

Reconstructing Islamic epistemology: a philosophical analysis of Amin Abdullah's integrative-interconnected paradigm

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Abstract: The separation between religious knowledge and modern sciences remains a major issue in contemporary Islamic thought, as it leads to fragmented and less integrated knowledge development. This condition not only divides sources of knowledge but also weakens the relationship between ethical, rational, and empirical dimensions in the construction of knowledge. In this context, the integration of knowledge becomes essential, particularly in Islamic education. This study aims to examine Amin Abdullah's integrative-interconnected paradigm as an effort to reconstruct a more holistic Islamic epistemology. This research employs a qualitative approach using textual analysis of Abdullah's works and relevant literature. The findings reveal that the integrative-interconnected paradigm connects three main domains religious texts (hadarat al-nash), scientific knowledge (hadarat al-'ilm), and philosophical reasoning (hadarat al-falsafah) within a dialogical framework. This approach rejects rigid separation between fields of knowledge as well as uncritical acceptance of modern science, emphasizing the interaction between textual, empirical, and rational dimensions in developing comprehensive knowledge. The novelty of this study lies in positioning the integration of knowledge as a critical and reflective effort rather than merely a pedagogical agenda. However, this research is limited to conceptual analysis, suggesting the need for further studies on its practical implementation in Islamic education, particularly in curriculum development and learning practices.

Keywords: Integration of knowledge, Islamic epistemology, integrative-interconnected paradigm, amin abduallah, Islamic education.

Article History: Submitted 11 April 2026; Revised 28 April 2026; Accepted: 28 April 2026; Published online 05 May 2026

Introduction

The development of Islamic knowledge in the modern era continues to be shaped by an unresolved epistemological fragmentation between the religious sciences and modern disciplines (Zianudin Sardar, 2022). This fragmentation is not merely a technical division of academic fields, but rather a deeper epistemic separation that positions revelation-based knowledge as normative and sacred, while modern sciences are perceived as empirical, value-free, and autonomous (Jurgen Habermas, 1971). Such an epistemological configuration has generated a crisis in contemporary Islamic thought, in which religious knowledge struggles to engage critically with modern intellectual developments, while modern sciences operate relatively detached from ethical and metaphysical considerations. This epistemological divide has significant implications for the intellectual vitality of Muslim societies. As noted by Azyumardi Azra, the dichotomy between religious sciences and modern knowledge has contributed to the stagnation of Islamic intellectual development. Religious sciences often remain confined to textual interpretation, while modern disciplines are sometimes adopted without critical engagement. This condition creates a gap that limits the ability of Islamic scholarship to respond effectively to contemporary challenges (Azyumardi Azra, 1999).

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How to cite: Rahmani, D. A., Najmi, V. M., & Dewi, E. (2026). Reconstructing Islamic epistemology: a philosophical analysis of Amin Abdullah's integrative-interconnected paradigm. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam Al-Thariqah*, 11(1), 169–182. [https://doi.org/10.25299/al-thariqah.2026.vol11\(1\).27798](https://doi.org/10.25299/al-thariqah.2026.vol11(1).27798)

Various responses have been proposed by Muslim intellectuals to address the epistemological crisis in contemporary Islamic thought. One of the most influential approaches is the Islamization of knowledge, as articulated by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. This project seeks to reconstruct modern sciences within an Islamic worldview by emphasizing that knowledge is not value-free but is deeply rooted in metaphysical and ethical foundations. Al-Attas argues that the crisis of knowledge in the Muslim world stems from the loss of *adab* and the dominance of secular epistemology. However, while this approach offers a profound critique of secularism, some scholars have noted that it may face challenges in engaging with the methodological autonomy of modern sciences, thus raising questions about how genuine epistemological integration can be achieved in a pluralistic intellectual context (Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, 1995).

Another influential response emphasizes the restoration of the metaphysical and sacred foundations of knowledge, as articulated by thinkers such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr. This perspective provides a profound philosophical critique of modernity and its epistemological assumptions. However, its strong emphasis on metaphysical principles often results in an abstract framework that offers limited practical guidance for engaging with contemporary scientific practices. Consequently, the epistemological gap between religious knowledge and modern knowledge remains insufficiently bridged. Within this intellectual context, Amin Abdullah's integrative-interconnective paradigm emerges as a distinctive epistemological proposal. Rather than reinforcing the dichotomy between religious sciences and modern disciplines, this paradigm views knowledge as a relational and dialogical process. It is formulated through three interconnected epistemic domains: *Hadharat al-Nash* (the civilization of text), *Hadharat al-'Ilm* (the civilization of science), and *Hadharat al-Falsafah* (the civilization of philosophy). These domains are not treated as separate spheres of knowledge, but as interdependent spaces that must continuously interact in order to produce a comprehensive and contextually relevant understanding.

