

Reimagining Hadith Studies: Embodied Islamic Knowledge and the Integration of Religion and Science in Southeast Asia Islamic University

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ABSTRACT

The transformation of Islamic higher education institutions into universities has intensified demands to integrate religious sciences and modern disciplines, while also raising concerns about marginalizing hadith studies as a core normative field. This article reimagines hadith studies in the university era by examining how an *embodied Islamic knowledge* approach sustains their relevance within religion–science integration frameworks. Employing a qualitative comparative case study design, this research draws on fieldwork conducted at State Islamic University Syekh Wasil Kediri, State Islamic Institute Madura, State Islamic Institute Ponorogo in Indonesia, and Fatoni University in Southern Thailand. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis, and analyzed thematically. The findings show that although institutional transformation creates structural opportunities for interdisciplinary integration, formal policies and curricular reforms alone are insufficient to sustain hadith studies. Instead, hadith demonstrates resilience through embodied practices, including pesantren-based academic traditions, ethical pedagogical exemplification, community engagement, and applied ethical initiatives. Through these practices, hadith functions not merely as a textual reference but as a lived moral and epistemological foundation that mediates relations between normative Islamic knowledge and empirical sciences. This study argues that the sustainability of hadith studies depends on praxis-oriented and experience-based integration rather than purely cognitive or administrative models. Theoretically, it contributes to debates on religion–science integration and Islamic anthropology by conceptualizing hadith as lived and embodied knowledge within academic life.

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INTRODUCTION

The integration of religion and science has become a central paradigm in contemporary Islamic higher education, particularly following the transformation of Islamic institutes into universities across the Muslim world (Abdullah, 2014; al-Faruqi, 2025; Mujiburrahman, 2014). Scholarly debates on this issue have largely focused on epistemological frameworks such as integration–interconnection, Islamization of knowledge, and dialogical models that seek to reconcile revelation, reason, and empirical reality (al-Faruqi, 2025; Al-Attas, 2010; Guessoum, 2010b; Sholihah et al., 2026). These approaches have significantly contributed to the reformulation of Islamic epistemology in modern academic settings, especially through curriculum reform and interdisciplinary discourse (Abdullah, 2014; Chande, 2023; Irham, 2025; Kartanegara, 2005; Rahman et al., 2026; Reynolds, 2016). However, much of this literature remains predominantly cognitive and structural in orientation, treating integration as an epistemic or administrative project rather than as a lived academic practice (Anam et al., 2024; A. U. F. Fauzi, 2022; Makin, 2016).

Within this expanding body of literature, hadith studies occupy a paradoxical position. On the one hand, hadith is widely recognized as a primary source of Islamic normativity, ethical reasoning, and moral authority within Islamic intellectual tradition (Abdulrahman, 2024; Sayeed, 2013a). On the other hand, recent studies suggest that hadith studies face marginalization in university contexts due to the expansion of empirical sciences, performance-based academic metrics, and market-oriented models of higher education (Brooks, 2026; Hefner, 2011; Helmy et al., 2021; Purba et al., 2026; Sabarudin et al., 2023; Tamjidnor et al., 2025; Wahid et al., 2023). Existing scholarship on the modernization of hadith studies tends to emphasize methodological innovation—such as historical criticism, thematic interpretation, and digital sanad analysis—without sufficiently addressing how hadith knowledge functions within everyday academic life (Abdulrahman, 2024; Widodo et al., 2026). Consequently, hadith is often positioned as an object of textual inquiry rather than as a formative source of ethical and epistemological orientation.

Recent developments in Islamic anthropology and the study of lived religion provide an important corrective to this limitation. Anthropological scholarship demonstrates that Islamic knowledge is not transmitted solely through texts and formal instruction, but through embodied practices, bodily discipline, ritual repetition, and affective engagement (Asad, 1993; Dian et al., 2023; Hirschkind, 2006). Studies on embodied religion further show that ethical formation in Islam emerges through habitus and daily practice rather than abstract cognition alone (Seesemann, 2015; Ware, 2014). Despite these advances, the insights of embodied knowledge and lived Islam have rarely been systematically integrated into hadith studies, particularly in discussions of Islamic higher education and religion–science integration. This absence marks a significant gap in the current state of the art, where the social life and practical authority of hadith remain under-theorized.

In addition, comparative research on Islamic universities across different socio-political contexts remains limited. Most institutional studies appear nationally bounded, focusing primarily on Muslim-majority contexts while neglecting Muslim-minority settings and transregional comparisons (Alkouatli et al., 2023; Hefner & Zaman, 2010). This limitation obscures how different cultural, political, and institutional environments shape strategies of knowledge integration and the resilience of religious sciences. Southeast Asia offers a particularly rich yet underexplored context, where Islamic higher education intersects with pesantren traditions, community-based knowledge transmission, and plural social realities (Khozin & Umiarso, 2019; Mariyono & Wiyono, 2026; Ubaidillah & Faiz, 2025). The lack of comparative Southeast Asian perspectives restricts our understanding of how hadith studies adapt to diverse institutional ecologies.

Against this scholarly backdrop, this article advances a novel analytical framework by reimagining hadith studies through the lens of embodied Islamic knowledge in the university era. Rather than approaching hadith solely as a textual or curricular discipline, this study conceptualizes hadith as lived and practiced knowledge embedded in academic habitus, pedagogical routines, and community

engagement (Anam et al., 2024; Asad, 1993; Ware, 2014). Drawing on comparative case studies from State Islamic University Syekh Wasil Kediri, State Islamic Institute Madura, State Islamic Institute Ponorogo, and Fatoni University in Southern Thailand, this research demonstrates how embodied practices enable hadith studies to function as an ethical and epistemological mediator between religion and science (Syarifah et al., 2026). This approach constitutes the article's primary novelty, extending existing debates on integration by grounding them empirically in lived academic practice and offering a transferable model for sustaining the relevance of hadith studies in contemporary Islamic universities.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative comparative case study design to examine how hadith studies are positioned and practiced within the transformation of Islamic higher education and the integration of religion and science. A qualitative design was selected because the study focuses on academic experiences, pedagogical practices, institutional meanings, and embodied forms of Islamic knowledge that require contextual interpretation rather than numerical measurement (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Creswell, 2014; MILES & HUBERMAN, 1984). The research was conducted from January to August 2025 at four Islamic higher-education institutions: State Islamic University Syekh Wasil Kediri, State Islamic Institute Ponorogo, State Islamic Institute Madura, and Fatoni University, Thailand. The four cases were purposively selected because they represent different institutional configurations of Islamic higher education and provide a basis for comparing how hadith is positioned within religion–science integration, academic practice, and community-oriented Islamic knowledge. The comparison was not intended to rank the institutions but to identify similarities and differences in the mechanisms through which hadith is transmitted, interpreted, and enacted.

