

SAFAVID KNOWLEDGE TRADITION FOR SCIENCE INTEGRATION IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION

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Abstract

The Safavid civilization represents one of the most significant periods in Islamic history, making substantial contributions to the advancement of knowledge through the integration of religious sciences and rational sciences. This study aims to analyze the contributions of the Safavid civilization to the development of knowledge and to examine its implications for the integration of science within Islamic education. Employing a qualitative approach through library research, the study draws upon data collected from books, scholarly journals, and other relevant academic sources. The data were analyzed descriptively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that scientific and intellectual progress during the Safavid era was supported by governmental policies, the establishment of madrasas and libraries, and the patronage provided to scholars and intellectuals. These developments fostered significant achievements in philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, medicine, art, architecture, and calligraphy. Furthermore, the Safavid intellectual tradition successfully integrated reason, revelation, and spiritual intuition, particularly through the philosophical thought of Mulla Sadra, thereby preventing a dichotomous separation between religious and secular knowledge. This study demonstrates that the Safavid intellectual tradition provides a historical and epistemological foundation for the contemporary paradigm of science integration by illustrating how the harmonious relationship between religious and rational sciences can address the persistent dichotomy of knowledge in Islamic education. The findings indicate that the Safavid model of scholarship is not only historically significant but also practically applicable to the development of integrative curricula, interdisciplinary learning approaches, the strengthening of research culture, and educational practices that balance scientific competence with Islamic values. This research contributes a historical perspective on knowledge integration as an alternative framework for addressing the persistent dichotomy of knowledge in contemporary Islamic education.

Keywords: Safavid civilization; Knowledge development; Science integration; Islamic education; Mulla Sadra.

INTRODUCTION

The history of Islamic civilization demonstrates that the progress of a society is determined not only by political and economic strength but also by the advancement of knowledge, which serves as the fundamental foundation of civilization. Following a period of decline after the collapse of the Abbasid Caliphate due to the Mongol invasion in 1258 CE, the Islamic world experienced a resurgence through the emergence of three major empires: the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Empires. These empires not only succeeded in establishing political stability within their respective territories but also made significant contributions to the development of Islamic civilization in various fields, including governance, economics, art, education, and scholarship (Alifah, Erman, Fauzi, & Zulfan, 2024). Among these three powers, the Safavid dynasty possessed distinctive characteristics, as it successfully transformed Persia into one of the foremost centers of Islamic intellectual development, fostering remarkable achievements in philosophy, theology, art, and science.

Established in Persia during the early sixteenth century, the Safavid dynasty reached its zenith particularly under the reign of Shah Abbas I. During this period, the government demonstrated a strong commitment to the advancement of knowledge through the establishment

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of madrasas, libraries, and centers of scholarly inquiry. The city of Isfahan emerged as a prominent intellectual hub, attracting scholars, philosophers, and scientists from various regions (Azizah & Mawardi, 2023). The scholarly tradition that flourished during the Safavid era was not limited to religious sciences but also encompassed rational disciplines such as philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and architectural arts (Samudra, Sumanti, & Daulay, 2024). This condition reflects the Safavid civilization's broad commitment to intellectual development and its refusal to draw a rigid distinction between religious and secular forms of knowledge.

The Safavid dynasty, founded in Persia in the early sixteenth century, attained its golden age particularly during the reign of Shah Abbas I. Under his leadership, the state placed considerable emphasis on intellectual advancement through the construction of educational institutions, libraries, and scholarly centers. Isfahan developed into a vibrant center of learning that attracted distinguished religious scholars, philosophers, and scientists from across the Islamic world. The intellectual tradition cultivated during the Safavid period extended beyond religious studies to include rational sciences such as philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and architecture. This demonstrates that the Safavid civilization embraced a comprehensive vision of knowledge and did not enforce a strict separation between religious and worldly sciences (Matthee, 2025).

One of the most prominent intellectual figures of the Safavid period was Mulla Sadra, who developed the concept of *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah* (Transcendent Philosophy). His thought serves as compelling evidence that the Safavid intellectual tradition was founded upon the integration of reason, revelation, and spiritual intuition (Ajidin & Kuswanjono, 2025). Furthermore, the flourishing of architecture, calligraphy, and various branches of knowledge demonstrates that the Safavid dynasty functioned not merely as a political power but also as a center of civilizational development that regarded knowledge as a fundamental instrument for societal advancement (Lathifah, Daulay, & Dahlan, 2021). Consequently, examining the Safavid contribution to the development of knowledge is essential for understanding how an Islamic civilization was able to cultivate an advanced and sustainable intellectual tradition.

On the other hand, contemporary Islamic education continues to face a fundamental challenge, namely the dichotomy between religious knowledge and scientific knowledge. Religious sciences are often perceived as disciplines concerned primarily with spiritual and moral dimensions, whereas scientific disciplines are frequently regarded as empirical and secular in nature. This dichotomy has led to fragmented educational practices that are less capable of producing learners who possess a balanced combination of scientific competence, critical thinking skills, and Islamic values (Suwarno, 2019). In contrast, the classical Islamic intellectual tradition viewed knowledge as a unified entity originating from Allah, thereby rejecting any dichotomous separation between religious and worldly sciences.