Despite its growing influence, Amin Abdullah's paradigm is often presented in a descriptive or pedagogical manner, particularly in educational discourse. Many studies focus on explaining the conceptual structure of the three *hadharat* without adequately examining its philosophical implications or its capacity to address deeper epistemological fragmentation in Islamic knowledge. As a result, the paradigm risks being reduced to a mere methodological framework, rather than being understood as a philosophical response to an epistemic crisis. This article argues that Amin Abdullah's integrative-interconnective paradigm should be understood primarily as a philosophical project aimed at reconstructing Islamic epistemology in response to modern epistemic challenges. By situating this paradigm within broader debates on epistemology, philosophy of science, and Islamic intellectual history, this study seeks to demonstrate that the integrative approach offers a middle path between epistemological isolationism and the uncritical assimilation of modern sciences. The paradigm neither dissolves the normative authority of revelation nor rejects the methodological rigor of modern disciplines. Instead, it proposes a dialogical epistemology in which textual, empirical, and philosophical forms of knowledge engage in ongoing processes of mutual interpretation and critique.

Accordingly, the central question addressed in this article is epistemological rather than pedagogical: how can Islamic knowledge overcome the entrenched dichotomy between religious sciences and modern disciplines without sacrificing its normative foundations or its intellectual openness? Furthermore, to what extent does Amin Abdullah's integrative-interconnective paradigm provide a coherent philosophical framework for addressing this challenge in contemporary Islamic thought? By raising these questions, this article situates itself within the ongoing discourse on the future of Islamic epistemology and the role of philosophy in mediating the relationship between tradition and modernity. The epistemological crisis discussed in this article has been widely recognized in contemporary studies of Islamic thought, yet it remains insufficiently resolved at the level of philosophical foundations. Many existing studies tend to address the crisis through normative prescriptions or institutional reforms, without critically examining the epistemological assumptions underlying the dichotomy between religious and modern sciences. As a result, the issue is often treated as a matter of curriculum design or

disciplinary boundaries, rather than as a fundamental question concerning the nature, authority, and purpose of knowledge itself.

A number of influential scholars have critically examined the consequences of modern epistemology for Islamic intellectual traditions. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, for instance, argues that the separation of modern knowledge from its metaphysical and ethical foundations has led to the desacralization of reality, rendering knowledge instrumental and morally neutral (Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 2018). While Nasr's critique provides a powerful diagnosis of this condition, his strong emphasis on metaphysical restoration is often seen as philosophically demanding and difficult to operationalize within contemporary academic contexts. Consequently, the tension between sacred knowledge and modern scientific rationality persists. Similarly, Wael B. Hallaq highlights the structural dominance of modern epistemological frameworks that prioritize procedural rationality over ethical and normative reasoning. According to Hallaq, modern knowledge systems are closely tied to power structures that marginalize alternative epistemologies, including Islamic epistemology (Wael B. Hallaq, 2020). This perspective underscores the importance of understanding epistemology not merely as a set of abstract principles, but as a field deeply rooted in historical contexts and shaped by political dimensions. Nevertheless, critique alone does not automatically yield a constructive framework for epistemological integration.

Within this scholarly landscape, Amin Abdullah's integrative–interconnective paradigm occupies a distinctive position. Unlike approaches that either reject modern epistemology altogether or subordinate it to religious doctrine, the integrative paradigm seeks to construct a dialogical relationship among diverse epistemic domains. However, much of the existing literature still treats Abdullah's framework primarily as an educational or methodological model, particularly in discussions of Islamic higher education reform (Amin Abdullah, 2012). Such readings tend to overlook the paradigm's philosophical depth and its potential contribution to broader debates in epistemology and philosophy of science.

This article seeks to fill this gap by repositioning the integrative–interconnective paradigm as a philosophical response to epistemological fragmentation, rather than merely a pedagogical strategy. By examining the epistemological assumptions embedded within the concepts of *Hadharat al-Nash*, *Hadharat al-'Ilm*, and *Hadharat al-Falsafah*, this study demonstrates that Amin Abdullah's framework offers a coherent approach to negotiating the relationship between normativity, empiricism, and critical reflection. In doing so, this article contributes to the development of contemporary Islamic epistemology by clarifying the theoretical significance of dialogical integration as a means of reconstructing knowledge in the face of modern epistemic challenges. Rather than viewing Amin Abdullah's integrative–interconnective paradigm solely as an educational or methodological framework, this article reaffirms it as a philosophical epistemology that responds to the structural fragmentation of knowledge in modern Islamic thought. By emphasizing the dialogical interaction between textual, empirical, and philosophical domains, this study highlights the paradigm's theoretical significance within contemporary debates on epistemology and the philosophy of science.

Literature review

The study of Islamic epistemology in contemporary literature shows that knowledge in Islam is built on the relationship between revelation, reason, and empirical experience. Hanni and Soleh in their article explain that the Islamic philosophical tradition, such as the thinking of Mulla Sadra, places reason as an important means of achieving metaphysical truth without abandoning the spiritual dimension (Hanni and Soleh, 2024). In addition, the dynamics of the theological approach in the Islamic intellectual tradition show that Islamic epistemology is developing and not singular, but is influenced by social and intellectual contexts (Arief Maulana, 2024). This shows that Islamic epistemology has an integrative and dynamic character in responding to developments in the times.

