

Integration of Naqli (Revealed) Knowledge and Aqli (Rational) Knowledge in Postgraduate Courses for Open and Distance Learning

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Abstract—This study discusses the development process of integrated Naqli and Aqli postgraduate courses for open and distance learning (NAPCOD) at Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM). This is a qualitative study using literature review and document analysis methods by assessing and analyzing discussions in texts content and being translated in the form of narrative approach. The NAPCOD are designed by first identifying a set of four (4) fundamental levels of Naqli and Aqli knowledge integration. These fundamental levels are subsequently converted to NAPCOD development process. The outcomes of this integration emphasize on good characters within the framework of Naqli and Aqli integration.

Index Terms—Open and distance learning, Naqli and Aqli knowledge, pedagogical tools, postgraduate courses, higher education.

I. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge experts in the world today have made a separating line whether in a clear cut or hidden manner between religious and modern science knowledge (Nurkhamimi, 2011). The source of this separation is due to secularism and dualism understandings which had seeped into the education sector. According to Noor Hisham (2013) he stated that as the effect to this disintegration, thus developed two education systems that develop synchronously but separated from one to the other and do not meet at the end.

A system focuses on Aqli (human) knowledge so deeply that it neglects Naqli (revealed) knowledge or offers Aqli knowledge superficially by not making it as the basis for the Aqli knowledge. On the other hand, another system focuses only on Naqli knowledge and neglects Aqli knowledge which is also crucial. Thus, Al-Quran provides guidance in questions related to faith, Islamic law, and good personality, by putting the basis of principles regarding the questions; and Allah S.W.T bestowed upon Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to spread the complete revelation of the principles, as mentioned in His words which means:

“[We sent them] with clear proofs and written ordinances.

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And We revealed to you the message that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them and that they might give thought.” (Quran, 16:44)

Naqli knowledge and Aqli knowledge are two groups of knowledge that are classified according to Islamic criteria. Naqli or revealed knowledge refers to Quranic sciences that encompass recitation, memorisation, interpretation, Hadith, Sunnah, Tawhid, Islamic jurisprudence, Quranic Arabic and other related subjects. It has to be emphasised that recitation and memorisation of the Quranic verses are essential processes to understand the true interpretation of this divine source and subsequently to internalise and practice in everyday life the principles inherent in those verses (Othman *et al.*, 2013).

In line with USIM aspiration integrating Naqli and Aqli knowledge to transform and create value for country, ummah and humanity, the teaching and learning material should guide the students to this vision (Jamilah *et al.*, 2014). An attempt to develop and implement the Naqli and Aqli to curriculum outline for each courses were made by faculties since 2013, but not many documented integration of Naqli and Aqli knowledge reported in literature review especially in open and distance (ODL) Postgraduate Courses. Based on this analysis, there is no concrete evidence and no clear indication has been made to evince that such integration of Naqli and Aqli knowledge in ODL postgraduate courses has been made.

Since there is a gap in this matter, this study will contribute in the Development of Integrated Naqli and Aqli Postgraduate Courses for Open and Distance Learning (NAPCOD) at Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM). It is hoped that the outcome from this unique courses will help USIM in developing generation who can be the creator of a civilization that can embrace Islamic soul in a dynamic and positive way. This generation will also manage changes that will occur in the society based on humanistic and Islamic soul.

II. METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative study using literature review and document analysis methods by assessing and analyzing discussions in texts content and being translated in the form of narrative approach. It is directed on the following:

- 1) The philosophy and vision of USIM as well as the underlying principles and concept that influence the structure of the curriculum;
- 2) Broad content of the curriculum classified under

postgraduate courses for open and distance learning; and

- 3) The values inherent in the NAPCOD that are considered as intangibles

The assessment of the contents is based on reflection by the Subject Matter Experts in research methodology and data analysis subjects who were given the responsibility to develop the contents and the course outline.

III. USIM AS THE PIONEER OF THE NAQLI AND AQLI KNOWLEDGE INTEGRATION

Integration of Naqli and Aqli knowledge is like a fertilizer for USIM, as it will determine the ecosystem in this university. USIM is unique because it is the only institution that upholds the philosophy of integration of Naqli and Aqli into the curriculum and governance. The excellent of USIM as an educational institution that has also been recognized by Cambridge University when they described USIM as the latest leading Islamic university guided by a unique and progressive vision and mission.