Various efforts have been undertaken to overcome the dichotomy of knowledge through the development of science integration paradigms within Islamic education. Contemporary Muslim scholars, such as Amin Abdullah with his integration-interconnection paradigm and Mulyadhi Kartanegara with his epistemology-based concept of knowledge integration, have emphasized the importance of constructing educational systems that holistically connect religious sciences, social sciences, and natural sciences. Nevertheless, the implementation of science integration in Islamic education continues to encounter numerous challenges related to curriculum design, instructional methods, and prevailing epistemological paradigms (Abdullah, 2014). Therefore, historical studies are needed to provide both conceptual foundations and practical models of knowledge integration that have previously been successfully implemented within Islamic civilization.

Numerous studies on the Safavid dynasty have been conducted by previous scholars. The study by Azizah and Mawardi (2023), entitled "The Development of Knowledge during the Safavid Dynasty," focused on the advancement of various branches of knowledge during the Safavid period, including philosophy, astronomy, and education. While the study successfully described the intellectual achievements of the Safavid era, it did not examine the relevance of these developments

to the contemporary discourse on science integration within Islamic education (Azizah & Mawardi, 2023).

Meanwhile, Abdullah's (2014) study entitled "Religion, Science and Culture: An Integrated, Interconnected Paradigm of Science" discusses the integration-interconnection paradigm as an approach to overcoming the dichotomy of knowledge in modern education. Although the study provides a strong conceptual foundation for knowledge integration, it does not explore historical examples from Islamic civilization that successfully implemented the integration of religious and rational sciences in practice (Abdullah, 2014).

Based on these studies, there remains a significant gap in the literature concerning the relationship between the Safavid civilization's contribution to intellectual development and the implementation of science integration within Islamic education. Accordingly, this study seeks to address that gap by analyzing the intellectual contributions of the Safavid civilization and explaining their implications as both historical and conceptual foundations for the advancement of science integration in contemporary Islamic education.

Although previous studies have examined the intellectual achievements of the Safavid dynasty and the concept of science integration independently, none has explicitly connected the Safavid intellectual tradition with the contemporary implementation of science integration in Islamic education. Existing studies remain descriptive or conceptual and do not explain how the Safavid model can provide a historical and epistemological framework for addressing the dichotomy of knowledge in modern Islamic education. Therefore, this study offers a novel contribution by integrating historical analysis of the Safavid civilization with contemporary discourse on science integration in Islamic education.

The Safavid civilization represents an important historical model that can serve as a reference for developing a paradigm of science integration in Islamic education. The intellectual tradition that flourished during the Safavid period demonstrates a harmonious relationship among religious sciences, philosophy, and scientific inquiry, resulting in significant intellectual achievements. Examining the Safavid contribution is valuable not only for understanding the historical development of Islamic knowledge but also for inspiring the formulation of integrative educational models that are relevant to the needs of modern society.

Previous studies have extensively examined the Safavid civilization from various perspectives, including the development of science, philosophy, architecture, and Islamic civilization (Azizah & Mawardi, 2023; Baghirov, 2024; Mar'ah et al., 2021). Other scholars have specifically explored Islamic education during the Safavid period (Mujiburrahman, 2024), the philosophical contributions of Mulla Sadra (Muslih et al., 2025; Anwar, 2024), and the paradigm of knowledge integration in contemporary Islamic education (Abdullah, 2014; Kartanegara, 2003). However, these studies tend to examine the historical achievements of the Safavid civilization, its philosophical legacy, and contemporary educational paradigms as separate areas of inquiry, leaving limited attention to how the Safavid intellectual tradition can serve as a historical and epistemological foundation for the contemporary integration of science in Islamic education. Accordingly, this study seeks to bridge this gap by connecting the intellectual history of the Safavid civilization with the current discourse on science integration in Islamic education. Rather than merely describing the scientific achievements of the Safavid era, this study demonstrates how the Safavid model of harmonizing religious sciences, rational sciences, and spiritual knowledge provides a relevant framework for overcoming the dichotomy of knowledge in contemporary Islamic education. Therefore, the novelty of this study lies in offering a historical perspective that supports the development of integrative curricula, interdisciplinary learning, and the strengthening of research culture within Islamic educational institutions.

