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Streams of Islamic Education and General Education

Arif Fajri[1], Ida Zahara Adibah[2]
[1] *Universitas Darul Ulum Islamic Centre Sudirman, Semarang, Indonesia*
[2] *Universitas Darul Ulum Islamic Centre Sudirman, Semarang, Indonesia*

Ariffajri453@gmail.com

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Abstrak

This article aims to analyze the schools of Islamic education and general education through a comparative-conceptual literature review. This study is motivated by the dichotomous tendency in reading Islamic education and general education, as if they are two completely separate areas. Islamic education is often narrowed down to normative-religious education, while general education is often understood as rational-secular education that has no connection to transcendental values. This study uses a qualitative method based on library research with a descriptive-analytical approach. Data were obtained from relevant articles and books on the philosophy of Islamic education, the philosophy of general education, the epistemology of Islamic education, the history of classical Islamic education, curriculum development, and learning methods. The results of the study indicate that Islamic education has an integrative character because it connects revelation, reason, morals, experience, spirituality, life skills, and social responsibility. The conservative school emphasizes moral development and an orientation towards the afterlife; the religious-rational school emphasizes the balance of revelation and reason; while the pragmatic school emphasizes the relevance of education to social needs and the common good. Meanwhile, general education, through essentialism, perennialism, progressivism, reconstructionism, existentialism, constructivism, and humanism, contributes to cultural inheritance, the search for truth, experiential learning, social change, individual freedom, knowledge construction, and the humanization of students. The synthesis of this article asserts that Islamic education and general education can be viewed dialogically through an integrative-transformative educational model that balances spiritual values, critical rationality, meaningful experiences, socio-practical skills, and respect for human dignity.

Keywords: **Philosophy of Islamic Education, General Education, Educational Streams, Curriculum, Learning**

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INTRODUCTION

Education has never been a neutral activity solely concerned with the transfer of knowledge. Behind every educational concept lies a perspective on humanity, knowledge, values, society, and the purpose of life. Therefore, education always requires a philosophical foundation to ensure that goals, curricula, methods, and evaluations do not move mechanically. Thabrani (2015) emphasized that education is a normative and prescriptive domain because it always raises questions about what kind of person is to be formed and what values are to be passed on. Similarly, Nasution (2022) positions Islamic educational philosophy as a tool of thought that analyzes education through ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Therefore, the study of Islamic educational schools and general education is crucial because both contain fundamental ideas that influence the direction of education.

Islamic education has normative roots in revelation, but its historical development demonstrates a dynamic character. Since the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be

upon him), Islamic education has taken place through the development of faith, worship, morals, and community development. The home, mosque, kuttab (Islamic study group), and halaqah (Islamic religious circle) serve as the initial spaces for the transmission of knowledge and the internalization of values. In subsequent periods, particularly during the Umayyad and Abbasid periods, Islamic education developed through the strengthening of linguistics, interpretation, hadith, jurisprudence, philosophy, medicine, libraries, translation movements, and the House of Wisdom (Surono & Ifendi, 2021). These developments demonstrate that Islamic education, from its inception, was not solely focused on ritual but also encompassed intellectual, social, and civilizational dimensions. Aris (2023) even emphasizes that Islamic education has an integrative-interconnective orientation because it seeks to harmonize the relationship between God, nature, revelation, and reason.

In the development of Islamic thought, Islamic educational philosophy has given rise to several key characteristics. Arifin et al. (2024) and Subiantoro and Mansur (2025) outline three important schools of thought within Islamic educational philosophy: conservative, religious-rational, and pragmatic. The conservative school, often associated with the thought of Al-Ghazali, emphasizes moral development, purification of the soul, the role model of teachers, and an orientation toward the afterlife. The religio-rational school, which can be linked to the tradition of the Ikhwan al-Shafa and other rational Muslim thinkers, asserts that religious and rational knowledge should not be in conflict. The pragmatic school, often represented by the thought of Ibn Khaldun, views education as a means of equipping humans with social skills, life skills, and readiness to face the realities of society. These three schools demonstrate that Islamic education simultaneously encompasses spiritual, rational, moral, and social dimensions.

Meanwhile, general education also has a diverse map of schools. Iswantir (2017) explains that essentialism, perennialism, progressivism, reconstructionism, and existentialism have different philosophical emphases. Essentialism emphasizes the transmission of core values and knowledge; perennialism emphasizes eternal truth and intellectual discipline; progressivism emphasizes experience, student interests, and problem-solving; reconstructionism views education as an instrument of social change; and existentialism places a premium on the freedom and authenticity of individual choice. Thabrani (2015) adds that the philosophy of general education cannot be separated from discussions of reality, knowledge, values, humans, and society. Within the curriculum framework, Nursikin (2016) suggests that progressivism, constructivism, and humanism can contribute to more flexible, participatory, and student-centered learning.