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The study involved 36 informants, consisting of nine informants from each institution. The informants included academic leaders or program coordinators, lecturers involved in Islamic/hadith education or interdisciplinary learning, and students who had direct experience with the academic practices examined in this study. Informants were selected purposively based on their institutional roles, involvement in curriculum or teaching activities, and direct experience with hadith studies and religion–science integration. Participant observation was conducted to examine how religious knowledge was enacted in academic settings, particularly classroom interaction, lecturer–student relationships, mentoring, habituation, and relevant academic or community activities. Document analysis was used to complement interview and observational data by examining institutional regulations, strategic plans, academic guidelines, curriculum documents, course materials, and documents related to the integration of Islamic and scientific knowledge. The combination of these techniques enabled the researchers to compare formal institutional representations of hadith with its practical enactment in everyday academic life (Aspers & Corte, 2021; Boddy, 2016).

The documentary corpus included, among other materials, academic guidelines, curriculum documents, institutional strategic plans, quality-assurance documents, program regulations, research roadmaps, and course-level teaching documents. For example, documents available from IAIN Ponorogo include the 2020–2024 Strategic Plan, the 2023 Guidelines for Developing Study-Program Curricula, the Academic Policy, the Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI) policy and standards, and the 2022 Tadris IPA curriculum. The institution's Tadris IPA regulatory documentation also explicitly records institutional policies concerning curriculum development and the relationship between scientific and Islamic educational programs. For IAIN/UIN Madura, the documentary corpus included the 2024 Academic Education Guidelines, 2020 Curriculum Development Guidelines, 2024 MBKM Curriculum Implementation Guidelines, SPMI Quality Policy and Standards, 2020–2024 Strategic Plan, and documents concerning the integration of research and community service into learning. The institution's quality-assurance repository specifically lists these documents, while its later curriculum-development framework articulates integration of Islamic knowledge, education, science, technology, skills, and character. For Fatoni University, the corpus included relevant

academic/program documents, curriculum materials, and institutional documents concerning Islamic Studies and higher-education programs, supplemented by classroom and community-related observations. Documents from each institution were treated not merely as administrative evidence but as sources for examining how hadith, Islamic knowledge, and scientific knowledge were formally positioned within institutional structures (Bhattacharya, 2017).

Data analysis was conducted through thematic and cross-case analysis. The analysis proceeded iteratively by organizing interview transcripts, observation notes, and institutional documents into initial codes, grouping related codes into themes, and comparing the resulting patterns across the four cases (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Particular attention was given to four analytical dimensions: (1) institutional positioning of hadith, (2) modes of religion–science integration, (3) forms of hadith transmission and pedagogical practice, and (4) embodied ethical and epistemological functions of hadith. The cross-case comparison was subsequently used to identify two analytical patterns: formal–structural integration, represented by policies, curricula, academic programs, and institutional structures; and embodied–practical integration, represented by pedagogical interaction, ethical exemplification, habituation, mentoring, and community engagement. Methodological triangulation was employed by comparing evidence obtained from interviews, observations, and documents, while member checking was used to clarify the interpretation of selected interview accounts. Researcher reflexivity was maintained throughout the research process to account for the researchers' positionality within Islamic academic contexts (Barrett & Twycross, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1988). This procedure enabled the study to examine hadith not only as a textual or curricular subject but also as lived and embodied Islamic knowledge within academic practice.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Institutional Integration and Its Implementation in Islamic Higher Education

Research on Islamic higher education has frequently discussed the relationship between religious and scientific knowledge in connection with the transformation of Islamic universities. Al-Attas (Al-Attas, 2010), places this discussion within the broader project of reconstructing the epistemological foundations of knowledge, particularly through the Islamization of knowledge. Abdullah (Abdullah, 2014) subsequently develops an integrative-interconnected paradigm that emphasizes dialogue between religious and scientific disciplines. A similar concern can be found in Ecklund, Park, & Sorrell (Ecklund et al., 2011) and Sibawaihi, Suyatno, Suyadi, & Fernandes (Sibawaihi et al., 2024), who discusses the relationship between religion and science beyond a simple juxtaposition of two separate domains. Guessoum (Guessoum, 2010a) also approaches the issue through a critical engagement between Islamic intellectual traditions and contemporary scientific knowledge.

Within Indonesian Islamic higher education, these ideas have been reflected in the institutional transformation from IAIN to UIN. Muqowim and Lessy (Muqowim & Lessy, 2021), for example, describe the transition as involving an expansion from *al-'ulūm al-naqliyyah* toward a broader configuration that also accommodates *al-'ulūm al-'aqliyyah*. Their study notes that the integrative paradigm has become an important orientation in Islamic higher education, although its implementation still requires movement from theoretical and philosophical formulation toward practical application.

Several empirical studies provide more specific illustrations. Zulkifli et. al (Zulkifli et al., 2020) in their comparison of UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta and UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, examined the implementation of science integration in the two institutions. Their findings indicate that the two universities shared similar objectives concerning the reduction of the dichotomy between religious and general sciences, while implementation remained more visible at the normative and philosophical level than at the empirical level. A study at UIN Malang provides another institutional example. Wahdi Sayuti et.al (Sayuti & Rahiem, 2020), using interviews, observation, and document analysis, examined the integration of science and religion in the university curriculum. The study identified the positioning of religious and secular sciences as complementary domains and described

several mechanisms through which religious values were incorporated, including internalisation, labelisation, and deductive approaches.

Other studies have examined curriculum development more specifically. Taufiq Alamin et.al (Alamin et al., 2024), discusses the construction an Indonesian Islamic science curriculum through an integration-interconnection framework, while Nasir, Mulyono, and Nastiti (Nasir, 2020) argue for a curriculum structure in which the integrated paradigm is distributed across disciplines and courses rather than restricted to particular subjects. Research on the Hadith Science curriculum has likewise documented changes from competency-based curriculum toward the KKNI framework, indicating adjustments in response to developments in Indonesian higher education (Fatia & Gusmaneli, 2022). Taken together, these studies provide several descriptions of how integration has been formulated and implemented at the institutional and curricular levels. They also show differences between the formulation of integration as an institutional ideal and its manifestation in teaching, curriculum, and academic production. This distinction becomes relevant when the discussion is narrowed to particular fields of Islamic studies, including hadith.

Hadith Studies within the Changing Academic Environment

The academic study of hadith has developed through several methodological traditions, ranging from classical approaches to contemporary historical and critical studies. Brown (Brown, 2017) discusses the development of modern hadith scholarship in relation to classical authentication and contemporary debates. Motzki (Motzki, 2013) demonstrates the use of historical-critical approaches in examining transmission and the origins of hadith materials. Sayeed (Sayeed, 2013b) pays attention to the historical and interpretive dimensions of hadith, while El (Shamsy, 2020) examines the processes through which Islamic textual traditions were transmitted, preserved, and reconstructed.

