



Scientific Learning and Inquiry-Based Learning Management in Learning Transformation at School

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to analyze the implementation of Scientific-Based Learning (SBL) and Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) in transforming instructional practices in Islamic education through an educational management perspective, including planning, implementation, evaluation, and teacher professional development. Employing an explanatory mixed-method design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with teachers and school leaders, classroom observations, document analysis, and questionnaires administered to the majority of teachers at Sekolah Tunas Unggul. The findings indicate that the integration of SBL and IBL has shifted instructional practices from a rational-practical orientation toward a scientific, student-centered approach emphasizing inquiry, reflection, and knowledge construction. From a management perspective, instructional transformation is reflected in systematic curriculum planning, clearer and measurable learning objectives, improved instructional organization, and the integration of Islamic values within contextual inquiry and project-based learning. Initial outcomes include increased student engagement, enhanced project quality, and improved critical thinking skills. However, the implementation remains constrained by limited teacher methodological literacy, insufficient facilities, time management challenges, and inconsistent data-based assessment practices. The study implies that sustainable scientific-based instructional transformation in Islamic education requires strong institutional leadership, continuous professional development, adequate resource management, and aligned educational policies.

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INTRODUCTION

The development of Islamic education in the modern era highlights an urgent need for educational innovation that is not merely practical but also

grounded in a strong epistemological and scientific foundation (Saharani & Diana, 2024; Sanjani, 2023). This issue is socially significant because Islamic educational institutions play a strategic role in shaping moral, intellectual, and civic competencies in Muslim societies (Maulidy & Zaini, 2025; Pratiwi & Zaini, 2023). When educational management relies primarily on habitual practices and experiential reasoning, instructional quality and curriculum relevance risk stagnation. Evidence from recent educational reforms indicates that systems grounded in scientific reasoning, data-based planning, and reflective evaluation are more adaptive to societal change and global educational demands. In contrast, Islamic education often struggles to balance tradition with modern scientific standards. This condition raises public concern, as ineffective educational management may weaken graduate competitiveness and societal contribution (Hefniy Hefniy & Alwahedi, 2025). Therefore, examining how Islamic education can transition toward a scientific paradigm is crucial for broader society (Rusdiah, 2024). Such transformation supports accountable curriculum management, evidence-based decision making, and sustainable institutional development, ensuring that Islamic education remains relevant, credible, and responsive to contemporary challenges.

Despite its strategic importance, Islamic education continues to face systemic problems in educational management, particularly in curriculum development and instructional governance. Many institutions still operate within a rational-practical paradigm that prioritizes routine implementation over systematic planning, research-based evaluation, and continuous improvement. This problem is not merely technical but epistemological, reflecting how knowledge is understood, validated, and applied within educational organizations (Khotimah et al., 2024). Curriculum planning often emphasizes administrative compliance rather than scientific needs analysis, learning outcome measurement, or data-driven assessment. As noted by Munif (2021), reliance on habitual rationality without empirical validation limits innovation capacity. From a management perspective, this results in weak coordination, unclear performance indicators, and limited professional development for teachers (Hasanah et al., 2024). Consequently, Islamic education risks becoming disconnected from learners' needs and societal change. This general problem forms the background of the present study, which seeks to address how educational management in Islamic institutions can shift toward a scientific paradigm that integrates epistemological rigor with effective organizational practices.

Empirical phenomena observed in Islamic educational institutions reveal a persistent gap between ideal curriculum management and actual practice (Rahmatillah & Andayani, 2025). Ideally, curriculum management should integrate planning, implementation, and evaluation in a coherent scientific cycle

(Kusumawati et al., 2025). However, field observations indicate that many schools and madrasahs rely on repetitive instructional models, minimal reflective practice, and limited use of assessment data. Teachers often implement curricula based on inherited routines rather than research-informed strategies, while school leaders focus more on administrative stability than instructional innovation. Irawan (2022) emphasizes that without a scientific culture grounded in data analysis and continuous evaluation, Islamic education remains stagnant. This phenomenon is also reflected in limited teacher literacy regarding scientific-based and inquiry-based learning models, as well as inadequate institutional support systems. From a management dimension, weaknesses are evident in human resource development, instructional supervision, and quality assurance mechanisms. These field realities underscore the urgency of studying how scientific-oriented learning approaches can transform curriculum management practices in Islamic education.