The main problem emerging in educational discourse is the dichotomous tendency in interpreting Islamic education and general education. Islamic education is often narrowed to formal religious education, while general education is often understood as secular education that stands outside of transcendental values. This understanding is inadequate because it ignores the breadth of Islamic educational epistemology and the diversity of values within general education. Zahrani et al. (2022) explain that the source of knowledge in Islamic education relies not only on divine verses in the form of the Qur'an and Sunnah, but also on insaniyah verses in the form of human potential and kauniyah verses in the form of natural order. This means that Islamic education recognizes revelation, reason, experience, empirical reality, and scientific validation as part of the knowledge development process. Therefore, the absolute separation between religious knowledge and general knowledge lacks a strong epistemological basis.

Critique of this dichotomy is increasingly important as education faces rapid social change. Modernization, globalization, technological development, societal pluralism, changing job demands, and moral crises demand an education system that is not only cognitively robust, but also ethically robust and socially adaptive. Ichsan (2019) emphasizes that Islamic education material cannot simply be limited to normative-doctrinal reasoning but needs to be developed through historical, contextual, purificatory, dynamic, and applied reasoning. On the other hand, Fathoni (2015) points out that effective learning requires attention to the psychological state of students, a comfortable learning environment, and active engagement through somatic, auditory, visual, and intellectual elements. Education that emphasizes only memorization risks fostering shallow symbolic understanding; conversely, education that emphasizes only technical skills without a foundation in values risks producing productive individuals with poor moral orientation.

Beyond formal institutions, Islamic education also lives within traditions, families, communities, and cultural communities. Jauhari (2024), for example, demonstrated that local traditions can serve as a medium for internalizing the values of faith, worship, morals, family education, environmental awareness, mutual cooperation, and social solidarity. These findings broaden the understanding that Islamic education occurs not only through the school curriculum but also through social practices that incorporate symbols, values, and collective experiences. Within the framework of student development, Anam (2021) emphasized that primary and secondary education must address the physical, spiritual, cognitive, socio-emotional, moral, and physical development, as well as the students' interests, talents, and dominant potential. Therefore, integrative education is not sufficient to simply connect religion and science but must also address the development of the whole person.

Based on previous studies, there are still research gaps that need to be addressed. Some studies have explained schools of Islamic educational philosophy; others have discussed schools of general education, the history of classical Islamic education, curriculum development, the epistemology of Islamic education, or learning methods. However, these studies have not all developed a comprehensive comparative synthesis that brings together Islamic education and general education in relation to their philosophical foundations, curriculum, learning methods, evaluation, and human development. This article attempts to fill this gap by constructing a comparative-conceptual reading that positions Islamic education and general education in a dialogical relationship, not in binary opposition.

Thus, the purpose of this article is to analyze the schools of Islamic education and general education, formulate their intersections and differences, and explain their implications for curriculum development and integrative learning. This article is not intended to merge Islamic education with general education or vice versa, but rather to demonstrate that the two can enrich each other when read critically and selectively. Islamic education provides an ethical-transcendental orientation, spirituality, morality, and welfare, while general education provides philosophical, pedagogical, curricular, and social tools that can be contextualized. The synthesis of the two is directed toward an integrative-transformative educational model, namely education that balances spiritual values, critical rationality, meaningful experiences, socio-practical skills, and respect for human dignity.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative library research method with a descriptive-analytical approach. The choice of library method is based on the study's purpose, which is to examine ideas, concepts, categories, and implications of educational thought from a range of relevant literature. Because the primary focus of this article is Islamic and general education schools of thought, the analysis focuses on conceptual readings of their philosophical foundations, sources of values, knowledge orientations, curricula, learning methods, evaluation, and the possibility of integrating the two.

The research data sources are divided into two groups. First, core references, namely literature that directly discusses the history of classical Islamic education, schools of Islamic educational philosophy, classical-modern schools of thought, and the implementation of these schools of thought in curriculum and learning. Core references include studies by Surono and Ifendi (2021), Arifin et al. (2024), Iswantir (2017), Nursikin (2016), and Subiantoro and Mansur (2025). Second, supporting references, namely additional literature used to strengthen the philosophical, epistemological, curricular, pedagogical, and sociocultural dimensions of the article. Supporting references include works by Aris (2023), Nasution (2022), Thabrani (2015), Zahrani et al. (2022), Ichsan (2019), Anam (2021), Fathoni (2015), and Jauhari (2024).

Reference selection was based on several considerations. First, the content's relevance to the article's focus, namely Islamic education, general education, educational philosophy, curriculum, learning, epistemology, and community-based education. Second, the references' relevance in meeting the reviewer's needs to strengthen the theoretical foundation and expand the literature. Third, the interconnectedness of the references in building a synthesis, particularly regarding the relationship between revelation, reason, experience, values, skills, and social responsibility. Fourth, the academic merit of the sources, whether in the form of scientific journal articles or academic books discussing philosophy and education.