Within Indonesian Islamic universities, however, the distribution of research topics provides a more specific picture of current scholarly practice. (Fatkhi & Firdausy, 2026) analyzed 1,272 undergraduate theses produced between 2018 and 2025 across five major State Islamic Universities, together with the curricula of the institutions studied. Their analysis classified the theses according to research objects, sources, problem orientation, methodology, and epistemological direction. The study reports that 53% of the theses focused on *matn*, 21% addressed living hadith, while research on *isnād* occupied a relatively limited position.

The distribution is useful for examining the relationship between institutional curriculum and actual student research. It indicates that textual approaches continue to occupy a substantial proportion of undergraduate research, while approaches concerned with the social and practical dimensions of hadith constitute a smaller proportion. Fatkhi and Firdausy (Fatkh & Firdausy, 2026) discuss this pattern in relation to the persistence of *bayānī* textualism, although their analysis also identifies differences among institutions and some indications of rational-critical approaches. Other studies similarly illustrate differences in the way hadith is taught. (Muhid, 2024), comparing hadith education at the Islamic University of Madinah and UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, found differences in emphasis between memorization-oriented learning and approaches that give greater attention to methodology and reasoning. (Umam & Khadijah, 2023), meanwhile, discuss methodological developments in hadith instruction and the need to strengthen pedagogical approaches in Islamic Studies.

These studies allow the current discussion to move beyond the general question of whether hadith studies have changed. The more specific issue concerns which aspects have changed and which continue to be maintained. Curriculum development, methodological diversification, and the emergence of living-hadith research appear alongside the continuing use of textual approaches. The coexistence of these orientations provides a useful starting point for examining hadith not only as an academic object but also in relation to practices of religious learning and authority.

Embodied Knowledge and the Study of Lived Religion

The discussion of religious knowledge changes when attention is directed from curriculum and texts toward religious practice (Anam et al., 2024). Asad (1993) approaches Islam as a discursive tradition in which knowledge is connected to practices, disciplines, and historically formed relations of authority. (Mahmood, 2004), through her study of women's religious movements, demonstrates how religious subject formation can take place through bodily discipline, ethical cultivation, and everyday practices. Hirschkind (Hirschkind, 2006) examines the relationship between Islamic ethical formation and practices of listening, while (Ware, 2014) emphasizes the role of the body, memorization, movement, and repetition in Islamic knowledge transmission.

These perspectives have also informed empirical studies of Islamic educational institutions. A recent ethnographic study of three pesantren in Madura, based on 15 months of fieldwork, examined authority, embodied learning, and social reproduction in pesantren educational practices. The study describes the role of bodily respect, ritualized learning, spatial organization, and direct interaction between teachers and students in the reproduction of traditional Islamic knowledge (Burmansah et al., 2025; Mu'alimin et al., 2026; Rokhman et al., 2025). A related pattern appears in research on *Living Qur'an* at Ma'had al-Jami'ah UIN Ar-Raniry. Through observation, interviews, institutional documents, and placement-test data, the study describes Qur'anic pedagogy through *tahsin*, *talqin*, *tahfiz*, worship habituation, moral supervision, repetition, and direct teacher correction (Khalidi et al., 2026). The findings place learning within cognitive, affective, and psychomotor processes rather than treating it solely as the acquisition of textual information.

The relevance of these studies to hadith research lies in the possibility of observing how textual knowledge enters everyday practice. A hadith may be encountered as a text in a classroom, but its significance may also be expressed through repetition, ethical instruction, ritual practice, teacher–student interaction, or the formation of particular dispositions. In this sense, the concept of embodied Islamic knowledge provides an additional analytical dimension to studies that have primarily examined hadith through textual or curricular categories. This perspective also helps contextualize the finding of (Fatkhil & Firdausy, 2026), in which living-hadith research constituted 21% of the 1,272 theses examined. The figure does not by itself establish a hierarchy between textual and lived approaches, but it does provide an empirical indication of the relative distribution of research orientations within the institutions included in their study.

Pesantren, Universities, and Multiple Sites of Islamic Knowledge

The institutional location of Islamic knowledge also receives attention in studies of Indonesian Islam. Azra (2006) discusses the historical and intellectual networks through which Islamic knowledge has circulated in Indonesia, while Hefner (2007, 2009) examines the relationship between Islamic education, social transformation, citizenship, and modernity. Within this context, the university represents one site of Islamic knowledge production, but it exists alongside pesantren, madrasah, mosques, religious organizations, and informal learning communities. Studies of pesantren provide examples of how knowledge transmission may take place through direct instruction, memorization, repetition, ritual participation, disciplinary practices, and relationships between teachers and students.

These processes correspond to the emphasis on embodied and practice-based knowledge found in Asad (1993), Mahmood (2004), Hirschkind (2006), and Ware (2014) (Niam et al., 2025). The relationship between university and pesantren therefore cannot simply be described in terms of replacement of one system by another. The empirical studies discussed above instead point to their simultaneous presence within the Indonesian Islamic educational landscape. Formal university curricula may introduce methodological and disciplinary changes, while pesantren-based learning continues to provide forms of religious authority, ethical formation, and embodied learning.

This institutional configuration is relevant to hadith because the authority of hadith may be encountered in more than one setting. It may be established through academic methods of authentication and interpretation, but it may also be reinforced through teacher authority,

memorization, ritual practice, and everyday ethical instruction. The relationship between these forms of authority requires empirical examination rather than being assumed from the existence of an institutional curriculum alone.

Islamic Higher Education in the Context of Southern Thailand

Studies of Islamic education in Southeast Asia provide another context for examining the relationship between religious knowledge and institutional environment. (Azra, 2006) situates Southeast Asian Islamic education within wider intellectual and educational networks, while Hefner, et.al(Hefner & Zaman, 2010) draws attention to the relationship between Islamic educational institutions, state structures, social change, and citizenship. Research in Southern Thailand presents a somewhat different institutional setting. Wekke, Siddin, and Langputeh (Wekke et al., 2019), using interviews, non-participant observation, and two focus group discussions, examined Islamic education in Pattani and identified the interaction between national educational aspirations and local community needs. Their findings place Islamic education within questions of institutional continuity, cultural identity, and social change.

Fatoni University provides a specific institutional case within this context. The university's official institutional description emphasizes Islamic education, ethical formation, Qur'anic learning, and close student development. In addition, a U.S. Department of State report from 2020 described Fatoni University as the only government-certified Islamic university in Thailand's Deep South at that time, with approximately 3,000 students and 250 academic personnel. The report also noted the use of Thai, English, Arabic, and Malay and the inclusion of mandatory peace studies(Isnaniah & Islahuddin, 2020; Sudarman, 2018).