Previous studies have explored educational innovation in Islamic education from philosophical, pedagogical, and managerial perspectives. Research by Alavi and Norhayati (2021) demonstrates that research-based educational innovation improves curriculum planning accuracy and learning relevance. Hassan (2023) further argues that integrating revelation, reason, and empirical methods strengthens Islamic education epistemologically. Meanwhile, Haidir and Fathurrahman (2022) highlight that scientifically managed curricula enhance teacher competence and institutional accountability. These studies contribute valuable insights into the importance of scientific approaches and professional management. However, most research tends to focus on either philosophical foundations or technical implementation separately. Few studies comprehensively examine how epistemological transformation toward scientific reasoning is operationalized through educational management dimensions such as planning systems, instructional organization, evaluation mechanisms, and professional development. As a result, the linkage between scientific philosophy and day-to-day curriculum management practices in Islamic education remains underexplored.

Despite growing attention to scientific approaches in education, existing research shows several limitations that form a clear research gap. First, many studies conceptualize scientific learning as a pedagogical technique rather than as an integrated management paradigm. Second, limited attention is given to how school leadership and institutional policies facilitate or constrain scientific-based curriculum transformation. Irawan (2025) warns that modern science often becomes secularized when detached from transcendental values, yet few studies address how Islamic values can be systematically embedded within scientific curriculum management. Additionally, Fauzi (2023) identifies structural barriers

such as weak research culture, insufficient training, and lack of data-based evaluation in Islamic schools, but does not provide an integrative epistemological framework. Therefore, there is a critical need for research that bridges philosophy of Islamic education, scientific learning models, and educational management practices. Addressing this gap is essential to ensure that innovation is both epistemologically sound and practically sustainable.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrative approach that combines Islamic educational philosophy with contemporary curriculum management practices grounded in scientific paradigms. Unlike previous research that separates philosophical discourse from managerial application, this study positions Scientific-Based Learning and Inquiry-Based Learning as instruments of epistemological transformation within educational management systems. It conceptualizes curriculum not as a static document but as a scientific process involving planning, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement aligned with Islamic values. Furthermore, this study emphasizes the role of leadership, organizational culture, and human resource development in sustaining scientific innovation. By situating scientific learning within management dimensions, the research advances the state of the art in Islamic education studies. This integrative model is important to resolve persistent stagnation and to enable Islamic educational institutions to respond effectively to digitalization, evidence-based governance, and global educational standards.

Based on the above discussion, the research problem of this study concerns how innovation in Islamic education management can facilitate the transformation of curriculum from rational-practical thinking toward a scientific paradigm. Specifically, this study examines educators' understanding of curriculum innovation, the mechanisms of scientific work in curriculum development, and the epistemological challenges encountered during this transition. The central argument of this research is that scientific-based curriculum transformation in Islamic education can only be effective when supported by coherent educational management encompassing systematic planning, instructional leadership, data-based evaluation, and continuous professional development. Using a qualitative descriptive approach that integrates literature analysis, Islamic educational philosophy, and limited field observation, this study contributes a comprehensive framework for managing scientific innovation in Islamic education. The findings are expected to inform policymakers, school leaders, and educators in designing more accountable, research-based, and value-oriented Islamic education systems.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach supported by descriptive quantitative data using an explanatory mixed-method design. This design was selected to obtain a comprehensive understanding of how Scientific-Based Learning (SBL) and Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) are implemented as part of instructional and curriculum management transformation. Qualitative data were prioritized to explore educators' experiences, instructional practices, and managerial processes related to planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating scientific-oriented learning. Quantitative data from questionnaires were used to broaden respondent coverage, identify implementation tendencies, and strengthen the validity of qualitative findings through triangulation. The explanatory sequence allowed quantitative results to confirm, reinforce, and extend qualitative interpretations, particularly in relation to institutional support, leadership roles, and teacher professional development in managing scientific-based instruction.

The study was conducted at Sekolah Tunas Unggul, an Islamic educational institution undergoing instructional innovation toward scientific-oriented learning, making it a relevant and information-rich research site. The school was selected due to its active adoption of SBL and IBL within curriculum planning and instructional management processes. Data were collected using four techniques. First, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 8–12 subject teachers from various disciplines and 2–3 school leaders, including the principal and curriculum vice principal, selected through purposive sampling based on their involvement in instructional management. Second, limited classroom observations were conducted to examine inquiry and scientific practices during instruction. Third, document analysis was applied to lesson plans, syllabi, learning modules, project assessment rubrics, and evaluation reports to assess alignment among objectives, learning activities, and assessment. Fourth, questionnaires using a 5-point Likert scale were distributed to all teachers or at least 70% of the teacher population to map understanding, implementation levels, institutional support, and constraints related to scientific-based learning management.

