

Article

Sharia–Legal Science Integration in Indonesian Islamic Universities: Practices, Challenges, and Implications

Muhammad Arsad Nasution¹, Hasiah², Rosnani Siregar³, Maulana Arafat Lubis⁴

^{1&2}Faculty of Sharia and Law, UIN Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidempuan, Jl. T. Rizal Nurdin No. Km 4, RW.5, Sihitang, Kec. Padangsidempuan Tenggara, Padang City, Sidempuan, North Sumatra 22733, Indonesia; ³Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business, UIN Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidempuan, Jl. T. Rizal Nurdin No. Km 4, RW.5, Sihitang, Kec. Padangsidempuan Tenggara, Padang City, Sidempuan, North Sumatra 22733, Indonesia; ⁴Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, UIN Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidempuan, Jl. T. Rizal Nurdin No. Km 4, RW.5, Sihitang, Kec. Padangsidempuan Tenggara, Padang City, Sidempuan, North Sumatra 22733, Indonesia
Correspondence: **Muhammad Arsad Nasution**

Abstract

To meet rising demand for graduates grounded in both Islamic law and modern national legal systems, Indonesian Islamic universities have begun to treat the integration of Sharia and legal studies as a strategic mission. This study examines how this integration has been conceived and pursued, identifies the difficulties encountered in the process, and discusses its implications for governance and curriculum planning in higher Islamic education. Using a qualitative multi-case design, data were gathered through in-depth interviews with university leaders and professors, document analysis of curricula and institutional policies, and non-participant observation at teaching sites. Thematic analysis was used to organize recurring patterns and institutional narratives. The findings show that integration is expressed mainly through collaborative teaching models that combine national law and Sharia studies within a single degree program. The process nevertheless faces significant challenges, including epistemological tensions between normative and positive law, a shortage of interdisciplinary expertise among staff, and structural constraints imposed by national higher-education regulations. The case study also reveals that effective integration heightens graduates' relevance, strengthens institutional identity, and supports the growth of Islamic legal scholarship that is contextually aware and self-reflexive. This study contributes to the literature on knowledge integration in Islamic higher education by presenting grounded findings and practical implications for curriculum reform and institutional policy in Indonesian Islamic universities.

Keywords: Curriculum Integration, Islamic Higher Education, Legal Science, Sharia Education

Introduction

In pluralistic societies, the integration of law and Islamic sciences in Indonesian Islamic universities is becoming increasingly essential. Higher-education institutions must produce graduates who embody vigorous Islamic values while also possessing the jurisprudential skills to navigate national and international legal frameworks. Without such preparation, graduates risk being equipped with a sound moral framework but lacking access to positively enforced judicial processes—a position that effectively leaves them unprepared for professional legal practice (Sulistyaningrum, 2022). For many years, Sharia studies and legal science in Indonesia have remained largely bifurcated, even as legislative reform and public demand for professionals who can work within both secular (civil code, criminal procedure) and religious traditions have intensified (Suadi & Affandi, 2023).

Sharia studies, with their normative and doctrinal orientation, have relied heavily on classical legal texts, whereas legal science has been more accepting of positive-law authorities, including statutory interpretation (Marune, 2021). This differentiation, with



each tradition maintaining its own epistemological integrity, has contributed to curriculum fragmentation. It also impedes the interdisciplinary cooperation needed to address contemporary legal problems in a meaningful way (Tumewang et al., 2023). From 2017 onward, however, it has become increasingly clear that universities must cultivate graduates who can handle modern legal complexities while also being trained in traditional Islamic legal theory and practice (Nugroho et al., 2022).

Many Islamic universities have adopted integration-oriented paradigms in their educational frameworks (Nengsih et al., 2021). These paradigms promote interdisciplinary dialogue and practical instruction while suggesting broad curriculum reforms that can dismantle rigid dichotomies between religious and secular domains of knowledge. This transformative tendency reflects a broader institutional change aimed at increasing the adaptability and relevance of Islamic-educated graduates (Sulistyaningrum, 2022). However, because the specific practices supporting these integration efforts vary, questions remain about how they have been conceptualized and implemented in academic settings (Marune, 2021; Suadi & Affandi, 2023).