Syafaah show that the changing role of Islamic scientific authority in the modern era demands a more integrative approach to understanding the relationship between disciplines. In this context, Amin Abdullah's thinking through the integrative-interconnective paradigm becomes relevant as an effort to reconstruct Islamic epistemology in a more comprehensive

manner (Syafaah, 2024). Apart from that, using a comprehensive approach is also important in understanding the integrity of Islamic teachings. Thus, there is a research gap in studying this paradigm philosophically, which is the main focus of this research (Jakiyudin and Hardianti, 2024).

Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a library research type, namely research that uses written sources as the main basis for collecting data. This method is used because the object of the research study is the thoughts of a figure, namely Amin Abdullah, so that the analysis is focused on the text, and epistemological constructions developed in his works. Literature research allows researchers to examine concepts in depth, systematically, and critically through various sources such as books, scientific journal articles, and relevant academic documents. (Abdurrahman, 2023). The approach used is a philosophical approach, namely an approach that emphasizes the analysis of concepts, basic assumptions, and thought structures critically and reflectively. In this context, the integrative-interconnective paradigm is analyzed as an epistemological framework for reconstructing the relationship between religious science and general science. The data collection technique was carried out through documentation studies, while data analysis used a descriptive-analytical method with the steps of data reduction, classification, interpretation, and drawing conclusions (Adiyono, dkk, 2024). In addition, this study also uses an interpretative-critical approach to understand the meaning of Amin Abdullah's thoughts and evaluate their relevance and contribution to the development of epistemology (Husnul Hatimah, dkk, 2017).

Results

The analysis presented in this section demonstrates that epistemological tensions in contemporary Islamic knowledge cannot be reduced to a mere conflict between tradition and modernity. Rather, these tensions reflect deeper structural issues related to the criteria of epistemic validity and the hierarchy of knowledge within modern academic discourse. The marginalization of religious knowledge is not primarily caused by its normative nature, but by the dominance of epistemological frameworks that recognize empirical verification as the primary standard of knowledge legitimacy. This condition places Islamic epistemology in a defensive position, as it is compelled to justify its relevance within paradigms that were not originally designed to accommodate normative or metaphysical claims.

The findings of this study indicate that such epistemological asymmetry has profound implications for the development of Islamic thought. When religious sciences are confined to the realm of moral advice or cultural identity, they lose their capacity as critical epistemic agents (Wael B. Hallaq, 2020). At the same time, modern sciences, when detached from ethical and metaphysical reflection, tend to produce instrumental knowledge oriented toward efficiency rather than meaning. This dual impoverishment reinforces knowledge fragmentation and limits the capacity to respond to complex contemporary issues that require both empirical insight and normative judgment. This condition aligns with broader critiques of modern epistemology articulated by contemporary Islamic scholars. Wael B. Hallaq, for instance, argues that modern knowledge systems operate within a moral framework that prioritizes technical rationality over ethical responsibility, thereby marginalizing alternative epistemologies rooted in normative traditions. Such critiques clarify that the epistemological crisis is not merely an internal problem of Islamic scholarship, but is also shaped by global structures of knowledge production that privilege certain forms of rationality while excluding others (Wael B. Hallaq, 2020). However, the analysis also shows that attempts to resolve the crisis through epistemological isolationism are equally problematic. Retreating into textual absolutism or rejecting modern sciences altogether risks transforming Islamic epistemology into a closed system incapable of self-critique. The findings of this study affirm that epistemological integrity cannot be preserved through isolation, but requires critical engagement with other knowledge systems. Such engagement, however, must be guided by a coherent philosophical framework to avoid falling into uncritical assimilation.

Within this framework, knowledge fragmentation should be understood as an opportunity for reconstruction rather than a sign of decline. Fragmentation exposes the limitations of existing

epistemic hierarchies and creates space for alternative models of integration. By positioning epistemology as a philosophical problem, this study emphasizes the need to reconfigure the relationship between revelation, reason, and empirical inquiry in Islamic thought. Thus, the epistemological crisis becomes a productive field for formulating new forms of epistemic dialogue capable of addressing contemporary intellectual challenges without abandoning normative commitments. Through a philosophical-critical reading of the major works of Amin Abdullah and contemporary discourses on Islamic epistemology, this analysis examines the epistemological assumptions underlying the dichotomy between religious sciences and modern disciplines, as well as the philosophical implications of dialogical integration. The epistemological crisis in contemporary Islamic knowledge is rooted in the persistent dichotomy between religious sciences and modern disciplines. This dichotomy is not merely institutional, but reflects a deeper epistemic separation that shapes how knowledge is classified, taught, and evaluated. Religious sciences are often confined to textual interpretation and normative doctrine, while modern sciences are associated with empirical verification and technical rationality. This separation results in fragmented epistemic authority, where each domain operates with its own methodological assumptions without meaningful dialogue (Mohammed Arkoun, 1999).