Based on this research gap, this study adopts a historical-analytical perspective to examine the relevance of the Safavid intellectual tradition to the contemporary paradigm of science integration in Islamic education. Historical data are analyzed not merely to reconstruct past events but to identify epistemological principles and educational values that remain applicable to

contemporary Islamic education. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the contributions of the Safavid civilization to the development of knowledge and to examine how its intellectual tradition provides a historical and epistemological foundation for the integration of science in contemporary Islamic education.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a library research design. This approach was selected because the study focuses on examining the literature concerning the contribution of the Safavid civilization to the development of knowledge and its implications for the integration of science in Islamic education. The data were collected from books, scholarly journals, and other relevant academic sources. The literature sources were selected purposively based on their relevance to the objectives of this study. Historical references concerning the Safavid civilization were used to examine the development of scientific traditions and educational institutions during the Safavid period. Philosophical works, particularly those discussing Mulla Sadra and the School of Isfahan, were employed to analyze the epistemological foundations of knowledge integration. In addition, contemporary literature on science integration in Islamic education was included to establish a conceptual framework for interpreting the relevance of the Safavid intellectual tradition within present-day educational discourse. Data analysis was conducted using a descriptive-historical method through the stages of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. This research design supports the achievement of the study's objectives by providing a comprehensive understanding of the development of the Safavid intellectual tradition and its relevance to science integration in Islamic education (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Development of Science during the Safavid Dynasty

Government Policies Toward Knowledge Development During the Safavid Dynasty

The advancement of knowledge during the Safavid dynasty cannot be separated from governmental policies that positioned scholarship as a fundamental element of civilizational development. Safavid rulers, particularly during the reigns of Shah Tahmasb (1524–1576 CE) and Shah Abbas I (1587–1629 CE), demonstrated a strong commitment to intellectual advancement by supporting religious scholars and scientists, establishing educational institutions, and providing patronage for various scholarly activities. These policies transformed Persia into one of the leading centers of Islamic learning during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Tavako, 2024).

First, support for Religious Scholars and Intellectuals. The Safavid dynasty regarded religious scholars and intellectuals as essential actors in maintaining political stability and advancing civilization. Consequently, Safavid rulers accorded scholars a highly respected status by involving them in governmental administration, judicial affairs, education, and broader social life. Religious scholars functioned not only as spiritual leaders but also as royal advisors who exerted considerable influence on state policies (Idris, 2025).

During the reign of Shah Abbas I, support for intellectual circles became even more pronounced. Shah Abbas invited numerous scholars and intellectuals from various regions, particularly Jabal Amil (present-day Lebanon), Iraq, and Bahrain, to settle in Persia. This policy was intended not only to strengthen scholarly traditions but also to reinforce Twelver Shi'ism as the official ideological identity of the empire. These scholars subsequently taught in madrasas, produced scholarly works, and established extensive intellectual networks that contributed significantly to the growth of knowledge (Farhat, 2014).

One of the most prominent figures who benefited from royal support was Bahā' al-Dīn al-'Āmilī, widely known as Shaykh Bahā'ī. He was a distinguished scholar, philosopher, mathematician, astronomer, and architect who played a crucial role in the development of knowledge during the Safavid era. With the support of the state, Shaykh Bahā'ī established

influential scholarly circles that served as important channels for the transmission of knowledge. These intellectual activities demonstrate that the Safavid government not only protected scholars but also fostered an environment conducive to intellectual growth and academic advancement (Tavakol, 2024).

In addition to Shaykh Bahā'ī, the Safavid period also witnessed the emergence of Mulla Sadra, who developed the system of Transcendent Philosophy (al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah). Mulla Sadra's intellectual project, which integrated reason, revelation, and spiritual intuition, flourished within the vibrant intellectual climate fostered by the Safavid state. This demonstrates that government policies did not restrict scholarly development to specific disciplines but instead encouraged the growth of both religious and rational sciences (Lathifah et al., 2021).

Second, establishment of Madrasas and Libraries. One of the most significant Safavid policies for promoting knowledge was the establishment of educational institutions and libraries. The government recognized that intellectual progress required institutions capable of functioning as centers of learning and knowledge dissemination. Consequently, numerous madrasas were established in major cities, particularly in Isfahan, which became the imperial capital during the reign of Shah Abbas I (Azizah & Mawardi, 2023).

Safavid madrasas did not limit their curricula to religious sciences such as Qur'anic exegesis, hadith studies, jurisprudence, and theology. They also offered instruction in philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, logic, medicine, and literature. As a result, these institutions functioned as multidisciplinary centers of learning that integrated religious knowledge with rational sciences. Such an educational model illustrates that the Safavid dynasty did not embrace the rigid dichotomy of knowledge often found in certain modern educational systems (Samudra et al., 2024).

In addition to madrasas, the Safavid government established libraries as centers for the preservation and advancement of knowledge. Royal libraries (kitab-khana) housed manuscripts, literary works, religious texts, and numerous scholarly writings. Shah Abbas I was particularly renowned for his commitment to expanding libraries and enriching manuscript collections, thereby strengthening the intellectual infrastructure of the empire (Emami, 2019).

Libraries served not merely as repositories of books but also as venues for scholarly discussion and intellectual inquiry. Scholars frequently gathered in these spaces to conduct research, copy manuscripts, and exchange ideas. The availability of well-developed libraries ensured the continuous transmission of knowledge and encouraged the production of new intellectual works that enriched the scholarly tradition of the Safavid era (Farhat, 2014).