There is a clear impetus to integrate Sharia into legal studies. Yet little empirical research has examined how this integration actually operates in Indonesian Islamic universities. Existing studies approach the topic from philosophical and public-policy perspectives, often illustrating it through abstract examples rather than practice-based results that show precisely what institutions have done in response to the challenges they face (Uula, 2022). Deeper investigation is therefore necessary to understand how integration initiatives unfold in academic environments and what participants perceive as their actual benefits and limitations. This gap urgently needs to be addressed if the findings are to guide curriculum development and inform governance within these institutions.

The integration of Sharia and legal sciences in Indonesian Islamic universities reflects an inevitable shift in the education system toward serving a more diverse society. Although historical dualism enabled specialization within each field, the complexity of modern legal questions demands a more interdisciplinary approach. Filling the gap in empirical research will be crucial for refining educational practices and ensuring that students are well prepared for professional work at the intersection of Islamic and state legislation.

Against this background, this study explores how Indonesian law schools have integrated Sharia legal science into their curricula. Specifically, it documents the various institutional models adopted, enumerates the principal barriers encountered when these models are put into practice, and discusses their implications for higher-education policy and Islamic legal theory. Adopting a qualitative stance enables the study to contribute empirically grounded insights to the ongoing discourse on knowledge integration in Islamic higher education, while also offering policy options for strengthening Sharia law education in Indonesia.

Literature Review

Conceptual Foundations of Sharia and Legal Sciences

Sharia and legal science rest on different epistemological frameworks. Sharia embodies a normative structure rooted in divine revelation and classical Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Its

authority derives from the Qur'an and the Hadith, and it emphasizes ethical, moral, and religious dimensions. The methodological tools of Sharia include textual interpretation, analogical reasoning (*qiyās*), and juristic consensus (*ijmā'*) (Husain et al., 2024). Contemporary legal science, by contrast, adopts a predominantly positivist stance, emphasizing enacted laws, judicial decisions, and procedural rationality. This orientation is heavily influenced by socio-political contexts, particularly the common-law tradition associated with England (Faisal, 2023; Muhajir et al., 2023).

Despite these differences, the two domains share the goal of regulating human behavior, ensuring justice, and preserving social order. This common purpose creates an environment in which dialogue can flourish and integration can be achieved. Rather than treating one school of thought as superior to the other, a new understanding should be adopted: integration should be seen as an exchange, a win-win for both sides that nevertheless preserves the independence of each discipline (Aksa et al., 2023). Such a view challenges the historically constructed dualism and advocates a more unified legal education that accurately reflects the contemporary legal conflicts found in plural societies (Harjawati & Ardiansyah, 2021; Royani & Park, 2023). Understanding the interaction between Sharia and legal science not only highlights the distinctive features of each framework but also underscores the urgent need for integrated curricula that equip future legal professionals with the tools to navigate these intersections effectively.

Integration of Knowledge in Islamic Higher Education

Dialogue on consolidating knowledge at Islamic colleges links religion and the sciences non-monistically, arguing that integration unifies epistemology, fosters interdisciplinary cooperation, and makes Islamic teachings relevant to contemporary society. Rather than merely running parallel courses for different disciplines, this approach aims to weld together theoretical, normative, and practical modes of thinking about knowledge (Alamin et al., 2024; Baharuddin, 2022). Numerous empirical studies illustrate operational strategies such as curriculum redesign, team teaching, and problem-based learning; integrating religious and scientific perspectives enables students to receive more responsive feedback on their work, which is demonstrably effective in improving both performance and satisfaction (Haviz & Maris, 2020; Yafiz & Daulay, 2023).

Nevertheless, challenges persist, including a lack of interdisciplinary teaching ability among faculty and ambiguous conceptualizations of integration (Maulida & Kassim, 2023; Ningsih et al., 2024). Such issues suggest that integration in Islamic higher education is not purely theoretical; it must be introduced systematically across institutional and pedagogical frameworks if it is to have practical effect (Tuzzahroh & Laela, 2022). The commitment to integrating Islamic and secular knowledge is consistent with efforts to produce balanced graduates who can navigate the complexities of contemporary society while upholding Islamic tenets. Integration is thus essential to a thorough educational experience that reflects both academic rigor and the teachings of Islam, and meaningful education reform will not occur until these practical problems are solved.