At the global level, USIM its objectives to become a referred respected, and relevant institution has heightened the spirits to turn it into a reality. It is hoped that the aspirations and vision of this institution to become a regional reference university in 2016 and become the world's top university in the integration of Naqli and Aqli knowledge by 2025 will be achieved. To become one of the world's leading universities, USIM initiates gradual implementation of its integration of Naqli and Aqli knowledge gradually within the next 5 years. In fact since 2014 USIM has aligned the decision to embrace the philosophy of Naqli and Aqli knowledge integration in all aspects including teaching and learning, research and innovation, administration and management, internationalization, student and staff personal development, financial sustainability, community engagement as well as governance and policy based on 4 fundamental levels of Naqli and Aqli knowledge integration as suggested by Mohd Rushdan (2013) viz:

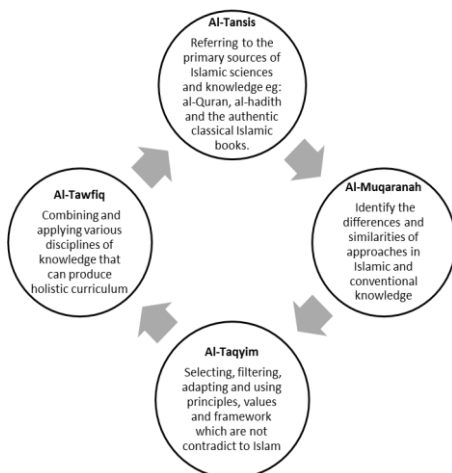


Fig. 1. Four fundamental levels of Naqli and Aqli knowledge integration.

Each of these levels can serve either as an entity that is independent of other levels or as stage in a process that influences other levels. These 4 levels as shown in Fig. 1 will be used in NAPCOD development.

IV. NAPCOD DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AT USIM

Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) is the 12th public higher education institution in Malaysia. USIM aims to uphold and enhance Islamic studies through the integration of Naqli (revealed) and Aqli (human) with emphasis on the use of information technology in education and research system, as well as the mastery of Arabic and English.

Centre for Graduate Studies (CGS) of USIM is responsible to administering and monitoring academic programmes as well as student's academic progress. The centre enhances academic research to generate knowledgeable, competent, and professional graduates in various fields. The main objective is to create opportunities for researchers and students to share the knowledge relating to Islam and Muslim community. An approach to this end is through the integration of Naqli and Aqli knowledge. This concept of integration is adopted in the development of NAPCOD that takes into cognizance the philosophy of USIM as well as its vision which is, "integrating Naqli (revealed) and Aqli (human) knowledge to transform and create value for country, ummah and humanity". 4 fundamental levels of Naqli and Aqli knowledge integration considered for its development are;

Level 1: Al-Tansis – Ayatization

Employ Naqli knowledge and examples in NAPCOD and emphasizing the role of Islamic traditions in enhancing research activities behaviors. As an example, the lecturer describes about effective strategies on how to write a good thesis or research paper for postgraduate students by explaining about the journey of Prophet Ibrahim searching for god (problem statement-hypothesis-methodology-pilot testing) as narrated in primary sources of Islamic sciences and knowledge such as al-Quran, al-hadith and the authentic classical Islamic books. The story of Prophet Ibrahim can be an example for postgraduate students as it can motivate them to conduct their research project in a good manner. However the challenge now is to align and coordinate this method with the modern theories in Research and Data Analysis subjects.

Level 2: Al-Muqaranah – Comparison

The Islamic and western perspectives or theories are taught side-by side in research methodology. In this approach, the assignment and tasks for these NAPCOD will involve both western and Islamic perspectives. Later, the lecturers will discuss with the students the pros and cons of both resources. This is the ideal, which is rarely used. Later, the lecturers will consolidate Naqli and Aqli knowledge examples to enhance students' knowledge and engagement in research activities.

