

# Effective Implementation Of The Integrated Islamic Education

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## Abstract

This study is a qualitative research on the implementation of Integrated Islamic Education. The Pioneer Schools (Sekolah Rintis) and the Integrated Islamic Education systems are solid evidence that not only Malaysia, but also Brunei has decided to settle on in promoting comprehensive education path for their future generations. However, some problems surface later, which are thought to impede a fully successful implementation of the Integrated Islamic Education in the country. This work aims to examine the extent of the implementation of the Integrated Islamic Education system and to evaluate whether there is evidence which requires revision of the current system. This research has identified, however, the need to look into the implementation of two main solutions to successfully accomplish the vision of assimilating the Integrated Islamic Education system in the country in the light of (i) the implementation of the Thoughtful Schooling system or the concept of Integrated Islamic Education system and (ii) the Educator's capability to prepare and practice a good lesson plan, according to the 'Eight Steps of the Teaching Learning Process' in the classroom by focusing on the four factors on the Heart-mind concept of the Integrated Islamic Education system.

**Keywords:** Integrated; Thoughtful; Capability; Factors, the Heart-mind concept

## Introduction

Education is important and it helps to guide one's life. Since education is dynamic in nature, it has the capacity to propel human beings into becoming a better person as well as being the

caliph of God. Based on several discussions and resolutions of the many conferences held, Muslim scholars have strongly proposed adopting an Integrated Education system. To ensure the success in its implementation, it will have to be carried out after thorough and proper analysis as well as planning. As a nation, Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam have begun to embark on this approach to tackle the current scholastic issues.

Dualism in education could lead to failure in producing well-balanced individuals. To produce a 'balanced' human being, an integrated concept must be practiced. It is a type of education that guides and trains the mind, body and soul of a person based on Islamic values and the revelations (Al-Quran and Al-Sunnah) to produce a pious human being who are devoted to God. Hence, Islamic education emphasises the following concepts: (i) A lifetime education; (ii) The development of the total potential of the soul, mind and body integrated and adequately in the three aspects - cognitive, effective and psychomotor; (iii) The capability to carry out duties as a servant of God and as a caliph of God (representative or vicegerent of God on earth) and knowledge and virtuous deeds to achieve happiness in life in this world and the hereafter (Al-Shaybaniy, Omar 1991).

## The Model of an Integrated Education

There are various models and interpretations in explaining the word 'integrated' as in Integrated Education. One possible meaning of 'integrated' is the co-joining between Science and non-Science subjects, irrespective of the languages used or whether they are related to co-curricular or non-curricular activities. While these approaches have their own strengths,

they do not fit perfectly into the true model and meaning of Integrated Education.

An Integrated Education emphasizes on the unison of knowledge, not merely the installation of one's knowledge but somehow follows after or emulates the approach and method of implementation and techniques used in the teaching and learning in a class room. An Integrated Education focuses mainly on implementing Islam as a whole with some philosophies of promoting a strong belief and knowledge, the balance of the physical element and the soul, the world and the hereafter, the thoughts, the heart, the mind and the search and application of Revealed knowledge. Through the Integrated Education, a person can be educated and trained to understand and uphold the Islamic faith, the laws and the morals in one's life (Al-Shaybaniy, Omar, 1991)

An Integrated Education unifies the different knowledge in life, with congruity between the development of "ummah" and its teaching, the relation between human and God, the relation between the different components in oneself, towards creating equilibrium in mind, spirit and body. In general, an Integrated Education's main aim is to obtain richness of the heart and brilliance of the mind. The system governs the entire education process and knowledge development and incorporates the spiritual, physical and mental aspects in its implementation. A student is made to understand that knowledge is pure (*quds*) and his / her involvement serves as a religious service for mankind.

After examining the view and the defined approach of Integrated Education, it can then be concluded that the full model is "Education based on revelations (Al-Quran and Al-Sunnah) that is the integration of revealed and acquired knowledges and can only be achieved by implementing the effective strategy, approach, method and technique in teaching and learning process towards building a prosperous community (*baldatun tayyibah*

*wa rabbun ghafur*)". This model has been put into practice in Brunei Darussalam in the application and implementation of Integrated Education, taking into account the teaching-learning materials, the teacher's education and the environment. All of these aspects encompass the theology and general knowledge (revealed and acquired knowledge), *fardu kifayah* and *fardu ain*. In other words, Integrated Education does not separate the worldly knowledge and the knowledge about the Hereafter. The product of the Integrated Education is human beings that are intellectually, emotionally, spiritually and physically balanced.