(Hayeesama-ae et al., 2023), in a qualitative study of Fatoni University, examined the institution's contribution to peacebuilding through Islamic higher education. The study identifies several institutional and educational components, including integrated Islamic curriculum and co-curriculum, the roles of university leaders and students, Assalaam Institute, Majlis Ilmi, Maal-Qur'an, Madinah Al-Salaam, and Waqaf institutions. Other research on Islamic education in Pattani similarly discusses the role of Islamic education in maintaining religious and cultural continuity. Umiersyah at.al(Umeirsyah et al., 2026), for example, examines Islamic education as part of the transmission of Islamic values and Malay-Muslim cultural heritage. More recent research has also discussed Islamic education in Southern Thailand in relation to cultural resilience, pluralism, and peace education.

These studies provide a different institutional background from the Indonesian UIN context discussed above. In Indonesia, much of the literature on Islamic higher education focuses on the integration of religious and scientific knowledge. In Southern Thailand, studies of Islamic education additionally examine questions of identity, cultural continuity, minority status, and peacebuilding. The difference in research context provides a basis for comparing how Islamic knowledge is transmitted and given meaning under different socio-political conditions.

Tabel 1. Comparative Synthesis of Previous Research

Dimension	Indonesian Islamic Universities	Fatoni University / Southern Thailand
Socio-political context	Islamic higher education within a Muslim-majority national context	Islamic higher education within a Muslim-minority regional context
Institutional setting	UIN, pesantren, madrasah, and Islamic educational networks	Islamic university, pondok, Islamic schools, and Malay-Muslim community networks
Religion–science discourse	Integration and interconnection between religious and scientific knowledge	Integration of Islamic education with general education and peace-oriented learning

Hadith research	Substantial emphasis on textual and matn-oriented research, alongside emerging living-hadith studies	Hadith-related knowledge situated within broader religious, ethical, and communal contexts
Knowledge transmission	Lectures, textual study, memorization, academic research, and embodied religious practices	Academic learning, religious instruction, communal practice, and cultural transmission
Religious authority	Lecturers, scholars, pesantren teachers, and institutional curricula	University authorities, religious scholars, educational institutions, and community networks
Embodied dimension	Particularly visible in pesantren and religious habituation	Related to religious identity, communal continuity, and everyday Islamic practice

The table does not suggest that the two contexts are internally uniform. Rather, it identifies the dimensions that appear repeatedly in the previous studies and that can subsequently be examined through comparative empirical research. The studies reviewed above provide three strands of discussion that are relevant to the present research. The first concerns hadith as textual knowledge, particularly questions of transmission, authenticity, interpretation, and historical development (Berliana et al., 2026; Brown, 2017; Motzki, 2005). The second concerns the institutionalization of Islamic knowledge, particularly through the integration of religious and scientific disciplines in Islamic higher education (Aziz et al., 2024; Hasbi et al., 2025; Landa et al., 2021). The third concerns embodied and lived religious knowledge, in which knowledge is examined through practice, discipline, authority, and everyday religious life.

The studies do not necessarily address these three dimensions within a single analytical framework. Research on science–religion integration tends to concentrate on institutional structures, curriculum, and epistemological models. Research on hadith studies tends to focus on textual objects, methodology, and scholarly production. Anthropological studies, meanwhile, pay greater attention to embodiment, practice, authority, and lived religion. The empirical study of 1,272 undergraduate theses by (Fatkhil & Firdausy, 2026) is particularly useful in this regard because it provides a quantitative indication of the distribution of hadith research orientations in Indonesian Islamic universities: 53% matn-focused research and 21% living-hadith research, with isnād receiving relatively limited attention. Meanwhile, ethnographic studies of pesantren and Islamic university settings provide examples of how religious knowledge operates through embodied learning, teacher authority, repetition, habituation, and interaction.

A further issue concerns the comparative context. Studies of Indonesian Islamic universities have primarily examined the transformation of Islamic higher education within Indonesia, whereas research on Southern Thailand has paid greater attention to Islamic education, cultural identity, minority conditions, and peacebuilding. (Hayeesama-ae, 2022), and Muhammad Adib (Nuruzzaman et al., 2023), for example, provide empirical discussions of Islamic education in Pattani and Fatoni University, but these studies do not specifically place embodied hadith knowledge at the center of a comparison with Indonesian Islamic universities.

The present study therefore takes these strands as a starting point for examining the relationship between hadith, institutional knowledge, and embodied religious practice. Rather than assuming that integration produces a particular form of knowledge, the study examines how such knowledge is transmitted and experienced within different educational environments. The comparison between Indonesian Islamic universities and Fatoni University allows attention to be directed toward the ways institutional structures, religious authority, pedagogical practices, and socio-political contexts intersect in the production and circulation of embodied Islamic knowledge.

Result

The institutional transformation of Islamic higher education has brought hadith studies into a changing academic environment, where traditional modes of religious learning increasingly intersect with university-based structures, interdisciplinary research, and formal integration policies. Across the four institutions examined in this study, these developments are reflected in different ways in institutional documents, academic practices, and lecturers' experiences. While integration policies provide formal space for engagement between religious and scientific knowledge, the position assigned to hadith within such processes varies across institutional settings. In some cases, hadith is primarily presented as a source of ethical and normative values, whereas its role in shaping interdisciplinary research agendas appears less explicit. As one senior lecturer explained, *"In policy documents, hadith is always mentioned as a source of values, but when it comes to interdisciplinary research agendas, it rarely becomes the starting point of inquiry"* (L1, Indonesian university). A similar observation was expressed by an academic administrator, who described a gap between institutional discourse and everyday academic practice: *"Integration is strong at the slogan level, but weak in everyday academic practice"* (A1, Indonesian university). These accounts provide a starting point for examining how the formal discourse of integration is translated into, negotiated through, and sometimes differentiated by the lived practices of hadith scholarship.

Despite these limitations, the study finds that hadith studies remain resilient through embodied academic practices rather than formal structures. Lecturers and students embed prophetic teachings into pedagogical habitus, ethical conduct, and daily routines. A hadith lecturer explained, *"I do not only teach hadith as a text; I try to show students how the Prophet's ethics should shape how we read, argue, and disagree in class"* (L2, Indonesian university). Similarly, a postgraduate student emphasized the experiential dimension of learning: *"We feel the presence of hadith more in how our teachers behave than in the syllabus itself"* (S1, Indonesian university). These narratives indicate that hadith knowledge is sustained through exemplification, discipline, and affective engagement rather than through curricular design alone.

The findings further show that embodied Islamic knowledge mediates the integration of religion and science by shaping ethical orientations rather than providing direct textual validation. In community engagement and applied research contexts, hadith is mobilized to cultivate responsibility and moral reflection. One lecturer involved in environmental programs stated, *"We do not look for a hadith to justify science, but to remind ourselves about trust (amanah) and accountability in using knowledge"* (L3, Indonesian university). This approach reframes integration as an ethical process, allowing scientific inquiry to remain autonomous while being morally grounded.

