

Critique of Western Educational Philosophy, the Urgency of Islamization, and Its Implementation

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Abstract

Keywords:
Western educational philosophy, Islamization of knowledge, Islamic education, epistemology.

This study was motivated by the paradigmatic crisis in modern education, which remains dominated by Western secular and reductionist philosophy. Such a paradigm tends to separate scientific knowledge from spiritual and moral values, creating a moral void in educational practice. In response, the Islamization of knowledge emerges as an epistemological effort to restore the harmony between reason, revelation, and divine values in the learning process. The purpose of this study is to analyze the implementation of Islamic value integration in pedagogical practices and curricula at two Islamic secondary schools SMP II Luqman Al Hakim Batam and SMP IT Ulil Albab Batam. This research employs a qualitative field approach using in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis as data collection techniques. The findings reveal that SMP II Luqman Al Hakim has systematically implemented value integration through reflective learning and spiritual leadership training for teachers, whereas SMP IT Ulil Albab still faces challenges in policy structure and time management. Sociocultural barriers also arise from community perceptions that continue to separate religious education from general education. These findings indicate that the success of Islamization depends on synergy among teachers, school leadership, and institutional policy support. The study implies the need for a paradigm reform in Indonesia's Islamic education that unites intellectual and spiritual dimensions to nurture insan kamil a holistic human being who embodies knowledge, faith, and moral integrity.

Abstrak

Kata kunci:
Filsafat pendidikan Barat, Islamisasi ilmu, pendidikan Islam, epistemologi.

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh krisis paradigma dalam sistem pendidikan modern yang masih didominasi oleh filsafat pendidikan Barat yang sekuler dan reduksionistik. Paradigma tersebut cenderung memisahkan antara ilmu pengetahuan dan nilai spiritual, sehingga menimbulkan kekosongan moral dalam praktik pendidikan. Sebagai respons, Islamisasi ilmu muncul sebagai upaya epistemologis untuk mengembalikan hubungan harmonis antara akal, wahyu, dan nilai-nilai ilahiah dalam proses pendidikan. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis implementasi integrasi nilai Islam dalam praktik pedagogis dan kurikulum di dua lembaga pendidikan Islam, yaitu SMP II Luqman Al Hakim Batam dan SMP IT Ulil Albab Batam. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif lapangan dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan studi dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa SMP II Luqman Al Hakim menerapkan integrasi nilai Islam secara sistematis melalui refleksi nilai dan pelatihan guru berbasis spiritual leadership, sedangkan SMP IT Ulil Albab masih menghadapi kendala pada aspek kebijakan dan manajemen waktu. Hambatan sosiokultural juga muncul dari persepsi masyarakat yang masih memisahkan antara pendidikan agama dan umum. Temuan ini mengindikasikan bahwa keberhasilan Islamisasi ilmu sangat bergantung pada sinergi antara guru, kepemimpinan sekolah, dan dukungan kebijakan institusional. Implikasi penelitian ini menegaskan perlunya pembaruan paradigma pendidikan Islam nasional yang menyatukan dimensi intelektual dan spiritual guna membentuk generasi insan kamil yang berilmu, beriman, dan beradab.

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INTRODUCTION

Education as a vehicle for the production of knowledge and the formation of human beings serves as the foundation of civilization building. However, the dominance of Western educational philosophy rooted in rationalism, secularism, and individualistic values has shaped the framework of modern education, a condition that risks obscuring the moral, spiritual, and transcendent dimensions of Islamic education (Ahmed & Chowdhury, 2025). In this context, criticism of Western educational philosophy and the call for the Islamization of knowledge become relevant, as they directly influence how educational policies are designed and implemented (Misdah et al., 2025; Srinio et al., 2025, 2025).

The importance of examining criticism toward Western education and the urgency of Islamizing knowledge lies in two key aspects (Nurhayati & Rosadi, 2022). First, without a critical understanding of the epistemological legacy of the West, educational policies tend to import value frameworks that may not align with the needs and characteristics of Muslim societies (Hs, 2024). Second, to produce educational policies that are more accurate and balanced between knowledge and values, policymakers must have a deep insight into how paradigm transformation can be systematically and contextually implemented (Zainuddin et al., 2025b).