Islamic Education is an Integrated Education based on and led by Al-Quran and Al-Sunnah. The integration of Islamic Education requires four realms to be embraced into Integrated Education namely knowledge-based, Physiological, Civic and Spiritual Education. He further emphasized that the Integrated Education disregards dualism in knowledge and education, while Islamic Education principle promotes the importance of acquiring useful knowledge. Knowledge thought to be vague should be analysed carefully in adherence to Islamic perspective and amended, if need be (Mahmud Saedon, 1998).

### The Objective of an Integrated Education

In Malaysia and Brunei, the objective of Integrated Education is rather holistic and covers a wider scope than those in some other countries. The interrelations of the objectives of Integrated Education are illustrated in Figure 1.

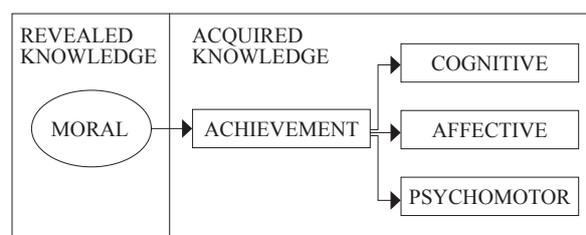


Figure 1: The relationship between the components in the objective of an Integrated Education

Based on the above figure, the objectives of Integrated Education may be viewed as a distinct equilibrium between moral and spiritual development and personal achievement in life as reflected in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects. Students with high academic achievements would normally possess honourable morals and project balanced personality, while they are less likely to be involved in forbidden activities.

### **The Principles of Integrated Education**

The main principle in the concept of integrated education arises from the notion of man being an earthly caliph of God. Humans are 'special' creations and the knowledge acquired through the Integrated Education will place them on a higher plane compared to other creatures. While Islam considers the acquisition and propounding of education as an honourable religious service, Muslims believe that an Integrated Education lends a lot from the Qur'an as the most important and reliable source of knowledge. The importance of knowledge and education in Islam is evident since the early history of this faith. The first chapter revealed to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is dedicated to combating illiteracy, and encourages the people to seek knowledge in all fields. This is clear in the Al-Quran 96: 1-4:

*"Proclaim! (Or read!) In the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, who creates? Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood. Proclaim! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful. He who teaches (the use of) the Pen."*

The Quran makes several clear references to the importance of knowledge. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) emphasises the value of seeking knowledge and Muslims are encouraged to continuously seek knowledge. An educated person is regarded as more honorable than a religious one, as stated in Al-Quran.

*"God will hoist, to suitable ranks and degrees, those of you who believe and who have been*

*granted knowledge"*.

Education of the Quran must be given priority since it can help strengthen the Muslims' belief. God gives wisdom (*hikmah*) as stated in the Quran 3:269:

*"And he to whom wisdom is granted received indeed a benefit overflowing"*.

Islam does not differentiate between religious and general education. Both are mutually complementary and are studied simultaneously in a system of education that aims to inculcate prosperity both in this world and the Hereafter. Hence, in a coordinated education system, a person must submit oneself to the *qudrah* and *iradah* from Allah (s.w.t) and make an effort so that his actions are appropriate with the Islamic teaching. One should also study other knowledge that coincides well with one's personal ability, talent and interest.

### **The Implementation of a Well-Coordinated Education System in Brunei**

The concept of coordinated education has been discussed since the early 70's. The phenomenon will inadvertently alter the education system currently implemented. The attempt to implement a coordinated education system is rather smooth in Negara Brunei Darussalam because its leader is extremely supportive and has made strides in this area while adhering to the philosophy of '*Melayu Islam Beraja*' (in Malay, 'Malay Islamic Monarch').

In Negara Brunei Darussalam where majority of the population are Muslims, the worldly knowledge should be well coordinated with the religious knowledge and not to be differentiated between both. It is justifiable for this country, having made Islam as its official religion, to adopt Islam in its education system just like other countries which strive to produce citizens suited to the national aspirations. A good example of such case will be the doctrines existing

in the communist and the Western countries. Therefore, it is timely for Brunei to find an alternative to the current education system in facing today's global challenges. The main challenge today is the vague objectives to be achieved when it comes to human development within the education system.

### **The Steps towards the Implementation of the Integrated Education**

The steps towards the implementation of the deemed proposal from the Commissioner of Education 1972 exhort that it is important for this country to implement the assimilation of Islam in knowledge, that is other subjects should be used as the tool in assimilating the Islamic value. This means that all subjects introduced or being taught should bear the characteristics and the principles of Islam. Long after the approval of the proposal by the Commissioner of Education did the Department of Education introduced the concept in 1985.