Table1. Comparative Patterns of Hadith-Based Ethical Integration in Indonesian and Thai Muslim Educational Contexts

Dimension	Indonesian Universities	Fatoni University (Thailand)
Socio-political Context	Muslim-majority	Muslim-minority
Knowledge Infrastructure	Pesantren-based	Community-based
Mode of Hadith Transmission	Academic-ritual hybrid	Identity-ethical reinforcement
Function of Hadith	Ethical habitus	Moral resilience
Visibility in Curriculum	Moderate	Limited
Lived Authority	Strong	Very strong

Comparative analysis highlights differences between Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority contexts. In Indonesian institutions, pesantren traditions provide a strong infrastructure for embodied transmission, reinforcing the authority of hadith beyond formal classrooms. A lecturer remarked, *"The pesantren culture keeps hadith alive even when the university system becomes more bureaucratic"* (L4,

Indonesian university). At Fatoni University, hadith studies play a distinct role in sustaining communal identity. As one lecturer explained, *“Here, hadith is not only academic knowledge; it is part of how we protect our moral identity as a minority”* (L5, Fatoni University). Students similarly described hadith learning as a source of moral resilience amid social pressure (S2, Fatoni University).

Table 2. Comparative Modes of Hadith Integration in Muslim-Majority and Muslim-Minority Contexts

Mode of Integration	Characteristics	Impact on Hadith Studies
Formal-Structural	Policy-driven, cognitive, administrative	Symbolic inclusion
Embodied-Practical	Praxis-based, ethical, experiential	Epistemological resilience

The comparative findings demonstrate that the ways in which hadith is lived, transmitted, and endowed with epistemic authority are deeply shaped by socio-political context and the surrounding knowledge infrastructure. In Indonesian Islamic universities situated within a Muslim-majority context, hadith operates within a relatively established institutional ecosystem supported by pesantren-based traditions of learning. In this setting, hadith is transmitted through a hybrid mode that combines formal academic instruction with ritual and ethical practices, contributing to the formation of an ethical habitus among lecturers and students. Although the lived authority of hadith remains strong in everyday academic life, its curricular visibility is only moderate, as it must coexist with expanding modern disciplines and policy-driven integration agendas. Consequently, hadith tends to function primarily as a source of ethical orientation rather than as a central epistemological driver in interdisciplinary knowledge production.

By contrast, at Fatoni University in Southern Thailand, where Muslims constitute a minority, hadith assumes a different yet more intensive role in shaping academic and moral life. Despite its limited presence in formal curricula and institutional structures, hadith exhibits a very strong lived authority grounded in community-based knowledge transmission and personal ethical engagement. In this minority context, hadith learning emphasizes identity formation and moral reinforcement, serving not merely as an academic discipline but as a key resource for sustaining religious and ethical continuity amid broader socio-political constraints. The findings indicate that structural limitations do not necessarily weaken the role of hadith; rather, they may intensify its function as a source of moral resilience and collective identity.

These contextual differences are closely linked to two distinct modes of religion–science integration identified in the study: formal–structural integration and embodied–practical integration. Formal–structural integration is characterized by policy-driven frameworks, curricular design, and administrative performance indicators. While this mode ensures the symbolic inclusion of hadith within integration discourse, it often reduces hadith to a normative reference that lacks substantive influence on epistemological practices. This pattern is particularly evident in Indonesian universities undergoing institutional transformation, where integration is strongly articulated at the policy level but remains limited in shaping lived academic practice.

In contrast, embodied–practical integration positions hadith as lived and enacted knowledge embedded in daily academic routines, ethical conduct, and experiential learning. This mode is most visible in the Fatoni University context but also persists informally in Indonesian universities through pesantren traditions and close pedagogical relationships. Rather than seeking textual validation of scientific knowledge, embodied integration draws on hadith to cultivate ethical sensibilities, responsibility, and epistemic humility. Through this process, hadith demonstrates epistemological resilience, maintaining its relevance and authority even when structurally marginalized.

Overall, the results demonstrate that the sustainability of hadith studies in the university era depends less on formal integration policies and more on the capacity of academic communities to embody prophetic knowledge within institutional life. Hadith continues to function as an ethical and epistemological anchor when it is enacted through practice, habitus, and social engagement. These

findings challenge dominant integration models that prioritize cognitive synthesis and underscore the importance of lived and embodied dimensions of Islamic knowledge in contemporary Islamic higher education.

Discussion

The institutional transformation of Islamic higher education has brought hadith studies into an academic environment in which traditional modes of religious learning increasingly intersect with university structures, interdisciplinary research, curriculum reform, and formal discourses of knowledge integration. The four institutions examined in this study—UIN Syekh Wasil Kediri, UIN Ponorogo, UIN Madura, and Fatoni University Thailand—provide different settings for observing this process. The comparison does not indicate a single model of religion–science integration. Rather, it shows that the position of hadith is negotiated differently according to institutional history, disciplinary configuration, pedagogical practice, and the surrounding religious knowledge infrastructure. This observation is consistent with broader scholarship on Islamic higher education, which has approached integration through different epistemological and institutional formulations. Al-Attas (1995) emphasizes the reconstruction of the epistemological foundations of knowledge, Abdullah (2014) proposes an integrative-interconnected paradigm, and Guessoum (2011) emphasizes critical engagement between Islamic intellectual traditions and contemporary science. (Zuidervaat, 2023), meanwhile, cautions against reducing integration to the simple juxtaposition of religious and scientific knowledge. The empirical question emerging from these perspectives is therefore not merely whether integration exists, but how integration is translated into academic practice and what position religious knowledge, particularly hadith, occupies within that process.

The first pattern concerns the distance between formal integration discourse and everyday academic practice. Across the four institutions, institutional policies and curriculum structures provide formal space for interaction between religious and scientific knowledge, but the experiences reported by academic actors indicate that formal recognition does not always determine the actual direction of academic inquiry. As one senior lecturer explained, *“In policy documents, hadith is always mentioned as a source of values, but when it comes to interdisciplinary research agendas, it rarely becomes the starting point of inquiry”* (L1, Indonesian university). An academic administrator similarly observed, *“Integration is strong at the slogan level, but weak in everyday academic practice”* (A1, Indonesian university). These statements are important because they distinguish symbolic inclusion from substantive participation. Hadith may be formally recognized as a source of ethical values without necessarily functioning as an active epistemological resource in the formulation of research questions, methodological choices, or interdisciplinary knowledge production. This observation corresponds with previous research on Indonesian Islamic universities. Sayuti and Rahiem (2020), for example, found that the integration of religion and science at UIN Jakarta and UIN Malang was more apparent at the normative-philosophical level than in its empirical implementation. Subchi (2020) likewise identified limitations in the manifestation of integration in students' academic work at several Indonesian Islamic universities. Muqowim and Lessy (2021) consequently emphasize the need to move from theoretical formulations toward practical implementation. These studies provide a broader context for understanding the experiences reported by participants in the present research.