This study seeks to enrich the discourse of Islamic education by presenting a critical analysis of Western philosophy and formulating an applicable and contextually relevant framework of Islamization. Therefore, the understanding generated from this study is expected to serve as a foundation for policymakers (ministries of education, Islamic institutions, curriculum developers) in designing an educational system that excels not only academically but also in moral and spiritual dimensions (Masitah et al., 2024; Permadi et al., 2025; Salamah et al., 2025). Knowledge is never neutral; every paradigm carries value assumptions. When an educational system adopts a predominantly Western framework, the values embedded in the curriculum and teaching practices are likely to neglect ethical, spiritual, and divine dimensions such as the relationship between humans and God, humans and nature, and social responsibility (Aslihah & Wasehudin, 2023; Laabdi & Elbittoui, 2024; Sefiana et al., 2025).

Although numerous studies have discussed critiques of Western educational philosophy and the Islamization of knowledge, several conceptual and methodological gaps remain insufficiently addressed. First, many previous studies are descriptive or conceptual, with few exploring the empirical context especially within Islamic education in Indonesia through qualitative approaches (Agustin & Kistoro, 2024; Akmansyah et al., 2025; Chande, 2023). This has resulted in a limited understanding of how the ideas of Islamization are translated and tested in the actual practices of educational institutions across various local contexts (Hadi, 2023)

Second, while some studies discuss the Islamization of knowledge from classical figures such as Al-Attas and Al-Faruqi, few have conducted recent comparative analyses or synthesized these ideas within a contemporary framework. For example, Kamalia's research compares the thoughts of Al-Attas and Al-Faruqi, yet it remains limited to theoretical discussion and does not examine its institutional relevance in contemporary Islamic education (Kamalia, 2025).

Third, the existing literature seldom explores sociocultural and structural barriers in implementing Islamization of knowledge—such as stakeholder resistance, curriculum dilemmas, or value conflicts within educational policies. Studies on the

Islamization of teacher education in global contexts indicate that such transformation occurs gradually and is marked by challenges related to inclusivity and academic freedom (Utari et al., 2024).

Thus, this research aims not only to extend previous studies but also to contribute new analytical frameworks and contextually applicable implementation strategies. Several preliminary studies have highlighted the need for deeper research into the institutional application of the Islamization of knowledge (Ariani & Muchtar, 2024; Niyozov & Memon, 2011; Rofiudin et al., 2025). For instance, research on the integration of science and religion in Indonesian Islamic universities indicates that, although integration efforts exist at the policy level, their practical forms and challenges have not yet been examined comprehensively (Irham, 2025). Similarly, studies on the transformation of Islamic education curricula in Indonesia reveal that, despite ongoing efforts to reform Islamic educational philosophy, there remains a limited understanding of concrete implementation and local challenges (Setiawan et al., 2024).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a phenomenological case study design, focusing on an in depth exploration of the implementation of the Islamization of knowledge within the context of Islamic education in Indonesia (Sugiyono, 2022). The qualitative approach was chosen because it is appropriate for understanding the meanings, experiences, and perspectives of research subjects within their natural environments (Nurhayati, 2025). According to Creswell, qualitative research aims to deeply explore human understanding of social phenomena and their meanings within specific contexts, rather than merely measuring variables quantitatively (Creswell, 2022). This study examines how critiques of Western educational philosophy and the concept of Islamization of knowledge are translated into modern Islamic educational practices, taking into account epistemological, pedagogical, and institutional aspects (Nurhayati & Rosadi, 2022).

