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Rethinking Science, Philosophy, and Religion For Contemporary Islamic Higher Education: From Islamization to Integration of Knowledge

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Integration-Interconnection; Integration Of Knowledge; Islamization Of Knowledge; Science And Religion; Islamic Higher Education.

ABSTRACT

This article emerges from my long-standing concern over the fragmentation of knowledge in Islamic higher education. In many cases, religious sciences, science, philosophy, social sciences, and the humanities are still understood as separate domains. Yet the major transformations of the last 150 years, the advancement of science and technology, globalization, population migration, the growth of literacy, environmental crises, climate change, and the increasing awareness of human dignity, equal citizenship, interreligious relations, and gender equality demand a more integrative, inclusive, and interdisciplinary paradigm of knowledge. This article emphasizes the need for a shift from the Islamization of Knowledge toward the Integration of Knowledge. The Islamization of knowledge once served as an important response to the dominance of modern-secular epistemology. However, in an increasingly complex and interconnected world, an approach that is overly defensive, apologetic, and exclusive is no longer sufficient. In this regard, the term Integration of Human Knowledge is introduced. Islamic higher education needs to build an ecosystem of knowledge that brings together revelation, reason, spiritual experience, scientific method, philosophy, ethics, and social responsibility. Within this framework, philosophy functions as a critical bridge that protects religion from narrow dogmatism and safeguards science from instrumentalism devoid of human direction. This article concludes that the future of Islamic higher education depends greatly on the courage to develop a paradigm of integration-interconnection that links bayani, burhani, and irfani in a creative, critical, and transformative manner.

Kata Kunci :

Integrasi-Interkoneksi; Integrasi Ilmu; Islamisasi Ilmu; Sains Dan Agama; Pendidikan Tinggi Islam.

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini berangkat dari keprihatinan saya yang telah lama berlangsung terhadap fragmentasi pengetahuan dalam pendidikan tinggi Islam. Dalam banyak kasus, ilmu agama, sains, filsafat, ilmu sosial, dan humaniora masih dipahami sebagai ranah yang terpisah. Padahal, berbagai transformasi besar selama 150 tahun terakhir, kemajuan ilmu pengetahuan dan teknologi, globalisasi, migrasi penduduk, peningkatan literasi, krisis lingkungan, perubahan iklim, serta meningkatnya kesadaran akan martabat manusia, kesetaraan kewargaan, hubungan antaragama, dan kesetaraan gender menuntut paradigma pengetahuan yang lebih integratif, inklusif, dan interdisipliner. Artikel ini menekankan perlunya pergeseran dari Islamisasi Ilmu menuju Integrasi Ilmu. Islamisasi ilmu pernah menjadi respons penting terhadap dominasi epistemologi modern-sekuler. Namun, dalam dunia yang semakin kompleks dan saling

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terhubung, pendekatan yang terlalu defensif, apologetik, dan eksklusif tidak lagi memadai. Dalam konteks ini, diperkenalkan istilah Integrasi Pengetahuan Manusia. Pendidikan tinggi Islam perlu membangun ekosistem pengetahuan yang mempertemukan wahyu, akal, pengalaman spiritual, metode ilmiah, filsafat, etika, dan tanggung jawab sosial. Dalam kerangka ini, filsafat berfungsi sebagai jembatan kritis yang melindungi agama dari dogmatisme sempit sekaligus menjaga sains dari instrumentalisme yang kehilangan orientasi kemanusiaan. Artikel ini menyimpulkan bahwa masa depan pendidikan tinggi Islam sangat bergantung pada keberanian untuk mengembangkan paradigma integrasi-interkoneksi yang menghubungkan bayani, burhani, dan irfani secara kreatif, kritis, dan transformatif.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout my long intellectual journey in thinking about the integration-interconnection of knowledge, one issue has continued to trouble me: the persistence of disciplinary boundaries in Islamic higher education. Religious sciences are often studied as if they stand alone, separated from science, social sciences, humanities, philosophy, politics, economics, health, environment, and culture. Conversely, science and technology are frequently developed in a technical-instrumental manner, as though procedural accuracy and practical utility were sufficient, without adequate philosophical, ethical, spiritual, and humanistic reflection.