Third, royal Patronage of Scientific Activities. The advancement of science during the Safavid period was facilitated by a robust system of royal patronage. Patronage, defined as both material and non-material support extended by rulers to scholars, scientists, artists, and educational institutions, played a critical role. Through this mechanism, the state provided the necessary funding, infrastructure, and protection for various intellectual endeavors, thereby enabling scholars to pursue their work optimally (Idris, 2025).

Shah Abbas I was the most prominent figure in fostering scientific activities through such patronage. He commissioned the construction of mosques, madrasas, libraries, and educational centers in Isfahan and other major cities. Under his governance, Isfahan emerged as a cultural and scientific hub, achieving widespread recognition throughout the Islamic world (Anar, 2017).

Royal patronage was also evidenced by the support for manuscript production and transcription. Writers, calligraphers, and scientists were provided with the resources to produce scholarly works, which were subsequently preserved in royal libraries or disseminated to the wider public. This institutional support fostered a vibrant culture of literacy and accelerated the proliferation of knowledge across the Persian territories (Tavakol, 2024).

Furthermore, Safavid patronage was not confined to religious sciences; it extended to philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, architecture, and various other disciplines. Consequently, the policies of the Safavid government established an intellectual ecosystem that facilitated the

integration of religious and rational sciences. This environment served as a primary factor in establishing the Safavid Dynasty as a pivotal center of Islamic civilization during the late medieval and early modern periods (Safitri & Amril, 2025).

The Advancement of Islamic Philosophy during the Safavid Dynasty

The advancement of Islamic philosophy represents one of the Safavid Dynasty's most significant achievements in the realm of science. During this era, Persia developed into an intellectual center that synthesized diverse Islamic scholarly traditions, including Peripatetic philosophy (al-Hikmah al-Masya'iyah), Illuminationist philosophy (al-Hikmah al-Isyraqiyyah), Sufism, and theology. The Safavid administration provided extensive support for philosophical development by creating venues for scholars and philosophers to engage in instruction, discourse, and the production of academic treatises. This environment nurtured a distinct philosophical tradition, which reached its zenith through the thought of Mulla Sadra, a seminal philosopher often regarded as the renovator of Islamic philosophy in the 17th century. The evolution of philosophy during the Safavid era not only preserved the classical Islamic intellectual heritage but also generated new paradigms capable of unifying diverse strands of Islamic thought into a comprehensive system (Nurkhalis, 2011).

First, the Role of Mulla Sadra. Mulla Sadra, or Şadr al-Dīn Muhammad al-Shirazi (1571–1640 CE), served as a central figure in the development of Islamic philosophy under the Safavid Dynasty. Born in Shiraz, he received instruction from preeminent scholars and philosophers, including Mir Damad and Sheikh Baha'i. In his intellectual trajectory, Mulla Sadra integrated rational philosophy with the study of Sufism, Quranic exegesis (tafsir), hadith, and theology. The Safavid rulers granted him considerable intellectual freedom, allowing him to produce numerous monumental works, most notably al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah fi al-Asfar al-'Aqliyah al-Arba'ah (The Four Intellectual Journeys). Through this work, Mulla Sadra successfully constructed a new philosophical system known as al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah, or "Transcendental Philosophy." This system exerted significant influence not only in Persia but also extended to Iraq, India, and other regions of the Islamic world, cementing Mulla Sadra's status as one of the most influential Muslim philosophers in history (Muslih, Syamil, & Kusuma, 2025).

Beyond his philosophical contributions, Mulla Sadra functioned as a nexus between classical intellectual traditions and the contemporary requirements of Islamic thought. He critiqued philosophical tendencies that relied excessively on pure reason, while simultaneously rejecting mystical interpretations that disregarded logic. Consequently, he endeavored to construct a system of thought that harmonized reason, spiritual experience, and revelation. This approach rendered Safavid-era Islamic philosophy more dynamic; rather than being confined to theoretical disputes, it addressed metaphysical, theological, and spiritual inquiries with profound depth (Ajidin & Kuswanjono, 2025).

Second, the Concept of Al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah. The concept of al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah represents the pinnacle of Mulla Sadra's philosophical discourse, denoting "Transcendental Wisdom." This philosophy emerged as a synthesis of preceding Islamic schools of thought: Peripatetic philosophy (emphasizing rationality), Illuminationist philosophy (prioritizing intuition and inner illumination), and Sufism (stressing spiritual experience). Mulla Sadra posited that truth could not be attained through reason alone but required the support of spiritual experience and divine revelation. Thus, al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah is grounded in three primary sources: burhan (rational demonstration), irfan (mystical intuition), and shari'ah (revelation) (Anwar, 2024).

