

## The Integration of Knowledge in Islam and a Critique of Western-Style Fragmentation of Knowledge: A Study of the Ideas of Ziauddin Sardar and Imre Lakatos

<sup>1</sup>Fajar Amin\*, <sup>2</sup>Usmanul Khakim  
University of Darussalam Gontor, Indonesia  
Corresponding Author: aminfajar695@gmail.com

---

### Article Info : ABSTRACT

Accepted:  
29-12-2025  
Approved:  
19-01-2025  
Published:  
04-03-2026

---

#### Keywords:

Integration of knowledge, fragmentation of knowledge, Islamic epistemology, Islamic worldview, *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, research programmes

**Background:** Modern civilization is built upon a secular and fragmented epistemology that separates rationality from spiritual values a condition Ziauddin Sardar refers to as epistemic apartheid. This worldview has significantly influenced educational systems in many Muslim countries, including Indonesia, leading to a dichotomy between religious and worldly sciences.

**Objective:** This study aims to explore the epistemological roots of this fragmentation from both Islamic and Western perspectives and to examine the potential for synthesizing the ideas of Sardar and Imre Lakatos.

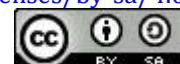
**Method:** The research adopts a qualitative library research approach utilizing a philosophical-analytical method. It traces the historical and epistemological dimensions of knowledge fragmentation and comparatively analyzes Sardar's Islamic epistemological reconstruction and Lakatos's scientific research programmes model.

**Findings and Implications:** Sardar advocates for knowledge reconstruction based on the Islamic worldview, the principle of *tawḥīd*, and the objectives of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, ensuring that knowledge remains value-driven and oriented toward the public good. Lakatos offers a structural model of scientific progress comprising a hard core and protective belt, which maintains theoretical continuity while accommodating rational development. Both thinkers reject positivism and value neutrality, emphasizing that knowledge is shaped by foundational assumptions and must respond to real ethical and social challenges. The proposed synthesis results in a comprehensive paradigm encompassing ontological (*tawḥīd*), epistemological (revelation, reason, and experience), axiological (*maqāṣid*), and methodological (research programmes) dimensions.

**Conclusion:** The integrated framework offers a practical and transformative proposal for developing a contemporary Islamic epistemology that is rational, ethical, contextual, and capable of guiding future research and educational reform.

---

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>



## INTRODUCTION

Modern civilization, with all its technological and scientific achievements, is in fact built upon an epistemological foundation that tends to be fragmentary, secular, and positivistic (Kamil, 2020; Najafi, 2024; Saputra & Arif, 2025; Sodik et al., 2025; Wang, 2024; Yusuf & Haddade, 2021). The model of knowledge that developed in the post-Enlightenment era places reason as the sole source of epistemic authority, thereby marginalizing revelation and the spiritual dimension from the domain of knowledge (Ackerly & True, 2008; Fanoulis, 2024; Hobden, 2023).

This condition has given rise to what Ziauddin Sardar terms “epistemic apartheid,” namely, the complete separation between knowledge and moral–spiritual values. In the context of globalization, this system has been widely adopted in Muslim countries through modern educational institutions that promote Western-based curricula, resulting in a fragmentation of knowledge that divides religious sciences (*‘ulūm al-dīn*) from worldly or secular sciences (*‘ulūm al-dunyā*) (Al-Attas, 1989).

This condition has given rise to what Ziauddin Sardar terms “epistemic apartheid,” namely, a total separation between knowledge and moral–spiritual values (Dalacoura, 2004). In the context of globalization, this system has been widely adopted in Muslim countries through modern educational institutions that promote Western-based curricula, resulting in a fragmentation of knowledge that divides religious sciences (*‘ulūm al-dīn*) from worldly or secular sciences (*‘ulūm al-dunyā*) (Al-Attas, 1989; Brodner et al., 2020).