Sharia–Legal Education in the Indonesian Context

As combined, dual-role institutions, faculties of Islamic Sharia must prepare students for a range of professional careers, including legal practice, religious-law enforcement, and college teaching (Mathar et al., 2022). Recognizing the need for appropriateness and competitiveness, scholars have made the integration of Sharia and legal science a prominent theme in discussions of curriculum reform (Mokodenseho et al., 2024). The implementation of Sharia and legal sciences in these schools is materially guided by national higher-education policies, accreditation standards, and the institutional visions of individual schools. Some schools have successfully launched interdisciplinary courses and hybrid curricula, while others continue to follow a divided path.

This situation reflects deeper institutional challenges and the dominant regulatory frameworks that continually reproduce bifurcated structures between Sharia and standard legal education (Jamal & Al Ahmadi, 2023). The literature also notes a gap between how things are idealized in theory and how they actually work in practice, indicating an urgent need for qualitative, institution-based research to illuminate the complexities of integration (Marune, 2021). The integration of Sharia and legal sciences in Indonesia's Islamic higher-education system is therefore not only a policy objective but an ongoing challenge that requires removing institutional obstacles and maintaining the vital link between the two fields.

Research Gap and Positioning of the Study

The conceptual debate on knowledge integration in predominantly Islamic countries has been extensive, but the empirical literature remains thin. Several scholars have noted that the current wave of reform in Indonesian Islamic higher education has not altered the institutional-level separation between Sharia and legal studies. Studies conducted to date have focused mainly on theoretical debates or policy analyses, and actual cases of integration—in curricular content, teaching methods, and administrative structures—are often absent (Yafiz & Daulay, 2023). This highlights the need for research that moves beyond frameworks to investigate the lived experiences of stakeholders inside these institutions.

Empirical studies have suggested practical measures to facilitate integration, such as curriculum revision, paired teaching, and problem-based learning (Ashari et al., 2022; Toifah & Faruq, 2021). However, these strategies differ from one institution to another. Some universities succeed in interdisciplinary expansion, while others remain confined within disciplinary silos. This inconsistency arises largely because there has been no comprehensive qualitative scrutiny of how integration actually works in practice. In addition, the existing literature treats theory and practice separately and does not adequately address the challenges institutions face as they implement integration programs (Ilmi et al., 2024; Karwadi et al., 2024). There is thus an urgent need for research that examines the actual institutional structure of Sharia–legal science integration, exploring practices, challenges, and their implications for governance and academic culture.

This study addresses these gaps by providing a qualitative examination of the practices, challenges, and implications of integrating Sharia and legal sciences in Indonesian Islamic universities. By focusing on institutional experiences, the research extends the discourse

from theoretical considerations to the realities of academic life, contributing a deeper understanding of the dynamics of educational integration. This positioning underscores the importance of bridging conceptual frameworks and actual educational environments, ensuring that integration becomes an active endeavor within Indonesia's unique legal landscape.

Methodology

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative, multi-case design to provide a nuanced account of how Sharia and legal sciences are formalized in Indonesian Islamic universities. The design explores institutional practices, the academic experiences of different groups, and the meanings in the subjective view of those involved. It is therefore better suited to this purpose than approaches that measure quantifiable variables (Syihabuddin & Maulani, 2023).

Treating the study as a multi-case analysis allows the researchers to compare different institutions. Each case can be evaluated on its own terms while also being compared with others. This specificity ensures that no single institution is given a privileged position, while providing rich material on how each Islamic institution understands and applies the integration of Sharia law with other subjects. Their distinctive educational theories and structures are thus reflected in the content of the research (Irwansyah et al., 2021). By focusing on the comparative method, the study aims to reveal the difficulties and successes universities face in integrating these areas. The qualitative design employs data-collection techniques that include semi-structured interviews, focus-group discussions, and document analysis to complement the findings and offer a comprehensive view of the integration process at different levels (Musdalifa et al., 2024). This approach captures the complexities and dynamics of higher-education practice within the distinct Indonesian context and enriches existing discussions of educational integration in Islamic universities.

This research structure aligns with the study's aims and enables exploration of gaps in the literature regarding the performance of Sharia-legal sciences. The qualitative approach provides a more nuanced understanding of institutional routines and stakeholder attitudes toward integration.

Research Sites and Participants

The research was conducted at selected Indonesian Islamic universities with strong Sharia and legal studies programs, using a systematic approach to participant selection. Institutions were chosen on the basis of their demonstrated commitment to integrating knowledge across Sharia and legal disciplines, ensuring alignment with the study's objectives. Participants included academic leaders, lecturers, and curriculum developers who held decision-making roles and had relevant experience in integrating Sharia and legal sciences.

Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that participants met the inclusion criteria and had the relevant knowledge and experience, aligning with practices observed in similar research contexts (Grover et al., 2024; Satriawan & Syamsuri, 2023). This technique allowed

the researchers to gather diverse insights from individuals specifically qualified to contribute to the discourse on integrating Sharia and legal studies (Fagrell et al., 2020; Praharsa et al., 2024). Emphasizing purposive sampling ensured that the findings can effectively inform curriculum development and educational strategies in Islamic legal education within Indonesia.

Data Collection

Data were collected through triangulation across three main methods: in-depth semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and non-participant observation. Semi-structured interviews introduced open questions on issues relating to integration and on participants' views about how Sharia and legal science should be implemented. This method, which combines open-ended questions with a participatory attitude, is preferred in qualitative research for the flexibility and depth it affords (Bennett et al., 2023; Seesai et al., 2024). It allowed respondents to give full accounts while the researchers extracted extensive qualitative data.

Document analysis focused on institutional materials, including vision statements and curricula, thereby ensuring the validity of data collected in context (Khan et al., 2025). Non-participant observation documented classroom interactions, offering an up-to-date snapshot of teaching and of interdisciplinary integration as they occurred in practice (Han et al., 2024). Data were compiled over an extended period to ensure saturation and depth, yielding an inclusive overview of the integration process (Taufiq et al., 2024; Velazco et al., 2023).

Data Analysis

The research employed a comprehensive thematic analysis grounded in the iterative and recursive process outlined by Braun and Clarke, involving stages of data familiarization, initial coding, theme development, and thematic refinement (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This method entails a systematic coding process that makes recurring patterns and themes more visible, while also requiring creativity and interpretation (Black & Wilson, 2024; Gray et al., 2022; Rogan et al., 2024).

The study also used a cross-case analysis to develop deeper analytical findings. Practices of integrating modern knowledge with Sharia law were not uniform across the universities studied. By taking in more than one site in different settings, this analysis revealed both similar problems and new ways of addressing them, regardless of institutional location. The resulting conclusions are more nuanced and deeply rooted in the varied backgrounds and experiences of participants across institutional settings (Buchanan & Husain, 2021).

Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

To ensure trustworthiness, the study applied credibility, dependability, and confirmability strategies. Data triangulation across interviews, documents, and observations strengthened the validity of the findings. Member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary interpretations with selected participants to confirm accuracy. Ethical considerations

included informed consent, voluntary participation, and confidentiality of participants and institutions. All data were anonymized to protect identities and institutional sensitivities.

Results

Models of Sharia–Legal Science Integration

In integrating Sharia and legal studies, the Indonesian universities studied considered various possibilities, reflecting differences in institutional mandate, regulatory context, and societal demand. These models nonetheless represent an effort to reconcile positive state law with normative Islamic principles. Understanding the models is necessary to explain how they are implemented at the curricular and pedagogical levels and to weigh their strengths and limitations in interdisciplinary legal education. Table 1 summarizes the three integration models identified.

Table 1. Models of Sharia–Legal Science Integration in Indonesian Islamic Universities

No.	Integration Model	Key Characteristics	Forms of Implementation	Main Objective
1	Curriculum-based integration	Mutual inclusion of Sharia and national-law subjects within programs	Inclusion of constitutional law, legal methodology, and legislative analysis in Sharia programs; inclusion of fiqh, uṣūl al-fiqh, and Islamic legal theory in law programs	Familiarize students with normative and positive legal frameworks within a single academic trajectory
2	Thematic problem-oriented integration	/ Focus on contemporary legal issues analyzed from dual perspectives	Seminars, case studies, and final-year projects on family law, economic regulation, and dispute resolution	Develop a contextual and applied understanding of the interaction between Sharia and state law
3	Team-teaching integration	Collaborative instruction by Sharia and legal scholars	Co-taught interdisciplinary courses	Encourage dialogical learning and epistemological exchange

Data from these universities show that curriculum-based integration is the prevailing model, as it aligns well with national curriculum standards and accreditation requirements. It embeds legal-science subjects within Sharia programs and vice versa, allowing students to gain a basic grasp of both normative Islamic law and positive state law. This model is strong, structurally clear, and easy to implement. However, integration often remains additive rather than genuinely cross-disciplinary.