This philosophical system is underpinned by several core concepts. First, the principle of ashalat al-wujud (primacy of existence), which asserts that existence is more fundamental than essence. Second, tasykik al-wujud (gradation of existence), which posits that reality consists of varying levels of existence. Third, al-harakah al-jauhariyyah (substantial motion), the theory that all reality is in a constant state of flux and development. Finally, ittihad al-'aql wa al-ma'qul (the unity of the knower and the known), which explains that the act of cognition is not merely

intellectual but involves existential transformation within the human subject. These concepts have rendered al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah one of the most comprehensive and enduringly influential systems in Islamic philosophy (Usman, 2022).

Third, integration of Philosophy, Sufism, and Theology. A defining characteristic of Islamic philosophy during the Safavid era was the successful integration of philosophy, Sufism, and theology into a harmonious system. Prior to Mulla Sadra, these three disciplines were often perceived as distinct or even mutually exclusive, philosophy emphasized reason, Sufism prioritized spiritual experience, and theology focused on doctrinal apologetics. Mulla Sadra, however, argued that these disciplines shared a common objective: the attainment of truth and a holistic understanding of reality. Consequently, he formulated a philosophical framework that synthesized these elements, resolving perceived conflicts between reason, the heart, and revelation (Nurkhalis, 2011).

This integration is exemplified by Mulla Sadra's methodological approach to knowledge acquisition. He maintained that perfect knowledge is attained through the synergy of rational argumentation, mystical experience, and divine guidance. Reason facilitates a logical understanding of reality, Sufism purifies the soul to receive truth intuitively, and revelation serves as the ultimate criterion to prevent cognitive error. Thus, Islamic philosophy in the Safavid period did not develop in a secularized or isolated manner; rather, it functioned as a vehicle for the refinement of spirituality and faith. This intellectual tradition established the Safavid Dynasty as a preeminent center for the advancement of Islamic philosophy and continues to inform contemporary discourse on the integration of knowledge in Islamic education (Arifa, 2017).

Development of Exact Sciences and Medicine during the Safavid Dynasty

The advancement of science during the Safavid Dynasty was not limited to philosophy and religious studies but also extended to the development of exact sciences and medicine. Governmental support for intellectual activities and the presence of educational institutions established Persia as a primary center for scientific development between the 16th and 17th centuries CE. Astronomy, mathematics, and medicine progressed through the transmission of knowledge from previous generations as well as through research and pedagogical activities conducted by Safavid scholars. Although the development of exact sciences during the Safavid period is often considered less prominent than that of the Abbasid era, various studies demonstrate that scientific activity remained active and made significant contributions to the continuity of the Islamic scientific tradition (Barker, 2017).

First, astronomy. Astronomy was one of the branches of exact sciences that continued to flourish during the Safavid Dynasty. Safavid scholars inherited astronomical traditions from previous eras, particularly from the traditions of Maragha and Samarkand, and further developed them through the transcription of manuscripts, celestial observations, and instruction in madrasas. Astronomy was studied not only for scientific purposes but was also utilized to determine the qibla direction, the Hijri calendar, prayer times, and navigational needs. Therefore, astronomy held a significant position in both societal life and educational institutions during the Safavid era (Barker, 2017).

The development of astronomy in the Safavid period was marked by the production of various scientific works and astronomical instruments used in observing celestial bodies. Safavid scholars also placed great importance on the reproduction and preservation of classical scientific manuscripts, such as *Kitāb al-Kawākib al-Thābitah* by Abd al-Rahman al-Sufi, which contains descriptions of fixed stars. The involvement of the court in supporting the copying and development of these manuscripts indicates that astronomy remained an essential part of the Safavid scientific tradition. Furthermore, astronomy during the Safavid era developed in integration with mathematics, resulting in more accurate astronomical calculations (Brentjes, 2014).

Second, mathematics. Mathematics also experienced significant development during the Safavid period. This field was not only studied as a theoretical science but was also applied in

various aspects of life, such as astronomy, architecture, trade, and governmental administration. Safavid scholars developed mathematical traditions derived from earlier Muslim scientists and produced numerous manuscripts covering arithmetic, geometry, algebra, and trigonometry. These scholarly activities demonstrate that the Islamic mathematical tradition remained vibrant and continued to evolve throughout the Safavid era (Brentjes, 2004).

A prominent figure in the development of mathematics during the Safavid period was Bahā' al-Dīn al-'Āmilī, also known as Sheikh Baha'i (1547–1621 CE). He was recognized as both a scholar and a mathematician who produced various works in the fields of mathematics, astronomy, and engineering. Through the intellectual circles he led, Sheikh Baha'i successfully transmitted mathematical knowledge to many students and scholars of his time. The intensive teaching and scientific discussions indicate that mathematics was one of the disciplines that received considerable attention within the Safavid educational system (Tavakol, 2024).

Third, medicine. The field of medicine also saw rapid development during the Safavid Dynasty. The Islamic medical tradition, which had evolved since the Abbasid period, was preserved and advanced through education, medical practice, and the authorship of scientific works. Safavid physicians integrated classical medical theories originating from Hippocrates, Galen, and Ibn Sina with empirical experience gained from daily clinical practice. This gave medicine during the Safavid era a character that was both theoretical and practical (Hamarneh, 1974).

