



THE MONODISCIPLINARY APPROACH IN KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR KNOWLEDGE INTEGRATION

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Abstract :

This study explores the monodisciplinary approach in the development of Islamic Education Management (MPI) as an epistemic foundation to strengthen the identity, structure, and scientific orientation of the discipline. The research aims to analyze the urgency of adopting a monodisciplinary approach within MPI studies and to evaluate its contribution to reinforcing fundamental concepts and theoretical frameworks before moving toward cross-disciplinary integration. The method employed is a library research approach with descriptive qualitative analysis by reviewing various academic sources related to monodisciplinary development, Islamic epistemology, and the contextualization of MPI. The findings indicate that monodisciplinary plays a pivotal role in enhancing specialization, clarifying conceptual frameworks, and establishing methodological legitimacy for MPI as an autonomous and scientifically accountable discipline. Nevertheless, the study also reveals that a dominant reliance on a purely monodisciplinary approach may lead to fragmented knowledge and limited capacity in addressing the complexity of contemporary educational challenges. Therefore, this approach should be positioned as an initial and progressive stage toward more comprehensive interconnection and integration of knowledge. Overall, the monodisciplinary approach remains a necessary foundation in the development of MPI; however, its implementation must be adaptive and open to dialogue with contemporary management perspectives, Islamic values, and the global dynamics of education.

Keywords : Monodisciplinary Approach, Islamic Education Management, Knowledge Integration

INTRODUCTION

The development of modern science and technology has given rise to various approaches in understanding reality and constructing scientific frameworks. One of the earliest and most fundamental approaches is the monodisciplinary approach, which emphasizes in-depth study of a single field of knowledge independently from other disciplines (Kuhn, 1962). This approach emerged from the positivist and Western modernist paradigms, which seek to measure scientific truth through strict empirical and rational methods. Within this context, each discipline attempts to establish its own boundaries, complete with specific methods, theories, and objects of study (Prentice, 1990).

The monodisciplinary approach has made a significant contribution to the emergence of scientific specialization, accelerating the advancement of science and technology. Through specialization, scholars can focus their attention on deepening one area of knowledge, producing tangible and measurable innovations. On the other hand, this approach also leads to the fragmentation of



knowledge, where disciplines exist independently without connection to values, ethics, or spiritual dimensions. In the Islamic context, this condition has raised a serious issue: the dichotomy between religious knowledge (al-'ulum al-diniyyah) and secular knowledge (al-'ulum al-dunyawiyyah) (Amin Abdullah, 2006). In contrast, in the history of classical Islamic intellectual tradition, knowledge was built on an epistemological unity that integrates revelation, reason, and empirical experience as the three primary sources of truth (Rolston, 1987).

In the context of Islamic education, including Islamic Education Management (IEM), the monodisciplinary approach is still commonly found in curriculum development, research design, and teaching practice. IEM students and researchers often focus exclusively on one aspect of knowledge, such as management, administration, or educational leadership, without linking it to theological, ethical, or Islamic value dimensions (Fitri, 2020). Conceptually, however, IEM is not limited to the technical aspects of managing educational institutions; it also concerns the spiritual, social, and moral values that form the philosophical foundation of Islamic education (Mujamil Qomar, 2020). In other words, IEM is not merely a managerial field, but a means to integrate system efficiency with the illumination of Islamic values in educational practice.

Historically, the monodisciplinary approach laid the foundation for the emergence of various branches of educational sciences. In the West, this approach gave rise to educational management as a discipline focused on organizational efficiency, strategic planning, and human resource control (Bernard & Pak, 2006). Management was positioned as a rational system neutral to values, with a primary orientation toward institutional productivity and performance. In the Islamic context, however, this paradigm cannot be applied purely. Islamic education management views humans not merely as resources, but as a divine trust (amanah) that must be managed according to principles of justice, welfare, and moral responsibility (Fauzi, 2017). Therefore, the development of educational management knowledge in Islam must be based on the values of tawhid, ethics, and humanity.

