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Auguste Comte's Positivism and its Relevance to Islamic Education in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT. The purpose of this article is to examine the philosophy of positivism as proposed by Auguste Comte and to explore how his philosophical ideas have influenced the development of the Islamic education paradigm in Indonesia. This study is a type of library research, involving a series of activities related to data collection from literature, reading, note-taking, and processing research materials. The findings of this study indicate that the positivistic approach can strengthen the development of research methodology in Islamic education without neglecting spiritual values and divine revelation. Although the philosophy of positivism has not succeeded in eliminating the role of religion in human life, the thinking paradigm it offers has contributed to shifting the orientation of Islamic education in higher education institutions from a theological approach to a more integrative one. The relevance of positivism is evident in educational research and the integration of Islamic sciences, making it selectively applicable as a methodological tool to enrich the academic discourse of Islamic education in the modern era.

Keywords: *Positivism, Islamic Education, Higher Education*

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INTRODUCTION

In its development, the philosophy of empiricism evolved into several distinct schools of thought, including positivism, materialism, and pragmatism. Among these, materialism and positivism represent the most extreme forms, as they emphasize that philosophy should only deal with observable reality (Cabrera, 2025; Damböck, 2026; Park, 2026). Positivism, in particular, emerged as an early philosophical foundation for the birth of modern science. It arose as a critique of the dominant medieval worldview rooted in metaphysics, which emphasized abstract reasoning and speculative truths. Positivism is grounded in the belief that truth must be proven through scientific methodologies namely, observation, measurement, experimentation, and verification. The ultimate aim is to formulate general laws of nature that serve as objective references in understanding reality. This stands in contrast to metaphysical approaches, which rely heavily on human reason and abstract speculation. Because human reasoning and experience are inherently diverse, metaphysical truths tend to be subjective and varied. Positivism gained prominence in the 19th century, championed by the French sociologist Auguste Comte. His positivist paradigm has long been employed by scientists across disciplines to uncover the laws of

reality. Over the course of approximately four centuries, this scientific worldview has proven effective, although it is not without its limitations particularly its inability to address non-empirical or metaphysical phenomena (Aljabri, 2025; Gershoni & Bernstein, 2026).

In the context of education, positivism offers a structured and empirical approach to evaluating all elements within an educational system. Through positivistic methods, the success or failure of educational processes can be assessed with greater accuracy and objectivity. Within the development of the social sciences, including education, positivism and naturalism are among the most commonly adopted paradigms. Proponents argue that by applying the positivist approach to educational research, more concrete, effective, and evidence-based solutions to educational challenges can be found (Dadaian, 2026; Longino, 2025; Mohankumar, 2025). This article is a descriptive-analytical effort to examine the philosophy of positivism and its influence on the development of Islamic educational thought in Indonesia. Drawing from both European philosophical discourse and the historical evolution of Islamic education in Indonesia, the article explores how positivist philosophy has left its intellectual imprint directly or indirectly on Islamic higher education. The author argues that although the idealistic goals of Comte's positivism have not been fully realized, its epistemological framework has significantly influenced the orientation of Islamic education in Indonesia's Islamic Higher Education Institutions (Perguruan Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri / PTAIN). Positivism has helped shift the paradigm from a purely theological focus toward a more integrative, empirical, and research-based approach to knowledge and education.

METHOD

In writing this article, the author uses a qualitative research method using a library approach. According to Kirk & Miller, qualitative research is a particular tradition in social science that is fundamentally dependent on observing humans in their area and relating to these people in their language and their terminology (Kang et al., 2026; Machut et al., 2025; Prybylo et al., 2025). Meanwhile, the library approach is a study that uses data analysis based on written materials. Library materials include published notes, books, magazines, newspapers, manuscripts, journals, and scientific articles. This research is descriptive-analytical in nature, which means it not only describes the content of the sources studied but also analyzes and interprets them to generate new understanding and synthesis (Bagherzadeh et al., 2025; Permana et al., 2025). The primary sources in this study include the philosophical works of Auguste Comte, especially those related to positivism, along with secondary sources discussing the development of Islamic education in Indonesia. The researcher also consulted various contemporary academic publications to trace the influence and relevance of positivism on epistemological, methodological, and institutional aspects of Islamic education in Indonesian higher education.