Various hospitals and medical centers were established to meet societal needs and to serve as training grounds for aspiring physicians. Additionally, many scientific works in medicine were written and studied during the Safavid period, covering internal medicine, surgery, pharmacology, obstetrics, and public health. Research on the medical history of the Safavid period suggests that this era represents one of the crucial phases in the history of Persian medicine, as it succeeded in developing an organized system of medical education and produced numerous influential scientific works (Orimi & Asadi, 2022).

Fourth, the development of observatories and scientific education. The progress of exact sciences during the Safavid period was also supported by the development of scientific education and astronomical observation activities. Madrasas functioned not only as places to study religious sciences but also as centers for the teaching of mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and other rational sciences. This educational system facilitated the integration of religious and scientific knowledge, thus fostering a multidisciplinary intellectual tradition (Mujiburrahman, 2024).

Although the Safavid Dynasty did not build observatories as large as those in Maragha or Samarkand, astronomical observation activities were still carried out through the use of astronomical instruments and the study of earlier scientific works. The government and the Safavid elite provided support for the preservation of scientific manuscripts, the development of research centers, and the establishment of intellectual circles that served as mediums for the transmission of knowledge. Consequently, scientific education during the Safavid era was not oriented solely toward the mastery of theory but also encouraged continuous research and scientific development. This tradition became one of the vital foundations for the continuity of Islamic science in the early modern period (Brentjes, 2014).

Advancement of Art, Architecture, and Calligraphy

The advancement of art, architecture, and calligraphy represents one of the significant achievements of the Safavid Dynasty, which contributed to the development of scientific culture in Persia. During the Safavid period, art was not viewed merely as aesthetic expression but also as a means to build the identity of the civilization and to disseminate scientific values. The Safavid government paid great attention to the development of painting, decorative arts, calligraphy, and architecture by involving artists and scholars in various royal construction projects. This artistic development fostered a harmonious blend of aesthetic, spiritual, and intellectual elements, resulting in monumental works that were not only artistically valuable but also served as media for education and the spread of knowledge. This tradition shows that art during the Safavid era had a

close relationship with the development of scientific culture, as many artworks incorporated elements of mathematics, geometry, astronomy, and philosophical symbols that were subjects of study for scholars at that time (Mar'ah, Mawardi, & Purnomo, 2021).

The development of calligraphy during the Safavid period reached a highly advanced level and became one of the hallmarks of Persian civilization. The art of calligraphy was not only used for writing the Quran but was also applied to the walls of mosques, madrasas, palaces, scientific manuscripts, and various other art objects. Calligraphy flourished alongside the increased production of manuscripts and intellectual activities within the royal court. The city of Isfahan subsequently gave birth to the "School of Isfahan," a style of painting and calligraphy that developed after Isfahan was established as the Safavid capital in the late 16th century. This school is known for the works of famous painters and calligraphers, such as Reza Abbasi, who successfully developed the Persian art style by combining traditional elements with new influences from outside Persia. The development of painting and calligraphy demonstrates that the culture of literacy and intellectual activity in the Safavid period progressed in tandem with the highly advanced development of visual arts (Farhad, 2007).

The advancement of Safavid art cannot be separated from the development of architecture, which became a symbol of the empire's glory. Various monumental buildings were constructed by integrating aesthetic elements, social functions, and religious values. Mosques, palaces, madrasas, gardens, and bazaars were built with geometric ornaments, calligraphy, and decorative patterns that indicate the progress of mathematics and art during that era. Safavid architectural art demonstrates a close link between science and art because the construction process required the simultaneous mastery of mathematics, geometry, construction engineering, and the art of decoration. Thus, the development of architecture not only produced beautiful buildings but also served as proof of the intellectual progress of the Safavid society (Mar'ah et al., 2021).

The city of Isfahan became the primary center for the development of art, architecture, and civilization during the Safavid period, particularly after Shah Abbas I moved the capital from Qazvin to Isfahan in 1598 CE. The relocation of the capital was not merely an administrative decision but was part of a grand project to build a center of power that reflected the political, religious, and cultural glory of the Safavids. Shah Abbas I built various public facilities such as mosques, palaces, madrasas, bazaars, gardens, and main roads that were integrated within a well-planned urban layout. Naqsh-e Jahan Square became the center of social, economic, religious, and intellectual activities that brought together various elements of society in one monumental public space. This organized urban spatial arrangement made Isfahan not only a center of government but also a center of Islamic civilization with a major influence on the Islamic world in the 17th century (Moradi & Salimi, 2024).

The magnificence of Isfahan is also reflected in various iconic buildings such as the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, the Ali Qapu Palace, and the Safavid palace complex, which were built with a blend of architectural art, calligraphy, and highly intricate geometric ornaments. These buildings served not only as symbols of royal power but also as centers for educational, religious, and intellectual activities. Therefore, Isfahan is often nicknamed "Nisf-e Jahan" or "half the world" due to the extraordinary progress of its civilization, art, and culture. The advancement of art, architecture, and calligraphy that flourished in this city demonstrates that the Safavid Dynasty succeeded in building a civilization that integrated beauty, science, and spirituality into one harmonious unity (Baboldashti, Tabaeian, & Dastgerdi, 2018).