Socially, the consequences of this fragmentation are highly tangible. Muslim societies experience disorientation in understanding the relationship between faith and knowledge, between technology and ethics, and between material progress and spiritual responsibility. Higher education in many Muslim countries, including Indonesia, continues to inherit a dualistic educational model from the colonial legacy, which creates a dichotomy between *pesantren/madrasah* and public or state schools (Zahra, 2025). As a result, graduates of educational institutions tend to be divided into two extreme poles: technocrats and scientists who are rational yet detached from ethical and value-based dimensions, and religious scholars who are ritually devout but insufficiently responsive to the challenges of modernity.

This condition has prompted a number of Muslim intellectuals to reformulate the epistemological framework of knowledge. Among them is Ziauddin Sardar, a contemporary thinker who criticizes the dominance of Western science and proposes the project of the “Islamization of knowledge” by emphasizing the importance of constructing science grounded in the Islamic worldview, based on *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*, and oriented toward social

justice. He argues that knowledge is never neutral; it is always underpinned by philosophical assumptions and value commitments. Therefore, according to Sardar, an integrative approach is required one that views knowledge as part of a comprehensive Islamic value system (*tawhīdī*) rather than merely as a neutral technological instrument.

From within the Western intellectual tradition itself, critiques of the modern scientific model have also emerged, one of which is articulated by Imre Lakatos. He sought to address the shortcomings of Karl Popper's falsificationism and Thomas Kuhn's relativism by proposing the theory of research programmes, which conceives scientific development as occurring within theoretical programs characterized by a "hard core" and a "protective belt" (Lakatos, 1978). Through this approach, Lakatos rejects the view that science progresses through abrupt revolutions (as argued by Kuhn), instead emphasizing a cumulative and competitive development among research programs. While acknowledging the dynamic nature of science, he nevertheless maintains rationality within the scientific process (Chalmers, 1999). This model allows for paradigm change, yet within the bounds of consistent scientific logic. "Unlike previous integration-of-knowledge models that primarily focus on normative or institutional frameworks, this study offers an epistemological synthesis that combines the tawhīdic worldview with Lakatos's research programmes as a methodological structure."

This study focuses on comparing and exploring the potential points of convergence between Ziauddin Sardar's concept of the integration of knowledge and Imre Lakatos's methodological approach to science. The objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To analyze the roots of the problem of knowledge fragmentation from both Islamic and Western perspectives.
2. To examine Sardar's epistemological proposal for constructing an integrative form of knowledge grounded in Islamic values.
3. To investigate Lakatos's methodological framework for understanding the development and integration of scientific knowledge.
4. To formulate a conceptual synthesis between the two approaches in order to develop an integrative paradigm of knowledge that is responsive to the needs of contemporary Muslim societies.
5. To articulate an epistemological synthesis between the ideas of Sardar and Lakatos that can be applied to the development of contemporary Islamic epistemology.

Based on the theoretical framework outlined above, this study advances the hypothesis that there exists a space for epistemological dialogue between the thought of Ziauddin Sardar and Imre Lakatos, particularly in their

shared rejection of the fragmentation of knowledge and their emphasis on the reinforcement of rationality, despite the fact that each operates within distinct value frameworks and intellectual traditions. Sardar introduces a normative and theocentric dimension, whereas Lakatos proceeds from a conception of scientific rationality that remains open to theoretical dynamics. This study is expected to enrich the discourse on the integration of knowledge and to contribute to the development of a critical and contextual Islamic epistemology.

### RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach and is classified as library research, which is appropriate for critically and in-depth examining philosophical ideas of science and the thoughts of key figures through textual interpretation and meaning analysis. The research is descriptive-analytical in nature, focusing on understanding and exploring philosophical arguments as well as the possibility of conceptual synthesis (Rofiah & Bungin, 2021). The study focuses on Ziauddin Sardar's critique of the fragmentation of modern scientific knowledge and his effort to construct an integrated framework of knowledge grounded in the Islamic worldview (*tasawwur Islāmī*), as well as on Imre Lakatos's concept of research programmes as a methodological model that rejects the view of science as merely the product of paradigmatic revolutions (Lakatos, 2014). In addition, this research analyzes the possibility of an epistemological synthesis between the ideas of Sardar and Lakatos in order to formulate an integrative paradigm of knowledge that is responsive to the needs of contemporary Muslim societies.