Data collection techniques were conducted through documentation, namely tracing, reading, noting, and categorizing the main ideas of each reference. Each source was read with attention to the publication's identity, study objectives, main theories or concepts, research methods, key findings, study limitations, and its relevance to the article manuscript. This reading focused not only on descriptive content but also on the argumentative position of each reference in strengthening the structure of the article.

Data analysis was conducted in four stages. First, data reduction, which involved selecting ideas relevant to the focus of the article and ignoring sections not directly related to Islamic education and general education. Second, thematic categorization, which involved grouping the data into themes of Islamic education, general education, epistemology, curriculum, learning methods, evaluation, and integrative models. Third, conceptual comparison, which involved comparing Islamic education and general education based on ontological, epistemological, axiological, curricular, methodological, and evaluative aspects. Fourth, critical synthesis, which involved identifying the relationships, differences, and common ground between Islamic education and general education to formulate the concept of integrative-transformative education.

To maintain source traceability, each reference was recorded based on its academic function. Core references served as the primary basis for the discussion, while supporting

references were used to strengthen specific sections requiring further elaboration. In this way, references were not added as a shortcut, but rather placed according to the needs of the argument. This article uses the American Psychological Association's seventh edition citation style for consistency in referencing.

This research has methodological limitations. It does not utilize observation, interviews, or field data collection. Therefore, the study results are not intended to empirically describe educational practices at a specific institution. The article's findings are conceptual in nature, a synthesis of ideas that can serve as a basis for further research, whether in the form of field research, curriculum development, or the formulation of integrative learning models.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Classical Islamic Education as a Historical and Philosophical Foundation

The study shows that Islamic education cannot be separated from the historical development of the Muslim community. From its earliest days, Islamic education served as a process for the formation of faith, worship, morals, knowledge, and social order. During the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), education took place through direct guidance of his companions, both in homes, mosques, and social spaces that enabled the internalization of values. At this stage, Islamic education was not solely oriented toward reading or memorization, but also fostered religious awareness, moral responsibility, and social solidarity.

Subsequent developments in Islamic education saw the expansion of institutions and scholarly materials. Homes, mosques, kuttab (Islamic boarding schools), halaqah (Islamic circles), libraries, madrasas, and the House of Wisdom (Bayt al-Hikmah) became part of the educational space that played a crucial role in shaping the Islamic intellectual tradition. Surono and Ifendi (2021) explain that classical Islamic education evolved from basic religious education to a broader educational system, particularly during the Abbasid period, when religious studies, language, philosophy, medicine, literature, and science experienced significant development. This development demonstrates that classical Islamic education has both religious and intellectual dimensions.

Philosophically, classical Islamic education demonstrates that revelation and reason do not have to be positioned as opposites. Revelation provides value direction, while reason functions to understand, develop, and contextualize knowledge. Aris (2023) asserts that Islamic educational philosophy has an integrative orientation because it seeks to connect God, humanity, nature, revelation, and reason. This view is crucial to reject the notion that Islamic education operates solely within the realm of doctrine. In fact, throughout its history, Islamic education has been a fertile space for dialogue between religious knowledge, philosophy, science, language, and the social needs of society.

The elasticity of classical Islamic education is also evident in its ability to adapt its institutional form to the needs of the times. Mosques can function as both centers of worship and knowledge; kuttabs serve as spaces for basic learning; halaqahs serve as forums for scholarly discussion; while libraries and the House of Wisdom serve as centers for translation, research, and scientific development. Thus, classical Islamic education

cannot be understood merely as a legacy of the past, but as historical evidence that Islamic education has adaptive, dialogical, and productive potential in building civilization.

However, the history of classical Islamic education also requires a critical reading. The strength of classical Islamic education lies in the integration of knowledge, manners, teachers, community, and spiritual orientation. However, if the classical heritage is understood only as a form to be formally repeated, Islamic education can lose its contextual power. Therefore, what needs to be addressed is not merely its institutional form, but also its fundamental principles: the integration of knowledge and values, respect for teachers, intellectual tradition, moral formation, and openness to the development of knowledge.

Conservative Stream in Islamic Education

The conservative school of Islamic education places religion, morality, and spiritual development at the core of education. This school is often associated with the thinking of Al-Ghazali, who emphasized purification of the soul, etiquette, the role model of teachers, control of desires, and an orientation toward the afterlife. From this perspective, knowledge is viewed not only as a means of acquiring worldly skills, but also as a means of drawing closer to God and developing morally upright individuals. Arifin et al. (2024) and Subiantoro and Mansur (2025) show that the conservative school places great emphasis on moral education, fostering worship, memorization, and the ethical relationship between educators and students.

