



DECONSTRUCTING ACADEMIC BOUNDARIES: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION MANAGEMENT AND GENERAL EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

Usep Ismail^{1a*}, Ahmad Sobirin^{2b}, Muhamad Rouful Hakim^{3c}, Deding Ishak^{4d}, Ahmad Sukandar^{5e}

¹²³⁴⁵ Universitas Islam Nusantara

^aE-mail: Majlis.ismaily@gmail.com

^bE-mail: Paksobirin11@gmail.com

^cE-mail: muhamadrroufulhakim@gmail.com

(*) Corresponding Author

Majlis.ismaily@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This multidisciplinary comparative study examines the academic boundaries between Islamic educational management and general educational management, exploring their philosophical foundations, methodological approaches, and practical implications. Through systematic analysis of 189 scholarly works, this research employs a comparative multidisciplinary framework to deconstruct traditional disciplinary boundaries and identify convergence and divergence points between these two management systems. The findings reveal that while both systems share fundamental management principles planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling they diverge significantly in their epistemological foundations, value systems, and ultimate educational objectives. Islamic educational management integrates divine revelation (Al-Qur'an and Hadith) with management science, emphasizing spiritual development alongside cognitive achievement, whereas general educational management operates within secular, empiricist frameworks prioritizing vocational skills and economic productivity. However, emerging trends indicate potential for integration through shared concerns for holistic human development, quality improvement, and ethical leadership. The study identifies five key areas of substantial difference: educational purpose, philosophical foundations, curriculum management, student development approaches, and institutional governance. This research contributes to ongoing discourse on educational integration by proposing a multilayered model that respects distinctive characteristics while fostering interdisciplinary dialogue. The implications extend to policy development, curriculum design, and leadership training in diverse educational contexts, particularly in pluralistic societies managing both Islamic and secular educational institutions.

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INTRODUCTION

The contemporary landscape of educational management is characterized by increasing complexity and diversity, particularly in contexts where Islamic and general educational systems coexist. The dichotomy between religious and secular education has historical roots extending to colonial periods and philosophical traditions that separated spiritual knowledge from empirical science (Tamami, 2019). This separation has created distinct academic boundaries, institutional structures, and management paradigms that often operate in parallel rather than in dialogue. However, the globalized educational environment demands critical examination of these boundaries and exploration of potential integration pathways.

The concept of academic boundary deconstruction refers to the critical analysis and potential dissolution of artificial separations between disciplinary fields, particularly when such boundaries limit holistic understanding and practical effectiveness. In the context of educational management, these boundaries manifest in separate theoretical frameworks, distinct institutional governance structures, and divergent educational philosophies. Islamic educational management has traditionally been viewed as a specialized field applicable only to religious institutions, while general educational management is positioned as universally applicable but often implicitly secular in its assumptions (Juliadarma, 2021).

Recent scholarship has begun questioning this rigid separation, arguing that both systems share fundamental concerns about quality, effectiveness, leadership, and student development (Islamiati et al., 2023). Moreover, the integration-interconnection approach (*integrasi-interkoneksi*) has emerged as a promising framework for overcoming educational dualism, particularly in Muslim-majority contexts seeking to harmonize religious values with modern educational demands (Machali, 2015). This approach suggests that the boundaries between Islamic and general educational management may be more permeable than traditionally assumed.

The purpose of this research is threefold: first, to conduct a comprehensive comparative analysis of the philosophical foundations, methodological approaches, and practical implementations of Islamic and general educational management; second, to identify specific points of convergence and divergence that illuminate the nature of academic boundaries between these systems; and third, to explore opportunities for integration and boundary deconstruction that respect the distinctive characteristics of each system while fostering productive interdisciplinary dialogue.

This study addresses several critical questions: What are the fundamental philosophical differences between Islamic and general educational management? How do these philosophical differences manifest in methodological approaches and practical implementations? Where do the two systems converge, and what accounts for these convergence points? What opportunities exist for integration without compromising the essential values and objectives of either system? And finally, what are the implications of boundary deconstruction for educational policy, curriculum development, and leadership training in diverse contexts?

The significance of this research extends beyond theoretical discourse to practical implications for educational institutions, policymakers, and educational leaders operating in pluralistic societies. Indonesia, for example, maintains parallel systems under the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, creating challenges of coordination, resource allocation, and quality assurance (Tamami, 2019). Understanding the nature of boundaries between these systems and identifying integration opportunities can inform more effective policy development and institutional management. This article is structured to provide a comprehensive analysis beginning with theoretical frameworks and background, followed by detailed methodology, extensive results and discussion organized thematically, implications for educational development, and concluding synthesis with recommendations for future research and practice.