The data collection technique used is documentation, where the researcher gathers and critically examines relevant texts. Data analysis is carried out using a content analysis method, in which the researcher identifies major themes, arguments, and patterns of thought in positivist philosophy and Islamic education literature. The researcher then interprets the data through a hermeneutic and interpretive approach to explore how the philosophical tenets of positivism have shaped or interacted with Islamic education paradigms. This method allows for a deeper exploration of the historical and conceptual intersections between Western philosophical thought and the Islamic educational tradition in Indonesia.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Philosophy of Positivism

Positivism was pioneered by August Comte (1798-1857), who is considered the father of Western Sociology. Positivism is a way of looking at understanding the world based on science. Positivism is a view that assumes that what can be investigated or understood are real/empirical data, or what they call positive. Positivism assumes that what can be investigated or studied is only "real/empirical data" or what they call positive (Arif & Yusuf, 2025; Chatzinikolaou, 2025; Liu et al., 2025). According to positivism, human knowledge should not go beyond objective facts, because the role of the subject is nothing more than an instrument to copy these objective facts. Objects in positivism are still narrowed down by methodological standards. In other words, "knowledge" can be said to be scientific if it uses positive facts and is explored with scientific methodology (Kouam, 2025).

According to Emile Durkheim, in Hassan stated that the object of sociological study is a social fact: (social-fact): *"... any way of acting, whether fixed or not, capable of exerting over the individual an external constraint; or something which in general over the whole of a given society whilst having an existence of its manifestation*" (Hassan et al., 2026). The social facts in question include language, legal system, political system, education, and others. Under the umbrella of positivism, it is determined that the objects of knowledge and scientific statements (scientific proportion) must meet the following requirements: observable, repeatable, measurable (measurable), can be tested (testable) and can be predicted (predictable) (Brockbank & Gazso, 2025).

Comte's positivism developed to give a positivism style in a qualitative paradigm in the form of an anthropological-sociological-historical theory study (Chatzichristos, 2025; Marogna et al., 2025). According to Donny Gahral, the characteristics of positivism are (Amalia et al., 2025):

1. Objective/value-free: a firm dichotomy between facts and values requires the research subject to distance himself from reality by being value-free.
2. Phenomenalism, the thesis that reality consists of impressions. Science only talks about reality in the form of these impressions. The metaphysical substance that is relied on is behind the symptoms of appearances being rejected (antimetaphysics)
3. Nominalism, for positivism, only concepts that represent particular realities are real. Example: heated metal expands, the concept of metal in the statement transcends all particular forms of metal: iron, brass, tin, etc.
4. Reductionism, reducing reality to observable facts.
5. Naturalism, a thesis about the orderliness of events in the universe that negates the explanation of the supernatural (supernatural). The universe has its structure and has its structure.
6. Mechanism, the thesis that all phenomena can be explained by principles that can be used to explain machines (mechanical systems). The universe is likened to a giant clockwork.

With the description above, it can be explained that in the perspective of positivism, the sciences adhere to three principles; empirical-objective, deductive-nomological, instrumental-value-free. These three apply not only to the natural sciences, but also to the social sciences, and this is the greatest contribution of Auguste Comte, who made him the father of modern sociology (AcengRahmat, 2011). In his work entitled "A General View of Positivism", Auguste Comte explains the meaning of the word "positive", namely: (1) As the opposite or opposite of something imaginary, then the notion of "positive" is first defined as the characterization of

something real, (2) As the opposite or the opposite of something that is not useful, then the notion of "positive" is defined as the nature of something useful, (3) As the opposite or the opposite of something doubtful, then the notion of "positive" is defined as the characterization of something certain, (4) As the opposite or opposite of something blurry or blurry, then the notion of "positive" is defined as the characterization of something clear or precise, (5) As the opposite or the opposite of something negative, the notion of "positive" is used to indicate the nature of his philosophical view which always leads to arrangement or order (Faleiros, 2025; Mushkani, 2025).