The relevance of the monodisciplinary approach to IEM is evident in efforts to build a solid scientific foundation for management based on Islamic values. For example, modern management theories such as planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling (POAC) can be developed monodisciplinarily within an Islamic context through a normative approach—interpreting planning (takhtih), organizing (tanzhim), implementation (tanfiz), and supervision (murāqabah) based on the Qur'an and Sunnah. This approach strengthens the roots of IEM knowledge to remain anchored in Islamic law, although it is not yet fully integrative (Abdullah, 2014). At this point, the monodisciplinary approach functions as an initial epistemological basis that provides methodological direction for IEM in building a systematic, rational, and consistent body of knowledge.

Nevertheless, the greatest challenge of the monodisciplinary approach in IEM lies in its limitations in addressing the complexities of modern educational issues, such as globalization, digitalization, moral crises, and pluralistic values.

In contemporary reality, Islamic education management faces not only administrative and bureaucratic challenges but also crises of values, character degradation among students, and limited epistemological awareness among educators. Ngainun Naim emphasizes that Islamic education should not stop at the cognitive and technical levels but must address transformative aspects that shape spiritual and social consciousness (Naim, 2012). Similarly, Akhyak argues that Islamic education management needs to integrate moral, social, and professional values so that management is not only administratively efficient but also oriented toward character building and the welfare of the community (Akhyak, 2015).

Therefore, the monodisciplinary approach needs to be positioned critically in the development of IEM knowledge. It is important as an initial foundation to establish disciplinary clarity, methodology, and academic identity for Islamic education management. However, to respond to the dynamics of the times, this paradigm must evolve toward an integrative-interconnective approach (Amin Abdullah, 2018), creating dialogue between Islamic knowledge and social sciences, educational psychology, economics, technology, and philosophy. Such synergy will produce an Islamic education management system that is not only effective in institutional governance but also aligned with the vision of Islam as a mercy to all worlds (*rahmatan lil 'alamin*).

Thus, studying the monodisciplinary approach in IEM is important not to preserve an outdated paradigm but to clarify the foundational epistemological position of this field within the framework of integrating Islamic knowledge. Through historical and philosophical understanding of this approach, IEM academics are expected to develop educational management models rooted in Islamic values while remaining open to modern scientific developments and the needs of a global society.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a library research method with a descriptive qualitative approach. Library research is a type of study that focuses on the collection and analysis of data sourced from various literature, such as books, scholarly journals, articles, papers, and relevant academic documents (Zed, 2014). The primary objective of this method is to gain an in-depth understanding of concepts, theories, and expert perspectives on the monodisciplinary approach and its implications for the integration of knowledge, particularly in the context of Islamic Education Management (IEM).

Through literature review, the researcher seeks to trace the philosophical foundations, characteristics, and relevance of the monodisciplinary approach in the development of contemporary Islamic knowledge. The data obtained are not processed statistically but are analyzed critically and interpretatively to uncover conceptual meanings and their connections to the integrative-interconnective paradigm (Fitri, 2020). The analytical process in this study employs content analysis, a method for systematically, objectively, and thoroughly examining the meaning contained in texts (Krippendorff, 2013).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Monodisciplinary Approach in Knowledge Development

The monodisciplinary approach emphasizes in-depth mastery of a single discipline independently. This is related to the phase of “normal science,” in which scientists work within an established paradigm with minimal interaction with other fields (Kuhn, 1996). The main goal of this approach is to produce measurable, structured, and empirically testable knowledge.

In the educational context, the monodisciplinary approach tends to produce specialization within knowledge, where each field stands independently with its own methodology and object of study (Prentice, 1990). For example, educational science is separated from psychology, sociology, or religion. This approach is considered effective for deepening expertise but offers limited support for cross-disciplinary collaboration (Bernard & Pak, 2006).