Theoretical Framework and Background

a. Historical Context of Educational Dualism

The separation between religious and secular education has deep historical roots in both Western and Islamic contexts, though the nature and implications of this separation differ significantly. In Western educational history, the Enlightenment period marked a decisive shift toward secular, rationalist approaches to knowledge, gradually marginalizing religious perspectives in mainstream educational institutions (Juliadarma, 2021). This philosophical movement, traceable to thinkers like Plato, Aristotle, and later Descartes, established dualism as a fundamental metaphysical doctrine that shaped Western culture's worldview (Tamami, 2019).

In Islamic contexts, however, the concept of dichotomy in knowledge was not recognized by early scholars, who viewed all knowledge as integrated and ultimately derived from divine sources (Tamami, 2019). The integration of religious and worldly knowledge (*din* and *dun'ya*) was considered essential for holistic human development. The contemporary separation in many Muslim-majority countries is largely attributed to colonial influences, particularly the Dutch colonial system in Indonesia, which deliberately separated religious education institutions from general education to facilitate colonial control (Tamami, 2019).

This historical legacy has created institutional structures that persist today, with separate ministries, curricula, teacher training systems, and quality assurance mechanisms for religious and general education. The challenge facing contemporary educational systems is whether and how to overcome this inherited dualism while respecting legitimate differences in educational philosophy and objectives.

b. Philosophical Foundations: Tawhidic vs. Secular Paradigms

The fundamental philosophical difference between Islamic and general educational management lies in their epistemological foundations. Islamic educational management operates within a tawhidic paradigm—a worldview based on the oneness of God (*tawhid*)—which assumes that all knowledge ultimately derives from divine revelation and that there is no legitimate separation between religious and secular knowledge (Matovu, 2013). In this framework, the Al-Qur'an and Hadith serve as primary sources of guidance not only for religious matters but for all aspects of life, including educational management (Islamiati et al., 2023).

This epistemology contrasts sharply with the secular, empiricist foundations of general educational management, which typically separates scientific knowledge from religious belief and emphasizes rationalism, empirical verification, and pragmatic outcomes (Juliadarma, 2021). Western educational management has developed within a framework that views management as a value-neutral technical discipline applicable across contexts, with effectiveness and efficiency as primary criteria for success.

The concept of *adab* (proper conduct, good upbringing) in Islamic education represents a distinctive philosophical commitment absent in secular frameworks. Islamic educational management aims to produce individuals who are not only intellectually competent but also morally excellent, spiritually developed, and committed to serving as *khalifah* (stewards or vicegerents) of Allah on earth (Douglass & Sharifah, 2004). This holistic vision integrates cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains within a framework of Islamic values and ethics.

c. Management Theory: Universal Principles and Contextual Applications

Despite philosophical differences, both Islamic and general educational management draw on common management principles, often summarized as planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling (POAC) (McCabe, 2022). These functional elements of management are recognized as universally applicable, reflecting the operational nature of management as a discipline concerned with achieving organizational objectives effectively and efficiently.

However, the application of these universal principles within Islamic contexts involves adaptation and reinterpretation through Islamic values and principles. Islamic educational management scholars argue that while the operational functions may be similar, the underlying philosophy, motivations, and ultimate objectives differ

significantly (Salleh, 2013). For example, planning in Islamic educational management must align with divine guidance and Islamic ethical principles, not merely with organizational efficiency or market demands.

This raises important questions about the nature of management knowledge itself: Is management a value-neutral technical discipline that can be applied universally, or does it inevitably carry philosophical assumptions that must be critically examined and potentially modified when applied in different cultural and religious contexts? The integration-interconnection approach suggests that management principles can be adopted from general management theory but must be integrated with Islamic epistemology and values to create authentic Islamic educational management (Machali, 2015).

d. Contemporary Trends: Integration and Interdisciplinarity

Recent scholarship has increasingly emphasized the need for integration between religious and secular knowledge, interdisciplinary approaches to educational management, and deconstruction of artificial academic boundaries. The concept of *integrasi-interkoneksi* (integration-interconnection) developed by Indonesian scholars represents one such framework, arguing that Islamic educational management should integrate attitude, knowledge, and skills as core competencies rooted in both spiritual and social values (Machali, 2015).

Similarly, calls for multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary approaches to Islamic education development reflect recognition that complex educational challenges cannot be adequately addressed within narrow disciplinary boundaries (Mardiana et al., 2020). This trend aligns with broader movements in educational research toward interdisciplinarity and recognition of the limitations of disciplinary silos.

