



## Multidisciplinary: Journal of Education and Learning

### Transformative Epistemology in Islamic Education: Linking Spirituality and Rationality in the Modern Education Curriculum

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#### ABSTRACT

*This article aims to explore the concept of transformative epistemology in the context of Islamic education, which links spirituality and rationality in the development of modern educational curricula. Through a qualitative approach and literature study, this article discusses how Islamic education can integrate aspects of spirituality and rationality to create a curriculum that is not only based on the teaching of science, but also on the formation of the character and spirituality of students. This research identifies challenges and opportunities in the application of transformative epistemology in Islamic schools and how an inclusive curriculum can create a balance between spiritual and intellectual dimensions. The implications of this study show that the application of transformative epistemology in Islamic education can enrich the existing curriculum and provide a strong foundation for students' personal development.*

**Keywords:** Transformative Epistemology, Islamic Education, Spirituality, Rationality, Modern Education Curriculum.

#### INTRODUCTION

Islamic education has a broader goal than simply transferring knowledge; it seeks to shape students' personalities and characters through the integration of spirituality and rationality. In this context, transformative epistemology offers a new perspective on curriculum development that not only prioritizes intellectual aspects but also moral and spiritual aspects that can strengthen the foundation of students' social and spiritual lives. Transformative epistemology focuses on changing ways of thinking and introducing more holistic learning experiences, prioritizing a profound understanding of the relationship between science and ethical and spiritual values. This creates space to integrate various disciplines within a mutually supportive educational framework, where knowledge is not only seen as something rational but also as a tool for shaping character and spirituality.

The importance of connecting spirituality and rationality in Islamic education has become relevant in the context of modern education, which is increasingly focused on the development of cognitive abilities and academic achievement. Most current education systems emphasize the importance of intellectual intelligence but often overlook the importance of students' moral and spiritual development (Fauzian dkk., 2025). Islamic education seeks to develop individuals who are both intellectually astute and morally upright by highlighting the complementary relationship between rationality and spirituality. Therefore, in an Islamic educational approach based on transformative epistemology, the spiritual aspect is not only included as an additional value but also as an integral part that shapes the entire learning process. This approach offers the possibility of integrating both dimensions into an educational curriculum that is more adaptable to the needs of students in this fast-paced world.

This research aims to identify how transformative epistemology can be applied in Islamic education and provide a foundation for developing a more effective curriculum that connects science (rationality) and deep spiritual values. This research also explores the challenges and potential inherent in integrating both aspects within the modern Islamic education system. For instance, Syafii's (2025) research found that an epistemology-based transformational curriculum model was used to teach at pesantren in the Nusantara. The research

showcases the integration of classical interpretations with a more contextual rational approach to tackle contemporary issues like pluralism and public ethics. In that research, it was found that a curriculum model combining traditional and rational approaches can produce graduates with strong textual competence and ethical sensitivity to social realities (Syafii, 2025).

Additionally, the integration of moral and spiritual values in the Islamic education curriculum can also be seen in research conducted by Gaffar (2025), which emphasizes the importance of developing an inclusive tawhid-based curriculum in Islamic education. As the epistemological basis of Islamic education, inclusive tawhid emphasizes the cultivation of a broader spiritual and ethical consciousness, fostering individuals who embody values of tolerance and receptiveness to pluralism. This approach helps create a more dialogical and humanistic Islamic education curriculum that fits with the challenges of the times (Gaffar, 2025).

Furthermore, research conducted by Rafsanjani and Waston (2025) on the transformation of Islamic epistemology in technology education also demonstrates the relevance of transformative epistemology in the context of modern Islamic education. This research emphasizes the importance of integrating Islamic values into technology education, such as computer science, where the Islamic epistemological approach not only encompasses rational aspects but also accommodates moral and spiritual values that are crucial for shaping graduates who are not only intellectually intelligent but also possess strong moral character (Rafsanjani & Waston, 2025). In a broader context, Mahmudulhassan's (2025) research on developing an ethics-based curriculum in Islamic education reveals the importance of integrating Islamic ethical values as a foundation for the educational process. According to Mahmudulhassan, education based on Islamic epistemology aims not only to transfer knowledge but also to shape students' ethical behavior through the integration of reason and revelation in every aspect of learning (Mahmudulhassan, 2025).

This research offers innovation in integrating transformative epistemology into the Islamic education curriculum, introducing new ways of combining rationality and spirituality in the learning process. The main goal is to develop a more holistic model of Islamic education curriculum that focuses not only on intellectual development but also on moral and spiritual development. This research also focuses on the challenges and opportunities that exist in applying this concept within the context of modern Islamic education, as well as how these two aspects can be strengthened through a curriculum that is more integrative and adaptable to the needs of the times.