The four institutions, however, demonstrate different manifestations of this institutional–practical gap. At UIN Syekh Wasil Kediri, the issue is particularly connected with the institution's recent transformation into a university and with the explicit discourse of epistemological renewal in Islamic studies. The institutional transformation has been associated with an ambition to connect spiritual values with scientific disciplines and broader fields of knowledge. At the same time, hadith retains a distinct disciplinary position within the university's academic structure. The appointment of

Wahidul Anam as professor of hadith is also accompanied by an intellectual discourse emphasizing hadith as a *discursive tradition* and the need for epistemological renewal in hadith studies. This creates an interesting analytical situation: the institutional transformation and the discourse of hadith renewal occur simultaneously, but the existence of such discourse does not by itself demonstrate that interdisciplinary research has already been reorganized around hadith. The relevant question is therefore how this epistemological discourse enters teaching, supervision, research, and academic interaction.

At UIN Ponorogo, the relationship between religion and science is more visibly articulated through particular disciplinary practices. The university's Faculty of Sharia has explicitly described *Ilmu Falak* as an area in which Islamic knowledge intersects with astronomy, geography, mathematics, physics, climatology, digital image processing, coding, and other scientific and technological fields. More recent institutional activities have continued this orientation through the development of a Falak laboratory and practical astronomical activities. The Tadris IPA program has likewise developed courses such as *Tafsir Sains Terintegrasi* and more recently the RESPIRASI program, which explicitly seeks to create dialogue between modern science and Islamic values. The Ponorogo case therefore suggests that integration can become more tangible when it is attached to a specific disciplinary object and practice, rather than remaining exclusively at the level of institutional rhetoric. Nevertheless, this does not automatically establish hadith as an epistemological driver of these interdisciplinary practices; the evidence instead indicates a stronger and more explicit role for Qur'anic interpretation, Islamic jurisprudence, and broader Islamic values in the integration process.

The case of UIN Madura illustrates another configuration. Previous research on the Tadris IPA program at IAIN Madura found that its curriculum combined institutional, scientific, pedagogical, Islamic educational, disciplinary, ethical, and competitive components. The study also reported the use of contextual, thematic, practical, collaborative, active-learning, and discovery-learning strategies. Importantly, the research identified expectations that lecturers incorporate Islamic values into science instruction and that students demonstrate these values through attitudes and behavior. The current institutional curriculum also includes courses such as *Islam dan Sains* and *Ulumul Qur'an dan Hadits* within the university curriculum, illustrating that integration is articulated through both general academic competencies and Islamic knowledge. The significance of UIN Madura for the present study is therefore located in the movement from curriculum to disposition: Islamic knowledge is not only expected to appear as content but is also connected with students' attitudes, lecturers' pedagogical responsibilities, and ethical conduct. The analytical issue remains whether these curricular expectations are consistently translated into academic habits and research practices. This distinction is important because the presence of an Islamic-values component in a curriculum is evidence of formal integration, but not by itself evidence of embodied integration.

The fourth institutional context, Fatoni University, presents a different configuration because Islamic higher education operates within the Muslim-minority context of Southern Thailand. Fatoni University's academic structure includes Islamic Studies and Qur'an and Sunnah-related programs alongside other fields, while its institutional activities connect Islamic learning with ethical formation, community engagement, and peace-oriented education. Research on Fatoni University has documented the use of integrated Islamic curriculum and co-curricular activities in relation to peacebuilding and community development. Other studies of Islamic education in Pattani emphasize the relationship between Islamic education, cultural continuity, identity, and the particular social conditions of the region (Wekke, Siddin, & Langputeh, 2019; Hayeesama-ae, 2023; Salaeh, 2023). The institutional context is therefore different from that of the three Indonesian universities. However, the difference should not be interpreted as evidence that minority status automatically produces stronger

hadith authority. Rather, it provides a different environment in which religious knowledge may acquire meanings related to identity, ethical continuity, community, and peace education.

The interview data provide an important connection between these institutional structures and the lived experience of hadith. A hadith lecturer stated, *"I do not only teach hadith as a text; I try to show students how the Prophet's ethics should shape how we read, argue, and disagree in class"* (L2, Indonesian university). A postgraduate student similarly explained, *"We feel the presence of hadith more in how our teachers behave than in the syllabus itself"* (S1, Indonesian university). These statements shift the analytical focus from where hadith appears in the curriculum to how hadith is encountered in academic relationships. In this sense, the syllabus provides only one channel of transmission. Teacher behavior, modes of disagreement, patterns of mentoring, classroom interaction, and ethical exemplification constitute additional channels through which prophetic knowledge may become meaningful. This interpretation is consistent with Asad's (1993) concept of Islam as a discursive tradition and Mahmood's (2004) analysis of embodied ethical formation. Hirschkind (2006) and Ware (2014) similarly demonstrate that Islamic knowledge is not transmitted solely through textual comprehension but also through practices of repetition, discipline, bodily engagement, and ethical cultivation.

This dimension is particularly important because contemporary hadith scholarship has often concentrated on methodological questions concerning authenticity, transmission, historical reconstruction, and textual interpretation (Brown, 2009; Motzki, 2010; Sayeed, 2013; El Shamsy, 2020). These approaches remain indispensable for establishing the scholarly basis of hadith studies. However, they address a different question from the one emerging in the present findings: how does an authenticated or academically interpreted hadith become a lived source of authority? The distinction is not between textual and embodied approaches as mutually exclusive alternatives. Rather, textual analysis concerns the establishment and interpretation of the source, whereas embodied analysis examines what happens when that source enters pedagogical, ethical, and social practice. This distinction becomes particularly relevant in light of Fatkhi and Firdausy's (2026) analysis of 1,272 undergraduate theses across five Indonesian State Islamic Universities, which found that 53% focused on *matn*, 21% on living hadith, and relatively little attention to *isnād*. The data suggest that textual approaches remain substantial even as interest in lived hadith develops. Thus, the present findings should not be interpreted as evidence that embodied approaches have replaced textual scholarship; rather, they reveal an additional layer of hadith authority that may not be adequately captured by textual research alone.