The challenge lies in developing integration models that respect the distinctive characteristics and values of both Islamic and general educational management while fostering productive dialogue and mutual learning. This requires moving beyond simplistic assimilation (where Islamic education merely adopts Western models) or rigid separation (where the two systems operate in complete isolation) toward more sophisticated models of integration that preserve essential values while enabling cross-fertilization of ideas and practices.

METHOD

This study employs a comparative multidisciplinary research design to analyze the boundaries between Islamic and general educational management. The research is qualitative in nature, utilizing systematic literature review and comparative content analysis as primary methodological approaches. The multidisciplinary framework integrates perspectives from educational management, religious studies, philosophy of education, comparative education, and organizational theory to provide comprehensive analysis of the research questions.

The comparative approach is particularly appropriate for this study because it enables systematic identification of similarities and differences between the two management systems across multiple dimensions (Juliadarma, 2021). Rather than treating Islamic and general educational management as entirely separate phenomena, the comparative framework allows examination of their relationship, including points of convergence, divergence, and potential integration.

The primary data for this study consists of scholarly literature on Islamic educational management, general educational management, and comparative education. A comprehensive literature search was conducted across multiple academic databases including SciSpace, Google Scholar, and specialized educational databases. The search strategy employed both basic and full-text search capabilities to ensure comprehensive coverage of relevant literature.

Search terms included combinations of keywords such as "Islamic educational management," "general educational management," "comparative education," "educational administration," "management pendidikan Islam," "manajemen pendidikan umum," "integration," "interdisciplinary," and "boundary deconstruction." The search was conducted in both English and Indonesian to capture relevant scholarship from diverse linguistic contexts.

The initial search yielded 656 papers across multiple databases. These papers were then combined and subjected to relevance ranking based on their alignment with the research objectives, specifically focusing on comparative analysis, multidisciplinary perspectives, and discussions of academic boundaries. The relevance ranking process reduced the corpus to 189 unique papers most relevant to the research questions. From this refined corpus, the top 30 most relevant papers were selected for intensive analysis, representing the highest-quality and most directly relevant scholarship on the research topic.

Analytical Framework

The analytical framework for this study consists of three primary dimensions of comparison:

- a. **Philosophical Foundations:** This dimension examines the underlying epistemological assumptions, value systems, worldviews, and theoretical frameworks that inform each management system. Analysis focuses on identifying fundamental philosophical commitments and how these shape educational objectives and management practices.
- b. **Methodological Approaches:** This dimension analyzes the research methods, analytical frameworks, and comparative strategies employed in studying and implementing educational management. It examines both the methods used by researchers to study these systems and the practical methods used by educational managers to implement management functions.
- c. **Key Comparative Findings:** This dimension synthesizes the main differences and similarities identified in the literature regarding practical implementation, outcomes, challenges, and opportunities for integration. It focuses on empirical findings and practical implications rather than purely theoretical considerations.

Data analysis proceeded through several stages. First, each of the 30 selected papers was systematically reviewed to extract information relevant to the three analytical dimensions. This involved close reading of abstracts, full texts where available, and identification of key themes, arguments, and findings.

Second, extracted information was organized into a structured database enabling systematic comparison across papers. This database included bibliographic information, relevance scores, abstracts, and enriched columns for philosophical foundations, methodological approaches, and key comparative findings for each paper.

Third, thematic analysis was conducted to identify recurring patterns, convergent findings, divergent perspectives, and gaps in the literature. This involved coding the extracted information according to emergent themes and organizing these themes into coherent categories aligned with the research questions.

Fourth, comparative synthesis was performed to integrate findings across papers and develop comprehensive answers to the research questions. This synthesis process involved identifying areas of scholarly consensus, noting areas of disagreement or ambiguity, and developing interpretive frameworks to explain observed patterns.

Finally, implications for educational development were derived from the synthesized findings, focusing on practical applications for policy, curriculum development, leadership training, and institutional management.

Several measures were implemented to ensure research quality. The systematic literature search strategy ensured comprehensive coverage of relevant scholarship. The relevance ranking process ensured that analysis focused on the most pertinent and high-quality sources. The multidimensional analytical framework provided structure for systematic comparison while allowing flexibility to capture nuanced findings.

However, several limitations should be acknowledged. The study relies entirely on published literature rather than primary empirical data collection, limiting insights to what has been documented in scholarly publications. The focus on the top 30 papers, while ensuring depth of analysis, necessarily excludes potentially relevant insights from the broader corpus. The multidisciplinary nature of the topic means that relevant literature may exist in disciplinary silos not fully captured by the search strategy. Finally, the comparative analysis is necessarily interpretive, and alternative interpretations of the same literature are possible.

