

INTEGRATION OF NAQLI AND AQLI KNOWLEDGE IN EDUCATION CURRICULUM : EXPERIENCE OF FACULTY OF QURANIC AND SUNAH STUDIES, UNIVERSITI SAINS ISLAM MALAYSIA

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Abstract

Naqli knowledge is a knowledge that is sourced on the Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad while *Aqli* knowledge is sourced from the rationale and findings of human thoughts in relationship with the progress of human civilization. Both types of knowledge have long developed in accordance with the current progress of the pioneers and their studies in the field. Therefore, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) as one of Malaysian Government universities has determined to be a university that is ahead in both disciplines through its theme in pioneering Islamic science and spearheading knowledge. Hence, the integration of *Naqli* and *Aqli* knowledge in the education curriculum for courses in the university has been practiced. This approach for both disciplines involves the entire faculty and academic centers in the university. For the Faculty of Quranic & Sunnah Studies, the department has made great strides through USIM's mission that is determined to be an advanced institution that is based on science and Islamic studies at the forefront of new knowledge through the use of the latest technology. This is to generate innovations that can transform the country, nation and mankind. Briefing sessions for integrating the two disciplines have been conducted to provide a better understanding to the academics in the Faculty. From the activities carried out, participants have more meaningful understanding in creating a curriculum that includes the integration of *Naqli* and *Aqli*. Similarly, workshops were also conducted either at the University or Faculty level for each course offered. From the workshop conducted, participants had made improvement to the curriculum of the courses offered to students. In addition, the seminar which was created through the presentation of papers by presenters either from within or outside the faculty have also been able to improve the quality of the education curriculum that integrates *Naqli* and *Aqli* in USIM. The study has found that the curriculum at the Faculty of Quranic & Sunnah Studies, USIM has successfully integrated both disciplines discussed, but in order to produce a more robust impact, then projected follow-up measures need to be strengthened.

Keywords: *Naqli*, *Aqli*, knowledge, integration, education curriculum.

1 . INTRODUCTION OF UNIVERSITI SAINS ISLAM MALAYSIA

Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) is the 12th university wholly owned by the Government of Malaysia. This institution adopts a balanced approach in education through the implementation of the elements that meet the physical and spiritual needs. This approach involves the practice in the academic programs offered as well as in the administration procedure from the highest to the lowest management level. This approach is taken for the process of delivering revelational knowledge that unites science (the science of *Naqli*) and rational science (the science of *Aqli*). Through this method, USIM offers a unique model for Islamic higher education, which is different from other Islamic universities in the Asian region in particular, and in the world in general. Integration of religion with social and physical sciences in all USIM programs enabling it to become an instrument for the new solution in the current global problems.

USIM establishment as a higher learning institution of Islam is the government's efforts to accommodate the lack of intellects who master the science of Islam. The initial announcement of the establishment of this proposal was made by the then Minister of Education the Honourable Dato' Sri Mohd Najib bin Tun Abdul Razak in Pasir Puteh, Kelantan, on June 14, 1996. Hence, the official announcement of the establishment of the Islamic University College of Malaysia (KUIM) was made by the Honourable Dato' Sri Mohd Najib bin Tun Abdul Razak on June 14, 1997, in Besut, Terengganu, after approval from the Cabinet on June 11, 1997 (Kandil et. al., 2007, pp. 28-29). Passionate establishment of this institution is consistent with the manifestation of the Government to create leaders who are competent and able to protect national interests and the people completely. In addition, it aims to make Malaysia as a leading model of Islamic countries in the world and become a center of excellence in education by using a local curriculum to ensure the integrity of Islam in the country to realize the construction of a new civilization of Islam.

With the establishment of KUIM, it had provided opportunities for graduate students in religious secondary schools throughout the country to pursue higher education. Indirectly, this situation could reduce the burden on the government to send students to pursue their studies abroad. On June 13, 1997 the Cabinet had agreed with the establishment of KUIM that used Arabic as a medium of instruction and proclaimed in the following year, on March 12, 1998 (Kandil et. al., 2007, p. 28). Among the leading figures in throwing ideas on the establishment of KUIM was the then Education Minister Dato' Sri Mohd Najib bin Tun Abdul Razak and supported by the Prime Minister, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad.