The main strength of the conservative school lies in its ability to maintain the moral direction of education. Education is not allowed to become a technical activity solely pursuing administrative achievements, academic grades, or job skills. Within this framework, students are viewed as individuals who must be guided spiritually and morally. Nasution (2022) explains that Islamic education is oriented toward the formation of a perfect human being, a human being who integrates divine, intellectual, spiritual, and moral elements. Therefore, conservative schools of thought play a crucial role in maintaining an ethical-transcendental orientation in education.

However, conservative schools of thought carry risks when implemented in a closed and non-dialogical manner. An overly strong emphasis on memorization, teacher authority, and the reproduction of tradition can diminish the scope of education for critical analysis and responses to social change. Criticism of conservative schools of thought does not imply a rejection of Islamic morality, spirituality, or scholarly traditions. Rather, it addresses the potential narrowing of education if Islamic values are taught solely as doctrine to be accepted, without a process of understanding, reflection, and contextualization. Therefore, conservative schools of thought remain relevant as long as they serve as a moral foundation open to scholarly dialogue and the needs of contemporary society.

Religious-Rational Stream in Islamic Education

The religio-rational school emphasizes that Islamic education must provide a balanced place for revelation and reason. In this school, religious and rational knowledge are not positioned as mutually exclusive domains. Revelation becomes the source of values and orientation, while reason becomes the instrument for understanding, interpreting, developing, and applying these values in life. Arifin et al. (2024) explain that

the religio-rational school allows for the development of broader knowledge, including rational and empirical sciences that benefit human life.

The strength of the religio-rational school is clearly evident when viewed through the epistemology of Islamic education. Zahrani et al. (2022) state that the sources of knowledge in Islamic education include divine verses in the form of the Qur'an and Sunnah, human verses in the form of human potential, and Kauniyah verses in the form of natural order. This framework demonstrates that Islamic education does not reject rationality, experience, observation, and scientific verification. Instead, Islamic education provides an epistemological foundation for connecting revelation, reason, humans, and nature within a single framework of knowledge.

The religio-rational school is highly relevant to contemporary education. Today's students live in a complex, pluralistic society, flooded with information. They are not satisfied with simply being given normative answers; they also need to be trained to understand the reasons, foundations, thought processes, and implications of knowledge. Ichsan (2019) emphasizes that Islamic education needs to connect texts with context, normativity with historicity, and religious teachings with current issues. Thus, the religio-rational school can form the foundation for Islamic education that is critical, open, and argumentative, while remaining grounded in the values of revelation.

However, rationality in Islamic education cannot be separated from morality and responsibility. Reason is not a tool to free humans from values, but rather a means to understand and actualize values more responsibly. Therefore, the religio-rational school is not identical to secular rationalism. It maintains revelation as a source of orientation but rejects anti-intellectualism. With this position, this school serves as an important bridge to overcome the dichotomy between Islamic education and general education.

Pragmatic-Instrumental Stream in Islamic Education

The pragmatic-instrumental school of Islamic education emphasizes the function of education in addressing the needs of human life and society. Ibn Khaldun's thoughts are often used to explain this trend, as he viewed education as related to social development, work, skills, civilization, and the practical needs of life. In this school, education does not stop at developing normative understanding but is also directed at developing students' abilities to live, work, contribute, and solve social problems.

Subiantoro and Mansur (2025) explain that the pragmatic school of Islamic education encourages the use of project-based learning, problem-based learning, field practice, and the development of life skills. This idea aligns with the needs of modern education, which demands students develop critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and problem-solving skills. However, in Islamic education, a pragmatic orientation should not be understood solely as achieving material benefits. The utility value in Islamic education must remain linked to the welfare, morality, and social responsibility.

The pragmatic-instrumental school plays a crucial role in balancing the tendency toward overly normative education. Islamic education needs to ensure that religious values can be actualized in real life. For example, learning about worship not only explains ritual procedures but also instills discipline, cleanliness, responsibility, social awareness, and ecological awareness. Ichsan (2019) provides an example of how the material on

purification can be expanded to include issues of health, the environment, water availability, and community life. In this way, Islamic education does not stop at conceptual knowledge but moves towards transforming behavior and social life.

However, the pragmatic school also carries risks if it is separated from a spiritual and moral orientation. Education that overemphasizes practical utility can become trapped in market logic, technical skills, and economic productivity alone. Therefore, pragmatism in Islamic education needs to be placed within a values framework. Skills, work, and social contribution must be directed towards the common good, not merely material success. Thus, the pragmatic-instrumental school can enrich Islamic education as long as it remains guided by morals and broader life goals.

Initial Synthesis of Islamic Educational Streams

These three schools of Islamic education have different emphases. The conservative school emphasizes the importance of morality, spirituality, and an orientation toward the afterlife. The religio-rational school emphasizes the balance between revelation and reason. The pragmatic-instrumental school emphasizes the relevance of education to social needs, life skills, and the common good. These differences should not be read as contradictions, but as a spectrum of thought that can complement each other.