The data used in this study are qualitative and textual in nature, derived from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include the original works of Ziauddin Sardar, such as *Islamic Science: The Task Ahead*, *Explorations in Islamic Science*, and *Postmodernism and the Other*, as well as Imre Lakatos's *The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes* and other writings collected in *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge* (Lakatos, 1978). Secondary sources consist of academic journals, scholarly articles, books on the philosophy of science, dissertations, and previous studies addressing the integration of knowledge and Islamic-Western epistemology (Arif, 2008). Data collection is conducted through documentary study, involving the systematic compilation, reading, and critical examination of works relevant to the research focus, a standard method in philosophical and library-based research (Naod & Ritzer, 2001). The collected data are then classified according to central themes such as knowledge fragmentation, the integration

of knowledge, research methodology, and the Islamic worldview (Wan Daud, 2003).

Data analysis is carried out using content analysis and comparative analysis. Content analysis is employed to extract and comprehend the core ideas of Sardar's and Lakatos's thought by paying close attention to context, terminology, and theoretical frameworks. Comparative analysis is used to critically and systematically compare the two epistemological frameworks in order to identify points of convergence and conceptual differences (Surajiyo, 2007). Finally, a conceptual synthesis is undertaken to formulate an integrative model of knowledge that combines the normative-religious dimension of Sardar's framework with the rational-evolutionary dimension of Lakatos's approach.

Nevertheless, this study has several methodological limitations. First, as a library-based philosophical inquiry, it relies exclusively on textual sources and interpretive analysis, which may limit its ability to capture the practical implementation of the proposed epistemological synthesis in real educational or scientific contexts. Second, the interpretive nature of philosophical analysis entails a degree of subjectivity in selecting, interpreting, and synthesizing concepts, despite efforts to maintain analytical rigor and theoretical consistency. Finally, this study does not incorporate empirical data or field-based observations, which could provide further validation and refinement of the proposed integrative model. Future research may therefore complement this philosophical framework with empirical studies to examine its applicability within educational institutions and scientific practices in Muslim societies.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Root Causes of the Fragmentation of Knowledge in Islamic and Western Epistemological Traditions

The analysis shows that the fragmentation of knowledge is the cumulative result of historical, epistemological, and institutional developments in both Islamic and Western intellectual traditions. Classical Islamic scholarship conceived knowledge as an integrated whole encompassing theological, ethical, cosmological, and practical dimensions, grounded in the ontological principle of *tawhīd* and the integration of revelation and reason (Al-Attas, 1989). Thinkers such as al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Khaldūn developed epistemologies that viewed knowledge as oriented toward spiritual realization and social well-being (*maṣlahah*).

The findings also indicate that this integrative epistemology weakened following major historical disruptions, particularly the Mongol invasion and

later Western colonialism. These events contributed to the decentralization of Islamic intellectual life and the institutional separation between religious sciences and rational–empirical disciplines (Chande, 2023). In the modern period, postcolonial educational systems further institutionalized this dichotomy through dualistic schooling structures Kashif & Rahman (2025).

From the Western perspective, the results reveal that epistemological fragmentation emerged through secularization, positivism, and increasing academic specialization. Positivist epistemology narrowed the scope of valid knowledge to empirical verification, excluding metaphysical and ethical dimensions (Comte, 2009, 2025; Martineau, 2024). This process produced highly specialized yet siloed forms of knowledge, often detached from moral reflection (Kandel, 1960; Ortolano, 2016).