This fragmentation has led to the marginalization of the Islamic intellectual tradition in contemporary knowledge production. Religious knowledge is often perceived as tradition-bound and contextual, while modern scientific knowledge is treated as universal and epistemologically superior. Consequently, Islamic epistemology struggles to assert its relevance in addressing modern intellectual and social challenges, including ethical dilemmas arising from technological advancement, governance, and social transformation. Thus, the crisis lies not in the absence of knowledge, but in the inability to integrate diverse epistemic sources within a coherent framework. One of the most significant manifestations of this fragmentation is the perceived opposition between revelation and reason. Revelation is often understood as an absolute and unchanging source of truth, while reason is associated with critical inquiry and contextual interpretation. When these two sources of knowledge are positioned as mutually exclusive, Islamic thought risks being trapped either in epistemological absolutism or relativism. Absolutism may lead to the rejection of critical inquiry, while relativism may erode the normative authority of revelation (Wael B. Hallaq, 2020). This dichotomy also affects the methodological orientation of Islamic scholarship. Textual studies may focus on fidelity to classical interpretations without engaging contemporary contexts, while modern disciplines may adopt secular epistemological assumptions that exclude religious considerations altogether. As a result, the potential for productive engagement between revelation and reason becomes severely limited. The epistemological challenge, therefore, is to formulate a framework in which revelation and reason are understood as complementary rather than contradictory sources of knowledge.

Amin Abdullah's integrative interconnective paradigm offers a critical response to this epistemological fragmentation by rearticulating the relationship between revelation, reason, and empirical knowledge. Rather than treating these domains as separate or hierarchically ordered, the paradigm emphasizes relational and dialogical interaction. The concepts of *Hadharat al-Nash*, *Hadharat al-'Ilm*, and *Hadharat al-Falsafah* function as analytical tools to examine how different epistemic domains contribute to the construction of knowledge. Within this framework, *Hadharat al-Nash* represents the domain of revealed texts and religious traditions that provide normative and ethical orientation. *Hadharat al-'Ilm* encompasses empirical and scientific inquiry, emphasizing methodological rigor and engagement with observable reality. Meanwhile, *Hadharat al-Falsafah* functions as a critical-reflective domain that mediates between textual norms and empirical findings. Philosophy, in this sense, is not merely speculative, but serves as an epistemic bridge that enables dialogue, critique, and synthesis.

The integrative-interconnective paradigm does not aim to eliminate the distinctiveness of each epistemic domain. Instead, it acknowledges the partial and contextual nature of all forms of knowledge and emphasizes the necessity of continuous interaction and mutual correction. Revelation retains its normative authority but is interpreted through philosophical reflection and enriched by empirical reality. Scientific knowledge maintains methodological autonomy while remaining open to ethical and metaphysical evaluation. This relational approach challenges both epistemological isolationism and uncritical assimilation.

The philosophical implications of Amin Abdullah's paradigm extend beyond methodological concerns to issues of epistemic authority and knowledge production. By rejecting epistemological absolutism, the integrative–interconnective approach promotes epistemic humility and intellectual openness. Knowledge is understood as a dynamic process rather than a static collection of truths, requiring continuous interpretation and critical engagement. This perspective aligns with contemporary philosophical discourses on pluralism and interdisciplinarity, while remaining rooted in the Islamic intellectual tradition. Furthermore, the paradigm provides a framework for integrating the normative dimension of knowledge without compromising critical inquiry. Ethical and metaphysical considerations are not treated as external constraints on scientific knowledge, but as integral components of epistemic evaluation. Thus, epistemological integration is not merely a technical endeavor, but a philosophical project aimed at reconstructing the foundations of knowledge in a way that is both intellectually rigorous and normatively meaningful.

By situating epistemological integration within a dialogical framework, Amin Abdullah's paradigm offers a viable response to the crisis of Islamic knowledge in the modern world. It enables Islamic epistemology to engage with contemporary intellectual challenges without abandoning its normative foundations or falling into intellectual isolation. Therefore, the paradigm functions not only as an analytical framework, but also as a philosophical proposal for reimagining the relationship between tradition and modernity in Islamic thought. The integrative–interconnective paradigm developed by Amin Abdullah carries significant philosophical implications for contemporary Islamic epistemology. Its most fundamental contribution lies in reframing epistemological integration as a dialogical and relational process rather than a project of epistemic domination. By refusing to privilege any single source of knowledge as an absolute epistemological authority, the paradigm challenges established hierarchies that often place modern scientific knowledge as universally authoritative while marginalizing religious knowledge.

This reconceptualization has direct implications for how epistemic authority is constructed and negotiated. Knowledge is no longer understood as a closed system governed by a single methodological standard, but as an open process shaped by the interaction between textual, empirical, and philosophical forms of knowledge. Such an understanding dissolves the binary opposition between certainty and doubt that often characterizes debates between religious traditionalism and scientific rationalism. Instead, epistemic validity emerges through critical engagement, interpretative reflection, and ethical evaluation across epistemic domains. One of the primary strengths of the integrative–interconnective paradigm is its ability to preserve the normative authority of revelation without isolating it from critical inquiry. Revelation functions as a source of ethical orientation and metaphysical meaning, yet it is interpreted through philosophical reflection and enriched by empirical realities. This prevents revelation from being reduced to rigid literalism while also protecting it from epistemological relativism.

