

Epistemology of Islamic Education: Revelation, Reason, and Empirical Knowledge Perspective

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ABSTRACT

In contemporary educational discourse, the epistemology of Islamic education faces the challenge of integrating revelation, reason, and empirical knowledge within modern philosophical frameworks. This integration is crucial to address the dominance of secular-positivistic paradigms and to develop a holistic, value-oriented educational approach. This study aims to systematically examine the epistemology of Islamic education based on revelation, reason, and empirical knowledge from a contemporary philosophical perspective. Employing a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, this study analyzed 30 scholarly articles (23 from Google Scholar, 7 from Scopus) published between 2020 and 2025. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify trends, methodological approaches, and epistemological constructions. The analysis reveals an emphasis on an integrative paradigm where revelation serves as the normative foundation, while reason and empirical experience function as rational and contextual instruments. The literature also demonstrates a critical stance toward secular-positivistic epistemologies. However, most studies remain conceptual, with limited empirical research on practical implementation. This study contributes to the theoretical development of Islamic educational philosophy. It underscores the necessity for future empirical and applied research to translate integrative epistemological constructs into practical educational contexts.

Keywords: Contemporary Philosophy, Islamic Education Epistemology, Systematic Literature Review

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INTRODUCTION

Epistemology is a branch of philosophy that examines the nature, sources, structure, and validity of knowledge (Rokhmah, 2021). In the context of education, epistemology serves as a conceptual foundation that determines the direction of curriculum development, learning methods, and educational objectives (Wiranata et al., 2021). When education lacks a solid epistemological basis, it runs the risk of losing its focus on values and becoming trapped in practical, technical methods, ignoring the philosophical and ethical aspects of the learning process (Tampahu et al., 2024). Compared to other educational systems, Islamic education has a distinct epistemic aspect. Unlike the prevailing Western educational system, the epistemology of Islamic education is not solely grounded upon reason and empirical experience (Hamdi et al., 2021; Ihsan, 2021; Juliwansyah & Ahida, 2022), but also places revelation as the primary and normative source of knowledge. This uniqueness makes Islamic education integral, as it simultaneously connects the intellectual, spiritual, and moral dimensions in the process of developing a complete human being.

In the Islamic scientific tradition, revelation, reason, and empiricism are understood as complementary and non-negotiable sources of knowledge (Masruhin et al., 2021). Empiricism is involved in evaluating and placing information within the context of life's reality, reason is a tool for critical, contemplative, and analytical thinking, and revelation offers a framework of transcendent ideals and truths. The development of a comprehensive and integrative epistemology of Islamic education is based on the interaction between these three. Nonetheless, there is still a tendency in modern educational practice to draw a distinction between normative and empirical approaches, as well as between religious and general knowledge. The educational system frequently marginalizes revealed values as a result of this contradiction, which also keeps reason and empiricism apart from the transcendental dimension (Dainori, 2018). This condition indicates an epistemological problem that demands a reconstruction of the epistemology of Islamic education to make it more integrative and relevant to the demands of modern developments.

The development of contemporary philosophy of science demonstrates a sharp critique of the positivism and pure rationalism that have dominated modern science (Akromullah, 2018; Mujib, 2019; Yusmei et al., 2023). Post-positivism, constructivism, and transdisciplinary approaches have begun to recognize the limitations of empiricism and the importance of the dimensions of value, meaning, and context in the process of knowledge production. This paradigm shift opens a broad space for dialogue for the development of Islamic educational epistemology in the context of modern science. From a contemporary philosophical perspective, epistemology is no longer understood as a neutral and value-free system of knowledge (Fadli, 2021), but rather as a construct influenced by worldview, culture, and human interests. This view aligns with Islamic epistemology, which from the outset recognized the relationship between knowledge and divine values and moral responsibility (Rofiq, 2018). Therefore, Islamic educational epistemology has strong conceptual relevance in the discourse of modern educational philosophy.

Various studies have examined the epistemology of Islamic education from various perspectives, such as educational philosophy, theology, the thoughts of prominent figures, and pedagogical practices (Ahmadi et al., 2021; Mulyani & Anwar, 2020; Rosnawati et al., 2021; Situmeang, 2021; Vera & Hambali, 2021). Existing studies have explored various dimensions of Islamic educational epistemology, addressing themes such as the integration of revelation (*naql*) and reason (*aql*), the Islamization of knowledge, and the development of value-based educational frameworks. Nonetheless, these significant contributions are still dispersed and fragmented over several publications. Because of this fragmentation, the literature is mainly fragmentary and compartmentalized, which frequently results in a normative-descriptive understanding devoid of a critical, cohesive synthesis. Consequently, there is a pronounced research gap: the absence of an integrative and critical systematic review that consolidates these dispersed findings within the context of contemporary philosophical discourse. Such a review is urgently needed to construct a coherent epistemological framework capable of addressing modern challenges like globalization, secularization, and moral crises with both conceptual depth and contextual relevance.