KUIM originally started its operation at the Faculty of Islamic Studies of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia in January 2000. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between the Majlis Agama Islam Wilayah Persekutuan (MAIWP) with KUIM and Baitulmal Professional Institute (IPB). KUIM later moved to IPB in Kampung Pandan, Kuala Lumpur for the first student intake for 2000/2001 session consisting a total of 255 students. At the early stages, KUIM offered three areas of studies, namely Sharia and Law Studies, al-Quran and al-Sunnah Studies and Da'wah and Islamic Management Studies in three faculties; Faculty of Shariah and Law, Faculty of Quran and Sunnah and the Faculty of Da'wah and Islamic Management (KUIM Academic Division, 2005, p. 9).

The philosophy of this institution is to combine science of *Naqli* and *Aqli*, and noble character is the main pillar to mould excellent generation and knowledgable society (KUIM Prospectus, 1993, p. 3). In addition, its vision is to integrate the knowledge of *Naqli* and *Aqli* to transform and deliver values to the nation and the *Ummah*. The mission of this university is it is determined to be an advanced educational institution that is based on Islamic studies and become the forefront of new knowledge that uses the latest technology to produce innovations that can transform the nation, *ummah* and mankind.

The objective of USIM is to uphold Islamic education and bringing it into the education mainstream. It is also to build coherence between theory and practice in each and every graduate produced. In addition, USIM aims to create unified and educated Islamic scholars, able to lead a pluralistic society and have a high potential to lead the development of the country (KUIM Academic Division, 2005, p. 11). For the long term, it can explore and restore the excellent tradition of Islamic knowledge in harmony with the environment and the latest technology.

2. INTRODUCTION OF FACULTY OF QURANIC AND SUNNAH STUDIES

Faculty of Quran & Sunnah (FPQS) is the first faculty established by Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) in 2001. Among its objectives is to enhance the learning of Quran and Sunnah in education mainstream by emphasizing the use of information technology in teaching and research (KUIM Academic Division, 2005, p. 18). In addition, it can expand Islamic teachings by providing more opportunities for researchers and educators to study, research and disseminate the knowledge contained in the holy book of Quran and Sunnah to the community and country.

In order to ensure that these goals are accomplished, FPQS has established three programs, namely: Bachelor of Quranic and Sunnah Studies with Honours, Bachelor of Quranic Studies with Multimedia with Honours and Bachelor of Sunnah Studies with Information Management with Honours. Besides undergraduate programmes, FPQS also offers Master of Quranic and Sunnah Studies and Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Quranic and Sunnah Studies. The Faculty aims to be an avenue to produce graduates who are knowledgeable, skillful and professional in the field of Quranic and Sunnah Studies, who can be a catalyst for community and national development.

The faculty's vision is to uphold the Quran and Sunnah in producing man that is based on Islamic education and recent technology that is able to contribute to the society, nation and the whole world. Its

mission is to conduct research through exploration of Muslims' problems and challenges and find solutions based on Quran and Sunnah in order to improve the quality of life and dignity of Muslims as pious, modern and progressive society (KUIM Academic Division, 2005, p. 19). Apart from that, it can produce graduates who are knowledgeable, farsighted, noble and possess strong leadership in all areas to spearhead the development of the country in line with the vision and development of the country and also the whole Islamic world. In particular, it aims to produce quality graduates who are creative and innovative in delivery methods and improve the experience and appreciation of the community towards the Quran and Sunnah. The mission of faculty is also to make USIM as a leading educational institution and research in Islamic sciences and recognized at all levels locally, regionally and globally.

The objective of this faculty is to produce graduates who are able to understand and refer the law from the original sources namely the Quran and Sunnah (Tamhidi Centre, 2005, p. 20). In addition, the objective is to produce graduates who have a thorough understanding of Islamic thoughts in the field of *akidah*, *syariah* and *akhlak* which are based on the Quran and Sunnah and understand the development of current thinking. The faculty also has the objective to produce manpower that is capable of carrying out their duties in a comprehensive selected field after graduating from the university.

3. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTEGRATION AND ISLAMIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE

Among the serious problems among the society on the issues of education is duality in the education system, whereby there is a clear separation between the knowledge of self-management and knowledge of system management themselves. Such a situation cannot build knowledge of *tasawwur* and integrated education. Islamic Education Conference in Mecca in 1977, which was attended by many scholars and world Islamic leaders, urged that Islamic education to return to the basics of faith. At the same time, approach to science and technology must be treated within the framework of Islamic values and ethics. In other words, it is about the integration of knowledge of self-management and knowledge of system management. In common understanding, it is the integration between knowledge of *fardu ain* and *fardu kifayah* or between *Aqli* and *Naqli* (Sidek Baba, 2013)

The idea of integration or the Islamization of knowledge has been raised by Muslim scholars in modern times, after there is a lot of progress in science and technology. It is debatable to prove that the revelation becomes a source of progress and also to make knowledge developed in the West is now aligned with the revelation itself (Muhammad Widus, 2014, pp. 4-5).

This is because modern technology has now given many great benefits to the present life. In other words, technological advancement has now become a tool for progress and betterment of the whole world. If knowledge of technology is put aside, this means that Muslims will be left out of the mainstream of development and if it is taken entirely by reference to the west, then it will produce a society that lives solely on material-oriented without the spirit of religion. Inevitably, the idea of integration or Islamization must be empowered to become one of the effective methods for the development of the Islamic *ummah* in accordance with the actual Islamic practice. Therefore, knowledge of *Aqli* should not collide with *Naqli* (Shalash, 2014, p. 12), unless if there are differences among Muslims then there should be an attempt to create a harmony between them.

Integration refers to the process that combines or collects things. Generally, it is a process of bringing together for the purpose of producing something. In the context of knowledge, integration means the combination of two disciplines that will turn into a new knowledge. Within the scope of USIM, the desired integration is combining knowledge of *Naqli* that is sourced from the Quran and Sunnah with knowledge of *Aqli* that is based on human thoughts and rationale (Mohd Nasrin, 2014, p. 4).

Some of the terms used in the context of the integration of knowledge is Islamization that comes from an English word "Islamization" (Abud, 2003, p. 171). Along with its meaning, the concept of integration is rooted in the concept of monotheism, that is any knowledge whatsoever shall not violate the law and the principles outlined by the tenets of Islam. In other words, the integration of knowledge through the process of Islamization makes people closer to God through faith that He is God and there is no partner for Him. (Mulyadi, 2005, p. 32). According to Faruqi, strong relationships are needed between the current reality and knowledge derived from revelation (Irwan, 2014, pp. 5-6). Therefore it is necessary to utilize the knowledge to develop civilization of mankind (Azyumardi, 2006, p. 42).

Islamization approach is seen more focused on epistemology which refers to the development and progress of philosophical thoughts (Syed Muhammad, 2014, p.1). Knowledge is not just limited to physical objects alone, but it also involves covering the unseen world of angels and spirits. In addition, this approach

is also based on Quran as a source of knowledge that can be analyzed by modern discoveries.

Integration approach means integrate, consolidate and unify something with sincerity and honesty. It is a method of combining several parts of something in a complementary form (Azyumardi, 2006, p. 47). Naquib al-Attas views integration approach as able to transform knowledge and adapt it to the principle of revelation. Similarly Ismail Raji al-Faruqi also supports the integration of knowledge in modern science progress atmosphere to build a civilization.

From one aspect, religion and science are needed by man to have a peaceful life (Amsal 2010, p. 230). Although they are two different elements, from another angle they have some similarities.

Knowledge of self-management considers the importance of knowledge of al-Quran and Sunnah to be the guidelines in thinking that shapes the *fikrah* of Qurani and Islami - led to the birth of a civilization. It does not mean that reasoning and rationality factors are rejected. Quranic knowledge philosophy provides guidance so that research about Allah's compassion and wisdom in the form of His treasures is done by connecting the real and unreal aspects so that *Naqli* and *Aqli* factors are combined well. Undoubtedly, many famous ancient scholars in various disciplines of knowledge of *Aqli* such as astronomy (Mesbahul, 2014, pp. 1-2) also mastered knowledge of *Naqli* at the same time.