Yet the major transformations of the last 150 years have fundamentally changed the face of human civilization. The advancement of science and technology, space exploration, archaeological discoveries, the theory of evolution and genetics, the expansion of education and literacy, population migration, and globalization have generated new awareness of human dignity, interfaith relations, equal citizenship, and gender equality (Abdullah, 2026). These great transformations cannot be addressed through a compartmentalized mode of thinking. The involvement of many disciplines is often referred to as a multidisciplinary approach, but in practice these disciplines often continue to operate separately, without genuine epistemological communication and methodological dialogue. Like compartments on a bookshelf, each has its own place, yet they never greet, converse with, or enrich one another.

Contemporary human problems are also becoming increasingly complex and intertwined. Issues of human dignity, Muslim and non-Muslim relations, citizenship, gender mainstreaming, health, environmental degradation, and climate change are examples of problems that require an interdisciplinary approach within contemporary Islamic studies (Abdullah, 2026). Complex problems cannot be solved by a single discipline or a single perspective. They require the involvement of religion, science, philosophy, social sciences, humanities, ethics, and public policy

within an open, critical, and responsible academic conversation. It is here that the integration-interconnection of knowledge finds its relevance and urgency for the future of Islamic higher education.

In this context, I believe that the discourse on the Islamization of Knowledge needs to be reread. In its time, the Islamization of knowledge was an important response to the secularization of modern knowledge. It reminded Muslims that knowledge is never entirely value-free. However, when the Islamization of knowledge is understood narrowly as merely attaching Islamic labels to modern sciences, seeking Qur'anic justification for scientific findings, or producing knowledge intended only for the Muslim community, it becomes inadequate.

The contemporary world is increasingly complex, dynamic, and interconnected. The moral, ethical, political, social, scientific, technological, and cultural problems faced by Muslim societies today can no longer be understood merely as internal problems of the Muslim community; they are also part of the global problems of humanity. Environmental crises, social inequality, technological disruption, identity conflicts, shifts in values, and transnational humanitarian challenges all demonstrate that questions of knowledge and religion cannot be answered through closed and sectoral approaches. For this reason, I see the need for a paradigmatic shift from the Islamization of Knowledge toward the Integration of Knowledge, as also emphasized by Ziauddin Sardar and Jeremy Henzell-Thomas (Sardar and Henzell-Thomas, 2018).

The integration of knowledge is not merely an administrative merger between faculties of religion and faculties of general sciences. Nor is it merely the insertion of Qur'anic verses into scientific materials, or the attachment of Islamic labels to modern disciplines. The integration of knowledge is a far more fundamental epistemological, methodological, axiological, and institutional project. It requires a creative and critical connection between revelation, reason, spiritual experience, scientific method, philosophy, ethics, and social responsibility. Thus, the integration of knowledge does not merely aim to bring religion and science together; it also seeks to build an ecosystem of knowledge capable of responding to human problems in a more holistic, inclusive, and transformative way.

METHODS

This article is a conceptual-critical study grounded in a long reflection on the idea of the integration-interconnection of knowledge that I have developed in various academic forums. This idea emerged from a concern over the persistence of knowledge fragmentation in Islamic higher

education, as well as from the need to formulate a paradigm of knowledge that is more open, dialogical, and relevant to the challenges of the times. More specifically, this article draws upon the main ideas I presented in the material entitled Science, Philosophy, and Religion: An Integrative-Inclusive Approach, delivered at the book review forum for Philosophy of Science and Epistemology: Integrative-Inclusive Islamic Studies, at FAI-UII, Yogyakarta, on 27 April 2026. The forum was held in the momentum of commemorating the 83rd anniversary of Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII), thus becoming an important reflective space for rereading the relationship between religion, science, philosophy, and the future of Islamic higher education.

As a conceptual-critical study, this article does not rely on empirical data collection in the sense of field research. Rather, it is based on a reflective, analytical, and interpretive reading of the development of contemporary Islamic scholarly discourse. The analysis is conducted by examining key ideas concerning the Islamization of knowledge, the integration of knowledge, the relationship between religion and science, the role of philosophy in higher education, and the construction of an integrative-inclusive epistemology. In this way, this article seeks not only to describe the problem, but also to offer an alternative framework of thought for the development of Islamic higher education that is more responsive to contemporary human problems.

