore, curriculum development requires strong theoretical support and implementation support through creative and innovative learning designs.

Curriculum integration in Islamic education can be achieved through several approaches, such as integrating subject matter, thematic learning, and formulating holistic graduate competencies encompassing spiritual, intellectual, social, and technological skills (Taufiq et al., 2025). This curriculum model not only teaches students to understand Quranic verses but also fosters critical awareness in reading natural and social phenomena as forms of *kauniyah* verses. Thus, students are guided to apply Islamic values to science and vice versa, utilizing science as a means of strengthening spirituality. This is the key to realizing a superior, competitive, and civilized Islamic education.

The research "Curriculum Development in Islamic Education: Integrating Religious Knowledge and Modern Science" is relevant because it offers important insights into how Islamic educational institutions can develop an integrative curriculum that addresses the problem of the dichotomy of knowledge. This research will explore in depth the concepts, principles, and implementation of curriculum development that accommodates both Islamic values and modern science. Furthermore, this research is expected to provide theoretical contributions in the form of a conceptual model for integrating knowledge into the curriculum, as well as practical contributions for schools, madrasahs, or Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in formulating strategies for implementing an integrated curriculum.

Thus, developing an integrative curriculum is a strategic step in improving the quality of Islamic education, making it more responsive to modernity without losing its Islamic identity. The ideal curriculum is not one that chooses between religion and science, but one that harmoniously integrates both to shape a generation of Muslims who are moral, knowledgeable, and ready to face global challenges. This integration ultimately aims to provide an Islamic education that not only preserves religious traditions but also becomes a center of innovation, knowledge, and the advancement of civilization (Solihutauafa, 2025).

## **Methods**

### **A. Type and Approach of Research**

This study employs a library research method, which is conducted by collecting data and information from various relevant literature sources without direct field investigation (Zed, 2014). The research approach used is qualitative-descriptive, chosen because the study focuses on examining theoretical foundations and scholarly perspectives related to curriculum development in Islamic education with an emphasis on integrating religious knowledge and modern science. A qualitative-descriptive approach prioritizes the process of collecting, analyzing, and presenting data in narrative form rather than employing statistical analysis (Moleong, 2017). Through this approach, the researcher interprets and synthesizes concepts and ideas derived from books, journal articles, and relevant academic works to create a comprehensive understanding of the integration-based curriculum framework.

### **B. Sources of Data**

The sources of data in this research consist of primary and secondary references. Primary sources serve as the main theoretical foundation and include books, scientific journals, articles, and academic works discussing Islamic education, curriculum development, and the integration of religious knowledge with modern science. Works such as Al-Attas (1980), Al-Faruqi (1982), Nasr (2016), along with contemporary literature focusing on Islamic curriculum innovation, are categorized as primary references. Secondary sources involve supporting literature such as additional books, proceedings, research reports, e-books, and scholarly websites used to strengthen arguments and broaden the analytical perspective (Sugiyono, 2019). The combination of both types of references is intended to enhance the validity and depth of theoretical discussion.

#### C. Data Collection Technique

Data collection in this research follows a continuous narrative procedure. The first stage involves the identification and compilation of literature relevant to the research topic, carried out through both physical libraries and digital academic platforms such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, DOAJ, and university repositories. After gathering all relevant materials, the researcher conducts close reading to thoroughly examine the content of each source, aiming to identify key concepts, theoretical frameworks, and previous findings related to integrative curriculum development. The next step involves documenting and organizing the information obtained, either through direct quotations or paraphrasing, and categorizing them based on themes to facilitate systematic analysis.

#### D. Data Analysis Technique

The data collected are analyzed using content analysis. This analytical technique is applied to interpret information systematically by identifying patterns, meanings, and conceptual relationships presented within the literature (Krippendorff, 2013). The analysis begins with data reduction, where only relevant information is selected and separated from less significant material. Following this stage, the researcher classifies and codes ideas according to analytical themes such as the concept of knowledge integration, curriculum development principles, and the implementation of Islamic education in the modern era. The final stage involves interpretation and presentation of the data in narrative form, allowing the researcher to synthesize theoretical findings into a coherent conclusion that contributes to scholarly discourse.