Studies in Geography simply connect man with the real world alone. However, the study of the supernatural in nature refers to understanding the nature created by Allah. Meanwhile, the study of plants and mountains is not separated from supernatural factors. Mountains in the Quran are described as *awtād* which pegs the earth that gives an answer to the meaning of equilibrium (Sidek Baba, 2013). Western scientific tradition, for example, gives more emphasis on the phenomenon of things or events. In contrast, science in the Islamic tradition not only studies the phenomenon of creation but the wisdom behind it. Water, for instance, is not only the result of a combination of hydrogen and oxygen, but also functions as a source of life as described in al-Quran. This integration is essential so that the perspective of knowledge and education relies on knowledge of self-management and system-management.

4. EXPERIENCE OF UNIVERSITI SAINS ISLAM MALAYSIA AND FACULTY OF QURANIC AND SUNNAH STUDIES

USIM's objective is to become a leader in all aspects of knowledge and as a global reference centre for the integration of knowledge of *Naqli* dan *Aqli*. Chairman of the Board of Directors, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), the Honorable Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dato' Dr. Hj. Abdul Shukor bin Hj. Hussin has presented USIM's experience in integrating knowledge of *Naqli* dan *Aqli* to achieve the mission and vision of USIM (Abdul Shukor, 2012). When USIM which formerly was Kolej Universiti Islam Malaysia (KUIM) was about to be established, he and other members of the Board of Directors were informed that the establishment of this Islamic university should have its own specialty and uniqueness as a strategy to compete with existing universities. For example, the Communications Program in USIM need to highlight something unique that is by applying the elements of Islam in the subjects offered and thus will create Islamic communication.

Establishment of USIM is seen parallel to the call of the Prime Minister of Malaysia, the Honorable Dato 'Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak who has given much emphasis on Islamic *maqasid* where all are the results of the integration of knowledge. What is being emphasized by the Prime Minister is also associated with the development of One Malaysia and as a process for setting up a system so that it reaches a level that can be accepted by the whole community.

Vision to integrate modern and religious knowledge in accordance to the Quran and Sunnah is the main element and the driving factor for Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) in making various progress and success since its establishment. The third Vice Chancellor of USIM, Prof. Datuk Dr. Asma Ismail, once said that generally the vision was not only to create a generation of excellent community, but also able to help the country and the world centered on knowledge of *Naqli* and *Aqli* (Utusan Malaysia, 27 November 2013).

The university is committed to become an advanced knowledge institution in integrating knowledge of *Naqli* dan *Aqli* in its efforts to strengthen its position so as able to continue to compete in the mainstream and at the international level. USIM's direction in 2025 is to become the world's top university for the integration of both types of knowledge and last year it achieved recognition as a emerging leader university for the integration of *Naqli* and *Aqli* knowledge at the national level (Asma Ismail, 2014, pp. 38 -39).

In USIM's strategic plan, it has affirmed that the academic curriculum that integrates *Naqli* and *Aqli* certainly meets the requirements of stakeholders. This is to ensure the graduates produced are balanced

and integrated *Naqli* and *Aqli* knowledge successfully (Center of Corporate Planning and Quality Management, Strategic Planning and Integration Workshop of *Naqli-Aqli*, pp. 1-2). To become the world's leading university, USIM needs to work on the integration of *Naqli* and *Aqli* knowledge gradually so that five years from now all aspects USIM encompassing teaching and learning, research and innovation, administration and management, internationalization, personality development of students and staff, financial sustainability, community engagement, and USIM's policy and administrators will be modified in order to embrace the philosophy of integration of knowledge concerned.

USIM has created a history and gained recognition when it won three awards of Europe Business Assembly (EBA) at the Socrates Award Ceremony held in London from 16 to 19 December 2013. USIM's success in winning the Best Regional University, Best Manager of the Year and Best Scientist in 2013 provides an opportunity for USIM to uphold and strengthen Islamic sciences at the global level (Utusan Malaysia, 2 April 2014) in accordance with the theme of the university itself namely "Pioneering Islamic Science, Spearheading Knowledge".

Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia will establish a Steering Committee of *Naqli-Aqli* Integration and under it Steering Committee for Curriculum Development (Academic), Acculturation Research, Talent Development, and Knowledge Transfer Services will be created in order to provide a framework so that the university can monitor and implement the agenda of *Naqli-Aqli* integration in USIM. In teaching and learning method, USIM can see some trends available. The easiest trend is where the lecturers teach the students in their own field and has nothing to do with other disciplines. This trend will continue to separate *Naqli* and *Aqli* knowledge and each of them develops without any link between these two corpuses of knowledge. There are also efforts towards multidisciplinary where it is based on double major concept but the interaction between the two disciplines is not clear because even though they are under the same house, each is still bound by their respective disciplines (Asma Ismail, 2014, pp. 11-14).

Students who study *Naqli* and *Aqli* knowledge may be asked to solve a problem by having a seminar or panel discussions that encourage team-teaching that includes those trained in *Naqli* and *Aqli* knowledge to be equally involved in the analysis of these types of knowledge focusing on problem-based learning. With the concept of team-teaching students not only learn, but lecturers will also learn the ways of handling the case. This does not mean that each course must have its own *Naqli* and *Aqli* but the university should see the program as a whole and design the curriculum so that there is a room for the integration of *Naqli* and *Aqli* knowledge.

Team-teaching is a concept that is practiced now in global higher education because the existing information in a field is so deep that a person is no longer able to know all of it in detail. The best thing is transdisciplinary in which there is a close relationship and cross-discipline between *Naqli* and *Aqli* knowledge. USIM will reach this stage when there are more lecturers trained in both types of knowledge. At the same time, the university's strategy is to hire its own excellent graduates that have been nurtured by *Naqli* and *Aqli* knowledge and become lecturers in USIM.

In 2014, all faculties in USIM were asked to review their curriculum respectively and initiated the integration effort. To practice the integration of *Naqli* and *Aqli* knowledge is not easy. It is pertinent to what the lecturers themselves have learned, particularly lecturers in science field. Secularism has separated *Naqli* and *Aqli* knowledge. In the concept of secularism, the discovery and understanding of science would not be associated with the greatness of God Almighty. Therefore, in most science fields, there is no concept of *Naqli* to understand, explore and master knowledge of science. However, man knows there are scientific facts contained in the Quran and Sunnah. If they can be combined, undeniably it can produce a prosperous nation.

Therefore, to realize the integration *Naqli* and *Aqli*, USIM must create a meeting point between various disciplines in order to connect the relation between *Naqli* and *Aqli* knowledge. One way to create this meeting point is to collect the Quranic verses and Hadith and show how it relates to *Aqli* disciplines such as biology, physics, entomology, embryology and so on. In the digital era that requires knowledge at the fingertips, it is necessary to set up an index that lists organized Quranic verses according to *Aqli* discipline. This database can be supplemented by scientific discoveries from scientific literature that is related to knowledge centered on Quranic verses and Hadith.

USIM is now running a project for the preparation of Al-Quran index led by Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies and assisted by Faculty of Science and Technology to compile these indices under various *Aqli* disciplines. After completion, the knowledge contained in the database will be donated for the use of all Muslim researchers and scholars around the world.

Here are some of the activities conducted by Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia and Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies, as an effort to integrate *Naqli* and *Aqli* knowledge in USIM's education curriculum.

Table 1. The table above shows the activities conducted by Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia and Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies to realize the integration of *Naqli* and *Aqli* in the curriculum at the university.