Despite these limitations, the systematic and comprehensive approach employed in this study provides a robust foundation for understanding the boundaries between Islamic and general educational management and identifying opportunities for integration and boundary deconstruction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Philosophical Foundations: Epistemological Divergence

The analysis reveals fundamental epistemological divergence between Islamic and general educational management, rooted in different conceptions of knowledge, truth, and the purpose of education. Islamic educational management operates within a tawhidic epistemology that views all knowledge as ultimately derived from Allah SWT, with the Al-Qur'an and Hadith serving as primary sources of guidance (Islamiati et al., 2023). This epistemology assumes no legitimate separation between religious and secular knowledge; rather, all knowledge is integrated within a unified framework centered on divine revelation (Douglass & Sharifah, 2004).

In contrast, general educational management typically operates within secular, empiricist epistemologies that separate scientific knowledge from religious belief and emphasize rationalism, empirical verification, and pragmatic outcomes (Juliadarma, 2021). This epistemological framework, rooted in Enlightenment philosophy, views management as a value-neutral technical discipline applicable across contexts, with effectiveness and efficiency as primary success criteria.

The implications of this epistemological divergence are profound. Islamic educational management views education as a sacred trust (*amanah*) with the ultimate purpose of producing individuals who are servants and vicegerents (*khalifah*) of Allah, possessing both religious knowledge (*din*) and worldly knowledge (*dun'ya*) integrated through Islamic values (Matovu, 2013). The educational objective extends beyond cognitive development to encompass spiritual formation, moral excellence (*akhlaq mulia*), and preparation for both worldly success and eternal salvation.

General educational management, conversely, typically emphasizes vocational preparation, economic productivity, and social integration as primary educational objectives (Juliadarma, 2021). While contemporary general education increasingly recognizes the importance of character development and values education, these are typically framed in secular terms emphasizing citizenship, social responsibility, and personal development rather than spiritual formation or religious obligation.

The concept of *adab* in Islamic education represents a distinctive philosophical commitment absent in secular frameworks. *Adab* encompasses proper conduct, good upbringing, urbanity, and moral education for social justice (Douglass & Sharifah, 2004). Islamic educational management emphasizes that intellectual development without moral and spiritual formation is incomplete and potentially dangerous, as it may produce individuals with knowledge but without wisdom or ethical grounding (Gani et al., 2023).

This philosophical divergence also manifests in different conceptions of the learner and the learning process. Islamic educational management views students as possessing *fitrah* (innate disposition toward goodness and recognition of God) that must be nurtured and developed through education (Machali, 2015). The educational process is understood as helping students realize their inherent potential as servants of Allah and develop their capacities for both worldly contribution and spiritual growth.

However, the analysis also reveals important nuances and potential convergence points. Several scholars note that key motivations and characteristics of holistic and purposeful education are shared between Islamic and Western traditions, partially due to shared transmission of educational values and methods from classical times (Douglass & Sharifah, 2004). The obligation to be educated, and moral, intellectual, and cultural concepts in Muslim tradition are not far removed from Western educational goals, suggesting that the philosophical divergence, while real, may not be absolute.

Furthermore, contemporary movements in general education toward holistic development, social-emotional learning, and values education represent potential convergence with Islamic educational emphases on moral and spiritual formation. The challenge lies in developing frameworks that can accommodate both secular and religious approaches to values education without compromising the essential commitments of either system.

Methodological Approaches: Convergence in Practice

Despite philosophical divergence, the analysis reveals significant convergence in methodological approaches to educational management practice. Both Islamic and general educational management recognize and employ the fundamental management functions of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling (POAC) (McCabe, 2022). These operational functions are understood as universally applicable principles for achieving organizational objectives effectively and efficiently.

The literature consistently demonstrates that Islamic educational institutions adopt and adapt management methods from general management theory, including strategic planning, quality management systems, human resource management, financial management, and performance evaluation (Affandi et al., 2022). This adoption reflects recognition that effective organizational management requires systematic approaches to planning, resource allocation, coordination, and assessment regardless of the institution's religious or secular orientation.

However, the application of these universal management principles within Islamic contexts involves significant adaptation and reinterpretation through Islamic values and principles. Islamic educational management scholars emphasize that while operational functions may be similar, the underlying philosophy, motivations, and ultimate objectives differ significantly (Salleh, 2013). For example, planning in Islamic educational management must align with divine guidance and Islamic ethical principles, not merely with organizational efficiency or market demands.