Another important strength lies in its engagement with epistemic pluralism. By acknowledging the limitations and contextual nature of all human knowledge, the paradigm fosters epistemic humility and intellectual openness. This orientation allows Islamic epistemology to interact with contemporary intellectual developments without relinquishing its distinctive normative commitments. The dialogical interaction among *Hadharat al-Nash*, *Hadharat al-'Ilm*, and *Hadharat al-Falsafah* creates a dynamic space in which knowledge can be continuously revised, evaluated, and enriched. Moreover, the paradigm provides a philosophical framework for interdisciplinary engagement that goes beyond mere juxtaposition of disciplines. It emphasizes epistemic interdependence, where philosophy facilitates critical reflection and conceptual synthesis, enabling empirical findings to be ethically evaluated and textual interpretations to remain responsive to lived realities. This integrative orientation enhances the capacity of Islamic epistemology to address complex contemporary issues that cannot be adequately understood through a single disciplinary lens (Sajjad Rizvi, 2021; Abdullah et al., 2025)

Despite its strengths, the integrative interconnective paradigm is not without limitations. One major challenge concerns the operationalization of dialogical interaction among epistemic domains. While the paradigm offers a compelling philosophical vision, its practical implementation requires sustained methodological rigor and institutional support. Without clear

criteria for epistemic negotiation, dialogical processes risk becoming merely rhetorical, resulting in superficial integration rather than genuine epistemological synthesis. Another limitation relates to the paradigm's reliance on philosophical mediation. While philosophy plays a crucial role in facilitating epistemic dialogue, it also raises questions about epistemic authority. The mediating role of philosophy may be perceived as marginalizing other forms of knowledge, particularly in contexts where philosophical literacy is unevenly distributed. Therefore, careful formulation is needed to ensure that philosophical reflection operates alongside, rather than above, textual and empirical inquiry.

Furthermore, the paradigm must contend with persistent institutional and ideological barriers that reinforce epistemological fragmentation. Educational systems, academic disciplines, and research paradigms are often structured around rigid boundaries that hinder integrative engagement. Thus, the success of the integrative–interconnective approach depends not only on its philosophical coherence but also on broader intellectual and institutional transformations that support epistemic dialogue. Despite these challenges, the integrative–interconnective paradigm offers a viable pathway for reconstructing Islamic epistemology in the modern world. By framing epistemological integration as a dialogical process, it enables Islamic knowledge to engage contemporary intellectual challenges without abandoning its normative foundations. Knowledge reconstruction, in this sense, is neither a return to pre-modern epistemological models nor an uncritical adoption of modern scientific frameworks. Rather, it is a reflective process that acknowledges historical continuity while remaining open to conceptual innovation.

This dialogical reconstruction has important implications for the future of Islamic thought. It encourages a re-examination of epistemic assumptions underlying disciplinary boundaries and invites scholars to renegotiate the relationship between tradition and modernity. By integrating textual authority, empirical inquiry, and philosophical reflection, the integrative–interconnective paradigm provides a coherent epistemological orientation capable of addressing ethical, social, and intellectual challenges in a rapidly changing world. In this context, this paradigm contributes to contemporary philosophical debates on knowledge integration by offering an Islamic perspective that is both critical and constructive. It demonstrates that epistemological integration need not lead to the homogenization of knowledge but can foster a pluralistic and dialogical intellectual environment. Through this approach, Islamic epistemology can reclaim its relevance as a dynamic, reflective, and meaningful intellectual tradition addressing the complexities of modern life.

One of the central challenges in contemporary Islamic epistemology concerns the issue of epistemic authority: who determines what counts as valid knowledge, and on what grounds such authority is justified. In the context of epistemological fragmentation, religious sciences and modern disciplines often claim authority based on fundamentally different criteria. Religious knowledge derives its legitimacy from revelation and tradition, while modern sciences rely on empirical verification and methodological rigor. When these criteria are treated as mutually exclusive, epistemic authority becomes fragmented and contested, resulting in intellectual polarization rather than productive engagement. Within modern epistemological discourse, the dominance of positivistic assumptions has reinforced the marginalization of non-empirical forms of knowledge. As noted by Wael B. Hallaq, modern knowledge systems tend to prioritize procedural rationality while excluding ethical and metaphysical considerations from the domain of epistemic legitimacy (Wael B. Hallaq, 2020). This tendency poses a serious challenge for Islamic epistemology, which historically integrates normative, metaphysical, and empirical dimensions of knowledge. When religious knowledge is forced to operate within epistemic frameworks that reject its normative foundations, it risks either epistemological subordination or defensive isolation.