The thematic or problem-oriented model represents a more advanced pedagogical approach. By treating real-world legal problems as learning subjects, it exposes students to the simultaneity of Sharia and national legal perspectives – an important foundation for an analytical worldview. Although less common than the curriculum-based type, it offers

greater integrative potential, particularly for developing analytical and professional skills attuned to plural legal contexts. Team teaching, in turn, represents the most profound form of integration because it facilitates direct cross-disciplinary dialogue between otherwise unrelated fields. Yet it finds little application because of limitations in faculty expertise, staff time, and institutional support, and it coexists with the other models. Overall, the variety of models reveals that integration between Sharia and legal science at Indonesian universities is a process governed by local conditions, structural constraints, and the availability of human resources, rather than a single, fixed framework.

Institutional Practices

Institutional practices exert a decisive influence on the realization of the normative commitment to integration. Beyond formal curriculum structures, integration is shaped by organizational policies, department-level coordination, and classroom pedagogy. Thematically analyzing these practices provides insight into how integration is implemented, negotiated, and lived at Indonesian Islamic universities. Table 2 presents the institutional practices identified.

Table 2. Institutional Practices of Sharia–Legal Science Integration

No.	Theme	Description	Illustrative Practices	Institutional Implication
1	Policy articulation	Formal commitment to integration at the institutional level	Vision and mission statements, strategic plans, curriculum guidelines	Establishes legitimacy and strategic direction for integration
2	Faculty-level operationalization	Translation of institutional policy into academic action	Curriculum redesign, cross-departmental teaching coordination, interdisciplinary research initiatives	Determines the consistency and sustainability of integration
3	Constructive disciplinary engagement	Integration framed as dialogue rather than disciplinary fusion	Preservation of Sharia and legal-science identities while encouraging interaction	Reduces epistemological resistance and maintains academic integrity
4	Dialogical pedagogy	Teaching methods that promote comparative and critical engagement	Comparative analysis, discussion-based learning, integration of texts and cases	Enhances students' analytical and reflective legal competencies
5	Pedagogical variability	Uneven depth of integration across courses	Dependence on lecturers' academic background and interdisciplinary skills	Results in inconsistent learning outcomes

Participants stated that policy articulation provides the foundation for institutional practice; its inclusion in official policy documents demonstrates the symbolic and normative commitment of university leadership. However, the operational effectiveness of these policies depends on the mechanisms implemented by faculties at a later stage. At the faculty level, implementation becomes a mediating theme: faculties and academic leaders actively recast the curriculum, foster cooperation among departments, and stimulate interdisciplinary research. This supports the claim that integration is not imposed from the top downward but negotiated among school units. Such distributed implementation allows for contextual adaptation; however, it also leads to varied integration outcomes across schools and departments within an institution.

Constructive disciplinary engagement, in turn, reflects a deliberate institutional choice to view integration as dialogue rather than unification. By keeping boundaries between disciplines, institutions reduce epistemological tension and preserve long-standing heritages. Yet this approach may also cut deeper methodological syntheses short, confining integration to interaction rather than transformation. At the pedagogical level, dialogical pedagogy represents a concrete attempt to effect compatibility in the classroom. Lecturers who use comparative analysis and critical discussion link the classical legal texts of Islam with everyday legal problems and current legislation. Such practices help students build advanced legal skills and grasp the relevant context.

At the same time, pedagogical variability emerges as a significant issue: the depth and quality of integration depend largely on the interdisciplinary skills and academic backgrounds of individual lecturers. This suggests that institutional integration is uneven and person-dependent. More broadly, the analysis shows that although institutional structures are necessary for integration, ongoing faculty development and clearer guidance on pedagogy are essential for achieving both continuity and depth.

Key Challenges in Implementation

Integrating Sharia and legal sciences into a coherent educational framework presents significant challenges, primarily stemming from epistemological tensions, human-resource limitations, and structural difficulties inherent in academic institutions. Each must be addressed to facilitate the productive merging of these fields.