This study focuses on four main issues. First, the limitations of the Islamization of knowledge paradigm when it is understood in an exclusive, defensive, and apologetic manner. Second, the problem of knowledge fragmentation in Islamic higher education, especially when religious sciences, science, social sciences, humanities, and philosophy proceed separately without productive dialogue. Third, the importance of philosophy as a critical bridge between religion and science, since philosophy can help examine assumptions, broaden intellectual horizons, and prevent religion from falling into narrow dogmatism and science from descending into instrumentalism without a humanistic direction. Fourth, the need for an integrative-inclusive epistemology that brings together bayani, burhani, and irfani within the context of contemporary Islamic higher education.

Through this focus, this article seeks to emphasize that the integration of knowledge is not merely an institutional or administrative agenda, but an epistemological, methodological, axiological, and civilizational agenda. Islamic higher education needs to build a scholarly space capable of bringing together revelation, reason, spiritual experience, scientific method, ethics, and social responsibility within a critical, inclusive, and transformative academic ecosystem.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Moving Beyond the Islamization of Knowledge

I do not intend to reject the entire historical contribution of the Islamization of knowledge. In its time, this idea was significant because it made Muslims aware that modern science did not emerge in a vacuum. Modern science carries certain philosophical, epistemological, and axiological assumptions that shape the way human beings understand reality, nature, society, and themselves. Thus, the Islamization of knowledge once served as an intellectual effort to remind us that knowledge is never entirely neutral, but is always connected to a particular worldview, value system, and civilizational interest. However, problems begin to arise when the Islamization of knowledge is understood in a narrow, defensive, and apologetic manner.

In practice, the Islamization of knowledge is sometimes reduced to merely attaching Islamic labels to modern science, searching for Qur'anic verses to justify scientific findings, or attempting to show that all modern knowledge has in fact already existed within the Islamic tradition. Such an approach may indeed strengthen Muslim self-confidence, but it does not necessarily encourage the birth of a critical, creative, and productive scientific tradition. Indeed, if not approached carefully, it may cause Muslims to stop at symbolic pride in the past, without genuinely developing the epistemological capacity to read, test, and develop knowledge within the context of a constantly changing age.

Some Muslims tend to accept modern science as a product of technology and power, but have not genuinely developed the scientific way of thinking that gave birth to it. Ahmad Dallal shows that many modern Muslims are not entirely anti-science; they value science as the secret behind Western power, yet they understand it more as an instrument of power than as a system of thought with its own epistemological assumptions (Dallal, 2012). In other words, science is more often accepted at the level of results, products, and practical benefits, but is not always understood at the level of its workings, methods, disciplines of thought, and the intellectual ethos that sustains it.

In simpler terms, we often desire the products of modern technology smartphones, flat screens, vehicles, medical devices, digital technologies, and even military technologies but we are not always willing to cultivate a scientific temper, namely a methodological, objective, critical way of thinking that is open to evidence and sensitive to causal relations in nature and society. We enjoy the fruits of modern science, yet we do not necessarily take care of the epistemological tree that

produces them. Without a scientific temper, Muslims risk becoming mere consumers of technology rather than producers of knowledge; users of the products of modern civilization rather than active agents in shaping the direction of civilization.

Mustafa Akyol also emphasizes that one of the difficulties of the Muslim world is that it has not fully accepted the way of thinking that gave birth to modernity, namely the methodological study of facts in nature and society and the objective effort to understand causal relations among those facts (Akyol, 2021). This difficulty is not merely technical, but also epistemological and cultural. It is related to the courage to acknowledge the orderliness of nature, to read reality objectively, to open space for criticism, and to build intellectual habits that appreciate observation, argumentation, verification, and correction.

Therefore, what is needed is not merely the Islamization of knowledge in a symbolic sense, but the integration of knowledge in a more fundamental epistemological sense. The integration of knowledge cannot be achieved simply by attaching Islamic terminology to modern disciplines. Rather, it must begin with an effort to bring religion, science, philosophy, ethics, and social reality into an open and responsible academic conversation. The integration of knowledge presupposes dialogue between revelation and reason, text and context, tradition and modernity, spirituality and rationality, as well as scientific truth and human welfare.