Qualitative data were analyzed using an interactive thematic analysis model encompassing data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data condensation involved selecting, coding, and categorizing information related to curriculum planning, instructional implementation, evaluation practices, and human resource development. Data displays were organized in thematic matrices to facilitate interpretation, while verification was conducted through pattern comparison and meaning interpretation. Quantitative data from questionnaires were analyzed descriptively by examining score distributions and response trends to support qualitative findings. Data

trustworthiness was ensured through source triangulation (teachers, school leaders, and documents), method triangulation (interviews, observations, document analysis, and questionnaires), and member checking with key informants. These procedures enhanced the credibility and academic rigor of the study's findings on scientific-based instructional management in Islamic education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research findings were derived from limited classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers and school leaders, curriculum and instructional document analysis, and questionnaires distributed to teachers and members of school leadership. The integration of these four data sources indicates that the transformation of instructional management at Sekolah Tunas Unggul from a rational–practical paradigm toward a scientific paradigm has begun to take place, although with varying levels of depth, consistency, and managerial support. This pattern aligns with the nature of scientific-based instructional transformation in Islamic education, which tends to be gradual, context-dependent, and highly influenced by institutional management capacity (Haidir & Fathurrahman, 2022; Hassan, 2023).

Thematically, the findings are organized into five major themes: (1) shifts in teachers' pedagogical understanding; (2) implementation of scientific and inquiry-based instructional methods; (3) curriculum and instructional document transformation; (4) implementation constraints; and (5) initial impacts on instructional practices and learning outcomes. A summary of these themes is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Thematic Summary of Field Findings

No	Main Theme	Key Empirical Evidence
1	Shifts in pedagogical understanding	Teachers increasingly view students as active subjects and "young researchers"; lesson plans include HOTS indicators; questionnaire results indicate high conceptual understanding of SBL and IBL
2	Implementation of scientific methods	Inquiry-based and project-based practices emerge in classroom instruction; depth and consistency of implementation vary across teachers
3	Curriculum transformation	Revisions of syllabi and lesson plans toward measurable objectives; integration of Islamic values with contextual inquiry and small-scale research
4	Implementation constraints	Limited teacher methodological literacy, insufficient facilities, time constraints, and administrative workload
5	Initial impacts	Increased student participation; improved quality of student projects; data-based assessment not yet implemented consistently

In-depth interview data further reinforce the patterns summarized in Table 1. Representative excerpts include:

– *Teacher A*: “Previously, instruction relied heavily on lectures; now we try to assign small research tasks so students can discover answers independently” (Interview, 02/2024).

– *School Principal*: “The curriculum has been revised to include scientific indicators; however, teachers still require structured mentoring to design research-based lesson plans” (Interview, 03/2024).

– *Teacher B*: “Assessment used to focus on tests; we are beginning to use project assessment rubrics, but implementation is not yet consistent” (Interview, 04/2024).

1. Shifts in Teachers’ Pedagogical Understanding

Interview data reveal a significant shift in teachers’ pedagogical understanding, particularly in how they conceptualize teaching and learning within the framework of instructional management. Teachers no longer perceive learning as a one-way transmission of content but increasingly as an active, inquiry-driven process that requires student engagement in thinking, investigating, and reflecting on knowledge. One teacher stated, “I now see students as young researchers, not merely recipients of information” (Interview G3). This shift reflects a change in the instructional planning dimension, where learning objectives are increasingly oriented toward inquiry, reasoning, and evidence-based thinking.

This transformation is also evident in lesson plan documents, which increasingly incorporate higher-order thinking skills indicators such as problem formulation, hypothesis development, and presentation of findings. From a management perspective, these changes indicate an emerging alignment between curriculum planning and instructional goals. These findings are consistent with previous studies showing that pedagogical transformation begins with changes in teachers’ beliefs about student roles and instructional purposes (Irawan, 2022; Mulyana, 2023).

Questionnaire data further confirm these qualitative findings at a broader level. The majority of respondents selected “agree” or “strongly agree” on items measuring conceptual understanding of Scientific-Based Learning and Inquiry-Based Learning. This suggests that, at the level of cognitive readiness and instructional planning, teachers have largely internalized the intended direction of pedagogical change promoted by the school. Similar patterns have been reported in recent studies on scientific-based instructional innovation in Islamic education (Fauzi, 2023; Hosen, 2024), indicating that conceptual acceptance often precedes consistent implementation and systematic evaluation within instructional management systems.