Amin Abdullah's integrative–interconnective paradigm responds to this issue by reconfiguring epistemic authority as relational rather than hierarchical. Instead of establishing a single source of knowledge as absolute authority, the paradigm emphasizes interdependence among textual, empirical, and philosophical domains. Within this framework, epistemic authority emerges through dialogical interaction and critical reflection rather than unilateral claims of certainty. This approach challenges the assumption that epistemic validity must be grounded exclusively in either revelation or empirical methods. The mediating role of philosophy (Hadharat

al-Falsafah) is particularly significant in this context. Philosophy serves as a space of critical reflection that examines the assumptions, limits, and implications of both textual interpretation and empirical inquiry. By facilitating conceptual clarification and ethical evaluation, philosophy enables dialogue between Hadharat al-Nash and Hadharat al-'Ilm without reducing one to the other.

The mediating role of philosophy (Hadharat al-Falsafah) is particularly significant in this context, as it provides a space for critical reflection that examines the assumptions, limits, and implications of both textual interpretation and empirical inquiry. Through conceptual clarification and ethical evaluation, philosophy facilitates a dialogical relationship between Hadharat al-Nash and Hadharat al-'Ilm without reducing one to the other. In this regard, Ziauddin Sardar emphasizes that knowledge production is not neutral, but is shaped by cultural, social, and political contexts. Therefore, efforts toward epistemological integration require not only methodological compatibility but also a critical awareness of the power relations embedded in the production of knowledge (Zianudin Sardar, 2022). However, the mediating role of philosophy also raises questions about accessibility and authority. Philosophical discourse often requires a certain level of conceptual training that is not evenly distributed across intellectual communities. This creates the risk that philosophy may become an elite gatekeeper of epistemic legitimacy. Amin Abdullah's paradigm addresses this concern by emphasizing dialogical engagement rather than philosophical domination. Philosophy is not positioned as the highest epistemic authority, but as a facilitator of mutual understanding and critical dialogue among epistemic domains. From this perspective, epistemic authority is no longer fixed or monopolized, but remains open to negotiation and revision. Revelation retains its normative significance, yet its interpretation is enriched by empirical realities and philosophical reflection.

Scientific knowledge maintains methodological autonomy while remaining open to ethical and metaphysical evaluation. This dynamic configuration enables Islamic epistemology to engage contemporary knowledge systems without abandoning its foundational commitments. The implications of this reconceptualization extend beyond the theoretical realm and touch the broader landscape of Islamic intellectual life. By redefining epistemic authority as dialogical, the integrative-interconnective paradigm challenges rigid disciplinary boundaries and encourages interdisciplinary collaboration. This orientation aligns with contemporary philosophical discourses on transdisciplinarity while offering an Islamic framework rooted in normative and ethical considerations. As such, this paradigm provides a viable model for reconstructing epistemic authority in an intellectually rigorous and contextually responsive manner (Amin Abdullah, 2012).

The dialogical orientation of Amin Abdullah's integrative-interconnective paradigm has broad implications for contemporary Islamic thought, particularly in redefining the relationship between tradition and modernity in epistemological discourse. Rather than positioning tradition and modernity as opposing forces, the dialogical approach situates them within a continuous process of interaction, interpretation, and critical engagement. This perspective challenges the assumption that intellectual renewal in Islam requires either a return to pre-modern epistemology or an uncritical adoption of modern scientific frameworks. Dialogical integration affirms that epistemological continuity and transformation are not mutually exclusive. The history of Islamic intellectual tradition itself reflects a long-standing practice of critical dialogue, in which scholars selectively appropriated philosophical, scientific, and cultural elements from various contexts without abandoning normative commitments. The integrative-interconnective paradigm continues this legacy by formulating a contemporary framework that acknowledges epistemic plurality while maintaining ethical orientation. In this sense, dialogical integration is not a break from tradition, but a reflective reactivation of Islamic intellectual heritage within modern epistemic conditions.

One important implication of dialogical integration is its potential to reduce ideological polarization within contemporary Islamic discourse. Debates between scripturalist, rationalist, and empiricist orientations often operate within closed epistemic frameworks that resist mutual critique. Such polarization hinders intellectual collaboration and reinforces epistemological fragmentation. The integrative-interconnective paradigm offers an alternative by promoting

dialogical openness, where epistemic claims are evaluated through critical reflection rather than dismissed on ideological grounds

This dialogical orientation also shapes how Islamic thought engages with global knowledge systems. Knowledge production in contemporary Islam is influenced not only by theological and intellectual debates but also by broader social, political, and institutional forces that shape authority and legitimacy. Modern academic disciplines are often structured by secular epistemological assumptions that marginalize religious perspectives. Rather than rejecting these disciplines outright or “Islamizing” them through doctrinal imposition, dialogical integration encourages selective, critical, and reflective engagement. As noted by Talal Asad, engagement with modern knowledge systems requires sensitivity to the historical conditions and power relations that shape knowledge production (Talal Asad, 2003). Dialogical integration provides a framework for such engagement by emphasizing ethical evaluation and epistemic reflexivity.