Epistemological tensions. A central problem is the tension between the two fields' sources of authority, methods of reasoning, and standards of validity, because many things permitted under Sharia are not permitted under positive law. These often incompatible modes of thinking appear deeply ingrained (Din et al., 2020). Faculty members frequently find it difficult to reconcile the normative frameworks of Sharia with the empirical, procedural reasoning emphasized in legal education, and this difficulty can impair teaching and learning when educators do not share a common understanding of how to blend the two frameworks within a single course (Gonzales et al., 2023). In addition, the varying interpretative methodologies used in Islamic jurisprudence can lead to disputes among educators over how best to bring these facets together (Saidah, 2023).

Human-resource limitations. A significant barrier to interdisciplinary curriculum development is the limitation in human resources. Academic staff trained exclusively in

Sharia or in legal science are often unable to appreciate the other discipline, which restricts their teaching methods. These constraints hamper co-teaching and hinder its development (Mawardi et al., 2020). The absence of cooperation among faculty from different fields also reduces opportunities for the innovative pedagogical interventions that are vital to creating a unified understanding of Sharia and legal science (Mawardi et al., 2020). There is evidence that investing in human capital through better faculty training and education could significantly enhance interdisciplinary effectiveness (Din et al., 2020).

Structural challenges. Structural issues built into institutional frameworks exacerbate the tensions between human resources and knowledge. Inflexible accreditation requirements do not accommodate interdisciplinary study because the traditional educational model does not include it, making the integration of Sharia law and legal science less feasible (Irfany, 2022). In addition, the heavy workload placed on faculty members limits the time available for productive cooperation and innovation. There are few institutional rewards or incentives to prompt teaching staff to pursue integrated approaches that move beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries (Burleigh et al., 2022). Resolving epistemological differences, strengthening human resources, and removing barriers to change within institutions are therefore essential steps in building a dynamic interdisciplinary education framework.

Perceived Implications of Integration

The integration of Sharia and legal sciences is widely perceived as beneficial for enhancing both graduate competencies and the institutional identity of Islamic universities. It prepares students for diverse professional avenues—including careers in religious courts, legal practice, policy analysis, and academia—while also solidifying the unique positioning of Islamic educational institutions within the broader national higher-education landscape.

Enhanced graduate competencies. Most interviewees believed that students who possess both broad skills and basic knowledge would meet the diverse expectations of professional roles they encounter in working life. Students whose capabilities align with both Sharia and legal principles are seen as able to navigate the many legal environments that intersect religious areas. This flexibility increases their employability, especially in contexts where legal and religious norms overlap, such as religious courts and policy analysis that draws on both secular and religious frameworks. At the same time, the demand for such broad skills reflects a wider trend in which interdisciplinary knowledge is becoming increasingly valuable across job markets.

Strengthening institutional identity. Integrating Sharia and legal sciences into the curriculum also enhances the uniqueness of Islamic universities. By bringing these two fields together, institutions can assert a distinct identity against competitors in the education market. Integration not only enhances the relevance of academic programs but also aligns them with professional and societal needs. In this way, institutions deepen their role as important players within and beyond the education sector. A strong emphasis on interdisciplinarity can also place Islamic universities at the forefront of educational innovation, attracting students who wish to see Islamic religion and law studied jointly rather than separately.

Conditional benefits on institutional support. Although integration is largely understood as positive, participants emphasized that sustaining it requires long-term institutional support, effective faculty development, and clearer operating regulations. The creation and maintenance of programmatic and interdisciplinary academic units do not depend solely on a university initiating a concept; they also require well-trained teachers who can practice effectively in both worlds. Clear operating protocols are crucial for directing efforts and verifying that educational objectives are met consistently. Without this structure, many of the benefits of integration will not materialize, and students and institutions may suffer as a result.

While the perceived implications of integrating Sharia and legal sciences are overwhelmingly positive, they depend on a strong institutional framework and a commitment to evolving pedagogical practices. As the educational landscape continues to develop (Suadi & Affandi, 2023; Sulistyaningrum, 2022), the capacity to integrate these disciplines effectively will determine the relevance of graduates and the unique role of Islamic universities within the broader higher-education sphere.

Discussion

The integration of Sharia and legal sciences within Indonesian Islamic universities plays a pivotal role in addressing the dual mandate of Islamic higher education: to preserve Islamic normative scholarship while ensuring alignment with the national legal framework. This integration occurs predominantly through curriculum-based and thematic models, allowing the two domains to interact without compromising their epistemological distinctiveness. This paper discusses findings from a recent study that highlight the complexities of integration, the epistemological tensions and human-resource constraints it entails, and its implications for graduate competencies and institutional identity.