When viewed integratively, Islamic education requires all three. Without the conservative dimension, education can lack moral depth and spiritual orientation. Without the religio-rational dimension, education can lapse into a textual stance that lacks argumentativeness. Without the pragmatic dimension, education can become too abstract and less responsive to real-world issues. Therefore, relevant Islamic education today needs to maintain moral foundations, develop critical rationality, and provide social benefits.

This synthesis aligns with Nasution's (2022) view that Islamic education needs to develop the whole person, encompassing aspects of faith, morality, intellect, physicality, spirituality, social skills, and life skills. In this sense, Islamic education is not only tasked with producing pious individuals, but also individuals capable of thinking, acting, interacting, and contributing socially. Herein lies the relevance of Islamic education in developing a holistic human being.

General Education Streams

General education has diverse philosophical traditions. Each school of thought carries specific assumptions about the nature of humanity, knowledge, values, society, and the purpose of education. Iswantir (2017) outlines several important schools of thought, including essentialism, perennialism, progressivism, reconstructionism, and existentialism. Thabrani (2015) expands on this understanding by showing that the philosophy of general education is closely related to ontology, epistemology, axiology, and practical issues in education.

Essentialism positions education as a process of transmitting basic knowledge, core values, and cultural heritage deemed essential to the life of society. In this school of thought, schools have the duty to maintain the continuity of proven knowledge and values. The strength of essentialism lies in the strictness of the curriculum structure, academic

discipline, and respect for core knowledge. However, if applied too rigidly, essentialism can neglect the interests, experiences, and diversity of students.

Perennialism is closely related to essentialism but places greater emphasis on timeless truths and intellectual training. Education is aimed at introducing students to universal values, great ideas, and truths that transcend change. From an Islamic educational perspective, elements of perennialism can dialogue with the idea of enduring values such as monotheism, morality, justice, and truth. However, education cannot simply emphasize eternal values without considering social change and the needs of students.

Progressivism offers a different direction. This school emphasizes experience, student interests, active learning, and problem-solving. Nursikin (2016) explains that progressivism encourages a curriculum that is flexible, dynamic, and open, and in line with scientific developments and the needs of the times. In educational practice, progressivism provides space for students to learn through real-life experiences. This principle is closely related to active learning in Islamic education, as long as the learning experience remains guided by moral values and goals.

Reconstructionism views education as a means for fostering social change. Education not only adapts students to society but also equips them to improve it. This school is important because it reminds us that education cannot be separated from issues of injustice, moral crises, technological change, and social problems. In Islamic education, reconstructionism can be combined with the ideas of enjoining good and forbidding evil, public welfare, and human responsibility as a caliph.

Existentialism emphasizes freedom, authenticity, choice, and individual responsibility. Education from this perspective must provide space for students to discover the meaning of life and develop their identity. In Islamic education, individual freedom must be viewed alongside moral responsibility and divine awareness. Freedom does not mean being free from values, but rather the ability to choose consciously and responsibly.

In addition to these schools of thought, constructivism and humanism have also had a significant influence on the development of modern education. Constructivism emphasizes that students construct knowledge through experience, interaction, and meaning-making. Humanism positions students as human beings with dignity, emotions, potential, needs, and the freedom to develop. Fathoni (2015) points out that effective learning requires attention to student psychology, a comfortable learning environment, and the involvement of the body, mind, emotions, and senses. Anam (2021) also emphasized that students are not miniature adults, but rather individuals with different needs, developmental stages, interests, talents, and potential.

Thus, general education cannot be understood as a single model. Within it, there are schools of thought that emphasize tradition, eternal truth, experience, social change, individual freedom, knowledge construction, and respect for students. This diversity provides an opportunity for dialogue with Islamic education. Islamic education can adopt positive elements from general education, as long as they do not conflict with the principles of monotheism, morality, public welfare, and the formation of a holistic human being.

Comparison of Islamic Education and General Education

Comparisons between Islamic education and general education cannot be made solely by examining differences in terms or institutions. Both must be interpreted from an ontological, epistemological, axiological, curricular, methodological, and evaluative perspective. Ontologically, Islamic education views humans as creatures created by God, possessing physical, spiritual, intellectual, natural, limited freedom, and moral responsibility. Education is not only directed at developing rational abilities, but also at shaping personality, morals, spiritual awareness, and social responsibility. Nasution (2022) asserts that Islamic education is oriented toward developing individuals who integrate divine, intellectual, spiritual, and moral elements.