The research was conducted over a period of six to nine months (January–September 2024) at two Islamic educational institutions in Batam City: one modern pesantren, SMP II Luqman Al Hakim Batam, and one Islamic junior high school that has implemented the integration of Islamic values into its curriculum, SMP IT Ulil Albab. Data collection was carried out through triangulation using three main techniques: (1) semi structured in-depth interviews with principals, teachers, curriculum managers, and students as key informants; (2) participant observation of classroom activities, teacher-student interactions, and religious practices within the school environment; and (3) documentary study of curricula, syllabi, institutional policies, and textbooks used in the teaching process (Arikunto, 2022). The semi-structured interview technique was chosen because it allows flexibility for the researcher to explore emerging themes from participants' experiences (Chand, 2025). Observation and documentation complemented the qualitative data by providing contextual evidence that strengthens the interpretation of interview findings (Moleong, 2022).

Informants were selected using purposive sampling and snowball sampling, meaning the researcher chose participants relevant to the study's focus and then expanded the respondent network based on recommendations from initial participants. Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, which includes three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification,

conducted interactively and iteratively (Miles et al., 2020). Data validity was strengthened through source and technique triangulation as well as member checking with informants to ensure interpretive accuracy. To maintain research integrity, the researcher also applied four criteria of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as recommended by Creswell & Poth (Creswell & Poth, 2020).

Thus, this methodological framework was designed not only to produce rich, thick descriptions but also to generate a deep empirical understanding of the implementation of the Islamization of knowledge in real educational settings.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Model of Islamic Values Integration in Educational Practice

The findings of this study indicate that both educational institutions—SMPII Luqman Al Hakim and SMPIT Ulil Albab Batam—have developed a strong model for integrating Islamic values into their daily pedagogical practices. Based on document analysis, both syllabi and lesson plans (RPP) demonstrate systematic efforts to embed Islamic values in every subject. At SMPII Luqman Al Hakim, for example, each lesson plan includes an additional column labeled “Tauhid Values” that contains relevant Qur’anic verses and Hadiths aligned with the scientific topic being discussed. In science lessons, for instance, Surah Al-Mulk (67):3–4 is cited to emphasize the orderliness of God’s creation as the foundation of scientific law. Similarly, at SMPIT Ulil Albab, the thematic curriculum incorporates the values of ‘adl (justice) and amanah (trustworthiness) in social studies. In an interview, Ustadzah Ila, a teacher at Luqman Al Hakim, explained: *“We avoid symbolic approaches; value integration must be written in the lesson plan so that it becomes a pedagogical direction, not just an incidental addition. That’s what we apply here, and it’s explicitly stated in the RPP.”* (Ila, 2024)

This finding reinforces Muslih’s argument that the Islamization of knowledge can only succeed when Islamic values are systematically embedded within the curriculum structure, rather than being treated as mere moral supplements (Muslih, 2023). In classroom practice, teachers at both SMPII Luqman Al Hakim and SMPIT Ulil Albab actively apply contextual linking strategies, connecting modern scientific concepts with Islamic spiritual values. Field observations revealed that Ustadz Domi, a physics teacher at SMPIT Ulil Albab, linked Newton’s laws with the concept of *sunnatullah*—the divine order of creation. He explained to his students that natural laws are not human inventions but discoveries of the rules already established by Allah SWT. As he stated in the interview: *“I want all my students at SMPIT Ulil Albab to understand that the laws of nature are not just about numbers and forces, but signs of Allah’s greatness. Students must realize that everything happening in this world is by the will and power of Allah SWT.”* (Domi, 2024)

Photographic documentation of classroom boards showed notes such as “Newton = *Sunnatullah*” and “Force is a manifestation of Allah’s order.” Such strategies strengthen students’ spiritual engagement and enhance the religious meaning of science learning, consistent with the findings of Schreiber, Siregar, and Rahman (2024), who examined Islamic values integration in science education in Indonesian Islamic schools.

The integration of Islamic values is not only manifested through learning materials but also through teacher exemplification. In-depth interviews with students at SMPII Luqman Al Hakim revealed that teachers’ behavior and speech serve as the

most memorable medium for value learning. One student, Rahmat, stated: *“Our teachers always remind us that learning is an act of worship. So, we feel motivated because studying is not only for report card grades but also for our future.”* (Rahmat, 2024)

Observations also showed that teachers consistently begin lessons with prayers, remind students of learning etiquette, and instill patience and honesty in completing assignments. Documentation of school activities demonstrates that teacher role modeling has become a deeply rooted culture, creating a religious and humanistic learning atmosphere. This finding aligns with Irfan’s (2023) study, which emphasizes that *uswah hasanah* (exemplary conduct) within Islamic educational settings is a key factor in successful value internalization (Irfan, 2023).