The closing sentence before “Methods” should more explicitly link the need to address study fragmentation to the chosen SLR methodology. Based on this explanation, this research is directed to systematically examine how the epistemology of Islamic education is constructed in contemporary academic literature, how the relationship between revelation, reason, and empiricism is explained and integrated within the framework of Islamic education, and how contemporary philosophical perspectives influence the development of this epistemology and its implications for the theory and practice of Islamic education. Thus, this research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of the philosophy of Islamic education while enriching academic discourse on the integration of Islamic epistemology in modern education.

METHOD

This research uses a systematic approach. Literature Review with reference to the Preferred guidelines Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2023; da Silva & da Silva Rodrigues, 2018; Palomino et al., 2019). This approach was chosen to ensure that the literature search, selection, and analysis process is carried out systematically, transparently, and can be replicated, particularly in examining the epistemology of Islamic education based on revelation, reason, and empiricism from a contemporary philosophical perspective. The literature search was conducted in two main databases, namely Google Scholar and Scopus, with consideration of the accessibility of reputable national and international literature. Google Scholar was used to capture a broad academic literature, including national and international journals, while Scopus was chosen to ensure the representation of internationally reputable articles. The search was conducted using a combination of keywords such as Islamic educational epistemology, epistemology of Islamic education, revelation, reason, and empiricism, philosophy of Islamic education, and

contemporary philosophy (Nurhikmah, 2024). The publication period is limited to 2020–2025 to capture developments in contemporary discourse.

Journal articles and scientific proceedings that specifically address the epistemology of Islamic education, involve discussions of revelation, reason, and/or empiricism, and employ a philosophical approach, the philosophy of education, or Islamic education were among the inclusion criteria for this study. The articles were available in full form and were authored in either English or Indonesian. Publications unrelated to the educational setting, opinion pieces lacking a clear scientific methodology, non-academic papers, and duplicate items that appeared in many databases were among the exclusion criteria. The article selection process followed the four main stages of PRISMA: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. In the identification stage, an initial search yielded a number of articles from Google Scholar and Scopus. After removing duplications and initial screening based on titles and abstracts, articles irrelevant to the focus of the epistemology of Islamic education were eliminated. The eligibility stage was carried out by reading the full text to ensure compliance with the inclusion criteria. The final result of this process resulted in 30 articles for analysis, consisting of 23 articles from Google Scholar and 7 articles from Scopus.

Narratively, the article selection process in this study can be explained as follows. In the identification stage, a number of articles were obtained from Google Scholar and Scopus. After an initial screening process and the removal of duplicate and irrelevant articles based on title and abstract, a number of articles were eliminated. The feasibility stage was carried out by reading the full text of the remaining articles, so that articles that truly align with the research focus were obtained. In the final stage, 30 articles were declared eligible and included in the systematic synthesis analysis.