The monodisciplinary approach represents the earliest foundation in the history of modern scientific development. It is based on the view that each discipline possesses independent objects of study, methodologies, and theoretical frameworks; therefore, to achieve scientific truth, research must be confined to one field in depth (Kuhn, 1962). In this way, knowledge develops through sharp specialization, resulting in a systematic and measurable structure.

According to Prentice, the monodisciplinary approach emerged alongside the establishment of modern universities in Europe in the 19th century, which emphasized the separation of faculties. The aim was to allow each field to develop its unique methodology without being influenced by other branches of knowledge. This paradigm was heavily influenced by Auguste Comte’s positivism, which emphasized that valid knowledge can only be obtained through empirical observation and rational experimentation (Prentice, 1990).

In the context of knowledge development, the monodisciplinary approach plays an important role in the early stages of scientific progress because it provides clear disciplinary boundaries and methodological focus. According to Flogie and Aberšek, the specialization resulting from the monodisciplinary approach has driven remarkable advances in technology, medicine, and engineering, as scientists can study a single object intensively until new theories are discovered. In this sense, the approach functions as an “epistemological laboratory” that establishes order within the scientific world (Aberšek, 2015).

However, the monodisciplinary approach also carries epistemological and social implications. It tends to produce fragmented knowledge and is often unable to address complex, multidimensional problems. Vaideanu argues that the monodisciplinary approach overemphasizes analytical depth while neglecting social, cultural, and ethical contexts (Vaideanu, 1983). In the Islamic context, this has created an imbalance between rational-empirical knowledge and normative-religious knowledge, a phenomenon referred to as epistemological disintegration (Abdullah, 2006).

Within the framework of Islamic knowledge development, the monodisciplinary approach retains a strategic position, particularly for

strengthening foundational knowledge and methodological clarity within a discipline. For instance, in the development of Islamic Education Management (IEM), monodisciplinarity plays a role in building a distinctive system of theory and methodology. IEM knowledge rooted in modern management requires a scientific foundation to ensure a strong conceptual structure and academic measurability (Fitri, 2020).

Nonetheless, the development of IEM cannot remain confined to a purely monodisciplinary approach. Ngainun Naim argues that Islamic education must cultivate reflective epistemological awareness so that the knowledge studied is not value-empty. In this context, monodisciplinarity should be oriented toward developing basic competence before advancing toward cross-disciplinary interconnection. In other words, this approach constitutes an initial stage toward knowledge integration rather than the final stage of knowledge development (Naim, 2012).

Furthermore, while monodisciplinarity is important for maintaining the “identity of knowledge,” if applied absolutely, it can close opportunities for epistemological dialogue between religious knowledge and social sciences. Therefore, within the context of Islamic knowledge integration, this approach should be positioned as the foundational epistemological structure supporting the development of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary knowledge (Abdullah, 2014).

From a higher education perspective, knowledge development in Islamic universities should begin with strong specialization in a specific field. Without deep mastery of a single discipline, knowledge integration will become unclear and directionless. However, such specialization must remain open to Islamic values, ethics, and social welfare (Fitri, 2020). This aligns with Akhyak’s view, emphasizing that Islamic education management must combine scientific method accuracy with moral and spiritual Islamic missions so that knowledge does not lose its ethical orientation (Akhyak, 2015).

Thus, in the context of IEM knowledge development, the monodisciplinary approach functions as an epistemological foundation that shapes the independence of knowledge. It strengthens the academic and methodological legitimacy of IEM as a valid and scientific discipline. However, this approach must also be directed toward forming a knowledge system open to cross-disciplinary dialogue, including social sciences, psychology, educational economics, and Islamic studies, as proposed by Amin Abdullah in the concept of integration-interconnection.

In this way, Islamic education management knowledge can move from the phase of specialization to an interconnective-integrative phase, where each discipline reinforces the others within the framework of tawhid values and universal humanity. In this regard, the monodisciplinary approach is not abandoned but elevated as the epistemic foundation for establishing a holistic, humanistic, and socially applicable paradigm of Islamic knowledge.