### Ziauddin Sardar’s Epistemological Framework for the Integration of Knowledge

The findings indicate that Ziauddin Sardar conceptualizes knowledge as inseparable from worldview-based assumptions that shape its ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions (Putawa, 2024). His critique of modern Western science centers on its secular, anthropocentric, and value-neutral orientation, which he considers incompatible with Islamic epistemology.

The analysis further shows that Sardar rejects the Islamization-of-knowledge model proposed by Ismail al-Faruqi, arguing that it fails to address the foundational assumptions of Western epistemology. Instead, Sardar proposes the reconstruction of knowledge grounded in the Islamic worldview, emphasizing *tawḥīd*, *khilāfah*, and *‘ibādah* as epistemic foundations (زين الدين, 2013).

Within this framework, knowledge is oriented toward *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*, directing intellectual activity toward justice, public welfare, and ecological balance. Thus, knowledge functions not merely as a descriptive or technical enterprise, but as a transformative moral project.

### Imre Lakatos’s Research Programmes as a Model of Scientific Rationality

The analysis reveals that Lakatos’s theory of scientific research programmes offers a middle position between Popper’s falsificationism and Kuhn’s paradigm relativism. Knowledge development is structured around a “hard core” of foundational assumptions protected by a flexible “protective belt” of auxiliary hypotheses.

The results show that Lakatos evaluates scientific progress not through isolated theories but through the comparative productivity of research

programmes. This model preserves rational evaluation while allowing theoretical adaptation and continuity (Lakatos, 1978).

### Points of Convergence between Sardar and Lakatos

The comparative analysis identifies several points of convergence between Sardar and Lakatos. Both reject positivist neutrality and emphasize that knowledge is grounded in foundational assumptions. While Lakatos refers to these assumptions as the hard core of a research programme, Sardar frames them as worldview commitments rooted in Islamic theology (Amarullah et al., 2023).

Both thinkers also emphasize that knowledge development must be progressive, systematic, and socially accountable. Lakatos focuses on rational methodological progress, whereas Sardar emphasizes ethical and civilizational outcomes.

**Table 1.** Comparison of Worldview, Ethics, and Knowledge Theories between Ziauddin Sardar and Imre Lakatos

Aspect	Ziauddin Sardar	Imre Lakatos	Point Of Converge
Worldview&Basic Assumptions	Islamic worldview as the epistemic foundation	Hard core that must not be questioned	Value-bases worldview as the foundation of theory
Theoretical flexibility	Theories may develop within the framework of maqasid al-shari'ah	Adaptive changes in the protective belt	Scientific methodology must be contextual
Ethics & purpose of knowledge	Social goals, justice, and environmental responsibility	Scientific and social progressiveness	Knowledge must be relevant and meaningful
Critique of neutrality	Knowledge is not neutral; it is value-laden	Theories are evaluated based on scientific progress	Values and purposes are integral to scientific inquiry

Source: Data Processed

### Toward an Integrative Epistemological Synthesis

The findings suggest that combining Sardar's normative Islamic epistemology with Lakatos's methodological framework enables the construction of an integrative paradigm that is both value-oriented and rationally structured. Unlike existing integration-of-knowledge models that prioritize institutional or curricular reform, this synthesis operates at the epistemological and methodological levels (Azra, 1999; Rosenthal, 2007; Toulmin, 1990).

In this framework, *tawhīd* and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* function as the ontological and axiological hard core, while diverse scientific methods serve as a flexible protective belt responsive to context and empirical challenges. This synthesis preserves epistemic continuity while enabling innovation.

Such an integrative paradigm addresses contemporary Muslim challenges ecological crisis, ethical disorientation, and social fragmentation by restoring knowledge as a trust (*amānah*) rather than a neutral instrument of power. Knowledge thus regains its transformative role in building a just and sustainable civilization.