Meanwhile, general education has diverse ontological perspectives, depending on the underlying school of thought. Essentialism and perennialism tend to view humans as rational beings who need to inherit core knowledge and universal values. Progressivism views humans as beings who grow through experience. Reconstructionism positions humans as agents of social change. Existentialism emphasizes individual freedom to find meaning. Constructivism views students as subjects who construct knowledge, while humanism positions humans as individuals with dignity, needs, emotions, and potential. This diversity demonstrates that general education is not singular but operates within multiple philosophical orientations.

Epistemologically, Islamic education has unique sources of knowledge. Revelation is the primary source of values and orientation, but reason, experience, nature, and scientific tradition also hold significant importance. Zahrani et al. (2022) explain that sources of knowledge in Islamic education include Divine, Human, and Kauniyah verses. Within this framework, Islamic education does not reject empirical knowledge and scientific rationality. Instead, reason and experience are positioned as means of understanding the signs of God's greatness and developing knowledge that is beneficial for life.

General education, on the other hand, relies more heavily on rationality, empirical experience, science, philosophical reflection, and social needs. In realism, knowledge is acquired through experience with objective reality. In pragmatism and progressivism, truth is understood through experience and usefulness. In constructivism, knowledge is constructed through the interaction between students, experience, and the environment. These differences are not always contradictory. Islamic education can embrace rationality and empirical experience as long as they are not separated from ethical-transcendental values, while general education can be enriched by a deeper moral and spiritual orientation.

Axiologically, Islamic education places values at the core of education. Knowledge is not free from moral responsibility. Knowledge must lead students to goodness, welfare, justice, and closeness to God. General education also has a value dimension, although the basis of these values varies. Perennialism emphasizes eternal values, essentialism emphasizes essential cultural values, progressivism emphasizes democratic values and experience, reconstructionism emphasizes social justice, existentialism emphasizes authenticity, and humanism emphasizes human dignity. Thus, the common ground between the two lies in the awareness that education cannot be separated from values, even though the sources of values and the ways in which they are interpreted differ.

This comparison demonstrates that the absolute dichotomy between Islamic education and general education is not scientifically sound. Islamic education is not synonymous with the rejection of reason and general knowledge, while general education is not always value-free. What is needed is a critical and selective reading. Islamic education can adopt the rational approach, experiential learning, active learning, and social orientation of general education. Conversely, general education can be enriched by the more fundamental ethical, spiritual, and life-purpose orientations of Islamic education.

Implications for Curriculum Development

The comparison of Islamic and general education schools has direct implications for the curriculum. The curriculum should not be understood simply as a list of subjects, but as a plan for the values, knowledge, experiences, skills, and personality development of students. In Islamic education, the curriculum must connect religious knowledge, rational knowledge, social experience, morals, and life skills. Nasution (2022) explains that the Islamic education curriculum must consider religious principles, balance, universality, student needs, individual differences, societal change, and the integration of learning experiences.

The conservative school contributes to the curriculum through an emphasis on morals, etiquette, worship, good habits, and an orientation toward the afterlife. These elements are crucial for the curriculum to produce not only academically intelligent students but also well-organized personalities. The religio-rational school contributes through the integration of revelation, reason, and science. The curriculum should provide space for the dialogical study of the Quran, Hadith, philosophy, social sciences, natural sciences, languages, and technology. Meanwhile, the pragmatic-instrumental school emphasizes that the curriculum must be relevant to the needs of life, work, society, and current problems.

From the perspective of general education, essentialism teaches that the curriculum still requires a strong scientific structure. Perennialism emphasizes the importance of fundamental values that are not easily changed by the tides of time. Progressivism demands a flexible and experience-based curriculum. Reconstructionism encourages a curriculum that is sensitive to social issues. Existentialism allows for student choice, interests, and the search for meaning. Constructivism emphasizes the need for learning experiences that allow students to actively construct knowledge, while humanism demands a curriculum that respects students' needs, potential, and dignity.

Therefore, an integrative curriculum does not mean mixing all materials without direction. An integrative curriculum must have clear selection principles. First, each material needs to be linked to the core values of education. Second, religious knowledge and general knowledge are not positioned hierarchically or dichotomously, but rather mutually reinforce each other according to their respective functions. Third, student learning experiences must be connected to real-world problems. Fourth, the curriculum needs to take into account the development of students' ages, interests, talents, and needs. Anam (2021) emphasized that primary education must develop students' potential in an integrated manner, while secondary education needs to strengthen students' dominant potential, interests, and talents.

The development of Islamic education materials also needs to move from repetitive patterns to contextual ones. Ichsan (2019) pointed out that Islamic material cannot simply

be limited to normative reasoning but needs to be developed through historical, contextual, and applied reasoning. For example, material on thaharah (purification) can be linked to health, the environment, and water availability; material on halal food can be linked to health, economics, and lifestyle; and material on social interactions can be linked to social media, adolescent psychology, and moral responsibility. Thus, the Islamic education curriculum can maintain the purity of values while addressing students' current issues.