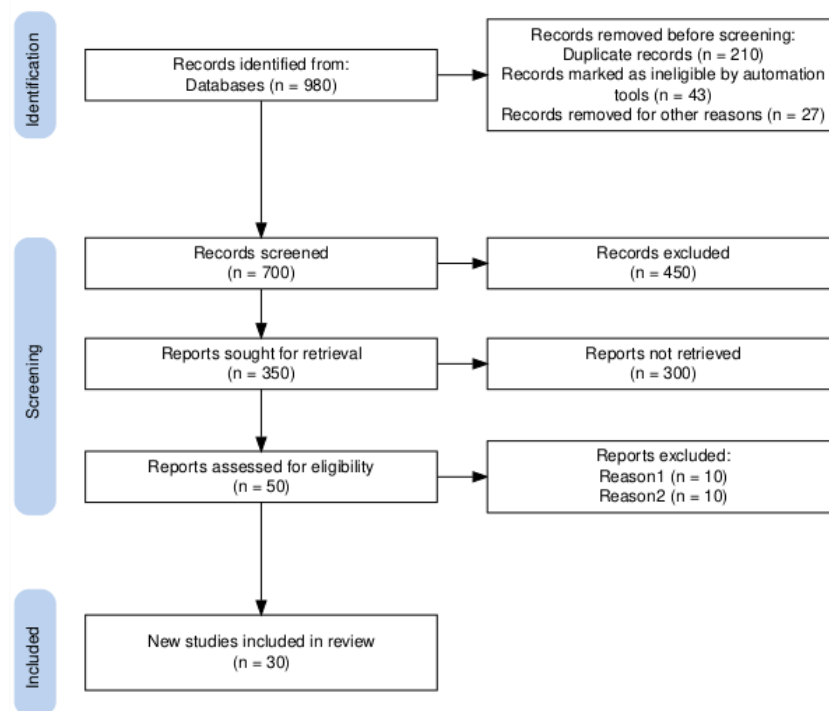


Figure 1. Flowchart of Literature Selection Based on PRISMA

The PRISMA diagram details the systematic and transparent literature selection process for this study. The process began with an initial search of relevant databases, yielding 980 articles. In the identification phase, initial screening was performed by removing duplicate articles, articles deemed unsuitable through automated tools, and articles excluded for specific reasons, such as inappropriate topics or publication types. This phase aimed to ensure that only potentially relevant articles were advanced to the next stage, leaving 700 articles for the screening phase.

Next, in the screening stage, the 700 articles were selected based on their titles and abstracts to assess their suitability to the research focus, namely the epistemology of Islamic education based on revelation, reason, and empiricism from a contemporary philosophical perspective. At this stage, 450 articles were eliminated because they did not directly address the research topic or did not meet the initial inclusion criteria. The 350 articles that passed the initial selection process were then searched in full text. However, limited access and document availability resulted in only 50 reports being obtained and thoroughly analyzed during the eligibility assessment stage.

50 available publications were thoroughly examined during the eligibility evaluation step in accordance with pre-established inclusion criteria, including conceptual relevance, methodological quality, and contribution to the research question. According to the evaluation results, 20 articles had to be removed from the review because they did not fit these requirements. As a result, 30 publications that satisfied every requirement were added to the systematic review. This systematic selection process ensures that research findings are based on relevant, high-quality, and scientifically sound literature. Data analysis was conducted using a thematic approach. Synthesis. Each article was analyzed to identify the epistemological concepts of Islamic education, the relationship between revelation, reason, and empiricism, and the contemporary philosophical perspectives used. The analysis process involved initial coding, grouping epistemological themes, and conceptual synthesis across studies. The synthesis results were then interpreted to address the research objectives and provide theoretical implications for the development of Islamic educational philosophy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

The findings presented in this study are entirely derived from secondary data collected through a systematic search of scientific articles published in national and international journals. The use of secondary data in this study aims to obtain a comprehensive picture of the development of the discourse on the epistemology of Islamic education as examined by previous researchers, while simultaneously enabling a critical and structured conceptual synthesis across studies. Information analyzed in each article includes the author's identity, year of publication, the journal in which the article was published, and the research approach or method used, whether in the form of a literature review, conceptual study, philosophical analysis, or systematic review. Furthermore, the databases in which the articles are

indexed, namely Google Scholar and Scopus, are also used as parameters to ensure the representation of national and international literature relevant to the study topic. This approach allows for a methodological and epistemological mapping of the research characteristics, as shown in the study characteristics table.

Each article was then analyzed in depth based on its level of relevance to the research questions formulated in this study. The analysis process was carried out through a critical reading of the research objectives, theoretical framework, and main findings of each article, so that only articles that explicitly discussed the epistemology of Islamic education and the relationship between revelation, reason, and empiricism were included in the synthesis process. This approach ensured that the study's findings were not broad, but rather focused on the epistemological difficulties at the core of the research. Empiricism as a way to contextualize knowledge in educational practice, reason as a rational and reflective tool, and revelation as a normative and transcendent source were the main areas of focus for the study, which focused on how the epistemology of Islamic education is constructed in contemporary literature. In addition, this study also examined how contemporary philosophical perspectives, such as critiques of positivism, constructivist approaches, and post -positivistic views influence the way authors understand and develop the epistemology of Islamic education.

This research finds patterns of epistemological integration, paradigm shifts, and conceptual gaps that need more investigation by methodically synthesizing these findings and mapping new trends in thinking. As a result, it is anticipated that the study's findings will make a substantial theoretical contribution to the growth of Islamic educational philosophy and provide a thoughtful foundation for enhancing contextual and integrative Islamic educational practices in the context of contemporary educational dynamics.