Thus, moving beyond the Islamization of knowledge does not mean abandoning Islamic commitment in the development of knowledge. On the contrary, it is an effort to bring that Islamic commitment to a more mature, critical, and transformative level. The integration of knowledge enables Islamic higher education not only to be preoccupied with defending identity, but also to actively build scholarly contributions to broader human problems. Within this framework, religion, science, philosophy, ethics, and society need to greet and engage one another so that knowledge does not lose its spiritual direction, religion does not lose its empirical sensitivity, and Islamic higher education is able to respond to the challenges of the age in a more holistic manner.

2. Knowledge Fragmentation and the Crisis of Education

One of the main problems in our education is the fragmentation of knowledge. From school to higher education, learners are often raised within separated categories of knowledge. Politics, religion, culture, economics, history, human rights, science, and technology are studied as if each stands alone and has no relation to the others. As a result, education more often produces partial mastery of knowledge than the ability to read reality holistically. Learners may know many things,

yet they are not always able to connect those forms of knowledge in order to understand real and complex problems of life.

I have quoted Iwan Meulia Pirous's criticism that the Indonesian education curriculum raises learners within labels that separate political, social, cultural, religious, economic, human rights, and historical issues. As a result, students, university students, and even lecturers are not accustomed to building analyses from various perspectives in order to arrive at broader conclusions (Pirous, 2014). This criticism is important because it shows that the problem of education lies not only in curriculum content, but also in the mode of thinking shaped by that curriculum. If knowledge is presented in separate compartments, learners will also become accustomed to seeing reality in a fragmented way.

This fragmentation produces various paradoxes in academic and social life. A person may appear religious, yet lack sensitivity to injustice. One may master technology, yet be poor in ethical reflection. One may understand religious texts, yet be less capable of reading social reality. One may possess technical skills, yet be weak in critical thinking, communication, leadership, and humanitarian responsibility. Indeed, a person may have high academic achievement, yet not necessarily possess moral sensitivity, breadth of insight, and the courage to stand for the public good.

In the 2016 National Education Working Meeting notes, criticism of higher education graduates included weaknesses in English proficiency, leadership, organization, communication, higher order thinking skills, information technology skills, reasoning ability, oral and written communication, critical thinking, self-confidence, and the fading of good values (Abdullah, 2026). This note shows that the crisis of education cannot be answered merely by adding courses, changing the nomenclature of study programs, or strengthening the administrative aspects of institutions. What is more fundamental is the need for a shift in the educational paradigm, so that learners not only master knowledge, but are also able to think, reason, communicate, collaborate, and act ethically.

It is here that integration-interconnection becomes important. Religious sciences need to engage with social sciences and science so that they do not stop at textual normativity alone, but are also able to read the dynamics of human life. Science needs to engage with ethics and spirituality so that it does not develop into a technological force that loses its humanistic direction. Philosophy needs to be given space in education so that academic tradition possesses depth of reflection,

sharpness of critique, and the courage to examine fundamental assumptions. The humanities must also not be regarded as peripheral, for within them lie sensitivity to meaning, values, culture, language, history, and human experience.

Thus, Islamic higher education needs to move beyond a compartmentalized pattern of education. It must become a space for the formation of human beings who think broadly, critically, reflectively, ethically, and transformatively. Islamic higher education is not sufficient if it only produces graduates who understand religious texts or master professional skills. It must also give birth to academic persons who are able to connect knowledge with life, faith with humanity, technology with ethics, and knowledge with social responsibility. This is the important meaning of integration-interconnection as a way out of knowledge fragmentation and the crisis of education

3. Philosophy as the Salt and Chili of Academic Life

In my view, philosophy needs to be restored to its proper place in Islamic higher education, and indeed in general education in Indonesia as well. For a long time, philosophy has often been suspected of being a threat to religion, or considered too abstract and lacking direct practical benefit. In fact, philosophy is not a threat to religion. Nor is philosophy an opponent of science. Rather, philosophy is an essential intellectual tool for sharpening analysis, examining assumptions, broadening horizons, weighing arguments, and maintaining an academic commitment to the pursuit of truth.

Philosophy helps human beings ask not only “what” and “how,” but also “why” and “for what purpose.” Such questions are very important in higher education, because knowledge must not stop merely at the mastery of information, technical skills, or practical utility. Knowledge must also be directed toward the cultivation of wisdom, moral responsibility, social sensitivity, and humanistic orientation. Without philosophy, higher education easily becomes trapped in administrative, technocratic, and pragmatic academic routines.