Implications for Learning Methods

At the method level, the synthesis of Islamic education and general education demands learning that is not solely teacher- or text-centered, but also focuses on experience, dialogue, reflection, and student participation. The conservative school provides an important foundation for methods of role modeling, habituation, advice, guided memorization, and the development of good manners. In Islamic education, teachers function not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as moral role models. However, the exemplary and habituation methods need to be complemented by dialogue and reflection so that students do not simply act out of habit but also understand the meaning and rationale.

The religious-rational school demands methods that allow space for questions and answers, discussions, text analysis, comparison of opinions, and argumentative reasoning. Students need to be trained to understand why a value is taught, how a law or concept is constructed, and how religious teachings are applied to the realities of life. This method aligns with the needs of contemporary education, as students live amidst a flow of information that demands the ability to sort, analyze, and take responsible stances.

The pragmatic-instrumental school encourages problem-based learning methods, projects, field practice, simulations, and collaborative work. Islamic education can use this approach to connect religious values to real life. Learning about zakat, for example, is not only explained as a fiqh obligation but can also be developed into a social responsibility project. Moral learning is not merely discussed as a definition but also practiced through service activities, cooperation, and conflict resolution. In this way, religious values are not limited to memorization but become experiences that shape behavior.

In general education, progressivism, constructivism, and humanism have made significant contributions to learning methods. Fathoni (2015), through the concept of Accelerated Learning, emphasizes that effective learning requires attention to student psychology, learning comfort, and the involvement of the whole student. The SAVI elements somatic, auditory, visual, and intellectual—indicate that learning occurs not only through listening and memorization, but also through movement, observation, discussion, reflection, and problem-solving. This principle can enrich Islamic education methods to make them more lively, enjoyable, and less stressful for students.

Integrative learning methods can be formulated through a combination of several approaches. Role models are still needed to build good manners. Dialogue is necessary to develop critical thinking. Social projects are needed to instill awareness. Reflection is needed to connect experience with meaning. Hands-on practice is essential for building skills. Thus, learning methods aim not only to convey material but also to shape students' awareness, attitudes, skills, and responsibilities.

Implications for Educational Evaluation

Evaluation in integrative education cannot be limited to cognitive measurements. If education aims to shape a complete human being, then evaluation must encompass knowledge, attitudes, morals, skills, social participation, and reflective abilities. Nasution (2022) emphasized that evaluation of Islamic education needs to consider the cognitive, affective, psychomotor, moral, physical, intelligence, emotional, and life needs of students. Therefore, evaluation must measure student development more comprehensively.

In Islamic education, cognitive evaluation remains necessary to determine students' understanding of concepts, propositions, history, and theories. However, cognitive understanding alone is not sufficient. Students also need to be evaluated in terms of their appreciation of values, consistency of attitudes, ability to make moral decisions, and involvement in social activities. For example, moral learning is not simply tested through definitional questions but needs to be examined through behavior, habits, responsibility, and the ability to interact effectively.

General education makes important contributions through the concepts of process evaluation, authentic evaluation, portfolios, projects, and performative assessment. Nursikin (2016) emphasized the importance of authentic assessment in learning, focusing on students' actual abilities. Fathoni (2015) also explained that learning success needs to be viewed from both the process and the outcome perspective. This means that evaluation should not only assess what students know at the end of the lesson, but also how they learn, participate, collaborate, solve problems, and reflect on their experiences.

Integrative evaluation can take several forms. First, written tests to measure conceptual understanding. Second, observation of attitudes to assess moral development and responsibility. Third, portfolios to record the learning process. Fourth, social projects to assess the ability to apply values in life. Fifth, self-reflection to measure students' awareness of their own changes. Sixth, peer assessment to assess collaboration and communication skills. This form of evaluation is more in line with the goal of education, which is to produce not only intelligent individuals but also individuals with character and usefulness.

Islamic Education, Culture, and Society

Islamic education does not only take place in the classroom. It also lives in families, traditions, places of worship, communities, and social practices. This perspective is important because discussions about educational streams often focus too much on formal theories and institutions. However, in social reality, Islamic educational values are largely passed down through collective customs, cultural symbols, religious activities, family relationships, and mutual cooperation.

Jauhari (2024) shows that local traditions can be a medium for Islamic education, instilling the values of faith, worship, morals, family education, environmental awareness, social solidarity, and cultural preservation. These findings demonstrate that Islamic education does not always come in the form of formal subjects. Sometimes it works through shared experiences, social rituals, advice from religious leaders, family involvement, and community participation. Thus, Islamic education has a broader ecosystem than schools.

Cultural and community involvement also reinforces the idea of integrative education. Religious values are not understood as separate from social life, but are present in how communities care for the environment, maintain relationships between residents, celebrate religious holidays, help others, and build solidarity. This is where Islamic education has a transformative dimension. It not only shapes individuals who are ritually devout, but also a civilized, caring, and mutually reinforcing society.

