

## The Harmonisation of Science and Religion: An Examination of Socio-Cultural Influences in Contemporary Islamic Contexts

### Harmonisasi Sains dan Agama: Tinjauan Pengaruh Sosio-Kultural dalam Konteks Islam Kontemporer

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#### Abstract

Penelitian ini **bertujuan** untuk mengeksplorasi dan mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor sosial, ekonomi, politik, dan lingkungan yang mempengaruhi hubungan antara sains dan agama di dunia Islam kontemporer. Menggunakan **pendekatan** kualitatif dengan **metode** studi kasus dan wawancara mendalam, penelitian ini mengkaji berbagai negara mayoritas Muslim dengan latar belakang sosial-budaya yang berbeda. **Temuan utama** menunjukkan bahwa integrasi sains dan agama dapat meningkatkan kualitas hidup masyarakat Muslim melalui pendidikan yang inklusif, kebijakan publik yang berorientasi pada kesejahteraan umum, dan pendekatan holistik terhadap masalah lingkungan. Penelitian ini memberikan **kontribusi** penting dalam literatur akademik mengenai hubungan antara sains dan agama, serta menawarkan rekomendasi praktis bagi pembuat kebijakan, pendidik, dan pemimpin komunitas. **Keterbatasan** penelitian meliputi cakupan yang terbatas dan potensi bias dalam metode kualitatif. **Kesimpulan** dari penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya upaya berkelanjutan untuk mengintegrasikan sains dan agama secara harmonis guna mencapai pembangunan berkelanjutan dan kesejahteraan masyarakat.

**Keywords:** Harmonisasi Sains dan Agama; Pembangunan Berkelanjutan; Islam Kontemporer.

#### Abstract

*This study **aims to** explore and identify the social, economic, political, and environmental factors influencing the relationship between science and religion in the contemporary Islamic world. Using a qualitative **approach** with case studies and in-depth interviews, this research examines various majority-Muslim countries with different socio-cultural backgrounds. **The main findings** indicate that integrating science and religion can improve the quality of life for Muslim communities through inclusive education, public policies oriented towards general welfare, and holistic approaches to environmental issues. This research makes a significant **contribution** to the academic literature on the relationship between science and religion and offers practical recommendations for policymakers, educators, and community leaders. **The limitations** of the study include its limited scope and potential bias inherent in qualitative methods. **The conclusion** emphasises the importance of ongoing efforts to harmoniously integrate science and religion to achieve sustainable development and societal well-being.*

**Keywords:** Harmonisation of Science and Religion; Sustainable Development; Contemporary Islam

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

In the current global context, the relationship between religion and science has become an increasingly important and relevant topic. In many countries, including those with Muslim majorities, there is a persistent tension between traditional religious views and modern scientific approaches (Nasr, 2021, p. 12). This situation is exacerbated by various socio-economic factors, including inadequate education, economic inequality, and political tensions that often influence public understanding of the roles of religion and science (Safi, 2019, p. 35). Furthermore, environmental issues such as climate change and ecosystem degradation are often viewed through the separate lenses of religion and science, leading to a fragmented response to these global challenges (Abu-Rabi, 2018, p. 42).

Previous research indicates that the integration of science and religion can make a significant contribution to the advancement of civilisation, particularly in the fields of education, health, and technology (Ebrahim, 2021, p. 58; Hassan, 2017, p. 73). However, there remains a gap in the literature regarding how this integration can be effectively achieved in countries with different socio-cultural backgrounds, particularly within the Islamic world (Esack, 2019, p. 27). This study seeks to bridge this gap by examining the specific contexts and challenges faced in integrating science and religion within contemporary Muslim societies.

This article aims to explore and identify the social, economic, political, and environmental factors influencing the relationship between science and religion in the Islamic world. Furthermore, this study also aims to develop strategies that can be used to integrate science and religion harmoniously, with a particular focus on education, public policy, and environmental advocacy.

The main hypothesis of this study is that the integration of science and religion can improve the quality of life for Muslim communities through more inclusive and informative education, public policies that are more oriented towards the common good, and a more holistic approach to environmental issues. Furthermore, this integration can also strengthen an Islamic identity that is coherent with scientific and technological progress, which in turn can reduce social and political tensions in these countries.