2. The Development of Human Thought According to Auguste Comte

According to Comte, the development of human thought took place in three stages, known as the Law of Three Stages. The law of three stages is the main element in Auguste Comte's philosophy of positivism, because in this law the meaning, meaning, and nature of all his philosophical views are reflected. He made this three-stage law the basis and starting point for explaining his teachings on history, science, society, and religion.

Auguste Comte in his book The Positive Philosophy says: "*From the study of the development of human intelligence, in all directions, and through all times, the discovery arises of great fundamental law, to which it is necessarily subject, find which has a solid foundation of proof, both in the acts of our organization and in our historical experience. The law is this:-that each of our leading conceptions,- each branch of our knowledge,-passes successively through three different theoretical conditions: the Theological, or fictitious; the Metaphysical, or abstract; and the Scientific, or positive. In other words, the human mind, by its nature, employs in its progress three methods of philosophizing, the character of which is essentially different, and even radically opposed: viz., the theological method, the metaphysical, and the positive. Hence arise three philosophies, or general systems of conceptions on the aggregate of phenomena, each of which excludes the others. The first is the necessary point of departure of the human understanding, and the third is its fixed and definitive state. The second is merely a state of transition*" (Jayadi, 2025; Saraux & Le Nen, 2025).

Through this law, he states that the history of mankind, both individually and as a whole, has developed according to three stages, namely the theological or fictional stage, the metaphysical or abstract stage, and the positive or scientific or real stage. The development of human thought according to Comte is as follows:

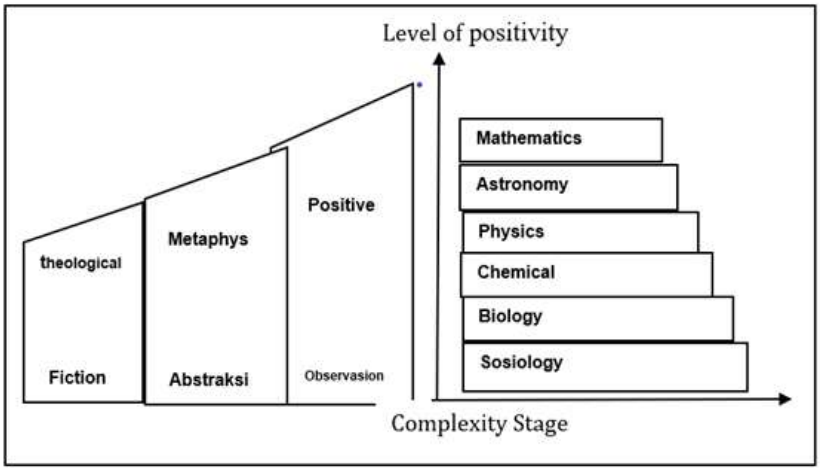


Fig 1. Auguste Comte's three-stage law

1. Theological stage/period (fictitious)
   According to Muhammad Muslih, at the theological stage, humans see that everything is based on the existence of a god, spirit, or God. A more concrete example is the god Thor when he hits his sledgehammer that makes thunder visible or Dewi Sri is the goddess of fertility who lives in each rice field (Park, 2026b; Xie, 2025a). Auguste Comte in his work The Positive Philosophy say: In the theological state, the human mind, seeking the essential nature of beings, the first and final causes (the origin and purpose) of all effects, in short, Absolute knowledge, suppose all phenomena to be produced by the immediate action of supernatural beings (Koç, 2025; Stroupe et al., 2025).
2. Metaphysical stage/period (abstract)
   The metaphysical stage only manifests a change from the theological age, because supernatural powers or gods are only replaced with abstract powers (Auguste Comte, 1971). In this case, Auguste Comte explains: "*In the metaphysical state, which is only a modification of the first, the mind supposes, instead of supernatural beings, abstract forces, veritable entities (that is, personified abstractions) inherent in all beings, and capable of producing all phenomena. What is called the explanation of phenomena is, in this stage, a mere reference of each to its proper entity"* (Maulana & Abiyyu, 2025; Stroupe et al., 2025). According to Auguste Comte, although in this metaphysical stage the human soul still shows things that are no different from what is done in the theological stage, at this stage humans have been able to free themselves from supernatural powers and switch to the power of abstraction.
3. Positive stage / period (real).
   The positive stage is that people believe in scientific understanding and humans concentrate on observation activities to find regularities in the physical and social world. Auguste Comte explains: "*In the final, the positive state, the mind has given over the vain search after Absolute notions, the origin and destination of the universe, and the causes of phenomena, and applies itself to the study of their laws that is, their invariable relations of succession and resemblance. Reasoning and observation, duly combined, are the means of this knowledge. What is now understood when we speak of an explanation of facts is simply the establishment of a connection between single phenomena and some general facts, the number of which continually diminishes with the progress of science*" (Mämmelä, 2025; Zulfa et al., 2025).

According to Comte, science is positive if it focuses on real and concrete phenomena, without any hindrance from other considerations. The assumptions of positive science itself, among others:

a. Science must be objective (value-free and neutral) a scientist should not be influenced by his emotionality in observing the object being studied.
b. Science only deals with things that are repeated.
c. Science focuses on natural phenomena or events from symbiotic mutualism and their relationships with other phenomena (Shofiyah et al., 2025; Villarroel Henríquez et al., 2025; Walker & Nouri, 2025).

In the development of the human soul, to the extent that humans are no longer satisfied with abstract things, humans will feel closer to things or phenomena that can be explained through observations based on descriptive general laws. With the maturity of the human soul, humans no longer feel helped by abstract knowledge, but what is needed now is real knowledge, which can be achieved through observation, experiment, comparison, and based on general laws (Wang et al., 2025). Comte stated that:

"*The Theological system arrived at the highest perfection of which it is capable when it substituted the providential action of a single Being for the varied operations of the numerous divinities which had been before imagined. In the same way, in the last stage of the Metaphysical system, men substitute one great entity (Nature) as the cause of all phenomena, instead of the multitude of entities at first supposed. In the same way, again, the ultimate perfection of the Positive so stem would be (if such perfection could be hoped for) to represent all phenomena as particular aspects of a single general fact; such as Gravitation, for instance*" (Urai et al., 2025).

The positive-scientific stage is the ideal stage that Comte aspired to in history. At this stage, humans stop looking for the absolute cause and ultimate goal of reality. The only thing that is important for humans at this stage is to concentrate on observing the social world and looking for general laws that can lead them to progress. This stage is described as a world full of technology (Bade et al., 2026; Gonçalves et al., 2026).

Maturity of history finally experienced maturity in a positive period. Humans no longer feel the importance of thinking about the absolute cause of everything and the ideal end. The only thing that matters at the positive stage is sensible factual realities, and how to use them for technological progress. This technology is then able to create a better order of life. If at the theological stage, life is controlled by the power of "God's representatives" on earth, and the State with the concept of democracy for the metaphysical stage, then at the positive stage, human life is controlled by practitioners of science and technology with creative abilities to cultivate the economic and industrial sectors. for development (Xie, 2025b).