Implementation of the Monodisciplinary Approach in the Integration of Islamic Education Management Knowledge

In the context of Islamic Education Management (IEM), the monodisciplinary approach serves as a fundamental stage in building a solid and directed knowledge structure. This approach emphasizes mastery of a single discipline—namely educational management—before engaging in cross-disciplinary integration. Such a focused approach allows IEM students and lecturers to comprehensively master managerial concepts, theories, and methodologies, thereby forming a strong knowledge base ready to be developed toward multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary approaches (Rahardjo, 2019).

In practice, the application of the monodisciplinary approach in IEM can be seen in curriculum development, which places core subjects such as Islamic educational institution management, educational leadership, or strategic planning of Islamic institutions as primary learning focuses. This strategy aims for students to deeply understand organizational management principles—including planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision—before integrating them with Islamic values and socio-cultural aspects (Arifin & Hidayat, 2020).

This approach does not reject knowledge integration but serves as a phase of core scientific strengthening, ensuring the academic identity of IEM remains intact. As Azyumardi Azra (2019) notes, knowledge development in Islamic education must begin with a strong epistemological understanding of a single field to prevent integration from becoming unclear or merely theoretical discourse.

At the implementation level, the monodisciplinary approach can be applied through several key strategies:

1. **Strengthening Core Curriculum:** Islamic educational institutions should ensure that each core course in IEM is systematically designed and interconnected within a cohesive managerial framework. For example, courses such as “Human Resource Management in Islamic Educational Institutions” and “Transformational Leadership” serve as the foundation for developing students’ professional competencies (Nasution, 2021).
2. **Initial Stage of Cross-Disciplinary Knowledge Integration:** After students master the fundamentals of management monodisciplinarily, the next stage is to open opportunities for collaboration with other disciplines, such as educational technology, Islamic ethics, educational psychology, and educational economics. This step ensures that knowledge integration occurs gradually and is grounded in strong core expertise (Fauzan, 2022).
3. **Research and Field Practice Collaboration:** IEM students can be guided to conduct research or practical projects that remain focused on management but incorporate variables from other fields, such as social, cultural, or technological aspects. This approach makes knowledge integration an evolutionary process emerging from academic practice, rather than a purely theoretical concept (Zarkasyi, 2020).

4. Epistemological Awareness: Implementing the monodisciplinary approach also requires awareness that Islamic educational management knowledge is not merely technocratic but also has normative and spiritual dimensions. In other words, management knowledge must be directed to strengthen Islamic values in educational governance (Hidayat & Latif, 2021).

Findings from several Islamic education studies indicate that institutions maintaining a strict separation between general and religious knowledge (pure monodisciplinary) tend to produce partial understandings of educational reality. However, if the monodisciplinary approach is used as an initial foundation before developing toward integration, the results are epistemologically and practically stronger (Susanto, 2022).

Therefore, the application of the monodisciplinary approach in IEM can be considered a scientific transitional strategy initiating the process of knowledge integration. This stage ensures students have strong foundational competencies, clear academic identities, and conceptual readiness to enter the interdisciplinary realm. In the long term, this strategy helps ensure that Islamic Education Management remains not only relevant to the dynamics of modern education but also firmly rooted in Islamic values and societal needs.

Justification for the Use of the Monodisciplinary Approach in Islamic Education Management Knowledge

The monodisciplinary approach in the development of Islamic Education Management (IEM) knowledge holds fundamental significance, both epistemologically and methodologically. At the epistemological level, this approach serves as the initial foundation for establishing the identity of IEM, providing it with clear direction and structure. Every discipline, including IEM, requires defined boundaries regarding its objects of study, research methodology, and theoretical framework to stand as an independent and academically recognized field (Rahardjo, 2019). In this context, the monodisciplinary approach functions as a means of constructing a robust and systematic body of knowledge before it is expanded toward multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary development.