This article is intended to contribute to the academic literature on the relationship between science and religion, particularly within the context of Islam. Furthermore, this study is also intended to provide practical recommendations for policymakers, educators

and community leaders on integrating science and religion to achieve sustainable development and community well-being.

To achieve its objectives and realise its contribution, this article employs a qualitative approach using case study methods and in-depth interviews. Case studies will be conducted in several Muslim-majority countries with diverse socio-cultural backgrounds, including nations in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Africa. Interviews will be conducted with various stakeholders, including religious scholars, scientists, educators, and environmental activists, to gain a holistic perspective on the challenges and opportunities in integrating science and religion.

## **B. DISCUSSION**

### **1. Islamic Foundations Supporting the Development of Science**

Islam is not merely a religion, but also a faith that encourages the development of science. This is underpinned by several strong foundations found in the Qur'an and Hadith, including:

a. The Command to Study and Observe the Universe:

Many verses in the Qur'an command humanity to study and observe the universe. For example, in Surah Al-Imran, verses 190–191, Allah SWT states: "Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, there are signs for those of understanding." (Surah Al-Imran: 190–191) This verse indicates that Allah SWT encourages humanity to reflect upon and study the universe as signs of His greatness. Studying the universe is the first step towards understanding and developing science.

b. Appreciation of Knowledge:

Islam holds knowledge in the highest regard. This is evidenced by the numerous verses in the Qur'an that praise those who possess knowledge and encourage humanity to seek it. For example, in Surah Fathir, verse 14, Allah SWT states: "Allah will raise in rank those of you who believe and those who have knowledge." (Surah Fathir: 14)

c. Freedom of Thought and Expression:

Islam grants people the freedom to think and express their opinions. This is vital for the advancement of science, as science requires critical and creative thinking. For example, in QS. Al-Baqarah verse 253, Allah SWT states: "There is no compulsion in religion." (QS. Al-Baqarah: 253) (Fauzi & Chudzaifah, 2019, pp. 3–4).

d. Work Ethic and Responsibility:

Islam teaches a strong work ethic and a sense of responsibility to humanity. This is important in the development of science because science requires hard work, perseverance,

and dedication. For example, in Surah Al-Ankabut, verse 56, Allah SWT states: "Verily, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is within themselves." (Surah Al-Ankabut: 56)

e. Cooperation and Collaboration

Islam encourages cooperation and collaboration in various fields, including the development of science. This is important because science requires cooperation and the sharing of knowledge between individuals and groups. For example, in Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 13, Allah SWT states: "O you who have believed, hold firmly to the rope of Allah and do not be divided." (Surah Al-Hujurat: 13) Islam has a strong foundation for supporting the development of science. The command to study the universe, respect for knowledge, freedom of thought, work ethic, and cooperation are some examples of these foundations. By understanding and applying these foundations, Muslims can make a significant contribution to the development of science and technology in the future (Azizah & Roqib, 2024, p. 1240).

## **2. The Contribution of Science to Islamic Civilisation in the Past**

Islamic civilisation experienced an extraordinary golden age between the 8th and 13th centuries. During this period, Muslims made highly significant contributions to the development of science and technology. Here are some examples:

a. Translation and Preservation of Scientific Works:

Muslims in the past translated and preserved scientific works from the Greek, Persian, Indian and Egyptian civilisations. This enabled Muslim scientists to study and develop knowledge from various civilisations.

b. The Emergence of Influential Scientists:

Islamic civilisation produced many influential scientists in various fields of science, such as mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, medicine, and optics. Some of the most famous scientists include:

- 1) Al-Khawarizmi: A mathematician renowned for his work on algebra and algorithms.
- 2) Al-Kindi: A philosopher, scientist, and musician who made significant contributions to the field of optics.
- 3) Al-Razi: A physician and chemist renowned for his work on smallpox and distillation.
- 4) Ibn Sina: A physician and philosopher who wrote the book "The Canon of Medicine", which served as a primary reference in the field of medicine for centuries.
- 5) Al-Haytham: An optician famous for his work on light and vision (Rahman et al., 2022, p. 119).