Several amendments from the 1972 curriculum were made in the "Objectives of Education in Brunei as devised by the Department of Curriculum Development - Ministry of Education, Brunei Darussalam 1985". The highlights of the amendments are "to emphasize Islamic Education to ensure that Islamic values being assimilated into the Education system through the School Curriculum". A report has been written recently concerning "the progress and achievements of the Education System and the steps to be taken towards its successful implementation - to produce children and youth who have good moral". This report has somehow become the main reference in designing the Brunei Education system. An extract of the report has clearly indicated the following;

*"The philosophy of the Malay Islamic Monarchy is a continuous effort to develop potentials in Individuals, as a whole so that the Nation may produce citizens who are knowledgeable and wise, religious and pious, dynamic, disciplined and responsible, well-suited to the religious*

*needs and its values. The sustaining aim is to achieve an Education System that emphasizes on the Belief and Loyalty to Allah and his Prophets, obedient to the King and the country while contributing well to the society."*

This is an effort geared towards forming better citizens, strengthening of the Independence and Sovereignty through the strategy of making Malay Islamic Monarchy as the country's philosophy where Islam is made as its main principle. The follow-on steps to substantiate the aspiration above was made by the initiation of The Department of Curriculum Development, having been approved by The Ministry of Education, to organize Conventions and Seminars to generate ideas and brainstorm among the Educators in the region on the best approach towards the implementation of the Integrated Education (Department of Curriculum Development, Ministry of Education, Brunei Darussalam, 1985).

The outcome of the convention is the recommendation to take the following steps: (1) To have close discussion between the Ministry of Education with the Ministry of Religious Affairs and other related organizations to discuss mainly the Integrated Education; (2) To form committees to plan, co-ordinate and implement the Integrated Education properly; (3) To take the steps to give the correct understanding concerning Integrated Education to the entire Brunei citizens through national seminars, briefing and courses, and media coverage.

Some of the duties and responsibilities of the committee are: (1) To arrange and prepare conceptual paper related to the implementation of the Integrated Education; (2) To plan and co-ordinate any school activities which support the purported curriculum; (3) To plan and arrange activities and practices forming part of the education curriculum; (4) To prepare and do checking and monitoring of the assessments system; (5) To plan and co-ordinate other related systems especially those pertaining to the

administration and management of schools involved.

This effort has been highlighted during His Majesty's address on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Teacher's Day:

*“Education is the trust, while religion is encompassing. If our adherence to the religion is weak, so would our country be. It is our obligation to build our Country through the proper Religious and worldly knowledge. Both of them should be integrated and shall not be separated.”* (Speech of His Majesty's, *Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan and Yang Dipertuan Negara Brunei Darussalam*)

Another of His Majesty's address:

*“This holy effort requires planning and conscious efforts. This is the reason behind the establishment of the National Education Council of Brunei Darussalam that is to come up with the National Educational Philosophy in alignment with the aspiration to create better human beings who are knowledgeable, religious and pious.”* (Speech of His Majesty's, *Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan and Yang Dipertuan Negara Brunei Darussalam*.)

To establish an Integrated Education, several aspects should be taken into account:

#### *The Teachers' Education*

Teachers and educationists should be ready to change their thinking and attitude to accept and understand Integrated Education as a holistic system. Teachers should be trained to be confident in their way of thinking and attitude while showing good mannerism in accordance to the pure Islamic values as a notable example to the students. Such criteria imply that the selection of future teachers does not rely purely on academic achievements, but also on self-reliance and good personality.

To support this initiative, the teaching institution

should produce future teachers that are capable of promoting growth and development in the children's mental abilities besides good personality. The Teachers' Education Curriculum should be thoroughly analysed, and courses such as Philosophy of Islamic Education, History of Islamic Education and others should be included. A teacher should use Islamic methods, aspirations and spirit in their teachings for the students to understand and be more inclined to mould themselves the Islamic way.

The Integrated Education system will not be effective until there are enough teachers trained to teach subjects as outlined in Islam while incorporating “Malay Islamic Monarchy” (*MIB*) without changing the essence of the subjects. If teachers are not trained well, they would not be able to teach effectively in an integrated schooling system. Since teachers are catalysts in the Integrated Education system, they should first and foremost understand the concepts and objectives and being able to fit in well into the realm of the Integrated Education system. Therefore, the Education Curriculum for the teachers should prepare them for the required skills. Teachers should not only be exposed to the theories and background, but also being trained on how to be more innovative in the preparation of the Teaching materials.