Philosophically, the justification for using a monodisciplinary approach in IEM is grounded in the principle of epistemological purification. This entails the refinement and consolidation of fundamental concepts within a discipline to prevent overlap with other fields. Productive knowledge integration can only occur when each discipline involved has already achieved epistemological and methodological robustness. Therefore, the monodisciplinary approach in IEM does not imply isolation from other knowledge fields; rather, it constitutes a conceptual stage that ensures the knowledge of Islamic education management has a solid foundation before engaging and collaborating with other disciplines such as educational psychology, educational economics, or Islamic theology (Azra, 2019).

From a methodological perspective, the monodisciplinary approach serves to clarify the structure of theory and practice development in IEM. Through this approach, IEM knowledge can be systematically developed using

scientific methods such as managerial analysis, evaluation of Islamic educational policies, and leadership design based on Islamic values (Hafidz, 2022). Emphasizing a single discipline also enables the formation of deep specialization, allowing students and researchers to acquire specific professional competencies aligned with the needs of Islamic educational institutions. This aligns with the views of Arifin and Hidayat, who argue that the monodisciplinary approach fosters practical, in-depth expertise by focusing on mastery of theory and practice within a measurable single field (Hidayat, 2020).

The monodisciplinary approach plays a strategic role in the development of Islamic higher education curricula, particularly in IEM study programs. A monodisciplinary-based curriculum provides a clear framework for constructing core knowledge blocks, for example, through courses such as "Strategic Management in Islamic Education," "Human Resource Management in Education," and "Educational Leadership in Islam." Mastery of these core knowledge blocks then becomes the basis for interdisciplinary integration, including educational technology and Islamic ethical values (Nasution, 2021). Without a solid monodisciplinary foundation, integration processes are often superficial and lack epistemic direction (Hidayat & Latif, 2021).

Historically, the Islamic scholarly tradition exhibits a similar pattern. Renowned scholars such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Al-Ghazali demonstrated that deep mastery of a particular branch of knowledge was a prerequisite for synthesizing insights across disciplines. For instance, Al-Ghazali first mastered logic and philosophy before integrating them with Sufism and theology (Zarkasyi, 2020). A similar principle can be adapted in IEM, where mastery of management knowledge forms the foundation for integration with spiritual and social dimensions of Islamic education.

In the context of knowledge development in Islamic higher education, the monodisciplinary approach is also strategically justified because it ensures that IEM holds a strong epistemic position among other disciplines. As Nata (2022) asserts, efforts to integrate knowledge in Islamic universities will not be effective if each field lacks prior epistemological independence. In other words, IEM must establish itself as a discipline with established methods, theories, and paradigms before engaging in interdisciplinary dialogue with other fields. Therefore, the monodisciplinary approach is not the antithesis of knowledge integration but an epistemological prerequisite for meaningful integration. It serves to clarify disciplinary identity, build solid foundational competencies, and ensure that IEM development has a strong scientific basis before moving into the interconnective phase. As emphasized by Susanto, genuine knowledge integration can only be built on a mature monodisciplinary foundation, not from a mix of fields that have not yet achieved conceptual maturity (Susanto, 2022).

CONCLUSION

The monodisciplinary approach plays a crucial role as an initial foundation in the development of Islamic Education Management (IEM) knowledge. This approach ensures strong disciplinary specialization, clearly defined objects of

study, and a solid theoretical and methodological framework, allowing IEM to stand as an academically recognized discipline. Deep mastery of a single field also enables the formation of core competencies necessary to address professional challenges in managing Islamic educational institutions. However, the monodisciplinary approach cannot operate in absolute isolation, as it may impose limitations in responding to complex and multidimensional educational issues. Therefore, it should be positioned as a strategic stage that prepares the ground for broader knowledge integration with other disciplines. In this way, the monodisciplinary approach serves as both an epistemological and methodological foundation for developing IEM toward a more integrative, relevant, and responsive body of knowledge, without losing sight of Islamic values as its primary guiding principle.

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