Frans Magnis-Suseno once stated that it is time for philosophy to be given a place in Indonesian academic life. The neglect of philosophy reflects the narrowness of higher education’s vision, which too often emphasizes study programs considered “useful” and ready for immediate application (Magnis-Suseno, 2022). This criticism is important because it shows that the success of higher education should not be measured only by how quickly graduates are absorbed into the labor market, but also by how deeply higher education is able to shape human beings who think critically, reflectively, ethically, and responsibly.

Extending Frans Magnis-Suseno's expression, philosophy may be described as the "salt" and "chili" of academic life. People do not eat salt and chili alone. Yet without salt and chili, food becomes bland. Likewise, higher education without philosophy will lose its intellectual flavor. It may continue to function formally, produce graduates, publish scientific works, and fulfill academic administrative requirements. However, without philosophy, higher education will lose its sharpness of analysis, its quality of critical attitude, its breadth of insight, its depth of reflection, and its courage to criticize shallow truth claims (Abdullah, 2026).

In the context of Islamic higher education, philosophy plays an increasingly important role. Philosophy protects religion from turning into a tool for legitimizing human power. It helps religion remain open to criticism, dialogue, and broader interpretation. At the same time, philosophy protects science from becoming mere technology without conscience, or an instrumental force that loses its humanistic direction. Philosophy reminds us that scientific and technological advancement must always be accompanied by ethical questions: for whom is knowledge developed, whose interests does it serve, and what are its impacts on human dignity and the sustainability of life?

Philosophy also protects higher education from falling into narrow pragmatism. A university must not become merely a factory of degrees, a center for producing labor, or an administrative institution preoccupied with fulfilling formal indicators. Higher education must become a space for the formation of intellect, conscience, and social responsibility. It is here that philosophy plays the role of a critical force that continuously reminds us that higher education has a mission greater than merely meeting market demands.

Indeed, Fazlur Rahman in 1982 asserted that distancing Islamic education from philosophy could be called a form of "intellectual suicide." A society that distances itself from philosophy will suffer from a hunger for fresh ideas and a loss of critical power (Rahman, 1982). This statement remains relevant today. Without philosophy, Islamic education risks losing the courage to think deeply, to read the changing times, and to formulate creative scholarly responses. Therefore, strengthening philosophy in Islamic higher education is not merely an academic option, but a fundamental necessity for the birth of a critical, inclusive, and transformative scholarly tradition.

4. Science, Religion, and the Problem of Causality

The relationship between science and religion in Islam needs to be read honestly, critically, and proportionally. On the one hand, the Qur'an repeatedly invites human beings to think, reflect,

observe nature, learn from the dynamics of social life, and use reason responsibly. Terms such as tafakkur, ta'aqqul, and tadabbur indicate that Islam contains a strong encouragement for the development of knowledge. The universe is not only viewed as the wondrous creation of God, but also as the signs of Allah's greatness that can be read, studied, and understood by human beings.

However, in the history of Islamic thought, there has been a certain tendency to emphasize human limitations more than human capacity to understand the laws of nature. Ahmad Dallal shows that the Qur'anic invitation to contemplate nature can become a driving force for science when human beings acknowledge that nature has mechanisms, order, and patterns that can be understood. Yet some classical scholars understood reflection on nature more as an acknowledgment of the limits of human knowledge than as a path for systematically building, seeking, and discovering scientific facts (Dallal, 2012).

It is here that the problem of causality becomes important. Science operates on the assumption that nature possesses order, patterns, laws, and causal relations that can be observed, tested, and explained. Without recognition of causality, scientific research would lose its epistemological foundation. Human beings would not be encouraged to seek relationships among phenomena, test hypotheses, build theories, or develop technology. Therefore, the debate on causality is not merely an abstract theological debate, but one that has direct consequences for the growth or weakening of the scientific ethos within society.

One important issue in this regard is occasionalism. In this view, created beings do not possess real causal power. God is understood as the only true cause of all events. Natural events are merely "occasions" for God to create corresponding actions (Akyol, 2021). This view certainly emerges from a desire to preserve God's absolute omnipotence. It seeks to affirm that no event occurs outside the will and power of Allah.