## CONCLUSION

This study explores the fragmentation of knowledge in both Islamic civilization and the modern West, highlighting how epistemological and historical factors have contributed to this issue. In classical Islamic thought, knowledge was seen as an integrated entity tied to spiritual, moral, and social values within the framework of *tawhīd*. However, the decline of Islamic centers, colonialism, and Western educational systems led to a divide between religious and worldly knowledge. Meanwhile, post-Enlightenment Western epistemology became highly specialized and secular, detaching knowledge from ethics and transcendent values. Ziauddin Sardar proposes a reconstruction of knowledge based on the Islamic worldview, emphasizing the importance of *tawhīd* and aligning knowledge with the objectives of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. Imre Lakatos offers a method for scientific progress that balances dogmatism and relativism, proposing a scientific research programme model with a hard core of fundamental assumptions and a protective belt of modifiable hypotheses. By combining Sardar's and Lakatos's approaches, an integrative paradigm is proposed, uniting ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology to address the fragmentation of knowledge. This synthesis offers a framework for developing contemporary Islamic epistemology that is rational, ethical, and transformative, with implications for future research and application in higher education, research institutions, and interdisciplinary scientific practices in Muslim societies.

## REFERENCES

- Ackerly, B., & True, J. (2008). Reflexivity in practice: Power and ethics in feminist research on international relations. *International Studies Review*, 10(4). <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2486.2008.00826.x>
- Al-Attas, O. S. (1989). Comparative studies on the major features of insulin receptors in mammalian and non-mammalian liver membranes.

- Comparative Biochemistry and Physiology -- Part B: Biochemistry And*, 93(1). [https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-0491\(89\)90226-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-0491(89)90226-5)
- Amarullah, S., Maulidi, A., Syarifudin, E., & Fauzi, A. (2023). Membangun Teori Manajemen Pendidikan Islam Melalui Teori Filsafat Ilmu. *Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial*, 10(10).
- Arif, S. (2008). Orientalis dan Diabolisme Pemikiran. In *Gema Insani Press* (Number May).
- Azra, A. (1999). Pendidikan Islam: Tradisi dan Modernisasi Menuju Milenium Baru. In *Logos*.
- Brodner, D. C., Corsino, P., Harvey, A., Sou tre, E., Salvati, E., & Belugou, J. L. (2020). Effect of blue light from electronic devices on melatonin and sleep/wake rhythms in high school children. *Sleep*, 40.
- Chalmers, A. F. (1999). What is this thing called science? 3e edition. In *Hackett Publishing Compagny* (Vol. 73, Number 3). <https://doi.org/10.1097/00132586-196404000-00001>
- Chande, A. (2023). Global Politics of Knowledge Production: The Challenges of Islamization of Knowledge in The Light of Tradition Vs Secular Modernity Debate. *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 6(2), 271–289. <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v6i2.3502>
- Comte, A. (2009). The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte. In *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511701450>
- Comte, A. (2025). The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte. In *Scientific Methodology in Nineteenth Century Britain: Volume I: Building Philosophical Systems* (Vol. 1). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003263814-16>
- Dalacoura, K. (2004). Islam, Postmodernism and Other Futures: A Ziauddin Sardar Reader. *Contemporary Political Theory*, 3(3). <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.cpt.9300141>
- Fanouli, E. (2024). Critical Theory and International Relations: Knowledge, Power and Practice, by S.Hobden (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2023), ISBN 9781526131959; ix+197 pp., £85 GBP hardcover. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 62(2). <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13525>
- Hobden, S. (2023). Critical theory and international relations: Knowledge, power and practice. In *Critical Theory and International Relations: Knowledge, Power and Practice*. <https://doi.org/10.7765/9781526131966>