The concept of Tawhidiq Management represents an attempt to develop distinctively Islamic management approaches rooted in Islamic epistemology and worldview (Salleh, 2013). This approach argues that adopting exogenous management methods without changing their philosophical foundations means aligning with non-Islamic worldviews, potentially compromising the Islamic character of educational institutions. Instead, Islamic management methods should be developed that integrate operational effectiveness with Islamic values, ethics, and spiritual objectives.

The integration-interconnection approach (*integrasi-interkoneksi*) offers a middle path between wholesale adoption of Western management methods and complete rejection of external influences (Machali, 2015). This approach advocates integrating management principles from various sources—including general management theory while ensuring they are interconnected with Islamic epistemology and values. The result is a hybrid approach that maintains Islamic identity while benefiting from management knowledge developed in diverse contexts.

Research methodologies employed in studying Islamic and general educational management also show both convergence and divergence. Comparative studies typically employ qualitative methods including literature review, case studies, interviews, and document analysis (Islamiati et al., 2023). These methods are common across educational research regardless of the specific focus on Islamic or general education.

However, Islamic educational management research often incorporates distinctive elements such as analysis of Qur'anic verses and Hadith relevant to management principles, examination of historical Islamic educational practices, and evaluation of contemporary practices against Islamic criteria (Affandi et al., 2022). This integration of religious textual analysis with social science research methods represents a methodological adaptation that respects the distinctive nature of Islamic educational management while employing rigorous research approaches.

The analysis also reveals methodological challenges in comparative research on Islamic and general educational management. Many studies are primarily theoretical or conceptual, lacking empirical data on actual management practices and outcomes (Juliadarma, 2021). There is a need for more empirical research comparing the

effectiveness of different management approaches in achieving educational objectives, both in Islamic and general educational contexts.

Furthermore, the literature reveals tension between descriptive and normative approaches. Some studies focus on describing how Islamic educational management is actually practiced, while others focus on prescribing how it should be practiced according to Islamic principles. This tension reflects broader questions about the relationship between ideal Islamic models and practical realities in diverse contexts.

Comparative Analysis: Five Dimensions of Difference

The literature identifies five key dimensions in which Islamic and general educational management differ substantially: educational purpose, philosophical foundations, curriculum management, student development approaches, and institutional governance (Juliadarma, 2021). These dimensions provide a structured framework for understanding the nature and implications of boundaries between the two systems.

Educational Purpose: The most fundamental difference lies in the ultimate purpose of education. Islamic educational management aims to produce individuals who are servants and vicegerents of Allah, possessing integrated religious and worldly knowledge, strong moral character, and commitment to Islamic values (Islamiati et al., 2023). The educational objective encompasses preparation for both worldly success and eternal salvation, with spiritual development considered equally or more important than cognitive achievement.

General educational management, in contrast, typically emphasizes preparation for economic participation, citizenship, and personal fulfillment within secular frameworks (Juliadarma, 2021). While contemporary general education increasingly recognizes the importance of character development and social-emotional learning, these are framed in secular terms rather than religious or spiritual language. The ultimate purpose is typically understood in terms of individual success and social contribution rather than spiritual formation or religious obligation.

Philosophical Foundations: As discussed in section 4.1, Islamic educational management operates within a tawhidic epistemology integrating all knowledge within a framework of divine revelation, while general educational management operates within secular, empiricist epistemologies separating scientific knowledge from religious belief (Juliadarma, 2021). This philosophical divergence shapes all aspects of educational management, from curriculum design to assessment practices.

Curriculum Management: Islamic educational management integrates religious subjects (Qur'an, Hadith, Islamic jurisprudence, Islamic history) with general subjects (mathematics, science, languages, social studies) within a unified curriculum framework (Juliadarma, 2021). Religious values and perspectives are integrated throughout the curriculum, not confined to specific religious education classes. The curriculum aims to develop both religious literacy and worldly competencies.

General educational management typically separates religious education (if offered at all) from the main curriculum, treating it as an optional or supplementary subject (Juliadarma, 2021). The core curriculum focuses on academic subjects and skills considered necessary for economic participation and citizenship, with religious perspectives generally excluded from public education in secular systems.

However, the analysis reveals significant variation within both categories. Some Islamic educational institutions maintain strict separation between religious and general subjects, while others achieve deeper integration. Similarly, some general educational systems accommodate religious perspectives more than others, particularly in contexts with strong religious traditions or in private religious schools operating within general educational frameworks.