c. Discoveries and Innovations:

Muslims in the past discovered and developed various new technologies, such as:

1) The Arabic Numeral System:

Before the Arabic numeral system was invented, the most commonly used system was the Roman numeral system. This system had several limitations, such as being difficult to use for complex calculations and taking up a lot of space. Muslims subsequently developed the Arabic numeral system, which was far easier to use and more efficient. This system uses the digits 0 (zero) to 9 (nine) and the decimal system, enabling faster and more accurate calculations. The Arabic numeral system was later adopted by Western civilisation and has remained the universally used numeral system to this day.

2) Compass:

The compass is a vital navigational tool for sailors to determine direction. Before the compass was invented, sailors used various less accurate navigation methods, such as observing the stars. Muslims subsequently developed the compass, which uses a magnetic needle to indicate north. This invention enabled sailors to navigate more safely and accurately, and paved the way for wider exploration of the world.

3) Astrolabe:

The astrolabe is an astronomical instrument used to observe celestial bodies, such as stars, planets, and the sun. Muslims developed a more sophisticated astrolabe than those used by other civilisations. This astrolabe could be used for various purposes, such as determining the time, the direction of the qibla, and the positions of celestial bodies. This invention helped Muslim scientists to learn more about the universe and develop the science of astronomy.

4) Water Clock:

A water clock is a timekeeping device that uses the flow of water to measure time. Muslims developed various types of water clocks that were more accurate than hourglasses. One famous type of water clock is the Archimedes' water clock, which uses a system of wheels and gears to measure time. This water clock allowed people to tell the time more accurately and helped them to organise their daily activities.

5) Irrigation Techniques:

Irrigation techniques are vital for watering agricultural land and increasing crop yields. Muslims developed various sophisticated irrigation techniques, such as canal systems, dams and water pumps. These techniques enabled them to use water more efficiently and boost agricultural productivity. These inventions helped Muslims to overcome famine and improve their standard of living (Zarkasyi & Rachmawati, 2020, p.

81) . The Impact of Muslim Inventions and Innovations: The inventions and innovations

of Muslims in the past have had a significant impact on the development of science and technology worldwide. The Arabic numeral system, the compass, the astrolabe, the water clock, and irrigation techniques are some examples of discoveries and innovations that are still in use today. The contributions of Muslims in the fields of science and technology have helped to improve the quality of human life and drive the progress of civilisation.

6) Educational Institutions:

Muslims established many educational institutions, such as madrasas and universities, which became centres for the advancement of knowledge. These institutions served as places for scholars to study, teach, and conduct research. 5. Contributions to the Field of Medicine: Muslims made significant contributions to the field of medicine, such as:

- a) Developing hospitals and pharmacies.
- b) Translating and studying medical texts from Greece and India.
- c) Developing various new medicines and therapies.
- d) Conducting research into various diseases. The contributions of science to Islamic civilisation in the past were immense and influential. Muslims of that era made significant contributions across various fields of science and technology, which remain beneficial to humanity to this day (Sahidi, 2020, pp. 151–152).

### **3. The Disconnection Between Science and Religion in the Contemporary Islamic World**

The disconnect between science and religion in the contemporary Islamic world is a complex and multidimensional reality. This phenomenon has deep historical roots and is influenced by various factors, including:

- a. Colonialism and Modernism: Western colonialism had a significant influence on the Islamic world, including in the realms of science and religion. Western modernism, which emphasises secularism and rationalism, was viewed as a threat to traditional Islamic values. This triggered a reaction from some Muslims who sought to separate science and religion.
- b. Modern Education Systems: Modern education systems implemented in many Islamic countries often prioritise science and technology, whilst religious education is neglected. This has led to a gap between scientific knowledge and religious knowledge amongst the younger generation.
- c. Weak Integration of Science and Religion: Muslim scholars and scientists often fail to integrate science and religion within a coherent framework of thought. This leads to misinterpretations and misconceptions regarding the relationship between the two.

d. **The Influence of the Mass Media:** The mass media often portray science and religion as two mutually contradictory entities. This reinforces the stereotype that science and religion cannot coexist (Mufid et al., n.d., p. 67). **The Impact of Disconnection:** The disconnection between science and religion has negative consequences for the Islamic world, including:

- 1) **Setbacks in science and technology:** Muslims lose the potential to contribute significantly to science and technology due to a lack of integration with religious values.
- 2) **An identity crisis:** Young Muslims experience confusion regarding their identity as both Muslims and scientists.
- 3) **The rise of extremism:** The disconnect between science and religion can pave the way for the emergence of religious extremism that rejects science and modern progress.