Contribution of the Safavid Civilization to the Advancement of Science

The Safavid civilization made significant contributions to the advancement of science through its efforts to integrate religious and rational sciences. During this era, science was understood as a unified whole that could not be dichotomized. Safavid scholars and scientists held the view that revelation, reason, and spiritual intuition were complementary sources of knowledge, such that all branches of science shared a common objective: the pursuit of truth and the attainment of closeness to God. This perspective was widely propagated through an intellectual

tradition known as the School of Isfahan. This school successfully integrated various Islamic schools of thought, such as Peripatetic philosophy, Illuminationist philosophy (al-Hikmah al-Isyraqiyyah), Sufism, and kalam (theology), into a comprehensive framework. Figures such as Mir Damad, Sheikh Baha'i, and Mulla Sadra represented this intellectual tradition, which did not limit scholarly inquiry to either religious or rational fields but harmonized both. Therefore, the development of science during the Safavid era demonstrates an intellectual tradition that was holistic and multidimensional (Baghirov, 2024).

This holistic intellectual tradition was further reinforced through the development of educational institutions that functioned as centers for multidisciplinary study. Madrasas during the Safavid period were not merely places to study religious sciences such as exegesis (tafsir), hadith, jurisprudence, and theology, but also taught philosophy, logic, astronomy, mathematics, medicine, literature, and art. After Shah Abbas I moved the royal capital to Isfahan, the city developed into an educational and cultural hub that attracted numerous scholars and scientists from various regions. Large madrasas were built and supported by a waqf (endowment) system, which allowed for the sustainability of educational activities. Furthermore, libraries developed as centers for storing manuscripts and knowledge sources used for both research and instruction. The existence of libraries integrated with educational institutions ensured that the process of knowledge transmission occurred effectively and strengthened the academic culture within Safavid society (Islamova, 2025).

In addition to madrasas and libraries, the tradition of halaqah (study circles) or scientific assemblies became a vital means for the advancement of science during the Safavid period. Halaqah were conducted in mosques, madrasas, libraries, and even within the royal court, enabling open dialogue and the exchange of ideas between teachers and students. This tradition of scientific discussion encouraged the growth of a culture of critical thinking and enriched the intellectual wealth of society. Scholars and scientists did not merely transmit knowledge in a unidirectional manner; they also engaged in academic debates regarding various philosophical, theological, Sufi, and exact science issues. Such conditions rendered Isfahan an intellectual center that produced numerous new ideas and solidified the Safavid position as one of the most influential centers of Islamic civilization in the 16th and 17th centuries (Mujiburrahman, 2024).

The Safavid contribution to the advancement of science is also evident in the production of various intellectual works that have become essential references in the history of Islamic thought. Mulla Sadra produced the monumental work *Al-Asfār al-Arba'ah*, which contains the concept of al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah as a synthesis of philosophy, Sufism, and theology. Sheikh Baha'i produced diverse works in mathematics, astronomy, architecture, and religious sciences that were utilized extensively by subsequent generations. Furthermore, the production of intellectual works during the Safavid period expanded due to the support of a broad network of scholars. Many scholars from Jabal Amil, Iraq, Bahrain, and other regions migrated to Persia, forming academic networks that facilitated the transfer of knowledge, the exchange of manuscripts, and the dissemination of ideas to various regions of the Islamic world. These scientific networks not only strengthened the Safavid intellectual tradition but also established Persia as a preeminent center for the development of Islamic science, which exerted significant influence on the evolution of education and Islamic civilization in the ensuing periods (Abisaab, 1994).

Implications for the Integration of Science in Islamic Education

The historical experience of the Safavid Dynasty offers significant lessons for the development of science integration in contemporary Islamic education. One of the most relevant aspects is the scientific paradigm that views knowledge as a unified entity originating from Allah SWT. In the Safavid intellectual tradition, religious and rational sciences were not positioned in opposition but rather as complementary elements for attaining holistic truth. This view aligns with the concept of knowledge integration developed in contemporary Islamic education, which strives to eliminate the dichotomy between religious and secular sciences. The separation of knowledge that has occurred thus far often causes education to function partially, leading students to master

only one aspect, whether it be spiritual or scientific. Therefore, the Safavid model of scholarship can serve as a philosophical foundation for building an integrative Islamic educational system, namely one that balances religious, rational, and spiritual dimensions (Kartanegara, 2003).

The concept of knowledge integration inherited from the Safavid civilization also has implications for the development of Islamic educational curricula. Curricula are no longer structured based on a separation between religious and scientific subjects but are designed in a unified manner by integrating Islamic values into the entire learning process. In science education, for example, students do not merely study scientific concepts empirically but are also encouraged to understand that natural phenomena are signs of God's greatness, which must be studied and utilized for the benefit of humanity. Integrating Islamic values into science education can cultivate the character of students who are not only intellectually intelligent but also possess spiritual awareness and moral responsibility. Thus, education does not merely produce competent scientists but also individuals who possess noble character and a strong religious consciousness (Matroni, 2018).