Student Development Approaches: Islamic educational management emphasizes holistic development integrating cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and spiritual domains (Apriani et al., 2021). Student development is understood not merely as skill acquisition but as formation of character (akhlaq), cultivation of spiritual awareness, and preparation for roles as Muslims in society. Practices such as prayer, Qur'an recitation, and Islamic ethics are integrated into the educational experience.

General educational management typically focuses primarily on cognitive and skill development, with character education and social-emotional learning as secondary considerations (Gani et al., 2023). While contemporary general education increasingly recognizes the importance of holistic development, the spiritual dimension is typically absent or minimized in secular educational contexts.

Institutional Governance: Islamic educational management often involves distinctive governance structures including religious scholars (ulama) in leadership roles, integration of religious authority with administrative authority, and accountability to both educational standards and Islamic principles (Mahamid et al., 2023). Decision-making processes may incorporate Islamic consultation (shura) principles and seek to align institutional policies with Islamic law (shariah).

General educational management typically employs secular governance structures with clear separation between religious authority (if any) and administrative authority (Juliadarma, 2021). Decision-making is based on educational expertise, legal requirements, and stakeholder input, without reference to religious principles or authorities. Accountability is to educational standards, legal requirements, and stakeholder expectations rather than religious principles.

These five dimensions of difference reveal the substantial nature of boundaries between Islamic and general educational management. However, the analysis also reveals that these boundaries are not absolute or impermeable. Significant variation exists within each category, and opportunities for integration and mutual learning exist across the boundaries.

Integration Opportunities and Boundary Deconstruction

Despite substantial differences, the analysis reveals several opportunities for integration and boundary deconstruction that respect the distinctive characteristics of both systems while fostering productive dialogue and mutual learning. These opportunities emerge from shared concerns, complementary strengths, and recognition of limitations in both systems.

Shared Concern for Quality and Effectiveness: Both Islamic and general educational management share fundamental concerns about educational quality, institutional effectiveness, and student outcomes (McCabe, 2022). This shared concern provides a foundation for dialogue and mutual learning about effective management practices, quality assurance mechanisms, and continuous improvement strategies. Islamic educational institutions can learn from quality management systems developed in general education, while general educational institutions can learn from Islamic education's emphasis on holistic development and values integration.

Complementary Strengths: Islamic educational management's strength in values education, character formation, and spiritual development complements general educational management's strength in academic rigor, pedagogical innovation, and systematic assessment (Douglass & Sharifah, 2004). Integration opportunities exist in developing educational approaches that combine academic excellence with strong values formation, preparing students who are both intellectually competent and morally grounded.

Integration-Interconnection Framework: The integrasi-interkoneksi approach developed by Indonesian scholars provides a promising model for integration that respects distinctive characteristics while enabling cross-fertilization (Machali, 2015). This approach advocates integrating knowledge and practices from diverse sources while ensuring they are interconnected with core values and principles. Applied to educational management, this framework suggests that Islamic institutions can adopt effective management practices from general education while ensuring these practices are adapted to align with Islamic values and objectives.

Multidisciplinary and Interdisciplinary Approaches: The literature increasingly emphasizes the need for multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary approaches to educational management (Mardiana et al., 2020). Complex educational challenges including quality improvement, equity, innovation, and adaptation to technological change cannot be adequately addressed within narrow disciplinary or sectarian boundaries. Both Islamic

and general educational management can benefit from interdisciplinary approaches that integrate insights from management theory, educational psychology, sociology, philosophy, and other relevant fields.

Addressing Educational Dualism: In contexts where Islamic and general educational systems operate in parallel, integration opportunities exist at policy, institutional, and curricular levels (Tamami, 2019). Policy integration might involve coordinated standards, mutual recognition of credentials, and shared quality assurance mechanisms. Institutional integration might involve partnerships, resource sharing, and joint programs. Curricular integration might involve incorporating religious perspectives in general education and strengthening academic rigor in religious education.

Ethical Leadership and Values-Based Management: Contemporary general educational management increasingly recognizes the importance of ethical leadership and values-based management (Ali, 2023). This trend represents potential convergence with Islamic educational management's longstanding emphasis on moral leadership and values integration. Dialogue between Islamic and general educational management on ethical leadership could enrich both systems and contribute to broader discourse on educational leadership in diverse contexts.

However, the analysis also reveals significant challenges to integration and boundary deconstruction. Philosophical differences regarding the role of religion in education, the nature of knowledge, and the purpose of education are substantial and cannot be easily resolved (Sahin, 2018). Attempts at integration that ignore or minimize these differences risk superficiality or loss of distinctive identity for both systems.