Furthermore, dialogical integration reshapes the understanding of intellectual authority in Islamic thought. Authority is no longer derived solely from mastery of texts or methodological expertise, but from the ability to navigate epistemic diversity responsibly. Scholars are encouraged to cultivate interpretive humility and critical awareness of the limitations of their own epistemic positions. This orientation fosters a culture of intellectual accountability, in which knowledge claims remain open to ethical and philosophical evaluation. The implications of this paradigm also extend to contemporary debates on reform (*tajdid*) in Islamic thought. Reform is often understood as doctrinal purification or structural adaptation to modernity. Dialogical integration offers an alternative understanding of reform as an epistemological process grounded in critical engagement and ethical responsibility. Renewal, in this sense, is achieved not through rupture or mere accommodation, but through sustained dialogue among diverse epistemic traditions. This perspective aligns with philosophical discourses on reflexive modernity, which emphasize self-critique and contextual responsiveness as conditions for intellectual vitality. Nevertheless, dialogical integration also faces practical and theoretical challenges. Authentic dialogue requires institutional environments that support interdisciplinary collaboration and philosophical inquiry. In contexts where academic disciplines are rigidly compartmentalized or ideologically constrained, dialogical engagement risks being reduced to rhetorical affirmation.

Moreover, dialogical integration demands intellectual openness that may be difficult to cultivate amid socio-political pressures that prioritize epistemic certainty over critical reflection. Despite these challenges, the findings of this philosophical analysis demonstrate that the integrative–interconnective paradigm functions as a model of dialogical epistemology. By articulating dialogical integration as both a philosophical orientation and an epistemic practice, the paradigm provides tools for navigating the complexities of modern intellectual life without sacrificing normative commitments. It shows that Islamic thought can engage modern knowledge systems critically and constructively while contributing to global intellectual discourse in ways that remain grounded in its ethical and metaphysical foundations. In this context, dialogical integration should not be understood as a final solution to epistemological fragmentation, but as an ongoing process of negotiation and reinterpretation. Its value lies precisely in its openness to revision and critique, enabling Islamic epistemology to remain dynamic and responsive. Through dialogical engagement, Islamic thought can reaffirm its role as a reflective and ethically grounded intellectual tradition capable of addressing the challenges of contemporary knowledge production.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the epistemological crisis in contemporary Islamic knowledge cannot be simplistically understood as a conflict between tradition and modernity. Rather, it reflects a deeper structural problem related to the criteria of epistemic validity and the hierarchy of knowledge within modern academic systems. The dominance of modern epistemology, which prioritizes empirical verification as the primary standard of knowledge legitimacy, has contributed to the marginalization of religious knowledge. In this context, Islamic epistemology is often placed in a defensive position, as it is required to justify its relevance within frameworks that were not originally designed to accommodate normative and metaphysical dimensions.

The implications of this condition are significant for the development of Islamic thought. When religious sciences are reduced to merely sources of moral values or cultural identity, they lose their function as critical epistemic agents. On the other hand, modern sciences, when detached from ethical and metaphysical reflection, tend to produce instrumental knowledge oriented toward efficiency rather than meaning. This situation creates what may be described as a “double impoverishment,” namely the weakening of the critical dimension in religious sciences and the loss of meaningful orientation in modern sciences. Consequently, the fragmentation of knowledge is reinforced, limiting the capacity of Muslim intellectual traditions to respond to complex contemporary challenges. The dichotomy between religious sciences and modern disciplines is not merely institutional but also epistemological. Religious knowledge is often confined to the interpretation of sacred texts and normative doctrines, while modern sciences are associated with empirical inquiry and technical rationality. This separation has given rise to an epistemic hierarchy, in which modern scientific knowledge is frequently positioned as universally valid, whereas religious knowledge is treated as particular or bound to specific traditions. As a result, the Islamic intellectual tradition faces the risk of epistemological marginalization in contemporary knowledge production (Mulyadi Kertanegara, 2005; Tambak et al., 2026; Sukenti et al., 2025)

This crisis is also consistent with broader critiques of modern epistemology, which highlight that modern knowledge is not value-neutral but embedded within particular ideological and methodological frameworks that often exclude ethical and metaphysical considerations. Wael B. Hallaq, for instance, argues that modern knowledge systems operate within a moral framework that prioritizes technical rationality over ethical responsibility, thereby marginalizing alternative epistemologies rooted in normative traditions (Wael B. Hallaq, 2020; Yasin et al., 2025; Widodo et al., 2025; Tambak et al., 2025). Therefore, the epistemological problem in Islam is not solely internal to its intellectual tradition, but is also shaped by the global structure of knowledge production, which privileges certain forms of rationality over others. However, this study emphasizes that resolving the epistemological crisis through epistemological isolationism is equally problematic. Rejecting modern sciences altogether or retreating into textual absolutism risks transforming Islamic epistemology into a closed system incapable of self-critique and development. Therefore, critical engagement with modern knowledge systems is necessary. Such engagement, however, must be selective and reflective in order to avoid uncritical assimilation.