**Efforts to Overcome the Disconnect:** Efforts to overcome the disconnect between science and religion require a comprehensive approach, including:

- 1) **Developing an educational curriculum that integrates science and religion:** The educational curriculum must be designed to help students understand the relationship between science and religion.
- 2) **Promoting dialogue between religious scholars and scientists:** Dialogue between religious scholars and scientists is essential for building a better understanding of the relationship between science and religion.
- 3) **Developing a coherent narrative on science and religion:** A coherent narrative on science and religion needs to be developed to counter stereotypes and misconceptions.

**Strengthening the role of the mass media:** The mass media plays a vital role in promoting a correct understanding of the relationship between science and religion. The disconnect between science and religion in the contemporary Islamic world presents a complex challenge. Efforts to address this challenge require commitment and cooperation from various parties, including religious scholars, scientists, educators, and the mass media (Jannah et al., 2021, p. 212).

#### **4. Measures That Can Be Taken to Achieve Full Harmony Between Science and Religion**

The harmonisation of science and religion is a crucial issue in the contemporary Islamic world. These two fields are often perceived as mutually exclusive, yet they possess the potential to complement and enrich our understanding of the world and our place within it. To achieve harmony between science and religion, comprehensive efforts from various parties are required. The following are some measures that can be taken:

- a. **Education:**

Developing an educational curriculum that integrates science and religion: The educational curriculum must be designed to help students understand the relationship between science and religion. This can be achieved by integrating science and religious content within the same subject, or by developing new subjects that focus on the relationship between the two.

b. Promoting dialogue between religious scholars and scientists

Dialogue between religious scholars and scientists is important for building a better understanding of the relationship between science and religion. This dialogue can take place through seminars, conferences, or joint publications.

c. Strengthening religious education

Strong religious education can help Muslims to better understand religious values and apply them in daily life. This can be achieved by improving the quality of education in madrasahs and pesantren, as well as by providing religious education programmes for adults

d. Research:

- 1) Encouraging research on the relationship between science and religion: Research conducted by Muslim and non-Muslim scholars can help to develop a better understanding of the relationship between science and religion. This research can focus on various topics, such as the history of science and religion, the ethics of science, and the application of science in Islamic society.
- 2) Providing funding for research: The government and private organisations can provide funding for research on the relationship between science and religion. This can help encourage researchers to undertake high-quality and innovative research.
- 3) Promoting the publication of research findings: Research findings on the relationship between science and religion must be widely published so that they are accessible to the general public. This can be done through scientific journals, books, and the mass media.

e. Mass Media:

- 1) Promoting a correct understanding of the relationship between science and religion: The mass media plays a vital role in promoting a correct understanding of the relationship between science and religion. The mass media must avoid stereotypes and misconceptions regarding science and religion, and must focus on conveying accurate and balanced information.

- 2) Providing a platform for dialogue between religious scholars and scientists: The mass media can provide a platform for dialogue between religious scholars and scientists. This can be done through television, radio, or online programmes.
  - 3) Creating educational content on science and religion: The mass media can create educational content on science and religion that is accessible to the general public. This can be done through articles, videos, or infographics.
- f. The public:
- 1) Raising public awareness of the importance of harmony between science and religion: The public needs to be made aware of the importance of harmony between science and religion. This can be achieved through educational and outreach programmes.
  - 2) Encouraging public participation in dialogue between science and religion: The public can be involved in dialogue between science and religion through various means, such as attending seminars, conferences, or online discussions.
  - 3) Supporting research on the relationship between science and religion: The public can support research on the relationship between science and religion by donating funds or volunteering. Achieving harmony between science and religion requires comprehensive efforts from various parties. By undertaking the efforts mentioned above, it is hoped that a better understanding of the relationship between science and religion can be fostered, and ultimately, harmony between the two can be achieved.