As for the Integrated Education curriculum, the Revealed knowledge (*Ilm Naqliy*) and Acquired knowledge (*Ilm Aqliy*) should be integrated well. Teachers themselves should receive or undergo their Teacher's Education training through a set of Integrated Education Curriculum to facilitate their understanding in applying the principles of the Integrated Education at the schools where they are going to be assigned.

#### *The Development and Distribution of Textbooks*

The Department of Curriculum Development plays a vital role in the preparation and distribution of the textbooks required as reading materials for the Integrated Education

curriculum. Currently, the Department of Curriculum Development has taken proactive steps by getting feedback and working with the scholars who could share their knowledge and skills especially in religious matters. Some of the books that are readily available are Geography and History textbooks for Form II and III. The responsible Department is making an effort to produce the Science textbook for Form I to IV.

### *The Teachers Role*

The job of teaching and educating students is the priority of a teacher. A teacher's duty is instrumental yet dignified and honoured. It is seen as continuing the obligation promoted by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). In the light of Integrated Education, his duty is to contribute in the teaching area in achieving the aims and the Integrated Education objectives. To ensure that the Integrated Education is carried out, the teachers' role is to translate the curriculum into teaching in the classroom.

Due to their vital role, a teacher should equip himself with knowledge, skills, good personality, behaviour and attitude to promote themselves as a good teacher as well as a Muslim with good qualities and characteristics. The teacher's role is made more complex with the development and progress in the field of Information Technology (IT). Nowadays, it is the teacher's role to help strengthen the society's spiritual needs especially among the students and young generations. This scenario reflects the importance of the Integrated Education as a means in developing a better generation, in particular and mankind, in general.

### *The Co-curriculum Activities*

The co-curriculum activities have its own value in helping expand the student's physical and mental potential. It is a set of activities routinely performed at schools to promote development in knowledge, skills, experience, attitude and personality of the students. To fulfill the aspirations of the Integrated Education system,

we need to understand several primary principles underlying this education system, which are:

- (i) Knowledge is of utmost importance for men to cope with life's challenges and to acquire more knowledge for life-long learning and continuous life improvements;
- (ii) Acquiring knowledge will increase one's thinking ability. As a result to this, the students should be able to express opinions and views objectively and to think critically. At schools, students must be trained in various aspects of thinking so that students know how to resolve problems effectively;
- (iii) In relation to good values, an Integrated Curriculum should necessarily contain some elements of spiritualism, humanitarianism and patriotism. As such the scope of instilling these genuine values is imbedded almost entirely into the Integrated Education curriculum to ensure the developments of students with high morals;
- (iv) Promoting the development of the Malay language as the main language for acquiring knowledge and to promote solidarity is viewed as an essential step because it is said that a person's ability to acquire knowledge is related to a person's ability in using a language and the language's capacity to support the knowledge;
- (v) To instill the culture and habit of being enthusiastic about reading and seeking knowledge;
- (vi) All subjects must co-exist and integrate well for a rich and exciting learning environment.

All the above principles are being emphasized in choosing the content and approach of learning. Teachers definitely play an important role in coming up with modern approach to Integrated Education.

### **The Challenges And Hopes**

#### *Educator's Attitude in the Implementation of Integrated Education system*

The final purpose of the Integrated Education is to produce a religious individual to God and His Prophets suited to our role as Caliphs of Allah on

this earth. The teachings of Islam have become the essence and an indispensable element of knowledge. In the attempt to introduce Islamic teaching into non-Islamic subjects, they bound to be people who rejected the ideas. In real fact, Islam as a form of knowledge may be taught as the normal “Religious Education” as well as through other subjects.

Teachers involved should make themselves ready to take up the challenge. It is perceivable that they should have clear understanding of Islam and laudable personality to achieve the objectives of Integrated Education. Teachers should fully understand that the new approach to Education is truly in accordance to the Islamic teachings and is simply appropriate to pass it on to others.

#### *The Need for Skillful Workforce*

To face the challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, someone who possesses open-mindedness and practices tolerance among religions is simply what the country needed. These two characteristics will very much help in the successful implementation of an Integrated Education. For students to learn and delve into the Islamic knowledge there is a need to learn from teachers who can inspire students towards the right path. The Islamic knowledge taught to students prepares one to be a good person with the drive to contribute back to the society. Any conflicts arising pertaining to administration need to be resolved in accordance with the Islamic culture as part of the support system in the Islamic teaching.