Implementation of Scientific-Based Instructional Methods

Classroom observations indicate that teachers have begun to adopt the core stages of scientific-based learning, including observation, question formulation, simple data collection, and reflection. Inquiry-Based Learning practices were evident through project-based assignments, problem-based discussions, and small-scale investigative activities, including in Islamic religious subjects. From an instructional management perspective, these practices reflect initial efforts to align classroom implementation with scientifically oriented instructional planning.

However, the depth and consistency of implementation varied significantly across teachers. Some teachers facilitated inquiry processes in a relatively complete manner, guiding students through problem identification, investigation, and presentation of findings. Others implemented inquiry in a more limited form, such as posing questions without sufficient scaffolding for data collection or analysis. This variation reflects differences in pedagogical readiness and instructional supervision, consistent with findings by Rahman et al. (2022) and Nizar (2024), who emphasize that the effectiveness of inquiry-based learning depends heavily on teachers' methodological competence and institutional support.

Questionnaire results further support observational findings, showing that implementation scores for scientific-based instruction were generally lower than scores for conceptual understanding. This indicates a gap between pedagogical knowledge and classroom practice, suggesting that instructional management mechanisms—such as mentoring, supervision, and professional development—have not yet fully bridged the transition from planning to effective implementation (Haidir & Fathurrahman, 2022).

Curriculum and Instructional Document Transformation

Document analysis of 15–25 lesson plans, syllabi, and learning modules reveals a systematic transformation at the instructional planning level. Curriculum documents from 2024 predominantly reflected cognitive-normative learning objectives, while revised documents from 2025 emphasized measurable and observable learning outcomes, such as students' ability to formulate problems, collect simple data, and present research findings. This shift indicates an emerging application of scientific principles in curriculum management, particularly in aligning objectives, learning activities, and expected outcomes.

Additionally, the development of learning modules integrating Islamic values with small-scale research activities and contextual projects was identified. This transformation reflects institutional efforts to harmonize spiritual objectives with scientific inquiry within a unified curriculum framework, as advocated in

contemporary Islamic education curriculum studies (Hassan, 2023; Purdiyanto, 2024). From a management perspective, this indicates a deliberate policy direction toward value-based scientific curriculum planning.

data show that most teachers reported designing lesson plans with measurable objectives. However, only a portion of respondents consistently applied authentic assessment rubrics, particularly for project-based learning. This finding suggests that curriculum transformation at the planning stage has not been fully followed by parallel transformation in instructional evaluation practices. Such misalignment between planning and assessment highlights a critical challenge in instructional management, as also reported by Alavi and Norhayati (2021), emphasizing the need for stronger data-based evaluation systems and assessment literacy among teachers.

Implementation Constraints

The study identifies implementation constraints that consistently emerge across three major instructional management dimensions. First, limitations in teachers' capacity for educational research methods, particularly methodological literacy and the design of authentic, data-based assessment. Many teachers reported difficulties in translating inquiry concepts into systematic investigation and evaluation procedures. Second, inadequate facilities and infrastructure constrain the effective implementation of project-based and inquiry-oriented learning, limiting opportunities for experimentation, data collection, and collaborative learning. Third, time constraints and administrative workload reduce teachers' capacity for instructional reflection, innovation, and professional inquiry.

Questionnaire results indicate that the majority of respondents expressed a strong need for advanced professional training in Inquiry-Based Learning, classroom action research, and data-driven instructional evaluation. From a management perspective, these findings point to weaknesses in human resource development planning and instructional support systems. These results are consistent with previous studies emphasizing that structural barriers and limited teacher capacity remain primary obstacles to scientific-based learning implementation in Islamic education (Fauzi, 2023; Purdiyanto, 2024).

Initial Impacts on Instructional Practices

Despite being at an early stage, the implementation of scientific-based instruction has generated positive initial impacts on classroom practices. Teachers reported increased student participation in discussions, collaborative inquiry, and project-based activities. Classroom observations and document analysis further indicate improvements in the quality of student assignments,

particularly in argumentation, analytical reasoning, and documentation of learning processes. These outcomes suggest that instructional implementation has begun to align with scientific-oriented learning objectives.

Questionnaire data reveal positive perceptions of the benefits of Scientific-Based Learning and Inquiry-Based Learning, especially in fostering critical thinking and active student engagement. However, evidence of quantitative improvement in learning outcomes remains limited. This limitation is largely attributed to inconsistencies in data-based assessment indicators and the absence of a systematic learning documentation system. From an instructional management standpoint, this finding highlights the gap between instructional implementation and evaluation systems, a challenge also identified in studies on evidence-based education (Alavi & Norhayati, 2021; Hassan, 2023).