## **METHOD**

The research approach used is qualitative with a literature study technique. Data was collected from various primary sources such as books, journals, articles, and academic documents relevant to the topic of transformative epistemology in Islamic education. The data analysis technique used is content analysis, where the author identifies the main themes that emerge in the relevant literature. This research was conducted over a six-month period, with the primary focus on literature published since 2015 to ensure the relevance and currency of the data used. The primary data sources come from reputable international journals and books written by experts in Islamic education and epistemology. The secondary data is taken from scientific articles related to the research topic. Data collection techniques were carried out thru digital document searches, library catalogs, and academic databases.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Transformative Epistemology in Islamic Education: Integrating Rationality and Spirituality**

Transformative epistemology, as a branch of the philosophy of science, holds the view that knowledge is not only objective and rational but can also be influenced by subjective experiences and spiritual values present in an individual's life. In the context of Islamic education, transformative epistemology can be understood as an effort to reconcile rational knowledge based on logic and science with spiritual values derived from Islamic teachings (Fauzian, 2022). This approach offers a new paradigm in education that integrates rationality and spirituality, two things often considered separate in conventional education systems. According to Sardar (2020), in Islamic education, knowledge is focused on cognitive learning and leads to the formation of character in accordance with the moral and ethical principles of Islam, making education more holistic and comprehensive. This transformative epistemology corresponds with the Islamic concept of tawhid, which underscores the unity of knowledge in its entirety, encompassing both scientific and spiritual dimensions (Al-Attas, 2007).

The integration of rationality and spirituality in Islamic education provides a foundation for creating a curriculum that is more flexible and relevant to the challenges of the times. This leads to an educational process that focuses not only on academic achievement but also on the development of character and moral values in line

with Islamic teachings. Transformative epistemology plays a role in teaching students to understand knowledge more comprehensively, taking into account spiritual aspects that can enrich the learning process. Research by Sadeghi & Naderi (2017) and Khan (2018) indicates that education integrating spiritual aspects can enrich the learning experience and help students understand their world more deeply. The emphasis on moral and social values in Islamic education also strengthens the formation of students' character, focusing not only on academic achievement but also on developing empathy, social responsibility, and community involvement.

A study by Mahmudhassan (2020) also highlighted the importance of integrating spirituality into education to prepare students to face increasingly complex global challenges. Education that prioritizes a balance between intellectual and moral development provides students with a strong foundation to contribute positively to society. On the other hand, research by Syafii (2025) shows that integrating rational knowledge and spiritual values in Islamic education can prepare young generations to face increasingly pressing social and environmental problems through an approach that is more oriented toward social change and transformation. Thus, transformative epistemology in Islamic education not only enriches the learning process but also shapes generations that are not only intellectually intelligent but also committed to moral and spiritual values that are beneficial for their social lives.

### **Connecting Spirituality and Rationality in the Curriculum**

Integrating spirituality and rationality in the Islamic education curriculum is crucial for creating a holistic curriculum. Education that focuses solely on rationality will lose an important human dimension, while education that prioritizes only spirituality will neglect the development of students' intellectual abilities. Therefore, transformative epistemology offers an approach that can balance these two dimensions. This approach allows education to not only transfer scientific knowledge but also instill spiritual values that can shape students' character. In line with this, Al-Attas (2007) emphasized the importance of integrating science with Islamic teachings so that education can shape individuals who are not only intelligent but also possess wisdom and spiritual depth.

Ali (2015) stated that Islamic education should aim to develop individuals who are not only academically intelligent but also possess spiritual depth that can support their moral and social lives. Integration between the two is very important so that Islamic education can produce a generation that is balanced between intellectual ability and spiritual values. The emphasis on these two dimensions is also relevant to the research by Sadeghi & Naderi (2017), which shows that education integrating spiritual aspects not only enriches students' learning experiences but also helps them develop into more morally and socially conscious individuals. In this case, a curriculum that combines both provides students with a broader and deeper understanding of their world. Several studies also reveal that integrating spirituality into education can improve the overall quality of education.

For example, research by Setiowati & Utomo (2023) on the integration of Islamic values in nursing education showed that an approach combining spiritual values and scientific knowledge resulted in more empathetic nurses with a better understanding of patient well-being. Additionally, research conducted by Ciputri & Safitri (2025) on the curriculum of Sufism-based education revealed that integrating spiritual aspects through Sufi orders in pesantren education can help students develop a balance between rationality and spirituality, which is crucial for shaping a generation that is not only knowledgeable but also of noble character.