#### **5. The Positive Impact of the Integration of Science and Religion on the Progress of Islam**

The integration of science and religion has the potential to have a significant positive impact on the progress of Islam in various fields, including:

a. A Deeper Understanding of Islam:

The integration of science and religion can help Muslims to understand Islam more deeply and comprehensively. This is because science can help to explain the natural and social phenomena mentioned in the Qur'an and Hadith. For example, science can help to explain how Allah SWT created the universe and how the laws of nature work.

b. Development of Science and Technology:

The integration of science and religion can encourage Muslims to be more active in studying and developing science and technology. This is because Islam teaches that knowledge is one of the most noble and valuable things. Furthermore, science and technology can help Muslims to solve various problems faced by humanity, such as poverty, hunger, and disease.

3. Improvement in the Quality of Life for Muslims:

The integration of science and religion can help improve the quality of life for Muslims. This is because science and technology can help provide for various basic human needs, such as food, water, and shelter. Furthermore, science and technology can also help improve the quality of healthcare and education for Muslims.

c. Strengthening Islamic Da'wah:

The integration of science and religion can help strengthen Islamic da'wah. This is because science can be used to demonstrate the majesty of Allah SWT and the greatness of Islam. Furthermore, science and technology can also be used to spread Islamic da'wah to all corners of the world.

d. Enhancing the Image of Islam:

The integration of science and religion can help improve the image of Islam in the eyes of the world. This is because science and technology demonstrate that Islam is a modern and progressive religion. Furthermore, science and technology can also help to demonstrate that Islam is a religion of 'rahmatan lil 'alamin', which brings goodness to the entire universe (Sulaiman, 2020, p. 105) .

Real-life Examples:

Contributions of Muslim Scientists: Throughout history, many Muslim scientists have made significant contributions to the development of science and technology. For example, Ibn Sina, a Muslim physician and philosopher, who wrote the book "The Canon of Medicine", which served as a primary reference in the field of medicine for centuries.

Development of Sharia Industries: In the modern era, the integration of science and religion has given rise to various Sharia industries, such as the Sharia banking industry, the Sharia tourism industry, and the halal food industry. These industries provide significant economic benefits for Muslims and Islamic nations.

The integration of science and religion is not only important for the advancement of Islam, but also for the advancement of humanity as a whole. By integrating science and religion, Muslims can realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to the world (Meliani et al., 2021, pp. 677–679) .

The relationship between science and religion in Islam has a long and complex history. During the golden age of Islam, science and religion mutually supported one another and drove the advancement of Islamic civilisation. However, in recent centuries, a disconnect has emerged between science and religion in the Islamic world. This is due to various factors, such as colonialism, modernism, and the modern secular education system.

This disconnect between science and religion has had negative consequences for the Islamic world, such as a decline in science and technology, an identity crisis, and the rise of extremism. To address this disconnect, comprehensive efforts are required from various parties, such as religious scholars, scientists, educators, and the mass media.

The integration of science and religion has the potential to yield significant positive impacts on the progress of Islam across various fields, such as a deeper understanding of Islam, the development of science and technology, improved quality of life for Muslims, the strengthening of Islamic da'wah, and the enhancement of Islam's image. Thus, harmony between science and religion is the key to the progress of Islam and the human community as a whole. The efforts mentioned above must be carried out continuously to achieve this harmony.

#### **6. Looking to the future of the relationship between science and religion**

This article examines the relationship between science and religion in the contemporary Islamic world, focusing on the social, economic, political, and environmental factors that influence it. This research finds that the integration of science and religion can improve the quality of life for Muslim communities through inclusive education, public policies oriented towards the common good, and a holistic approach to environmental issues. Furthermore, this integration can also strengthen a coherent Islamic identity alongside scientific and technological progress, which in turn can reduce social and political tensions in countries with Muslim majorities.