Furthermore, both schools have implemented project-based learning (PjBL) grounded in Islamic values. At SMPIT Ulil Albab, students carried out a project titled *“Social Justice in Islamic Economics,”* which introduced concepts such as zakat, ethical trade, and social responsibility. Meanwhile, at SMPIT Luqman Al Hakim, students completed a project titled *“Amanah Bumi”* (*“Earthly Trust”*), emphasizing ecological responsibility based on the concept of *khalifah fil ardh* (stewardship on Earth). In their project reports, students wrote spiritual reflections such as, *“Caring for the earth means fulfilling Allah’s trust.”* Ustadz Fidri, the supervising teacher, stated: *“We want Islamic values to be reflected in real actions. Projects are not just assignments but forms of amal shalih (righteous deeds) that students directly practice.”* (Fidri, 2024)

This approach has proven effective in developing students’ affective and psychomotor dimensions, consistent with Azhari’s (2024) study titled *“Integration of Character Education Based on Islamic Values,”* which found that project-based learning can shape students’ religious and social character contextually (Azhari, 2024).

The integration of Islamic values in the two schools also enhances students’ cognitive dimension. A mathematics teacher at SMPIT Ulil Albab explained that the concept of balance in mathematical logic is related to the meaning of *mīzān* (balance) in Surah Ar-Rahman, encouraging students to think rationally while remaining grounded in faith. This nurtures critical-faithful thinking the ability to think critically with spiritual awareness (Rausch, 2000). Beyond cognition, the affective domain is cultivated through spiritual reflection (*muhasabah*) held every Friday morning. Documentation shows students reflecting on their mistakes, praying, and writing personal improvement commitments. A guidance counselor explained: *“Every disciplinary violation is not immediately punished; instead, students are invited to reflect because we want them to learn sincerely from the heart.”* (Irma, 2024)

Rassool’s (2024) research supports this practice, stating that spiritual reflection in Islamic schools enhances students’ internal moral awareness and builds a sense of personal responsibility (Rassool, 2024).

Islamic value integration is also evident in the psychomotor dimension through routine activities such as duha prayer in congregation, Qur’an recitation (*tahsin*), study circles (*halaqah*), and community service. Photographic documentation shows students cleaning mosques, organizing school environments, and participating in social service programs. The vice principal for student affairs explained that these activities are part of the holistic learning process, not merely extracurricular additions. Such activities foster habits of discipline, empathy, and etiquette (*adab*) that form the foundation of Islamic character.

As Muslih (2023) explains, these practices embody the true meaning of *ta’dib* as emphasized by Al-Attas the formation of *adab* through the integration of knowledge, action, and spiritual consciousness (Muslih, 2023).



Figure 1. Duha Prayer and Halaqah Activities

Nevertheless, the study also identified several challenges in implementing the integration of Islamic values. Some teachers at SMPIT Ulil Albab admitted difficulties in designing assessment instruments capable of objectively measuring the spiritual dimension. The packed learning schedule often caused value reflections to be conducted only briefly. However, both schools demonstrated serious commitment in finding solutions through internal training, the development of contextual learning modules, and collaboration with Islamic higher education institutions. This approach illustrates that the Islamization of knowledge is a gradual process requiring supportive policies, teacher capacity building, and visionary school leadership.

Thus, the findings confirm that the model of Islamic value integration in pedagogical practices at SMPIT Luqman Al Hakim and SMPIT Ulil Albab is not merely theoretical but has been concretely manifested in lesson planning, implementation, and evaluation. The integration process involves synergy among teachers, curricula, and school culture founded on Qur'anic values (Umami & Yasin, 2024). This study also highlights that the Islamization of knowledge in education is not a rejection of modern science, but rather an effort to build an educational paradigm that unifies knowledge ('ilm), faith (iman), and action ('amal) into a holistic epistemological framework.