Policy and Practice Recommendations

Based on the findings regarding the transformation of Scientific-Based Learning and Inquiry-Based Learning at Sekolah Tunas Unggul, several policy and practice recommendations are proposed to strengthen the sustainability of scientific-based instructional management in Islamic education.

Strengthening Research-Based Teacher Professional Development Policies

Educational institutions should formulate explicit professional development policies focused on strengthening teachers' scientific pedagogical capacity. Training programs should prioritize inquiry-based learning, scientific lesson planning, and classroom action research as integral components of the school's academic culture. Given that methodological literacy remains a key constraint, professional development should move beyond incidental workshops toward structured, continuous programs. This recommendation aligns with Fauzi (2023) and Hosen (2024), who emphasize that successful inquiry-based instruction depends heavily on sustained, practice-oriented, and data-informed teacher development.

Institutionalizing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

Schools are encouraged to establish Professional Learning Communities as collaborative platforms for teachers to design, implement, and reflect on scientific-based instruction. PLCs can serve as forums for joint lesson planning, analysis of student learning data, and sharing best practices. From an educational management perspective, PLCs institutionalize instructional innovation, ensuring that transformation does not rely solely on individual teachers but becomes an embedded organizational process. This recommendation is consistent with Haidir and Fathurrahman (2022) and Irawan (2022), who stress the importance of structural support for curriculum innovation in Islamic education.

Developing Authentic Assessment and Data-Based Evaluation Systems

The study finds that data-based instructional evaluation remains inconsistently implemented. Therefore, schools should develop standardized authentic assessment rubrics that measure students' scientific skills, including problem formulation, data analysis, and argument presentation. Additionally, schools should establish integrated learning documentation systems to support reflective practice and curriculum decision making. This approach aligns with the principles of evidence-based education, which emphasize the use of empirical data to improve instructional quality (Alavi & Norhayati, 2021; Hassan, 2023).

Providing Structural Support and Institutional Incentives

Scientific-based instructional transformation requires tangible structural support beyond regulatory frameworks. Schools should allocate dedicated time for teachers to design and reflect on inquiry-based learning, provide minimum facilities for project-based activities, and offer institutional incentives that recognize pedagogical innovation. These findings are consistent with Purdiyanto (2024), who argues that sustainable curriculum innovation in Islamic education depends on strong institutional commitment and resource allocation.

Aligning Islamic Values with Scientific Practices in Curriculum Management

As Islamic educational institutions, schools must ensure that scientific-based learning remains grounded in Islamic values. Curriculum policies should explicitly promote the integration of spiritual values, scientific ethics, and inquiry practices within instructional planning and implementation. This recommendation aligns with Mulyana (2023) and Hassan (2023), who argue that the integration of *bayani*, *burhani*, and *irfani* epistemologies provides a robust conceptual foundation for meaningful scientific learning in Islamic education.

CONCLUSION

The most important finding of this study is that the transformation of Islamic education management from a rational-practical paradigm to a scientific paradigm is both urgent and inevitable in contemporary Islamic education. This transformation is not merely a technical adjustment in instructional methods but represents a fundamental epistemological shift in how knowledge, revelation, reason, and empirical reality are integrated within curriculum planning, instructional implementation, and evaluation. The study demonstrates that the application of Scientific-Based Learning and Inquiry-Based Learning can foster student-centered, reflective, and inquiry-oriented learning without undermining Islamic values, provided that it is supported by coherent educational management. The key lesson drawn from this research is that sustainable

scientific transformation cannot rely on individual teacher initiatives alone but requires strong institutional leadership, systematic policy support, continuous professional development, and data-informed evaluation practices.

From an academic perspective, this study contributes to the field by integrating Islamic educational philosophy with scientific-oriented instructional management, positioning scientific-based learning as an organizational and epistemological process rather than a purely methodological strategy. This integrative framework strengthens the theoretical understanding of “value-based science” in Islamic education management and offers an empirically grounded model for curriculum innovation. However, the study is limited by its single-site context and relatively short observation period, which restrict the generalizability of the findings. Future research is recommended to involve multiple Islamic educational institutions, adopt longitudinal designs, and incorporate quantitative analyses of student learning outcomes to assess the long-term impact of scientific-based instructional transformation.

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