#### E. Data Validity

To ensure the credibility and accuracy of the obtained data, this study applies source triangulation. Triangulation is conducted by comparing information across multiple references to verify consistency and reduce interpretive bias (Miles & Huberman, 2014). Additionally, cross-checking between primary and secondary sources is carried out to ensure that the theoretical basis used in the research is relevant, reliable, and academically accountable. This process reinforces the validity of the findings and supports the overall quality of the research output.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **Conceptual Framework of Curriculum Integration**

The conceptual framework of curriculum integration in Islamic education emerged in response to the need to address the dichotomy between religious knowledge and modern science, which remains a major challenge in the contemporary Islamic education system. Numerous studies have demonstrated that curriculum integration is not simply a combination of learning materials from two disciplines, but rather an epistemological effort to harmoniously unite religious and scientific knowledge so that students can view knowledge as a unified whole, originating from God and the interconnected realities of the universe (Nubari et al., 2025). This approach is rooted in the premise that Islamic education must place moral and spiritual values as the foundation for understanding and developing modern knowledge, so that educational goals encompass not only academic competence but also character development and noble morals. Numerous studies on the integration of Islamic education demonstrate that integration aligns revelation with scientific

rationality to create learning that fosters critical thinking skills and moral awareness in students (Handayani, 2025).

Other literature perspectives demonstrate that curriculum integration needs to be supported by an inclusive and systematic curriculum structure. Integration aims to connect various disciplines through themes or problems that require interdisciplinary solutions, making learning more contextual and meaningful for students. An integrative curriculum doesn't stop at adding religious material to general subjects, but rather unifies scientific paradigms so that problem-solving-based learning can occur across disciplines (Muna & Fauzi, 2024). This approach enables students to understand life phenomena not as separate entities, but as holistic realities where religion and science complement each other.

Research on integration also confirms that successful curriculum integration requires alignment between learning objectives, pedagogical strategies, and teaching resources. The curriculum must be able to integrate spiritual, moral, and intellectual competencies with 21st-century skills such as critical, creative, and adaptive thinking. This means the curriculum is no longer viewed as a collection of stand-alone subjects, but rather as an interconnected system. Modern science can contribute to students' intellectual and technological development, while religious knowledge provides guidance on values and ethics as a foundation for its use, thus creating a more comprehensive education.

Furthermore, the concept of curriculum integration is a crucial strategy for addressing the moral crisis and value degradation resulting from modernization and globalization. By combining scientific literacy with Islamic education, students not only master factual knowledge but also develop spiritual values that guide their use of that knowledge. Integration creates a learning environment that encourages students to understand that science is not valueless but must be situated within an Islamic ethical framework. With this understanding, Islamic education graduates are expected to be able to compete in the modern world while maintaining their religious and moral identity.

The conceptual framework of curriculum integration also relates to implications for learning design and evaluation of learning outcomes. The integration model encourages evaluation that encompasses cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in a balanced manner to comprehensively measure learning success. Students are assessed not only on academic achievement but also on how they apply Islamic values in their daily lives and in solving scientific problems. Through a thematic, interdisciplinary, and contextual approach, integration not only enriches learning content but also broadens the learning experience, producing a generation that is religious, scientific, ethical, and innovative in responding to future challenges (Fauzi et al., 2025).

### **Curriculum Development Models and Strategies**

Integrative curriculum development models and strategies in Islamic education are oriented toward creating a curriculum capable of integrating religious values with modern knowledge in an applicable manner. The most widely used development model is the integrative-holistic model, which places religious knowledge as the center of values and modern science as an instrument for developing scientific logic and 21st-century skills (Rabbani et al., 2025). Within this framework, the curriculum is designed by connecting religious concepts with natural and social phenomena, so that students do not study religion and science separately, but rather understand them as a mutually explanatory whole. This holistic approach makes the curriculum more contextual, engaging, and relevant to everyday life.