- Kamil, S. (2020). Is Islam Compatible with Modernity? An Analysis of Modernity as Modern Civilization. *Sunan Kalijaga: International Journal of Islamic Civilization*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.14421/skijic.v3i1.1467>
- Kandel, I. L. (1960). *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* by C. P. Snow. New York, Cambridge University Press, 1959. 58 pp. \$1.75. *The Educational Forum*, 24(4). <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131726009339597>
- Kashif, A., & Rahman, F. A. (2025). Colonial Roots of Education: A Postcolonial Analysis in Context of Pakistan and Malaysia. *Foro de Educacion*, 23(2). <https://doi.org/10.14201/fde.23204>
- Lakatos, I. (1978). The methodology of scientific research programmes Philosophical Papers Volume I. *The Elgar Companion to Economics and Philosophy*.
- Lakatos, I. (2014). Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes. In *Philosophy, Science, and History: A Guide and Reader*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203802458-7>
- Martineau, H. (2024). The positive philosophy of Auguste Comte. In *Literature and Philosophy in Nineteenth-Century British Culture: Volume II: The Mid-Nineteenth Century*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003427865-16>
- Najafi, M. (2024). A Theory of Islamic Modern Civilization: Bridging Philosophical and Historical Perspectives. *Iranian Politics and Law Quarterly*, 2(1).
- Naod, J., & Ritzer, G. (2001). Modern Sociological Theory. *Teaching Sociology*, 29(2). <https://doi.org/10.2307/1318728>
- Ortolano, G. (2016). Breaking Ranks: C. P. Snow and the Crisis of Mid-Century Liberalism, 1930–1980. *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews*, 41(2–3). <https://doi.org/10.1080/03080188.2016.1223577>
- Putawa, R. A. (2024). Islamization of science: Ziauddin sardar's critique of the universality of science. *Dharmakirti: International Journal of Religion, Mind and Science*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.61511/ijroms.v1i2.2024.291>
- Rofiah, C., & Bungin, B. (2021). Qualitative Methods : Simple Research With Triangulation Theory Design. *Develop*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.25139/dev.v5i1.3690>
- Rosenthal, F. (2007). Knowledge triumphant: The concept of knowledge in Medieval Islam. In *Brill Classics in Islam* (Vol. 2). <https://doi.org/10.2307/600550>
- Saputra, A., & Arif, M. (2025). Rereading Ibn Khaldun's Asabiyyah as a Critique of the Crisis of Modern Civilisation. *Al-Hikmah: International Journal of Islamic Studies*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.64540/alhikmah77>

- Sodik, H., Aqidah, S., & Sumenep, U. (2025). Pendidikan Agama Islam Sebagai Fondasi Kemajuan Peradaban Modern. *JIEL*, 2(02).
- Surajiyo. (2007). Filsafat Ilmu dan Perkembangannya Di Indonesia: Suatu Pengantar. In *Bumi Aksara*.
- Toulmin, S. (1990). Cosmopolis: El trasfondo de la modernidad. In *Revista de Filosofia (Mexico)* (Vol. 35, Number 106).
- Wan Daud, W. M. N. (2003). Filsafat dan Praktik Pendidikan Islam Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (penerjemah: Hamid Fahmy, M. Arifin Ismail, dan Iskandar Amel). *Mizan*, 8(5).
- Wang, Y. (2024). The fundamental issues in promoting modern civilization of the Chinese Nation. *International Journal of Anthropology and Ethnology*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41257-024-00108-4>
- Yusuf, M., & Haddade, H. (2021). Reformulating Islamic Epistemology: Solution to The Crisis of Modern Science, Technology and The Impact of Globalization. *Ar-Raniry, International Journal of Islamic Studies*, 8(1).
- Zahra, W. A. (2025). Quality Education through Pesantren, Madrasahs, and Islamic Schools in Globalization Dynamics: Pendidikan Berkualitas Melalui Pesantren, Madrasah, dan Sekolah Islam dalam Dinamika Globalisasi. *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Studies*, 13(3).
- زين الدين, ح. ل. (2013). عروض مختصرة. <https://doi.org/10.35632/citj.v19i73.2585>
- زين الدين ح. ل. (2013). عروض مختصرة. *Al-Fikr Al-islāmī Al-mu‘āṣir* (previously *Islamiyat Al-Ma‘rifah*), 19(73), 219–209. <https://doi.org/10.35632/citj.v19i73.2585>