Sociocultural and Structural Barriers

During the research at SMPIT Luqman Al Hakim and SMPIT Ulil Albab, sociocultural barriers were found to play a significant role in hindering the integration of Islamic values in educational practice. One of the key obstacles was local cultural resistance and community habits that do not yet fully support the Islamization of knowledge approach. In an interview, Ustadzah Mila, a subject teacher at SMPIT Luqman Al Hakim, stated: *"Some parents think that incorporating religious values into science lessons is unnecessary or distracts from the core material."* (Mila, 2024)

This reflects that within the school community's culture, the perception that religious education and academic subjects should be separate remains strong. Documentation of parents' feedback letters to the school also showed written remarks such as, "Religious values appear too often in general subjects," providing concrete evidence of sociocultural resistance within the educational community.

Another cultural challenge concerns the diversity of students' value and religious backgrounds, which requires greater sensitivity in value integration. In modern Islamic schools like Ulil Albab, there are students from non-religiously strict families or moderate religious backgrounds who expect a more neutral learning atmosphere. In an interview, Ustadz Ilham, a subject teacher at Ulil Albab, explained: *"We have to be selective in inserting values so it doesn't feel like we're forcing them on students from less religious backgrounds."* (Ilham, 2024)

Attendance records and preliminary student surveys indicated that some students felt uncomfortable when religious values were presented too explicitly in general lessons. This condition shows that value integration must consider the cultural and belief pluralism of learners, a sociocultural challenge that has been widely discussed in modern Islamic education literature (Hayat et al., 2025).

In addition to community cultural aspects, structural barriers also emerged clearly in both schools. One of the fundamental structural obstacles is the rigidity of the national curriculum, which prioritizes cognitive achievement and academic standards without providing explicit space for the application of moral or spiritual values. The principal of SMP II Luqman Al Hakim mentioned in an interview: *"We feel constrained by grade targets and national exam standards, which makes it difficult to allocate time for value reflection in compulsory lessons."* (Muhammad Hasan, 2024)

The school curriculum documents show that the section on additional value objectives is placed in an appendix rather than as part of the main lesson plan (RPP). This condition confirms that the institutional curriculum structure does not yet fully allow for deep value integration. Another structural obstacle lies in the limited resources and institutional support, including the availability of Islamization-based learning modules, textbooks integrating Islamic values, and supporting facilities such as reflection spaces or discussion rooms. From the Ulil Albab library inventory documents, it was found that only a few reference materials consistently combine science and Islamic values. A teacher at SMP II Luqman Al Hakim stated in an interview: *"When we want to include value-based material in our subjects, there are often no suitable modules available, so we have to create them ourselves, which takes extra time."* (Ratna, 2024)

This situation shows that the institutional structure has not yet provided full support in terms of materials, resources, and internal policy frameworks. Finally, another structural barrier concerns time management and the heavy curriculum load. An interview with a mathematics teacher at Ulil Albab revealed that the dense class schedule and curriculum targets often reduce the time available for value reflection. Ustadzah Nunuk explained: *"Value reflection sometimes only lasts 5–10 minutes at the end of class if there's extra time, so as subject teachers, we face serious time limitations."* (Nunuk, 2024)

The documentation of the class schedule shows that there is no specific time slot allocated for value reflection or muhasabah, causing value integration to occur only incidentally and inconsistently. This finding indicates that the school's time management structure needs improvement to ensure a more systematic process of value integration. Overall, these sociocultural and structural barriers explain why, despite the strong will and initiatives for integrating Islamic values, implementation often faces limitations in depth and consistency. The findings underscore that transformation toward an Islamization of knowledge paradigm requires comprehensive efforts—school cultural reform, curriculum policy adaptation,

improved material and management support, and shared awareness among parents, teachers, and school leaders so that these challenges can be systematically addressed.