In this context, the integrative interconnective paradigm proposed by Amin Abdullah offers a relevant epistemological framework. This paradigm promotes a dialogical approach that does not position revelation, reason, and empirical experience as opposing entities, but rather as complementary sources of knowledge. Through the concepts of *Hadharat al-Nash*, *Hadharat al-‘Ilm*, and *Hadharat al-Falsafah*, the paradigm presents a relational and dynamic model of epistemological integration. In the Islamic intellectual tradition, epistemology has historically been grounded in the integration of revelation (*wahy*), reason (*‘aql*), and empirical observation, all of which are understood within a unified ontological and ethical framework. Knowledge is not perceived as value-neutral, but rather as inherently directed toward moral purpose and the realization of *tawhīd* as the fundamental principle of reality. If the influence of modern epistemological assumptions that separate metaphysics from scientific reality becomes too strong, then knowledge discovered in the field tends to lose its moral purpose and its orientation toward *tawhīd*.

Philosophically, this paradigm rejects epistemological absolutism by asserting that no single source of knowledge holds exclusive authority. Revelation retains its normative role, yet its interpretation requires philosophical reflection and openness to empirical realities. Similarly, modern scientific knowledge maintains its methodological autonomy but should not be detached from ethical and metaphysical considerations. Thus, epistemological integration is understood not as fusion, but as a continuous dialogical process. The main strength of the integrative–interconnective paradigm lies in its ability to bridge the dichotomy between religious and modern sciences without eliminating their distinctive characteristics. It also encourages epistemic pluralism, where different forms of knowledge are recognized as partial and mutually complementary through dialogical interaction. Furthermore, this paradigm provides a foundation

for a more substantive interdisciplinary approach, not merely technical but also epistemological in nature.

Conclusion

The main contribution of this article lies in its philosophical reinterpretation of Amin Abdullah's integrative–interconnective paradigm as a dialogical epistemology, rather than merely a pedagogical framework. By situating this paradigm within broader epistemological debates, this study demonstrates its relevance in addressing the structural fragmentation of knowledge in contemporary Islamic thought. This article examines the epistemological crisis in contemporary Islamic knowledge arising from the persistent dichotomy between religious sciences and modern disciplines. The analysis shows that this crisis is not merely institutional or methodological, but fundamentally epistemological, rooted in conflicting assumptions regarding the sources, authority, and purposes of knowledge. When religious knowledge is confined to normative-textual interpretation and modern sciences are detached from ethical and metaphysical considerations, Islamic epistemology risks fragmentation and loses its capacity to respond effectively to contemporary intellectual challenges. Through a critical analysis of Amin Abdullah's integrative–interconnective paradigm, this study demonstrates that epistemological integrity cannot be sustained through isolation. The concepts of *Hadharat al-Nash*, *Hadharat al-'Ilm*, and *Hadharat al-Falsafah* function as interconnected epistemic domains that enable dialogical engagement between textual authority, empirical reasoning, and philosophical reflection. This relational framework prevents Islamic epistemology from falling into either epistemological isolationism or uncritical assimilation into modern science, instead offering a middle path that preserves normative commitments while remaining intellectually open.

The findings of this study affirm that the philosophical strength of the integrative–interconnective paradigm lies in its rejection of epistemological absolutism and its affirmation of epistemic pluralism. Knowledge is understood as a dynamic and reflective process shaped through interaction, critique, and ethical evaluation across epistemic domains. At the same time, this analysis acknowledges the limitations of the paradigm, particularly regarding its practical operationalization and the institutional conditions required to support meaningful epistemic dialogue. These challenges do not undermine the paradigm's philosophical coherence; rather, they highlight areas that require further theoretical refinement and critical engagement. In conclusion, Amin Abdullah's integrative–interconnective paradigm provides a coherent and philosophically robust framework for reconstructing Islamic epistemology in the modern world. By situating epistemological integration within a dialogical and reflective horizon, this paradigm enables Islamic knowledge to engage with contemporary intellectual and ethical challenges without abandoning its foundational principles. This study contributes to the discourse of Islamic philosophy by repositioning epistemological integration as a critical response to knowledge fragmentation, while also emphasizing the role of philosophy as a mediating force between tradition and modernity in the ongoing reconstruction of Islamic thought.

Declarations

Author contribution statement

The author declares that this article is an original work written independently, and this article has never been published previously in any form and is not currently under review by another journal. Specifies the exact contributions of each author in a narrative form. For example, from drafting the manuscript, collecting data, and writing the manuscript, the authors who contributed should be listed. The authors contributed to this research as follows: [Diah Ayu Rahmani] wrote and revised the manuscript conceived the research concept and methodology. [Via Novelia Najmi] collected and analyzed the data. [Eva Dewi] conceived the research concept and methodology.

Funding statement

The authors received no financial support for this research. The article publication charges were paid by the authors

Data availability statement

Data Availability Statement: The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Declaration of interests statement

The authors declare no financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the findings of this study

Declaration of use artificial intelligence

The authors used artificial intelligence assistance during the writing and/or editing process of this manuscript. However, the authors take full responsibility for the entire content.

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to thank the lecturers who provided guidance in preparing this journal article, as well as colleagues who offered support and contributions to this research.

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