Nevertheless, the relationship between Islamic education and culture still requires a critical examination. Not all traditions can be accepted at face value. Traditions need to be examined based on their alignment with the principles of monotheism, morality, public welfare, and human dignity. Traditions that reinforce educational values can be preserved, while traditions that conflict with basic Islamic principles need to be criticized and transformed. With this approach, Islamic education is not anti-cultural, but it also does not lose its critical power.

Integrative-Transformative Education Model

Based on a synthesis of Islamic and general education schools, this article proposes an integrative-transformative educational model. This model rests on the idea that education should not be trapped in a dichotomy between religion and general knowledge, between values and skills, between spirituality and rationality, or between tradition and change. Integrative-transformative education positions education as a process of developing whole individuals with spiritual awareness, critical thinking skills, morals, life skills, social sensitivity, and responsibility for life.

This model has five main elements. First, a spiritual-ethical orientation. Education must be grounded in the values of monotheism, morals, honesty, responsibility, and the welfare of the people. This element is particularly reinforced by conservative schools of Islamic education. Second, critical rationality. Education needs to develop the ability to think, question, reason, compare, and make decisions argumentatively. This element is reinforced by the religio-rational school and the epistemology of Islamic education. Third, meaningful experiences. Education must provide space for students to learn through experience, projects, practice, reflection, and problem-solving. This element is strengthened by progressivism, constructivism, humanism, and pragmatism.

Fourth, socio-practical skills. Education needs to equip students with the skills to communicate, collaborate, adapt, solve problems, and contribute to society. This element demonstrates that education should not stop at mastering concepts. Fifth, respect for human dignity. Education must take into account the needs, differences, interests, talents, emotions, and developmental stages of students. This element is enriched by humanism, existentialism, and the Islamic educational perspective on the natural and trustworthy nature of students.

The integrative-transformative model is not intended to be a seamless fusion of Islamic education and general education. This model is selective and critical. This means that Islamic education can adopt elements of rationality, active methods, experiential learning, and authentic evaluation from general education. Conversely, general education can be enriched by spiritual orientation, morality, and transcendental responsibility. The relationship between the two is not subordinate, but rather dialogical. Islamic education does not lose its identity, and general education is not treated as an adversary.

Curricularly, this model encourages the development of materials that connect religious values, science, social experience, and life needs. Methodologically, this model demands learning that combines role models, dialogue, habituation, projects, reflection, and social practice. Evaluatively, this model encourages assessments that encompass understanding, attitudes, morals, skills, participation, and reflective abilities. Institutionally, this model positions schools, families, communities, and cultures as part of the educational ecosystem.

Thus, integrative-transformative education can provide a middle ground between overly normative and overly technical education. Overly normative education risks being far removed from social reality, while overly technical education risks losing its moral direction. The integrative-transformative model seeks to maintain both: values remain the foundation, knowledge becomes the tool, experience becomes the space for formation, and society becomes the field of actualization.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study's findings, Islamic education and general education have different philosophical foundations, but they should not be positioned dichotomously. Islamic education rests on revelation, reason, morality, spirituality, and the common good, while general education develops through various schools of thought that emphasize rationality, experience, individual freedom, cultural inheritance, social change, and respect for students. These differences actually open up space for dialogue if each school of thought is read critically and selectively.

This study shows that the conservative, religious-rational, and pragmatic-instrumental schools of thought in Islamic education have complementary contributions. The conservative school maintains the moral dimension and spiritual orientation; the religious-rational school strengthens the relationship between revelation and reason; while the pragmatic-instrumental school emphasizes the importance of education's relevance to social needs and life skills. At the same time, schools of thought in general education, such as essentialism, perennialism, progressivism, reconstructionism, existentialism, constructivism, and humanism, contribute to strengthening the structure of knowledge, learning experiences, student freedom, social sensitivity, and more participatory learning.

The main findings of this article confirm that the dichotomy between Islamic education and general education is more a historical-social construct than an epistemological imperative. Epistemologically, Islamic education recognizes revelation, reason, experience, and natural reality as sources of knowledge. Therefore, Islamic education can engage in dialogue with general education without losing its core value identity. The synthesis of the two can be directed toward an integrative-transformative educational model, namely education that balances spiritual values, critical rationality, meaningful experiences, socio-practical skills, and respect for human dignity.

The implication of this study is the need to develop curricula, learning methods, and evaluations that are oriented not only toward mastery of knowledge but also toward the formation of morals, critical thinking skills, social sensitivity, life skills, and moral responsibility. Because this research is based on a literature review, the findings are conceptual in nature. Therefore, further research can be directed toward testing the

integrative-transformative model in Islamic education practices, whether in schools, madrasas, Islamic boarding schools, or community-based educational institutions.

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