Table 1. Synthesized Findings on Islamic Education Epistemology Based on Revelation, Reason, and Empirical Knowledge

Writer	Year	Method	Database
Beautiful	2025	Conceptual study	Google Scholar
Enden et al.	2024	Literature review	Google Scholar
Al Qifari	2024	Philosophical analysis	Google Scholar
Fahmi et al.	2024	Literature review	Google Scholar
Hayat et al.	2024	Thematic interpretation study	Google Scholar
Brotherhood	2024	Qualitative-descriptive study	Google Scholar
Siswanto	2024	Literature review	Google Scholar
Muqtadir & Tobroni	2025	Conceptual analysis	Google Scholar
Ainuri & Wijaya	2025	Study of the thoughts of figures	Google Scholar
Nurdin et al.	2025	Study of educational philosophy	Google Scholar
Bahrullah et al.	2025	Conceptual study	Google Scholar
Yudhyarta	2025	Philosophical-normative analysis	Google Scholar
Asyibli et al.	2025	Literature review	Google Scholar
Makki	2019	Critical literature review	Google Scholar
Mu'ammar	2024	Study of the thoughts of figures	Google Scholar
Afryansyah	2025	Epistemological analysis	Google Scholar

Writer	Year	Method	Database
Zahrani	2022	Theoretical study	Google Scholar
Rahman	2023	Conceptual study	Google Scholar
Hidayat	2023	Study of Islamic philosophy	Google Scholar
Solomon	2022	Integrative analysis	Google Scholar
Kurniawan	2021	Literature review	Google Scholar
Hasanah	2020	Descriptive-qualitative study	Google Scholar
Abdullah	2024	Literature review	Google Scholar
Sahin	2020	Theoretical – philosophical analysis	Scopus
Berglund	2020	Critical philosophical inquiry	Scopus
David	2021	Conceptual qualitative review	Scopus
Hashim	2021	Conceptual analysis	Scopus
Sahin & Watson	2022	Analytical review	Scopus
Nasr	2023	Philosophical – normative study	Scopus
Abdullah & Rashid	2024	Systematic conceptual review	Scopus

DISCUSSION

A synthesis of 30 analyzed articles shows that the epistemology of Islamic education in contemporary discourse has shifted from a normative-descriptive approach to an integrative and reflective framework. The integration of revelation, reason, and empiricism is no longer understood simply as the summation of knowledge sources, but rather as a hierarchical, dialogical, and contextual epistemic relationship. This finding is consistent with the view that places revelation as the source of normative truth as well as the ontological foundation of Islamic education (Basri et al., 2025; Bustam, 2021; Fathonah et al., 2025; Indah, 2025; Istiqomah et al., 2025), while reason and empiricism serve as operational instruments in understanding and implementing the values of revelation in the educational context (Adiasta et al., 2025; Basith et al., 2024; Yuni et al., 2025).

Articles from Google Scholar predominantly emphasize the urgency of reconstructing the epistemology of Islamic education as a response to the epistemological crisis of modern education. Muslimin & Suharmanto (2024) highlight that the dominance of Western epistemology, which is positivistic, secular, and utilitarian, has influenced educational orientation to the point of neglecting transcendental and moral dimensions. In this context, Islamic education is seen as requiring an epistemological framework that is not only rational and empirical, but also rooted in revelation as the source of values and educational goals. A similar critique is also put forward by Hayat et al. (2025) who assert that the globalization of knowledge without an Islamic epistemological filter has the potential to give rise to alienation of values in educational practices.

The relationship between revelation, reason, and empiricism in the epistemology of Islamic education is understood differently in the analyzed literature (Hosaini & Akhyak, 2024 ; Karim et al., 2024 ; Sunardi et al., 2025 ; Tobroni, 2025 ; Yuwono et al., 2025). Ainuri & Wijaya (2021) view the three as complementary sources of knowledge, where revelation provides basic principles, reason processes and interprets these principles rationally, and empiricism tests

their relevance in educational reality. This approach is strengthened through the bayani, burhani, and irfani frameworks, which show that Islamic epistemology has a methodological plurality that allows dialogue between texts (Solikhin et al., 2025), reason (Bahrullah et al., 2025), and spiritual experiences (Asyibli et al., 2025; Makki, 2020; Mu'ammam & Muchtar, 2024; Yudhyarta, 2025). This framework enriches Islamic educational epistemology with reflective and ethical dimensions that are rarely found in modern educational epistemology.