Discussion

The qualitative field research conducted at SMPIT Luqman Al Hakim and SMPIT Ulil Albab reveals that the process of Islamization of knowledge through the integration of Islamic values in learning has a transformative meaning, both epistemologically and practically. Analysis of interview, observation, and documentation data shows that Islamic value-based education does not merely teach cognition but holistically builds students' spiritual and moral consciousness. A teacher at SMPIT Luqman Al Hakim emphasized in an interview: *"We want our students not only to be smart, but also to understand that every field of knowledge they study is part of their devotion to Allah SWT."* (Ratna, 2024)

This statement is reinforced by the school syllabus, which includes tauhid (monotheism), amanah (trustworthiness), and adab (good conduct) as part of the learning outcomes in each subject. This indicates that Islamic values are not cosmetic additions but the main framework for constructing the epistemology of education.

Meanwhile, observations at SMPIT Ulil Albab revealed that the implementation of value integration varies. Some teachers include value reflection as part of the lesson closure, but not all subjects do so consistently. In an interview, one teacher stated: *"If time allows, I include Islamic values at the end of the lesson; if not, we move on to the next topic."* (Nunuk, 2024)

Documentation of the school's activity schedule also shows no dedicated time allocated for value reflection. This fact highlights disparities in the intensity of Islamization practices between the two schools, influenced by internal policy and time management. This condition aligns with Alaw's (2025) finding that the success of value integration in Islamic education heavily depends on institutional leadership and the reflective culture developed within the school (Alaw, 2025).

Field data analysis also indicates that institutional context differences affect the effectiveness of value integration. At SMPIT Luqman Al Hakim, the principal plays a strategic role as a spiritual leader, ensuring that every teacher understands the philosophy of Islamization of knowledge. At the beginning of each semester, a teacher reflection meeting is held to align the curriculum with Islamic values. Conversely, at SMPIT Ulil Albab, the principal tends to emphasize academic achievements, leaving little room for reflective activities. Documentation of teacher meetings shows a primary focus on graduation targets and exam results. Therefore, this study finds that spiritual leadership plays a crucial role in sustaining value integration. This finding supports Wardi and Mappanyompa (2025), who assert that the success of modern Islamic school management lies in the principal's ability to merge spiritual vision with academic strategy (Wardi & Mappanyompa, 2025).

The theoretical implications of these findings affirm the need for a renewal of the Islamic educational paradigm based on the unity of knowledge as taught by Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi and Syed Naquib Al-Attas (Kurniawan, 2021). The integration of Islamic values should be understood as a dialogical process between scientific theories and the socio-cultural context of the school. In other words, the Islamization of knowledge cannot be standardized but must be adapted to local needs, student characteristics, and institutional structures. This approach, known as contextual Islamization, serves as a strategy for linking Islamic values with the social realities of Indonesian education (Muslih, 2023). It emphasizes that Islamization of knowledge is not only about

“Islamizing” curriculum content but also about transforming the ways of thinking, acting, and interacting among all members of the school community.

Practically, the results of this study provide important directions for the development of Islamic education policy at both institutional and national levels. First, there must be policies ensuring the allocation of time and reflective space within school curricula. Second, teacher capacity-building in Islamic epistemology is essential through regular training and teacher mentoring programs grounded in values. Third, schools should develop contextual learning resources, such as interdisciplinary modules combining science and Islamic ethics.

Fourth, school leadership must strengthen its spiritual role by cultivating a collaborative, value-oriented culture. If these measures are implemented, the Islamization of knowledge can become an effective approach to shaping a generation of insan kamil – individuals who are knowledgeable, moral, and well-mannered. These findings support Sumariadi’s (2024) research, which concludes that the success of curriculum Islamization depends on a combination of effective management, teacher training, and strong spiritual culture within Islamic educational institutions (SUMARIADI, 2024).