### **Implications of Applying Transformative Epistemology in Islamic Education**

Applying transformative epistemology in Islamic education presents significant challenges, particularly in designing a curriculum that can balance both aspects. One of the biggest challenges is how to balance limited time and resources between teaching science and teaching spiritual values. This creates a need to design flexible and adaptive curricula that not only accommodate academic achievement but also consider the development of students' character and morals. For example, research conducted by Nasir (2020) shows that Islamic schools that successfully integrate both aspects into their curriculum are able to produce graduates who are not only academically excellent but also have a clear moral compass in their lives. The implementation of this curriculum, which integrates spiritual and scientific values, allows students to develop intellectually while strengthening their ethical depth and character.

However, this challenge also presents a great opportunity to develop a curriculum that is more adaptable and relevant to the needs of the times. As explained by Syafii (2025), transformative epistemology in Islamic education provides space to integrate tradition and progress, overcome the gap between science and moral values, and bridge religious understanding with existing scientific developments. A curriculum model based on transformational epistemology in Islamic boarding schools, as implemented in Gontor and Al-Azhar Medan, shows that with the right approach, Islamic education can prepare a generation capable of facing global challenges without losing their spiritual and ethical roots. On the other hand, research by Mahmudhassan (2024) shows that implementing an Islamic values-based curriculum model across various disciplines, such as nursing

education and technology, can strengthen intellectual abilities while also enhancing students' moral and social awareness.

The application of transformative epistemology in Islamic education also has a significant long-term impact on the integration of scientific knowledge and spiritual values in society. In a study by Ciputri and Safitri (2025), they showed that the Sufism-based curriculum in pesantren not only introduces students to spiritual values but also provides them with critical knowledge about the contemporary world. This has the potential to produce a generation that is wiser and better prepared to face life's challenges, utilizing science to improve the social and moral conditions of society.

### **Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing Transformative Epistemology**

Although the challenges in implementing transformative epistemology cannot be ignored, the opportunities available are immense. The application of this epistemology can enrich the Islamic education curriculum by adding a strong spiritual dimension, allowing students to develop more comprehensively. The main challenge in implementing this approach is how to align a curriculum that integrates rationality and spirituality without sacrificing the quality of either aspect. One of the biggest challenges is the limited time and resources available, which can make it difficult to simultaneously teach scientific knowledge and spiritual values. In this context, a study by Syafii (2025) highlights how Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, such as Gontor, are adopting a transformative epistemology-based curriculum model to reconcile these two dimensions, despite the challenges of limited curriculum and difficulties in integrating modern methodologies with classical traditions. Nevertheless, the opportunity to create a more holistic curriculum remains wide open if these challenges can be overcome with innovative approaches.

As exemplified by Nasir (2020), some Islamic schools in Indonesia have begun to adopt this approach in their curriculum. They not only teach science rationally but also integrate the learning of religious values through in-depth spiritual studies. With this approach, students can experience a greater depth of knowledge, as they learn to connect the knowledge they gain with their spiritual lives. Research conducted by Wahid (2016) also shows that a curriculum incorporating spiritual elements can provide a richer learning experience, enabling students to develop intellectual capacity while deepening their understanding of moral and social values. The biggest challenge is how to design a curriculum that is not only responsive to academic needs but also capable of accommodating deep moral development in line with the progress of the modern world.

However, this challenge also presents a great opportunity to develop a curriculum that is more adaptable and relevant to the needs of the times. According to research by Mardatillah (2025), the application of transformative epistemology can open up space for innovation in Islamic education, focusing on the development of critical, creative, and moral skills. This is very important because in an increasingly global and diverse world, Islamic education must be able to prepare a generation that not only understands religious texts but can also face social challenges with solutions based on authentic Islamic values. A study by Ciputri & Safitri (2025) also showed that although the integration between rational and spiritual knowledge still faces obstacles, the opportunity to improve the Islamic education curriculum and provide more holistic education remains significant.

### **CONCLUSION**

The application of transformative epistemology in Islamic education offers a holistic approach to connecting spirituality and rationality in the modern education curriculum. This approach emphasizes that knowledge is not only rational and objective but also involves subjective aspects influenced by spiritual and moral experiences. In the context of Islamic education, transformative epistemology serves to bridge the understanding of scientific knowledge with religious teachings, which has a goal beyond mere academic achievement. The primary goal of Islamic education is to cultivate individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent but also possess strong character and solid moral values. The integration of spirituality and rationality in education allows students to understand knowledge from various perspectives, not only based on scientific facts and theories, but also through the lens of ethical and spiritual values taught in Islam. Such an approach provides a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the world and their lives, thus shaping individuals who excel not only in academic aspects but also in social attitudes and behavior. Despite challenges in its implementation, such as time constraints, resource limitations, and curriculum readiness, the opportunities are immense.

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