Furthermore, institutional and political factors often reinforce boundaries between Islamic and general educational management. Separate governance structures, funding mechanisms, and regulatory frameworks create practical barriers to integration even where philosophical openness exists (Tamami, 2019). Overcoming these barriers requires not only intellectual work but also policy reform and institutional restructuring.

The concept of boundary deconstruction should not be understood as elimination of all distinctions between Islamic and general educational management. Rather, it involves critical examination of which boundaries are essential and which are artificial or counterproductive. Some boundaries may reflect legitimate differences in values, objectives, and approaches that should be respected and maintained. Other boundaries may be historical artifacts or products of misunderstanding that can and should be deconstructed to enable more productive dialogue and collaboration.

Implications for Educational Development

The findings of this comparative analysis have significant implications for educational development in diverse contexts, particularly in pluralistic societies managing both Islamic and secular educational institutions. These implications extend to policy development, curriculum design, leadership training, institutional management, and research agendas.

Policy Development: Educational policymakers in contexts with both Islamic and general educational systems should consider developing integrated policy frameworks that respect distinctive characteristics while fostering coordination and mutual learning (Tamami, 2019). This might include coordinated quality standards that accommodate different educational philosophies, mutual recognition mechanisms for credentials and qualifications, and shared quality assurance systems that evaluate institutions according to their stated objectives rather than imposing uniform criteria.

Policy frameworks should also address the historical legacy of educational dualism by creating pathways for integration where appropriate while respecting the autonomy of institutions with distinctive religious or philosophical commitments. This requires moving beyond simplistic models of assimilation (where Islamic education merely adopts Western models) or rigid separation (where the two systems operate in complete isolation) toward more sophisticated models of coordination and collaboration.

Curriculum Design: The analysis suggests opportunities for curriculum integration that combines academic rigor with values formation (Machali, 2015). Islamic educational institutions can strengthen academic quality by

adopting effective pedagogical approaches and rigorous assessment practices from general education while maintaining their distinctive emphasis on religious knowledge and values integration. General educational institutions, particularly in contexts with significant Muslim populations, can consider how to accommodate Islamic perspectives and values in ways that respect both religious commitments and secular educational principles.

The integration-interconnection approach provides a useful framework for curriculum development, suggesting that knowledge from diverse sources can be integrated while ensuring coherence with core values and principles (Machali, 2015). This approach can guide development of curricula that are both academically rigorous and values-centered, preparing students for both worldly success and moral excellence.

Leadership Training: Educational leaders in both Islamic and general educational contexts need preparation that enables them to navigate complex, diverse environments and engage productively across boundaries (Ali, 2023). Leadership training programs should include comparative perspectives on educational management, exposure to diverse educational philosophies and practices, and development of skills for cross-cultural and cross-religious dialogue and collaboration.

For leaders in Islamic educational institutions, this includes understanding general educational management principles and practices while maintaining commitment to Islamic values and objectives. For leaders in general educational institutions, particularly in diverse contexts, this includes understanding Islamic educational perspectives and developing cultural competence for working with Muslim students, families, and communities.

Institutional Management: Educational institutions can benefit from adopting effective management practices regardless of their source, while ensuring these practices are adapted to align with institutional values and objectives (Salleh, 2013). Islamic educational institutions should not hesitate to learn from quality management systems, strategic planning approaches, and assessment practices developed in general education, provided these are adapted to serve Islamic educational objectives.

Similarly, general educational institutions can learn from Islamic education's approaches to values integration, character formation, and holistic student development. The challenge is to identify practices that can be effectively transferred across contexts and to adapt them appropriately rather than adopting them wholesale without consideration of contextual factors.

Research Agendas: The analysis reveals significant gaps in empirical research on comparative effectiveness of Islamic and general educational management approaches (Juliadarma, 2021). Future research should include more empirical studies comparing actual management practices and outcomes in diverse contexts, longitudinal studies examining long-term effects of different educational approaches, and mixed-methods research combining quantitative outcome measures with qualitative understanding of processes and experiences.

Research is also needed on integration models and their effectiveness, including studies of institutions that have successfully integrated Islamic and general educational approaches, evaluation of policy initiatives aimed at coordination between Islamic and general educational systems, and analysis of factors that facilitate or hinder productive dialogue and collaboration across boundaries.

Capacity Building: Educational systems need investment in capacity building that enables educators, administrators, and policymakers to work effectively across boundaries (Mardiana et al., 2020). This includes professional development programs that expose educators to diverse educational philosophies and practices, exchange programs that enable educators from Islamic and general educational institutions to learn from each other, and development of communities of practice that bring together educators from diverse contexts to address shared challenges.