Curriculum-based and thematic models. The findings confirm that structured curricular reform grounded in interdisciplinary engagement is well established in Islamic higher education, and this is consistent with a broader paradigm of infusing all types of knowledge into educational frameworks in contexts where Islamic law and state law come together (Karman, 2021). From a thematic perspective, Sharia proves itself useful in addressing contemporary legal problems (Karman, 2021). In implementing the integration paradigm at the course and program levels, these institutions demonstrate a forward-looking response to changing legal education in Indonesia. This approach increases students' understanding of and participation in both local and national jurisprudential traditions, providing an education that is both relevant and rigorous.

Epistemological tensions in integration. Yet the study also documents intellectual contradictions that arise from incorporating Sharia into legal principles. At the core of these contradictions are the different methods used in normative Sharia reasoning and in positivist legal frameworks. The differences regarding sources of authority, hermeneutic methods, and criteria for validity present a major obstacle in interdisciplinary legal education (Nasoha et al., 2024). Instead of treating these contradictions as insurmountable, they should be seen as points of transformation. Educators must develop strategies to teach students how to reconcile these methodological differences, enabling them to negotiate and synthesize divergent legal rationalities. This advanced navigation prepares graduates for

the intricate real-world conflicts they will encounter in professional practice (Khoiriyah et al., 2022).

Human-resource constraints and structural challenges. The integration process is further aggravated by restrictions on human resources and by the regulatory architecture. Recent research confirms earlier findings that universities still lack adequate interdisciplinary training services, while rigid institutional regulations prevent curricular innovation and collaborative teaching (Kadir et al., 2021). Addressing these structural problems is a priority for institutions seeking to deepen integration. Accordingly, the paper argues that institutional policies should encourage faculty development, cross-disciplinary research, and curricular innovation. A necessary aspect of building an effective integrative model is ensuring that it can survive and adapt to meet the needs of different people and newly established legal environments (Blanchard et al., 2023).

Implications for graduate competencies and institutional identity. The effects of integrating Sharia with other legal sciences are not limited to a more comprehensive curriculum; integration also serves a strategic purpose by enhancing graduate competencies and reinforcing institutional identity. When universities equip students with the knowledge and skills to operate within both Islamic and national legal frameworks, they increase their social relevance and professional credibility in the job market (Stoutenberg et al., 2023). From a theoretical perspective, the findings contribute to broader debates on knowledge integration by showing that successful integration depends on institutional commitment, awareness of epistemological diversity, and continuity in pedagogical support. Integration of Sharia and legal sciences is therefore no longer a merely superficial curricular change; it is an essential part of the long-term reform process in modern Islamic higher education (Rosa et al., 2023).

Conclusion

This research analyzed how Sharia and legal sciences are integrated within Indonesian Islamic universities, detailing the methods used, the difficulties encountered in their implementation, and the broader implications for institutional practice. The research found that integration is generally established through thematic and curriculum-based approaches that bind normative Islamic legal scholarship within the national judicial framework. These models represent a deliberate effort by institutions to meet contemporary legal requirements while remaining grounded in the epistemological foundations of Sharia studies.

Despite these efforts, the study finds that integration is patchy and beset by significant obstacles. Epistemological differences between Sharia and positive law, a lack of interdisciplinary expertise among faculty, and structural weaknesses in accreditation continue to pose challenges. These difficulties suggest that policy statements alone will not suffice without sustained institutional support and a capacity-building process.

The study has several important implications. At the practical level, Islamic universities need to build faculty-development programs, foster interdisciplinary collaboration, and provide clearer operational guidelines for connecting different parts of the curriculum. At the policy level, institutions with flexibility in accreditation standards and course structures can operate more innovatively. At the theoretical level, this research contributes to the

discussion of knowledge integration in Islamic higher education by providing empirical evidence that integration is not a static state but something that must be actively pursued.

However, the study's conclusions should be read with its limitations in mind: it is confined to particular institutions, and the presentation of qualitative data may be subject to interpretive bias. Future research, whether comparative or mixed-methods, could examine how integration outcomes are affected by different national settings and types of institutions. Nevertheless, the findings will be illuminating for scholars, policy-makers, and professionals seeking to promote Sharia law within Indonesian Islamic higher education.

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