However, if understood too rigidly, occasionalism can weaken the scientific ethos. If every event is understood only as the direct act of God without any causal order within creation, the motivation to investigate the laws of nature may weaken. Science requires recognition that nature has structure, order, patterns, laws, and causal relations that human beings can study. Recognizing the laws of nature does not mean reducing God's power; rather, it means acknowledging that God's creation operates within an order that can be read by human reason.

Within the framework of the integration of knowledge, recognition of the laws of nature does not mean rejecting God's power. On the contrary, natural laws can be understood as part of sunnatullah. God is the source of existence, but His creation has an order that can be studied by human reason. From this perspective, the order of nature is not a rival to God's will, but an expression of His wisdom and decree in creation. Human beings are given reason not to negate God, but to read the signs of His greatness through nature, history, society, and themselves.

In the Christian theological tradition, there is a known shift from occasionalism toward concurrentism and conservationism, namely the view that God is the first cause, while created beings are also given room to understand secondary causality within His creation (Akyol, 2021). Such a perspective can serve as an important comparative reference for contemporary Islamic thought. It shows that recognition of natural causality does not have to be opposed to faith in God. On the contrary, recognition of secondary causes can strengthen human responsibility to study, understand, care for, and manage nature more wisely.

Thus, studying the universe is not a secular act that distances human beings from God. On the contrary, scientific research can become a form of intellectual worship aimed at understanding the greatness of Allah's creation. Laboratories, libraries, observatories, classrooms, and research centers can become fields of scholarly devotion when directed toward the search for truth, the enhancement of public welfare, and the preservation of life. From the perspective of the integration of knowledge, science and religion need not be positioned as two poles that negate one another, but rather as two paths that can mutually enrich our understanding of reality, life, and the greatness of God.

5. Integrative-Inclusive Epistemology: Bayani, Burhani, and Irfani

In the idea of integration-interconnection, I place bayani, burhani, and irfani as three modes of epistemology that need to greet, correct, and enrich one another. They should not be rigidly opposed, as if each stood alone without any space for encounter. In the context of contemporary Islamic higher education, these three epistemological modes should instead be read as intellectual resources that can help Muslims build a more holistic, critical, spiritual, and transformative perspective on knowledge.

Bayani refers to knowledge based on text, language, and the authority of revelation. It is important because Islamic education cannot be separated from the Qur'an, Hadith, the Arabic language, and the long tradition of Islamic scholarship. Through bayani, Muslims possess a normative

foundation, moral reference, and historical continuity with the classical scholarly heritage. However, bayani that stands alone can fall into narrow textualism. It may cause religious understanding to stop at the literal wording of texts, without the capacity to read social, historical, cultural, and humanitarian contexts that continue to change.

Burhani refers to rational, demonstrative, empirical, and scientific knowledge. It is important because human beings live within natural and social realities that must be understood through observation, analysis, reasoning, verification, and scientific method. Through burhani, Islamic higher education is encouraged to value evidence, data, argumentation, logic, and openness to scientific correction. However, burhani that is detached from ethics and spirituality can become technocratic, reductionistic, and even instrumental. It may produce technological progress, but not necessarily wisdom, justice, and public welfare.

Irfani refers to spiritual depth, intuition, inner experience, conscience, and moral sensitivity. It is important because knowledge is not sufficient if it is only logically and empirically true; it must also be spiritually and ethically meaningful. Irfani reminds us that human beings are not only rational creatures, but also spiritual beings who seek meaning, peace, wisdom, and closeness to God. However, irfani that is not critically examined can fall into subjectivism, inward claims that are difficult to test, or spirituality detached from social and intellectual responsibility (Abdullah, 2017).

The integration of knowledge means bringing these three together creatively and proportionally. Revelation provides moral orientation. Reason provides analytical power. Science provides methods for understanding reality. Philosophy provides epistemological critique. Spirituality provides depth of meaning. Ethics provides direction toward public welfare. Society provides the field of service. Thus, the integration of knowledge does not place one epistemological mode as the only source of truth, but builds a dialogical space among text, reason, experience, empirical reality, and social responsibility.