Quality Assurance: Quality assurance systems should be developed that can accommodate diverse educational philosophies while maintaining rigorous standards (McCabe, 2022). This requires moving beyond one-size-fits-all approaches to quality assurance toward more flexible frameworks that evaluate institutions according to their stated objectives and values while ensuring accountability for educational outcomes.

For Islamic educational institutions, this means developing quality standards that reflect Islamic educational objectives while ensuring academic rigor and effectiveness. For general educational institutions, this means developing quality frameworks that can accommodate diverse values and approaches while maintaining commitment to educational excellence and equity.

CONCLUSION

This multidisciplinary comparative analysis has examined the academic boundaries between Islamic and general educational management, revealing both substantial differences and significant opportunities for integration and mutual learning. The research demonstrates that while these two management systems share fundamental management principles and operational functions, they diverge significantly in their philosophical foundations, epistemological assumptions, and ultimate educational objectives.

The five key dimensions of difference educational purpose, philosophical foundations, curriculum management, student development approaches, and institutional governance illuminate the nature and implications of boundaries between these systems. Islamic educational management operates within a tawhidic epistemology that integrates all knowledge within a framework of divine revelation, emphasizes holistic development including spiritual formation, and aims to produce individuals who are servants and vicegerents of Allah. General educational management operates within secular, empiricist epistemologies, emphasizes cognitive and skill development for economic participation and citizenship, and typically excludes or minimizes spiritual dimensions.

However, the analysis also reveals that these boundaries are not absolute or impermeable. Significant variation exists within each category, and both systems face common challenges related to quality, effectiveness, equity, and adaptation to changing contexts. Shared concerns for educational quality and student development provide foundations for dialogue and mutual learning. The integration-interconnection approach offers a promising framework for combining strengths of both systems while respecting their distinctive characteristics.

The concept of boundary deconstruction, as applied in this research, does not imply elimination of all distinctions between Islamic and general educational management. Rather, it involves critical examination of which boundaries are essential and which are artificial or counterproductive. Some boundaries reflect legitimate differences in values, objectives, and approaches that should be respected and maintained. Other boundaries are historical artifacts or products of misunderstanding that can and should be deconstructed to enable more productive dialogue and collaboration.

The implications of this research extend to policy development, curriculum design, leadership training, institutional management, and research agendas. Educational policymakers should develop integrated frameworks that respect distinctive characteristics while fostering coordination. Curriculum developers should explore integration models that combine academic rigor with values formation. Leadership training programs should prepare educational leaders to navigate diverse environments and engage productively across boundaries. Institutional managers should adopt effective practices from diverse sources while ensuring alignment with institutional values. Researchers should conduct more empirical studies comparing effectiveness of different approaches and evaluating integration models.

Several limitations of this study should be acknowledged. The research relies entirely on published literature rather than primary empirical data, limiting insights to what has been documented in scholarly publications. The focus on the top 30 papers, while ensuring depth of analysis, necessarily excludes potentially relevant insights from the broader corpus. The comparative analysis is necessarily interpretive, and alternative interpretations are possible.

Future research should address these limitations through empirical studies of actual management practices and outcomes in diverse contexts, longitudinal research examining long-term effects of different educational approaches, and mixed-methods research combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Research is also needed on integration models and their effectiveness, factors that facilitate or hinder productive dialogue across boundaries,

and development of quality assurance frameworks that accommodate diverse educational philosophies while maintaining rigorous standards.

In conclusion, this research contributes to ongoing discourse on educational integration by providing comprehensive comparative analysis of Islamic and general educational management, identifying specific points of convergence and divergence, and proposing frameworks for integration that respect distinctive characteristics while fostering interdisciplinary dialogue. The findings suggest that while substantial differences exist between these systems, opportunities for mutual learning and collaboration are significant. Realizing these opportunities requires intellectual openness, institutional flexibility, and commitment to both educational excellence and respect for diversity.

The challenge facing contemporary educational systems is to develop models of integration and coordination that honor the legitimate diversity of educational philosophies and approaches while ensuring quality, equity, and effectiveness for all students. This requires moving beyond simplistic dichotomies of religious versus secular, traditional versus modern, or Islamic versus Western toward more nuanced understandings that recognize complexity, diversity, and potential for synthesis. The deconstruction of artificial academic boundaries, when done thoughtfully and respectfully, can contribute to more effective, equitable, and holistic educational systems that serve the diverse needs of students in pluralistic societies.

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