The interview concerning environmental engagement further clarifies this distinction. One lecturer stated, *"We do not look for a hadith to justify science, but to remind ourselves about trust (amanah) and accountability in using knowledge"* (L3, Indonesian university). This statement is analytically significant because it rejects a proof-text model of integration. Hadith is not being used to establish the scientific validity of an environmental claim. Instead, it provides an ethical vocabulary through which the use of scientific knowledge is evaluated. Such a configuration is closer to what may be termed ethical integration than epistemological fusion. Science retains its methodological autonomy, while prophetic knowledge contributes to questions concerning responsibility, accountability, social consequences, and the moral orientation of knowledge production. This interpretation resonates with Mahmood's (2004) account of ethical self-formation and with Asad's (1993) emphasis on the relationship between authoritative knowledge and disciplined practice. It also provides a more precise formulation of religion–science integration: integration does not necessarily require religious texts to function as scientific evidence; it can also operate through the ethical conditions under which scientific knowledge is produced and applied. The comparative data can consequently be reformulated as follows:

Table 3. Comparative Patterns of Hadith-Based Ethical Integration across Four Islamic Higher-Education Institutions

Dimension	UIN Syekh Wasil Kediri	UIN Ponorogo	UIN Madura	Fatoni University, Thailand
Institutional context	Recent transformation and renewal of Islamic epistemology	Integration through disciplinary and applied science	Integration through curriculum and pedagogy	Islamic higher education in a Muslim-minority context
Prominent integration pathway	Islamic epistemology and hadith studies	<i>Ilmu Falak</i> , IPA, astronomy, technology	Islamic values within science education	Qur'an–Sunnah, Islamic education, community and peace education
Position of hadith	Established academic discipline and source of epistemological reflection	Religious source within a broader Islamic-scientific ecosystem	Part of Islamic knowledge accompanying scientific and pedagogical integration	Part of wider Islamic identity, ethical and educational formation
Mode of transmission	Academic, pedagogical, and religious networks	Academic, practical, laboratory, and disciplinary learning	Curriculum, pedagogy, habituation, and ethical guidance	Academic, communal, ethical, and identity-related transmission
Integration emphasis	Epistemological and institutional	Disciplinary and applied	Curricular and pedagogical	Ethical, communal, and peace-oriented
Embodied dimension	Teacher practice and academic habitus	Practical learning and religious-scientific application	Attitudes, behavior, and pedagogical practice	Community, ethical identity, and religious continuity

This four-institution comparison is preferable to the earlier two-category table because it avoids collapsing three different Indonesian institutions into a single “Muslim-majority” model. The Indonesian cases share a national institutional environment, but their pathways of integration are not identical. UIN Syekh Wasil Kediri foregrounds institutional transformation and hadith epistemology; UIN Ponorogo provides concrete examples of disciplinary integration between Islamic knowledge and scientific or technological practice; UIN Madura places considerable emphasis on the incorporation of Islamic values into science curriculum and pedagogy; while Fatoni University operates within a broader configuration in which Islamic education, Qur'an and Sunnah, community, identity, and peace education intersect. These differences are more analytically informative than a simple majority/minority distinction.

The same revision is necessary for the concept of lived authority. Rather than assigning “strong” to Indonesian universities and “very strong” to Fatoni University without a measurable scale, the findings are better expressed in terms of different mechanisms of authority. In the Indonesian cases, authority appears to be mediated through academic specialization, lecturers, pesantren traditions, curriculum, mentoring, and religious practice. At Fatoni University, the available evidence suggests

that religious knowledge is additionally connected with community and identity formation. A lecturer from Fatoni University explained, “Here, *hadith* is not only academic knowledge; it is part of how we protect our moral identity as a minority” (L5, Fatoni University), while a student described *hadith* learning as a source of moral resilience amid social pressure (S2, Fatoni University). These accounts should be read as participants’ understandings of *hadith* rather than as evidence that minority status universally intensifies religious authority. Their significance lies in showing that, in this particular institutional setting, *hadith* is experienced through a broader identity and community framework.

The distinction can also be represented through the following analytical table:

Table 4. Modes of *Hadith* Integration across the Four Institutional Contexts

Mode	Formal–Structural Integration	Embodied–Practical Integration
Primary location	Policy, curriculum, program structure, institutional documents	Classroom interaction, mentoring, habituation, community engagement
Primary mechanism	Curriculum design and institutional regulation	Exemplification, repetition, ethical practice, relationships
Position of <i>hadith</i>	Source of values and academic subject	Lived ethical and pedagogical resource
Relation to science	Formal articulation of integration	Ethical orientation of knowledge production and application
Main evidence in the four cases	UIN transformation, curriculum, disciplinary programs	Lecturer conduct, student experience, mentoring, ritual/ethical practice
Analytical implication	Indicates institutional recognition	Indicates practical enactment

The distinction between these two modes should not be understood as a binary opposition. The four institutions demonstrate that formal and embodied dimensions can coexist. What differs is the degree to which one becomes more visible in particular institutional practices. This is important because the phrase integration can otherwise conceal different processes. A curriculum that contains Islamic values and a classroom in which lecturers model prophetic ethics both involve integration, but they do so through different mechanisms (Abdullah, 2024; Amalia, 2026; F. Fauzi et al., 2025; Hussain, 2025). The first operates through institutional design; the second through practice and socialization.

The comparative findings therefore point toward a more precise understanding of embodied Islamic knowledge. In UIN Syekh Wasil Kediri, it appears in the relationship between *hadith* scholarship, epistemological renewal, and academic authority. In UIN Ponorogo, embodiment is connected more visibly to practical and disciplinary learning in fields such as *Ilmu Falak* and science education. In UIN Madura, it appears through the expectation that Islamic values incorporated into science education should become attitudes and behaviors. At Fatoni University, it is associated with the broader experience of Islamic education, ethical identity, community, and peace-oriented formation. These are not identical manifestations, but they share an analytical feature: religious knowledge becomes significant not simply because it is formally present, but because it is performed, interpreted, transmitted, and recognized through academic and social relationships.

This finding also modifies the interpretation of the relationship between institutional marginality and religious resilience. It would be premature to conclude that the less visible *hadith* is within formal curricula, the stronger its lived authority becomes (Berliana et al., 2026). The evidence does not establish such a linear relationship. What it does show is that formal visibility and lived significance are analytically distinct variables. A religious tradition may have substantial curricular visibility but limited influence on interdisciplinary research, while another dimension of that tradition may remain highly influential through mentoring, ritual, ethical conduct, or community practices. The relationship

between the two must therefore be examined empirically within each institution rather than inferred from curriculum structure alone.