Furthermore, the development of an integrative curriculum requires an interdisciplinary approach capable of connecting various branches of science. The interdisciplinary approach is essential because the problems of modern life cannot be solved through a single discipline. Therefore, Islamic education needs to develop learning models that integrate religious, social, natural, and technological sciences. This approach aligns with the integration-interconnection paradigm developed by Amin Abdullah, which emphasizes the importance of dialogue and interconnectedness between fields of knowledge to resolve humanitarian issues. Through an interdisciplinary approach, students are encouraged to think critically and creatively and are enabled to view an issue from various perspectives, thereby producing a more comprehensive understanding (Abdullah, 2014).

The development of science integration in Islamic education must also be accompanied by the simultaneous strengthening of spiritual and scientific dimensions. The advancement of science and technology without being balanced by spiritual values can lead to moral crises and dehumanization. Conversely, spiritual strengthening without scientific mastery can hinder the ability of Muslims to face global challenges. The Safavid civilization serves as an example that scientific advancement can proceed in tandem with the strengthening of spiritual values. Safavid scientists were not only known as experts in science and philosophy but also possessed a spiritual depth reflected in their works and thoughts. Therefore, Islamic education needs to build a balance between intellectual and spiritual aspects to produce a generation that is academically superior yet possesses high moral integrity (Masyitoh, Mustika, Alfaza, & Hidayatullah, 2020).

Furthermore, the Safavid experience provides inspiration for strengthening research culture in Islamic educational institutions. During the Safavid period, scientific advancement was inseparable from the existence of madrasas, libraries, and research centers that served as birthplaces for various inquiries and intellectual works. Such conditions demonstrate that the progress of a civilization is heavily influenced by academic culture and a robust tradition of research. Therefore, modern Islamic educational institutions need to develop research centers capable of integrating Islamic studies with science and technology. These research centers can serve as platforms for lecturers, researchers, and students to conduct innovative research and generate solutions to the various problems facing modern society (Abdullah, 2014).

In addition to developing research centers, the collaboration between religious and scientific fields needs to be strengthened through various academic activities, such as collaborative research, seminars, scientific publications, and community service. Such collaboration can enrich scientific perspectives while simultaneously removing the barriers that have historically separated religious and secular sciences. Moreover, the strengthening of scientific literacy is an important aspect that must be developed in Islamic education. Scientific literacy is not only related to the ability to understand scientific concepts but also to the ability to think critically, analyze information, and utilize knowledge responsibly. Thus, the integration of science into Islamic education will not only produce graduates who master scientific knowledge but also those who are

capable of developing an intellectual tradition oriented toward the progress of civilization and the benefit of humanity (Rahmani, Najmi, & Dewi, 2026).

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the Safavid civilization made significant contributions to the advancement of knowledge through state support for intellectual activities, the establishment of educational institutions, and the integration of religious sciences, rational sciences, and spiritual philosophy within a unified intellectual tradition. The principal finding of this study is that the Safavid intellectual tradition, particularly as reflected in the philosophical thought of Mulla Sadra and the educational development during the Safavid period, represents an epistemological model that successfully reconciled revelation, reason, and scientific inquiry. Rather than separating religious and scientific knowledge, the Safavid civilization developed a holistic framework that promoted scientific progress while maintaining Islamic spiritual values.

This study contributes to the existing literature by extending previous historical discussions of the Safavid civilization toward a contemporary educational perspective. Unlike earlier studies that primarily describe the scientific achievements or philosophical developments of the Safavid period, this research interprets the Safavid intellectual tradition as a historical and epistemological foundation for the integration of science in Islamic education. Accordingly, the study offers a conceptual contribution by demonstrating that historical Islamic intellectual traditions can serve as relevant references for addressing the persistent dichotomy between religious and scientific knowledge in contemporary educational discourse.

The findings also have important implications for both theory and practice. From a theoretical perspective, this study enriches the discourse on science integration by providing a historical framework rooted in the Safavid intellectual tradition. From a practical perspective, the findings may inform the development of integrative curricula, interdisciplinary learning approaches, and research-oriented educational environments within Islamic educational institutions. Furthermore, this study may serve as a reference for future research examining the relationship between Islamic intellectual history and contemporary educational reform in different historical periods and educational contexts.

This study has several limitations. First, this research is limited to a qualitative library research approach that relies on historical documents, scholarly books, and academic journal articles without empirical validation in contemporary Islamic educational institutions. Second, the discussion focuses exclusively on the Safavid civilization and does not compare its intellectual tradition with other major Islamic civilizations, such as the Ottoman and Mughal empires. Therefore, future research is encouraged to employ comparative historical analyses or empirical studies to examine how the Safavid model of knowledge integration can be implemented in contemporary Islamic educational contexts.

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