The authorities in charge should responsibly examine and check on the authenticity of the experts graduating from the Teacher’s Training of the University of Brunei Darussalam and to screen out teachers who hold different religious philosophies like “free thinker” to avoid adulteration in the thinking of the students. The Prophet Rasulullah (pbuh) had always reminded the Muslims about the prohibition from imitating the foreign culture that might adulterate the true Islamic teachings. A better

alternative however is to train enough local teachers who would naturally understand and support the country’s aspiration.

The greatest challenge however, lies in creating conducive learning environment and the kind of reinforcement required to sustain the good values and spirit learnt from the lessons in schools and the advice by parents at home. Undeniably the task to create and sustain a good learning atmosphere is a lot harder now than before, requiring persistence and patience. The value upheld by the Islamic society and reinforcement of the Muslims’ solidarity and sovereignty will allow Muslims to maintain their autonomy. The Brunei Government, on one hand, has paid great attention to their Muslim citizens.

The main factors that promote the success of the Integrated Education program launched in Brunei are: (i) The support of His Royal Highness who stresses Islam as the guiding principle in the daily activity; (ii) The conceptualization of Islamic knowledge in the country’s programme. (iii) The highlight of Integrated Education as the new concept to be applied in the Nation’s Education system, as contained in the decree by His Royal Highness in conjunction with the reception of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Teacher’s Day celebration, for year 2000 and 2001).

The Commission of Education 1972 requires that all the subjects to be consistent with the spirit of Islam, which also means that the subject contents to be in agreement with the principles and teachings of Islam. Based on the Commission recommendations, the Ministry of Education has, in 1985 introduced the concept of Islamisation of knowledge as a preamble towards the implementation of the Integrated Education system.

#### **Conclusion**

Brunei has planned to adopt an education system namely the Integrated Education system after taking into consideration many aspects. The Integrated Education system is considered as the

best Education system since the implementation is referred back to Islam where the Qur'an and Hadith are used as the main reference. This education system promotes the idea that any education should contain both Islamic and worldly knowledge. The values should exist in the form of well-planned curriculum, keeping in view the Teachers and the students' education orientation, the teaching materials, the conception of conducive learning environment, and so on.

In the implementation of the Integrated Education, effort has and is still being made to give a good understanding of the Islamic philosophy regardless of ethnic, race, culture and religion. After a few years of groundwork, Brunei can contentedly declare that it is prepared for the real implementation of the integrated curriculum from the early days of pure ideas conception dated back to the year 2000. Besides the preparation of appropriate textbooks as part of the Teaching material, a continuous effort is also being made by holding courses, seminars or workshop to give the proper and correct understanding to the fellow Teachers. The implementation of the Integrated Education is always being supported well by His Royal Highness's decrees i.e. in conjunction with Teachers Day and also at convocation ceremonies held at University of Brunei Darussalam.

The primary objective of adopting the Integrated Education system in Brunei is so that a generation of balanced Individuals may be shaped; where the Muslims becomes better Muslims and citizens along the Non-Muslims and both can live harmoniously and develop the nation together.

One of the immense challenges faced by Brunei as a nation in the successful implementation of the Integrated Education is the lack of skillful teachers. There is also the challenge of getting the willingness of the Science teachers to teach the subjects in such a way that the Islamic principles and values will be blended together with pure

Science. Besides educating the teachers, another great task is to educate other support groups to eventually understand and offer a hand to work along with the teachers to carry out their duties. An important element to take note is that in Integrated Education, the teaching and learning activities has always comprise the integrated knowledge of the mind and the heart. The final result is to eventually produce individuals who are not only academically excellent but also those who are honorable and responsible and to be able to contribute well to the society.

As a conclusion, the decision made by Brunei Darussalam in realizing the concept of an Integrated Education is deemed wise, despite some great challenges that cannot be under estimated. It is duly hoped that the Integrated Education system can be implemented successfully in the near future. In order to realistically implement the Integrated Islamic Education, teachers should focus on the four factors on the Heart-mind concept of Thoughtful School as mentioned below:

- (i) Creativity – using unlimited methods or approach to do something for the objectives to be achieved;
- (ii) Reflectivity – responsiveness in thinking and coming out with practical solution;
- (iii) Reciprocity – system which possesses symbiotic inter-relationship, that is, in contributing and receiving;
- (iv) Responsibility – to take responsibility in doing the task at hand.

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