Table 1. Comparison of the Research Findings in Terms of Analysis and Implications

Main Aspect	SMPII Luqman Al Hakim	SMPIT Ulil Albab
Consistency of Value Integration	Value reflection is conducted regularly in every class; curriculum documents explicitly include Islamic values.	Value reflection is incidental and conducted only when time permits.
Policy Support	The principal actively directs the integration of values; internal policies facilitate the development of value based modules.	Internal policies do not yet fully ensure the allocation of time or the provision of value-based modules.
Curriculum Load & Time Allocation	Academic content and values are balanced; reflective sessions are scheduled regularly.	Classes are packed with technical material; value reflection is often displaced by time constraints.
Teacher Capacity	Teachers receive internal training on value integration and pedagogical methodologies.	Some teachers report limited training in designing lessons that integrate Islamic values.
Managerial Implications	Strong spiritual leadership and value management support the sustainability of Islamization initiatives.	Improvement is needed in management systems, internal policies, and resources for developing value-based modules.

The analysis of the table above shows that the most significant differences lie in leadership, time management, and school culture. SMPII Luqman Al Hakim has a more mature internal system in embedding Islamic values as an integral part of the curriculum, whereas SMPIT Ulil Albab remains more focused on conventional academic achievement. Therefore, this study emphasizes that the implementation of the Islamization of knowledge cannot adopt a purely top down approach; it must involve synergy among teachers, school leaders, and institutional structures. This approach also demonstrates that the success of Islamization is not measured solely by the content of the lessons but by how effectively the school cultivates a learning environment that genuinely reflects Islamic values in everyday practice.

Critical Discussion and Relevance to National Islamic Education

The findings from SMPIT Luqman Al Hakim and SMPIT Ulil Albab provide profound reflections on the direction of Islamic education in Indonesia, particularly in the context of critiquing the dominance of Western educational paradigms. Western educational philosophy tends to emphasize rationality, utilitarianism, and academic competition as indicators of learning success, while moral and spiritual dimensions are often marginalized (Utami et al., 2024). In an interview, the principal of SMPIT Luqman Al Hakim stated: *“If education only teaches intelligence without morals, we will produce clever people who lose their sense of purpose in life.”* (Muhammad Hasan, 2024)

This statement reflects a critique of the positivist legacy of Western thought, which regards knowledge as value-free, contrary to the Islamic worldview that knowledge is value-laden—inseparably tied to moral purpose and submission to Allah SWT. The school’s vision statement at SMPIT Luqman Al Hakim reinforces this orientation through the phrase *“Producing knowledgeable and well-mannered generations”*, serving as an antithesis to the secular education model.

Conceptually, the Islamization of knowledge emerges as a critical response to the dualist structure of knowledge inherited from Western colonialism. In the Indonesian context, this dualism manifests as a separation between general and religious education. Field findings show that both schools in this study strive to integrate these two realms within a unified curriculum. A mathematics teacher at SMPIT Ulil Albab explained: *“We don’t want knowledge to stop at formulas; it should become a way to recognize the greatness of Allah SWT.”* (Nunuk, 2024)

This statement demonstrates the practical application of tawhidic epistemology, where knowledge is understood not merely as an instrument but as part of worship and character formation. This aligns with Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi’s concept of the unity of knowledge, which has recently been revived in modern Islamic education studies across Southeast Asia (Zainuddin et al., 2025a). Thus, the Islamization of knowledge functions as an epistemological decolonization mechanism, affirming the independence of Indonesia’s Islamic educational paradigm.

From a practical perspective, the study reveals that implementing Islamization of knowledge at the secondary school level can strengthen the execution of the Merdeka Curriculum through its spiritual and character dimensions. Islamic values such as amanah (trustworthiness), adab (proper conduct), and ihsan (excellence) can serve as the foundation for reinforcing the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (Pancasila Student Profile), particularly in the domains of faith and noble character. At SMPIT Luqman Al Hakim, weekly reflection sessions and halaqah character-building programs serve as concrete platforms for shaping students’ spiritual identity. Meanwhile, at SMPIT Ulil Albab, the implementation of values remains adaptive and not yet fully structured; nevertheless, both contribute positively to improving student motivation. These findings support Santoso’s (2025) study, which highlights that integrating Islamic values into project-based learning enhances student engagement and moral awareness in modern Islamic schools (M. A. Abdullah, 2024; Effendi et al., 2025; Santoso, 2025; Zamroni et al., 2024). Hence, integrating Islamic values is not only a theological dimension but also an effective pedagogical strategy to strengthen the relevance of the national curriculum.