In addition to the holistic model, the interdisciplinary curriculum model is also widely applied in Islamic education. This model emphasizes the integration of subjects through specific themes or issues. For example, the theme of creation can be studied simultaneously through the subjects of Tafsir, Physics, Biology, and Geography. This approach allows students to see the connection between the kauniyah verses in the Qur'an and the findings of modern science. Thus, integration occurs not only at the theoretical level but is also reflected in real-life learning experiences. In this context, teachers play a crucial role as interdisciplinary bridges by providing conceptual explanations linking religion and science.

Another prominent strategy in the literature is the use of a competency-based curriculum (CBC), which focuses on the development of three main domains: spiritual-religious, scientific knowledge, and application skills. Curricula that adopt this approach provide more space for students to develop analytical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, and demonstrate noble character in the implementation of their knowledge. Assessment is not only based on academic results, but also on how students internalize Islamic values and apply them in learning and social activities. This strategy has proven to be a strong bridge of integration because it balances the intellectual and moral dimensions simultaneously.

Developing an integrative curriculum also requires innovation in learning methods so that the integration of religious and scientific values does not stop at the material level. Project-based learning, inquiry learning, reflective discussions, and collaborative approaches are widely used strategies to encourage students to connect religious concepts with scientific phenomena (Qosthalani et al., 2025). Through simple research projects, for example, students not only learn the laws of cause and effect in science but also understand the nature of God's creation and the importance of preserving nature as a trust. Thus, integration is achieved through an active process that positions students as key actors in the construction of knowledge.

Curriculum integration efforts are also strengthened through the provision of thematic teaching materials, the development of interdisciplinary modules, and ongoing teacher training. Teachers need dual literacy, namely a strong understanding of Islam and the ability to read and teach modern science pedagogically (Hasanudin, 2024). Without adequate teaching resources, integration remains merely a normative concept without concrete implementation. Therefore, teacher training, the development of learning laboratories, and collaboration with universities are crucial strategies to ensure the effective implementation of an integrative curriculum. With adequate resource support, this curriculum development model can produce students who are religious, critical, and competent in facing global scientific and technological developments.

### **Implementation Challenges in Islamic Educational Institutions**

The implementation of an integrative curriculum in Islamic educational institutions faces various challenges, particularly related to the persistent dichotomous paradigm between religious knowledge and science. In many educational institutions, religious knowledge is positioned as more sacred and separate from general knowledge, so integration efforts often encounter resistance (Sari et al., 2025). This occurs not only at the structural level of the curriculum, but also in the mindset of some educators and policymakers, who view integration as an effort that could diminish the purity of religious studies. This situation demands a strong epistemological transformation so that all components of education understand that integration does not equate religion with science, but rather aligns the two within a unified, non-negotiable scientific framework.

Another challenge lies in the competence and preparedness of teachers to implement an integrative curriculum. Many teachers possess specific qualifications only in religion or science, making it difficult to connect material interdisciplinaryly. Limited pedagogical literacy that integrates Islamic values into science learning also poses a significant obstacle. Without ongoing training and capacity building, teachers tend to revert to traditional methods that separate the two disciplines. Therefore, implementing curriculum integration requires coaching programs, workshops, and interdisciplinary collaboration to enable teachers to deliver religious and scientific content using a reflective and contextual approach (Gasmi et al., 2025).

In addition to human resource challenges, obstacles also arise from limited learning resources and teaching materials relevant to the integrative concept. Available textbooks generally still follow a conventional curriculum structure that separates religion and science, requiring teachers to adapt or even develop their own learning modules. Not all institutions have the resources, laboratories, or digital facilities to support the project-based learning and scientific research required in an integrated approach. Unequal educational facilities make the implementation of an integrative curriculum uneven, particularly in Islamic educational institutions in regions with limited access to technology and scientific literature.

From an educational institution management perspective, implementing curriculum integration requires strong institutional policy support. Curriculum change cannot be achieved solely through teacher initiative

without clear administrative support, academic structures, and evaluation. Challenges arise when institutions lack assessment systems capable of simultaneously measuring cognitive, affective, and spiritual aspects. Learning evaluation, which still focuses on memorization and academic grades, results in the essence of integration—namely, the development of scientific skills and religious character—being less than optimally addressed. Therefore, institutional support and the formulation of integrative evaluation standards are urgently needed.