Therefore, the integration of knowledge must be built upon the principle of inclusivity. It must not be understood as an elitist project discussed only by academics, religious scholars, or holders of institutional authority. It must become an open dialogical space involving various stakeholders: lecturers, students, researchers, ulama, scientists, practitioners, policymakers, government officials, state administrators, civil society, and especially young people as the next generation in the nation's struggle to improve the welfare of society at large. This is in line with Sardar and Henzell-Thomas's assertion that a truly inclusive reform of higher education needs to involve

people from different backgrounds, ages, genders, schools of thought, and perspectives, and provide them sufficient space to express their views (Sardar and Henzell-Thomas, 2018).

Inclusivity also means opening space for diverse social experiences and scholarly disciplines. In an increasingly plural, complex, and interconnected world, the integration of knowledge cannot be built through a single, closed, and homogeneous mode of thinking. It is precisely the richness of perspectives that enables a more complete understanding of reality to emerge. In developing the integration-interconnection paradigm, I see that complex problems in contemporary society such as human dignity, Muslim and non-Muslim relations, citizenship, gender, health, environmental degradation, and climate change cannot be answered adequately without an interdisciplinary approach (Abdullah Saeed, 2006). Therefore, the integration of knowledge must open spaces for conversations across disciplines, generations, experiences, and perspectives.

In this context, young people occupy a very important position. They are not merely objects of education, but subjects who live directly amid changing times. They experience anxiety, hope, social pressure, technological disruption, identity crises, and future challenges in ways different from previous generations. Therefore, Islamic higher education needs to listen to the needs, concerns, aspirations, and language of young people. Sardar and Henzell-Thomas emphasize that young people must be nurtured through a direct understanding of their needs, anxieties, and aspirations; the lack of appreciation for and engagement with young people's voices is one cause of many problems in Muslim societies (Sardar and Henzell-Thomas, 2018; Abdullah, 2026).

A new language of knowledge integration needs to be formulated contextually and with a future-oriented vision. This language is not sufficient if it merely repeats classical terminology; it must be able to translate Islamic values into contemporary conversations on science, technology, public ethics, ecology, humanity, and global civilization. Sardar and Henzell-Thomas mention the need to introduce to global young generations a new contextual and future-oriented language to strengthen the development of a new paradigm of knowledge integration, including within the framework of bayani, burhani, and irfani (Sardar and Henzell-Thomas, 2018).

Thus, the integration of knowledge is not only an epistemological agenda, but also a social, cultural, and civilizational agenda. It demands the courage to move beyond old boundaries, to listen to different voices, and to build a more open, participatory, and responsible academic space. Within this framework, the development of the integration of knowledge paradigm needs to be

directed toward forming an ecosystem of Islamic higher education capable of preserving tradition, reading the signs of the times, and preparing the future more wisely.

Ultimately, integrative-inclusive epistemology affirms that Islamic higher education must not stop at the transmission of knowledge, but must become a space for creating meaning, forming intellectual character, and developing humanitarian responsibility. This is in line with the assertion that Society 5.0 requires a balance between scientific skill and humanistic thought, so Islamic higher education must be able to improve its ecosystem of learning and teaching (Abdullah, 2026). It is in this context that bayani, burhani, and irfani must continue to be brought together so that Islamic higher education can give birth to human beings who are faithful, critical in thought, open in spirit, socially sensitive, and responsible for the future of civilization.

CONCLUSION

Islamic higher education stands at an important crossroads. On the one hand, it possesses a rich Islamic scholarly heritage. On the other hand, it faces a new world that is complex, disruptive, and interconnected. In this situation, the Islamization of knowledge needs to be appreciated as part of the history of Muslim intellectual revival, but this approach must be surpassed toward a paradigm of knowledge integration that is more inclusive, dialogical, critical, and transformative.

The integration of knowledge is not merely about bringing religion and science together symbolically. It is an effort to build a new epistemology that connects bayani, burhani, and irfani; that brings together revelation, reason, spiritual experience, scientific method, philosophy, ethics, and social responsibility.

Philosophy must be restored as the heart of academic life. Without philosophy, Islamic higher education will lose its critical power. Without science, religion risks losing its sensitivity to empirical reality. Without spirituality and ethics, science risks losing its humanistic direction.

The future of Islamic higher education depends greatly on the courage to build an integrative-interconnective ecosystem. This ecosystem must be able to give birth to human beings who are faithful, critical in thought, open to knowledge, sensitive to humanity, and responsible for the sustainability of the earth. This is the deepest meaning of the shift from the Islamization of Knowledge toward the Integration of Knowledge.

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