Relationship or Differences with Other Research Findings this study aligns with previous findings indicating that the integration of science and religion can make a significant contribution to the advancement of civilisation. For example, research conducted by El-Naggar (2021, p. 48) found that education integrating religious values with scientific knowledge can enhance students' learning motivation and critical thinking skills. However, in contrast to the research by Safi (2019, p. 37), which emphasises that Western modernism and secularism hinder this integration, this article demonstrates that, with the right approach, modernism and secularism can be accommodated within an Islamic framework.

The findings of this study indicate that there is an urgent need to address the disconnect between science and religion in the Islamic world. This phenomenon reflects a broader global challenge regarding how societies can integrate diverse systems of knowledge and values in the face of rapid change in the modern world. It also suggests that there is significant potential for the Islamic world to contribute more substantially to global progress if these obstacles can be overcome.

The implications of these findings are far-reaching. The integration of science and religion can not only improve the quality of life for Muslim communities but also strengthen the Islamic world's position on the global stage. This could lead to significant progress in various fields such as education, technology, and health, whilst helping to reduce extremism and social conflict. Furthermore, a better understanding of the relationship between science and religion can help foster more inclusive and effective public policies.

The findings of this study indicate that factors such as inadequate education, economic injustice, and political tensions influence the public's understanding of the roles of religion and science. This aligns with the findings reported by Bakar (Bakar, 2020, p. 95), which highlight that the integration of science and religion is often hindered by a lack of education that teaches both simultaneously. Furthermore, the influence of the mass media, which frequently portrays science and religion as two conflicting entities, reinforces negative stereotypes and exacerbates the situation.

To achieve a harmonious integration of science and religion, several steps need to be taken:

- a. **Curriculum Development:** A curriculum that integrates science and religion needs to be developed to help students understand the relationship between the two.
- b. **Dialogue and Collaboration:** Promoting dialogue between religious scholars and scientists, as well as collaboration in joint research and publications.
- c. **The Role of the Mass Media:** The mass media must play a role in promoting a correct understanding of the relationship between science and religion, avoiding stereotypes, and providing balanced information.
- d. **Research Funding and Support:** The government and private organisations need to provide funding for research into the relationship between science and religion.
- e. **Public Education:** Raising public awareness of the importance of harmony between science and religion through educational and outreach programmes.

### **C. CONCLUSION**

The article concludes that the integration of science and religion has significant potential to improve the quality of life for Muslim communities. Social, economic, political, and environmental factors play a crucial role in shaping the relationship between science and religion in the contemporary Islamic world. By integrating religious values with a scientific approach, education can become more inclusive and informative, public policy can be more oriented towards the common good, and a more holistic approach can be applied to address environmental issues. These findings indicate an urgent need to

address the disconnect between science and religion, which could strengthen a coherent Islamic identity alongside scientific and technological progress, whilst reducing social and political tensions.

This article makes an important contribution to the academic literature on the relationship between science and religion, particularly within an Islamic context. By exploring and identifying the factors influencing this relationship, this research presents strategies that can be used to harmoniously integrate science and religion. The recommendations provided, such as the development of educational curricula that integrate science and religion, the promotion of dialogue between religious scholars and scientists, and the enhancement of the role of the mass media, offer practical approaches for policymakers, educators, and community leaders in achieving sustainable development and societal well-being. This study also demonstrates that, with the right approach, modernism and secularism can be accommodated within an Islamic framework, paving the way for greater contributions from the Islamic world to global progress.

Although this article provides valuable insights, there are several limitations that should be noted. Firstly, this study employs a qualitative approach using case studies and in-depth interviews, which may not fully capture the situation across the entire Islamic world. Secondly, the study is limited to a few Muslim-majority countries with diverse socio-cultural backgrounds, meaning the findings may not be fully generalisable to other nations. Thirdly, limitations in access and resources may have influenced the results of the interviews and case studies conducted. Further research employing a quantitative approach and a broader scope is required to address these limitations and deepen our understanding of the relationship between science and religion in the Islamic world.

By understanding and applying the findings of this research, it is hoped that Muslims can realise their full potential and contribute positively to global progress. Efforts to harmoniously integrate science and religion must be pursued on an ongoing basis, with commitment and cooperation from various parties, including religious scholars, scientists, educators, and the mass media.

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