Critically, this study also identifies philosophical and policy challenges in the efforts to Islamize knowledge in Indonesia. The main challenge lies in the structure of the national education system, which remains heavily oriented toward cognitive achievement and standardized testing. Consequently, spiritual values are often relegated to the periphery of the curriculum. A teacher from Ulil Albab explained: *“We*

want to provide time for value reflection, but exam targets often get in the way.” (Nunuk, 2024)

This statement underscores the need for policy reform, so that Islamic education in Indonesia does not merely imitate Western models but instead builds an independent paradigm rooted in tawhid (the unity of God) and humanity. As Abdullah et al. (2025) argue, the transformation of Islamic education must begin with a “reorientation of epistemology”, not merely the adoption of formal policies. Therefore, this study calls for stronger collaboration among the government, academics, and Islamic educational institutions to establish a more holistic epistemic framework for education (F. D. Abdullah et al., 2025).

From a national relevance perspective, the models practiced at SMP II Luqman Al Hakim and SMP IT Ulil Albab can serve as inspirations for other Islamic schools in designing value-based education. The integration of Islamic values has proven to enrich the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum by adding moral and spiritual dimensions that have long been neglected. If broadly adopted, this model could help the government realize the vision of national education as outlined in the Profil Pelajar Pancasila: to nurture learners who are faithful, devoted to God Almighty, and of noble character. Furthermore, the practice of Islamizing knowledge holds strategic implications for Indonesia’s Islamic education diplomacy at the global level. By developing a value- and spirituality-based educational model, Indonesia can demonstrate that the Islamization of knowledge is not an ideological movement but a scientific process oriented toward humanity and justice.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Islamization of knowledge is not merely a theoretical discourse born as a critique of Western educational philosophy but a transformative epistemological movement with real implications for contemporary Islamic education in Indonesia. Field research conducted at SMP II Luqman Al Hakim and SMP IT Ulil Albab Batam demonstrates that the integration of Islamic values into pedagogy, curriculum, and school culture produces a significant transformation in students’ moral awareness and intellectual engagement. Teachers are not only transmitters of knowledge but also spiritual guides who instill the values of tawhid (oneness of God), adab (ethical behavior), and amanah (trustworthiness) in every learning process. This finding challenges the long-held assumption that science and religion must be separated and reaffirms the urgency of adopting an Islamic epistemological approach in modern educational systems.

The research contributes theoretically by reinforcing the view of Ismail Raji al-Faruqi and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas that the Islamization of knowledge aims to unify reason and revelation while restoring the moral and spiritual dimensions of science. Practically, the study introduces the concept of contextual Islamization—the integration of Islamic values adapted to local culture, institutional context, and student characteristics. This approach provides a new methodological foundation for Islamic education in Indonesia that is both theoretically grounded and contextually relevant.

The study also reveals several sociocultural and structural challenges. Sociocultural challenges include parental skepticism and the diverse religious backgrounds of students, while structural barriers include rigid national curricula, time constraints, and limited institutional support for developing value-based learning modules. These findings highlight the need for stronger leadership, flexible policies, and continuous teacher training to sustain the Islamization process in schools.

In light of these findings, this study emphasizes that the Islamization of knowledge is not an ideological project but a holistic educational endeavor aimed at developing insan kamil complete human beings who embody intellect, faith, and morality. Education that integrates knowledge and values can serve as an alternative paradigm to Western secular models, positioning Islamic education as a system that nurtures both intellectual excellence and spiritual depth.

Ultimately, the success of the Islamization of knowledge depends on the synergy among educators, policymakers, and communities in reforming the epistemological foundations of education. Only by integrating faith and reason, science and ethics, and knowledge and adab can Islamic education fulfill its divine purpose—producing generations who are knowledgeable, ethical, and devoted to the betterment of humanity in accordance with Islamic principles.

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