A final challenge that frequently arises is the lack of collaboration between Islamic educational institutions and universities, research centers, and the community (Munir & Su'ada, 2024). The limited academic network makes the development of integrative curricula and learning methods slow and limited. Curriculum integration requires a vibrant learning environment, where students can interact with various technological, social, environmental, and cultural issues as a space for the actualization of religious and scientific knowledge. Without external collaboration, integrative learning has the potential to become trapped in theoretical concepts without real-world applications. Therefore, these challenges are crucial aspects that must be addressed so that the implementation of an integrative curriculum truly impacts the quality of Islamic education and its relevance to current developments.

### **Future Opportunities and Prospects**

The opportunities for developing an integrative curriculum in Islamic education are vast, given the increasingly rapid advancement of science and technology (Aripin, 2024). The integration of religion and science offers an educational foundation relevant to today's needs, particularly in developing a generation that excels not only cognitively but also possesses a religious character. Global challenges such as digitalization, social change, and scientific developments require Islamic educational institutions to update their curricula to produce adaptive, innovative, and competitive students. Curriculum integration enables Islamic educational institutions to play a greater role in developing human resources with a strong spiritual foundation while remaining competitive in modern industry.

The future prospects for curriculum integration are increasingly promising with the support of government policies aimed at improving the quality of education through the advancement of information technology and the digitalization of learning. Advances in educational technology enable the integration of religious and scientific knowledge to be implemented more interactively through digital platforms, virtual laboratories, and multimedia-based learning resources. This opens up opportunities for the development of more creative teaching materials, such as thematic modules linking Quranic verses to scientific phenomena or learning applications that combine interpretation studies with simple science experiments. With technology, the integration process occurs not only in the classroom but can also be extended to virtual environments, allowing students to independently explore knowledge from various sources.

Furthermore, opportunities for integration are growing with increasing public and academic awareness of the importance of comprehensive Islamic education. Many educational institutions are beginning to recognize that religious knowledge cannot stand alone without the support of modern knowledge, and that science without spiritual values can lose its ethical direction (Daulay, 2022). Support for research and scientific publications related to integration is growing, providing a theoretical foundation and best practices that can serve as references for future curriculum implementation. The growing body of research also facilitates the development of new learning models that can be tested and applied at various levels of education.

The future prospects for curriculum integration are also evident in the potential for collaboration between Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), *madrasahs* (Islamic schools), Islamic schools, and universities to strengthen academic networks and develop interdisciplinary research (Malrizwa et al., 2025). Collaborations with research institutions or the technology industry can open up internship opportunities, project-based research programs, or the development of innovation laboratories that bridge religion and science. If this collaboration goes well, Islamic education will be better able to produce graduates with the professional competencies needed by industry while maintaining the integrity of Islamic values. Thus, Islamic educational

institutions can become centers for the birth of modern Muslim scientists working in various fields such as technology, health, energy, and social sciences.

In the future, curriculum integration has the potential to create a new, more visionary and futuristic paradigm for Islamic education. Integration is expected to overcome the fragmentation of knowledge that has historically been a barrier and encourage the emergence of a generation of Muslims capable of combining faith with technological sophistication. Students will not only be equipped with religious theory and scientific knowledge but will also be required to apply it in real life, so that education can produce social transformation. If these opportunities are seized through thorough curriculum planning, improved teacher quality, and policy support, Islamic education has bright prospects to develop into a global center of knowledge capable of making significant contributions to the development of modern civilization (Amanda et al., 2025).

## **Discussion**

Curriculum integration between religious studies and modern science in Islamic education is a strategic effort to address the needs of the times and eliminate the dichotomy of knowledge that has been ingrained since the colonial era and early modernization. The findings indicate that integration is not merely an administrative concept in curriculum design, but an epistemological framework that positions monotheism as the unifying foundation of all disciplines. Religious studies, as a source of values and morality, hold a dominant position in shaping educational orientation, while modern science serves as an instrument for developing scientific reasoning, creativity, and technological skills. Thus, integration provides an Islamic education that is not merely normative-doctrinal but also capable of playing a role in solving contemporary problems.