No	Activity	Date	Venue
1	Cafe of Naqli and Aqli Integration	10 February 2014	Faculty of Economics & Muamalat, USIM
2	Curriculum Review Pre-Workshop on Naqli and Aqli Integration	20 February 2014	FPQS, USIM
3	Curriculum Review Coordination Meeting on Naqli and Aqli Integration	16 June 2014	Chancellory, USIM
4	Curriculum Review Workshop on Naqli and Aqli Integration	19-21 June 2014	Malacca
5	Refining Workshop on FPQS Revised Program	1 July 2014	FPQS, USIM
6	Curriculum Review Clinic on Naqli and Aqli Integration	7 July 2014	Learning and Teaching Innovation Centre, USIM
7	Curriculum Briefing on Naqli and Aqli Integration	23 July 2014	FPQS, USIM
8	Restoration Workshop on Naqli and Aqli Integration 1/2014 Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies	12 August 2014	FPQS, USIM
9	Restoration Workshop on Naqli and Aqli Integration 2/2014 Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies	16 October 2014	FPQS, USIM
10	Pre-Workshop on Strategic Plan and Naqli and Aqli Integration USIM No 1/2014	1 December 2014	Chancellory, USIM
11	Pre-Workshop on Strategic Plan and Naqli and Aqli Integration No 2/2014	3 December 2014	Chancellory, USIM
12	Workshop on Strategic Plan and Naqli and Aqli Integration No 3/2014	22-24 December 2014	Perak

Based on various activities that have been carried out for the integration of *Naqli* and *Aqli* knowledge in USIM's education curriculum, to date there are four stages which are named by *Mustawa* (Center for Learning and Teaching Innovation, 2014, Resolution of Curriculum Review Workshop on *Naqli* and *Aqli* Integration, 1- 2). Each stage (*Mustawa*) consists of the following criteria: the first stage, known as *Mustawa* 1 (M1) is called with '*al-Nusus*', referring to the fundamental teachings of Islam, namely the Quran, hadith and prominent Islamic scholars' scriptures. Next, *Mustawa* 2 (M2) is named '*al-Muqaranah*' which means comparison, referring to the differences and similarities between the approaches of Islamic knowledge and conventional one. *Mustawa* 3 (M3) is named as '*al-Taqyim*' that is adaptation through the process of selecting, filtering, adapting and adopting any principles, values and framework that does not conflict with Islam. The fourth stage is called '*al-Tafaqquh*' which refers to the combination of various disciplines and applications that generate a holistic curriculum.

As an example, Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies have carried out the integration of *Naqli* and *Aqli* in the curriculum, even in Tafsir al-Quran course (Abdulloh Salaeh, 2014, pp. 9-12). In addition, the faculty also introduced a course to students of Bachelor of Quranic and Sunnah Studies, known as 'Scientific Interpretation of Quran' (Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies - Course Outline, pp. 1-3). This course is taught to final year students in the degree program and they are required to pass it. In this course, learning of Quranic verses (*Naqli*) has been integrated with modern science (*Aqli*). For instance, Surah al-Baqarah verse 19 states that Allah gave touching parable of the hypocrites like heavy rain at pitch black night with very strong lightning and thunder. In interpreting this verse, through the integration of *Aqli* knowledge,

students are introduced to the science of meteorology and weather forecast as well as to determine the factors of occurrence of thunder and lightning from scientific perspective. Students are also introduced to the phenomenon of hurricanes, tornadoes and other natural phenomena.

5. CONCLUSION

The process of creating and advancing the integration of *Naqli* and *Aqli* knowledge in the curriculum at tertiary level is not an easy task. It requires dedication, understanding, sustained commitment and support from all levels in an organization. There are also many challenges that exist, such as the willingness and understanding of the academic staff and lack of resources and reference materials. However, the determination outlined by USIM through its objectives to become a referred respected, and relevant institution has heightened the spirits to turn it into a reality. It is hoped that the aspirations and vision of this institution to become a regional reference university in 2016 and become the world's top university in the integration of *Naqli* and *Aqli* knowledge by 2025 will be achieved. This hope is not impossible, given that in 2013 this institution has gained recognition as emerging leader for the integration of *Naqli* and *Aqli* knowledge at the national level. In addition, the various awards received from Europe Business Assembly (EBA) at the Socrates Award Ceremony in London such as the Best Regional University, Best Manager of the Year and Best Scientist Award 2013, have marked the beginning of that vision that one day, it will be a reality.

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