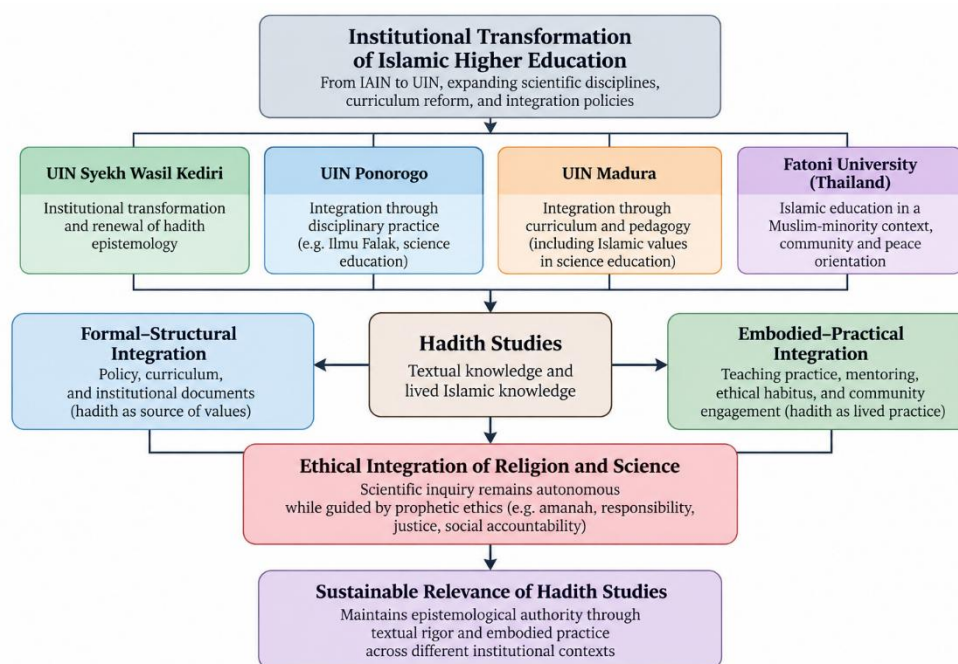


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework of Hadith Integration in Islamic Higher Education

The broader theoretical implication is that the study moves the discussion of religion–science integration from institutional alignment toward academic enactment. Al-Attas (1995), Abdullah (2014), and Guessoum (2011) remain important for understanding the epistemological aspirations behind integration, while Sayuti and Rahiem (2020), and Muqowim and Lessy (2021) demonstrate the difficulties involved in translating those aspirations into institutional practice. The present findings add another dimension by showing that the implementation of integration cannot be examined only through curricula and institutional policies. It must also be examined through the practices by which religious knowledge becomes embodied in academic relationships. In this respect, Asad (1993), Mahmood (2004), Hirschkind (2006), and Ware (2014) provide an analytical vocabulary for understanding dimensions of religious knowledge that may remain invisible in formal institutional documentation.

The findings also have implications for the future study of hadith in Islamic higher education. The persistence of textual approaches documented in contemporary hadith scholarship should not be regarded as a problem to be eliminated, since textual criticism, transmission analysis, and historical interpretation remain foundational to the discipline (Brown, 2009; Motzki, 2010; Sayeed, 2013; El Shamsy, 2020). At the same time, textual rigor does not exhaust the social life of hadith. The findings from the four institutions indicate that hadith also operates through pedagogical exemplification, ethical conduct, mentoring, community engagement, and institutional culture. The more productive direction is therefore not to replace textual scholarship with living-hadith approaches, but to place textual authority and embodied authority within a connected analytical framework.

Accordingly, the central contribution of this study is not the claim that one institutional model of integration is superior to another. Rather, the four cases demonstrate that the relationship between hadith and religion–science integration is institutionally differentiated. UIN Syekh Wasil Kediri shows how institutional transformation can coincide with renewed reflection on hadith epistemology; UIN Ponorogo demonstrates how Islamic knowledge can enter scientific and technological practices

through specific disciplines; UIN Madura illustrates the movement from curricular integration toward pedagogical and behavioral expectations; and Fatoni University shows how Qur'an and Sunnah can operate within a broader environment of Islamic education, community, identity, and peace-oriented formation. The resulting analytical proposition is therefore that the sustainability of hadith in contemporary Islamic higher education depends not only on its formal curricular position, but also on the institutional and interpersonal practices through which its authority is reproduced.

In this sense, the evidence supports a shift from asking whether religion and science have been integrated toward asking how religious knowledge is enacted within particular academic environments. Hadith may function as a textual source, an academic discipline, an ethical vocabulary, a pedagogical resource, or a component of communal identity, and these functions may coexist within the same institution. The four cases demonstrate that embodied Islamic knowledge emerges precisely at the intersection of these dimensions. The significance of hadith in the contemporary university therefore lies not simply in its formal inclusion within an integrative curriculum, but in the extent to which prophetic knowledge becomes part of the ways academic actors teach, learn, deliberate, conduct research, relate to others, and assume responsibility for the consequences of knowledge.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the sustainability of hadith studies in contemporary Islamic higher education cannot be explained solely by institutional transformation, curriculum design, or formal religion–science integration policies. Comparative findings from UIN Syekh Wasil Kediri, UIN Ponorogo, UIN Madura, and Fatoni University indicate that hadith operates through multiple academic and social practices. While formal structures provide institutional recognition for Islamic knowledge, the practical significance of hadith is also produced through lecturer exemplification, pedagogical interaction, mentoring, habituation, community engagement, and ethical conduct. The main finding, therefore, is that the institutional presence of hadith and its lived significance constitute two related but analytically distinct dimensions of Islamic knowledge in higher education.

The main academic contribution of this study is to extend the discussion of religion–science integration from a predominantly epistemological and institutional framework to an embodied–practical framework of Islamic knowledge. Rather than treating hadith merely as a textual source to be integrated with scientific knowledge or as a curricular subject within Islamic universities, this study conceptualizes hadith as an embodied ethical and epistemological resource. This perspective distinguishes between formal–structural integration, which operates through policies, curricula, programs, and institutional structures, and embodied–practical integration, which operates through pedagogical relationships, ethical exemplification, habituation, and community practices. The contribution is therefore not to replace textual approaches with living-hadith approaches, but to connect textual authority with the processes through which hadith becomes socially and pedagogically meaningful. In this formulation, religion–science integration does not require hadith to function as scientific evidence; rather, hadith can provide ethical orientations concerning responsibility, accountability, humility, and the responsible use of knowledge. This framework complements scholarship on Islamic epistemology, hadith studies, and lived religion by showing how prophetic knowledge can remain relevant in increasingly interdisciplinary academic environments.

This study is nevertheless limited by its qualitative comparative design and its focus on four purposively selected Islamic higher-education institutions in Indonesia and Southern Thailand. The findings should therefore not be generalized to all Islamic universities or taken to establish a universal relationship between institutional context and the lived authority of hadith. Further research should examine a broader range of institutions and socio-cultural settings and employ longitudinal, mixed-

methods, or comparative multi-site approaches to investigate how formal curricular integration and embodied religious practice interact over time. Future studies may also examine students' academic trajectories, research outputs, classroom practices, and institutional policies more systematically. Such research would help test and refine the formal–structural and embodied–practical integration framework proposed in this study and further clarify the conditions under which hadith functions as a lived ethical and epistemological resource in contemporary Islamic higher education.

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