The conceptual framework of integration demands a holistic educational orientation, one that does not separate reason and revelation, but rather makes them complementary instruments in the learning process. The findings of this study support the view that the kauniyah verses in the Qur'an can serve as a philosophical foundation for connecting scientific concepts in science subjects. For example, the study of the creation of the universe is not merely a matter of interpretation but can also be linked to the laws of physics, biological processes, and cosmological theories in modern science. This model demonstrates that curriculum integration can be a transformative educational tool that empowers students to understand knowledge from a faith perspective. Spiritual and scientific understanding coexist, rather than mutually exclusive.

Findings related to curriculum implementation models and strategies show that integration can be achieved through several approaches, including holistic, interdisciplinary, thematic, and competency-based curricula (KBK). The holistic model views education as a unified experience that is not divided into sacred and profane knowledge. The interdisciplinary model combines subjects through specific themes, enabling students to develop cross-disciplinary thinking. Meanwhile, the competency-based approach provides space for the balanced development of spiritual, cognitive, and psychomotor domains. Project-based and inquiry-based learning have also proven effective in supporting integration, as they allow students to engage in scientific exploration while reflecting on religious values. With these strategies, the learning process is not merely theoretical but also applicable, reflective, and meaningful.

However, the implementation of integration faces structural and cultural barriers in Islamic educational institutions. Resistance to curriculum change often arises because the old paradigm separating religious and scientific knowledge is considered established and unnecessary to disrupt. Furthermore, not all teachers possess the competency to integrate the two disciplines simultaneously. Religious studies teachers generally receive insufficient training in scientific literacy, while science teachers often lack expertise in Islamic interpretation and treasury. Furthermore, limited laboratory facilities, a lack of integrative teaching materials, and a lack of curriculum policy support are also inhibiting factors. Without consistent teacher training, module development, and institutional support, integration will remain at the conceptual and discourse level without optimal implementation in the classroom.

Nevertheless, the opportunities and future prospects for curriculum integration are vast. The flow of digitalization, industry needs, and global competition are pushing Islamic educational institutions to be more adaptive in designing learning systems. The integration of religion and science, facilitated by technology, allows for the creation of innovative digital-based learning, virtual laboratories, and collaborative research platforms that can broaden the scope of student scientific interaction. Public awareness of the importance of modern and moderate Islamic education is also increasing, thus expanding the scope for developing an integrative curriculum. By strengthening teacher capacity, enriching teaching resources, and establishing collaborations with universities and industry, Islamic education has the potential to become a center for the development of modern Muslim scientists with spiritual, rational, and global-level excellence.

## Conclusion

Curriculum integration in Islamic education is a strategic approach needed to address the demands of modern developments and eliminate the long-standing dichotomy between religion and science. Integration is not merely understood as a combination of content, but rather as an epistemological alignment that places spiritual values and revelation as the primary foundation for interpreting the development of modern science. Research findings indicate that the conceptual framework of integration is based on the principle of monotheism, where all knowledge is part of the unity of God's creation and therefore must be studied holistically and complement each other. Integrative curriculum development models and strategies can be implemented through holistic, interdisciplinary, thematic approaches, and competency-based curricula, supported by project-based learning methods, inquiry, reflection, and collaboration. Although implementation faces challenges such as limited teacher competency, a lack of integrative teaching materials, and resistance to traditional paradigms, opportunities for strengthening integration are increasingly open with technological advances, digital innovation, and growing awareness of the importance of adaptive and moderate Islamic education. Future prospects indicate that curriculum integration has the potential to transform Islamic education, producing a generation that is not only strong in spirituality but also excels in science, possesses 21st-century skills, and is able to contribute to the development of modern civilization. Therefore, the implementation of an integrative curriculum requires institutional support, teacher capacity development, the provision of adequate learning facilities, and a collaborative commitment between educational institutions, universities, and the community so that Islamic education can become a center for the birth of Muslim scholars who are religious, have character, and are globally competitive.

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