Several articles also emphasize the importance of historical dimensions and figures in the construction of Islamic educational epistemology (Khatami & Dina, 2024; Malik et al., 2025; Zahrani & Dhobith, 2022). Hidayat & Rijal (2024) show that the thoughts of Islamic figures such as Hasyim Asy'ari and Majid Irsan Al-Kilani have formulated an integrative educational epistemology long before the development of modern educational philosophy discourse. This finding confirms that Islamic educational epistemology is not a reactive response to modernity (Kurniawan et al., 2024; Marasabessy, 2025; Mukmin & Arikarani, 2025; Munir, 2025), but has roots in a strong and continuous intellectual tradition. Scopus articles make important contributions to expanding the dialogue on the epistemology of Islamic education at the global and philosophical levels (Ahmed, 2021; Meijer, 1999; Saada & Magadlah, 2021; Thobani, 2007; Ulfat, 2020). Rahman (2025) positions Islamic educational epistemology as a critical alternative to the modern educational paradigm, which tends to be relativistic and value-free. Günther (2020) emphasizes that all educational systems always depart from a particular worldview, thus questioning the claim of knowledge neutrality in modern education. In this context, Islamic educational epistemology is considered to have conceptual superiority because it explicitly recognizes the link between knowledge and divine values and moral responsibility.

The metaphysical and sacred dimensions of Islamic epistemology are a primary concern (Ali, 2022; F. Rahman, 2024; Sabic-El-Rayess, 2020). Both criticize the clear distinction between the spiritual component of contemporary schooling and empirical science. They argue that this separation causes a crisis of meaning and restricts educational aims to cognitive accomplishment and technical abilities. According to this viewpoint, Islamic educational epistemology provides a paradigm for education that sees knowledge as a way to create a fully realized human being and purify the soul (insān). kāmīl), not merely a utilitarian tool (Lundie & O'Siochru, 2021; Matemba, 2021; Roy et al., 2020; Zhao, 2020).

However, the literature synthesis also reveals significant limitations in the study of contemporary Islamic educational epistemology (Fauzi et al., 2025). Most research remains conceptual and normative, with a lack of empirical studies examining the implementation of integrative epistemology in curriculum, pedagogy, and learning evaluation (Fauzi et al., 2025; Murharyana, Al Ayyubi, Komarudin, et al., 2024; Murharyana, Al Ayyubi, Rohmatulloh, et al., 2024; Sabarudin et al., 2024; Somantri et al., 2024). Kooli (2020) emphasized that the gap between epistemological discourse and actual educational practice is a major challenge that needs to be bridged through further empirically based research.

Overall, the epistemology of Islamic education, based on revelation, reason, and empiricism, holds strong relevance in addressing contemporary educational

challenges, both at the conceptual and normative levels. The epistemological integration offered not only rejects the dichotomy of knowledge but also opens up space for a holistic, meaningful Islamic education oriented toward the formation of knowledgeable, faithful, and moral individuals. These findings also emphasize the urgency of developing an Islamic educational model capable of translating this epistemological framework into contextual and sustainable educational practices.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the epistemology of Islamic education, founded on revelation, reason, and empiricism, is an integrative, hierarchical, and beneficial knowledge construct from a current philosophical standpoint. Reason and empiricism function as epistemic tools that facilitate the rationalization, interpretation, and contextualization of knowledge in educational practice, while revelation holds a fundamental position as a source of normative truth and orientation of educational goals, according to a synthesis of 23 articles from Google Scholar and 7 indexed articles from Scopus. These findings indicate that contemporary Islamic educational epistemology seeks to transcend the dichotomy between religious and general knowledge and offers an educational paradigm that focuses not only on mastering knowledge but also on character development, moral awareness, and spiritual responsibility of students.

However, this research also uncovered a number of epistemological and methodological obstacles in the analyzed studies. The dominance of the normative-conceptual approach indicates that the discourse on the epistemology of Islamic education remains largely focused on philosophical ideas and reflections, while empirical studies examining the application of integrative epistemology in curriculum, learning strategies, and educational evaluation are relatively limited. Furthermore, there are differences in conceptual emphasis among authors in interpreting the relationship between revelation, reason, and empiricism, often influenced by their respective disciplinary backgrounds, traditions of thought, and social contexts. These variations, while enriching the discourse, also complicate efforts for a more operational and applicable synthesis.

Based on these findings and limitations, further research is recommended to develop empirical studies and mixed-method research designs capable of bridging epistemological frameworks with the realities of Islamic educational practice. Future studies should also concentrate on creating pedagogical, curriculum, and learning assessment models that are specifically based on the fusion of empiricism, reason, and revelation and that have been tried out in diverse educational settings. Furthermore, it is expected that growing discussion with modern international educational philosophies and reading more literature from other countries will solidify Islamic educational epistemology's standing as a pertinent, critical, and possibly useful alternative paradigm for the advancement of education in the contemporary era.

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