Level 3: Al-Taqyim – Reviewing

There has to be a paradigm shift in postgraduate research and publications. Instead of individual efforts based on narrow disciplinary perspectives, focus will be on identifying and reviewing the problems of the Muslim ummah and humanity at large, both in Malaysia and all over the world, and trying to develop solutions for them. Since human problems are rarely neatly packed and compartmentalized according to academic disciplines, the only way we can create breakthrough innovations and solutions is by taking a multi-disciplinary perspective. Thus postgraduate students need to integrate the Naqli and Aqli knowledge and examples to direct students' research behaviors and to appreciate the

role of Naqli in research advancement to enhance students' research skills and motivation.

On the other hand, the lecturers are encouraged to review and apply the concept of team-teaching that includes Naqli and Aqli knowledge to be equally involved in the analysis of these types of knowledge focusing on problem-based learning. With the concept of team-teaching students not only learn, but lecturers will also learn the ways of handling the case study. Team-teaching is a concept that is practiced now in global higher education because the existing information in a field is so deep that a person is no longer able to know all of it in detail. The best thing is transdisciplinary in which there is a close relationship and cross-discipline between Naqli and Aqli knowledge. USIM will reach this stage when there are more lecturers trained in both types of knowledge. At the same time, the university's strategy is to hire its own excellent graduates that have been nurtured by Naqli and Aqli knowledge and become lecturers in USIM.

Level 4: Al-Tawfiq – Integration

Integration is a process of combining, adapting and incorporating knowledge into something that would be benefited the students and community at large. USIM is equipped with its own e-learning system known as GOALS (Global Open Access Learning System) based on Moodle as an initiative to integrate the learning contents in a progressive way (Nurkhamimi, 2014). With its inception in 2011, USIM GOALS has since undergone periodic upgrading process (Alwi et al., 2014). From uploading course outlines, posting notices, setting up online quizzes to initiating online forum, USIM lecturers utilized GOALS in their teaching and learning activities. Looking at the advantageous function of this system, there's a need to integrate Moodle as an innovative platform to support the smooth running of the NAPCOD in USIM. This kind of platform is crucial in ensuring the process of integration to occur through learning, education, observation and the use of reason in our journey of integration. More importantly, al-Quran encourages people towards scientific research:

“And whose brings the truth and believes there in such are the dutiful” (Quran, 39:33)

Fig. 2 illustrates the conceptual framework of NAPCOD.

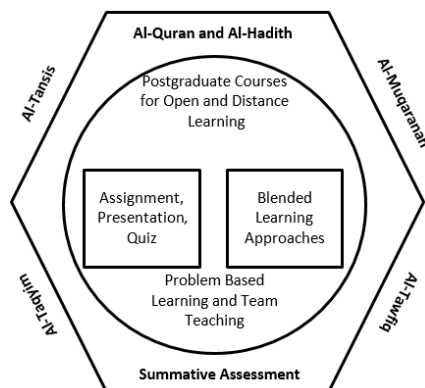


Fig. 2. NAPCOD development model.

V. CONCLUSION

Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia has implemented unique postgraduate courses for open and distance learning that

harmonized revealed knowledge with rational knowledge. It is the first step in integrating Naqli and Aqli so that its graduates have a firm fundamental in their vertical relationship with Allah and a strong commitment in their horizontal relationship with society. It has a long way to achieve its aspiration. Nevertheless, the NAPCOD built on the foundation of the Naqli and Aqli knowledge, with an orientation to a value system that is relevant to postgraduate courses for ODL and the emphasis on Naqli and Aqli knowledge augers well in the quest to nurture a noble generation and a knowledge society. In implementing NAPCOD it faces several challenges from the dimensions of staff, students and lack of reference materials. The greatest challenge in moving forward is not to lose sight of the underlying principles and concepts of integration of Naqli and Aqli. The integration of Naqli and Aqli knowledge in postgraduate courses for open and distance learning is needed to be done in order to save the Muslims and humanity today from problems and issues pertaining to crime towards knowledge development and nurturing process either in a family or in a society. In making this into a realization, the integration process should be done in a serious, well-planned and wise manner. The outcome from these courses will eventually make them as the ultimate generation of all time.

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