To what extent is the objective truth of this three-stage law? If you look back at the experience of human history in ancient Greece, what is called mathematics, physics, and metaphysical speculative activities have taken place. This period is called by Comte a theological period, has not yet reached the metaphysical stage. Comte argued that although at that time there was mathematics, physics, and speculative-metaphysical thinking, theological thinking still dominated. Man's speculative activities are directed towards theological ends, namely the search for the absolute cause of reality and the ideal end of it. However, in the end, Comte also admitted that the truth of the law of three stages was not rigid; there is an overlap at each stage concerning the other stages. Auguste Comte acknowledged that something cannot be completely free from the influence of the previous stage (Gonçalves et al., 2026).

3. Criticism of Positivism

In some ways, Comte's ideals of the determination of science in modern life have indeed been achieved. The empirically verified scientific method has led to the development of science very rapidly. However, the idea of how humans live in this era of positivism, with all its science and technology, has not been achieved. One critic stated that if Comte lived in this era, he would be surprised to see that value-free technology reduces human values. The scientific method inspired by Comte's thinking was also used to create weapons, which were eventually used for war. The construction of industrial factories ignores environmental sustainability. All this chaos was not what Comte expected to happen with the positivistic period he wanted (Imroati, 2020).

To a certain extent, positivism has succeeded in creating an optimistic modern life with the development of science and technology. Its influence in the scientific paradigm ultimately made positivism a new dogma, or what Ian Hacking called a modern humanist religion. The dogma runs in the form of institutionalizing an objectivistic view in the doctrine of the unity of science (unified science) (Belk et al., 2026; Schneider, 2025).

In its development, positivism did not develop without criticism. Both theoretical criticisms such as those proposed by Saussure with linguistic structuralism, Derrida with deconstruction, or

Giddens and Huston Smith which highlight the failure of scientism in creating a safe and comfortable life for humans. However, this paper will not present their complex critique, but will only highlight some of the main points of positivism.

These criticisms lead to the character of positivism which is value-free and uses instrumental reasoning. Just as positivism views science as being value-free, science must be independent of human subjectivity; Science must stand alone without taking sides. Science only serves to explain the impressions of reality. Anthony Gidden describes in his collection of essays the themes surrounding the failure of modernity. According to him, lands that have escaped positivistic attention include ecology, the military, world wars, industrialization of wars (Dayé, 2025; Leihy, 2025). Meanwhile, according to Huston Smith, modernity is more visible as a desire to advance a career than a cautious attitude in controlling the situation (Kozlenkova et al., 2025; Okonta et al., 2025).

How does instrumental reasoning work? Instrumental reasoning is reasoning that prioritizes how-to, rather than why. That is, instrumental reasoning is a manifestation of the manifestation of science as power. How to build elite apartments, how to win the competition in the global market, how to sell weapons, and other ways (Ratna et al., 2025). From that, instrumental reasoning ignores that the targeted land is a water-holding area that can prevent flooding, many small traders rely on traditional markets, human values longing for peace, and so on.

4. The Relevance of Positivism in Islamic Education

The influence of positivism in the world of education began in the early 1950s. Two great writers Charles D. Hardie through his work Truth and Fallacy in Education Theory and D.J.O Connor's An Introduction to The Philosophy of Education are two figures who have had a wide influence in the world of modern education. These two writers have heavily criticized current educational theories as vague and unscientific. It is only an expression of opinions. Both urged educational experts to be more involved in analyzing language and concepts through the methods adopted by positivism. These two authors also recommend that research in the fields of education be more scientifically oriented (Chen & Shabbir, 2025; Moulaei et al., 2025; Székely et al., 2025).

In the perspective of philosophy in general, education means nothing if the statements are always oriented towards something that is not empirical (cannot be verified) (Esengulova et al., 2025; Rudenko et al., 2025), nor does it consist of terms that are easy to understand and understand for the sake of purpose of truth. The philosophy of education must be placed parallel to the "philosophy of the curriculum" which is contained in philosophical analysis, such as the concepts of language, mathematics, science, and history. Hardie emphasizes the importance of the theory of meaning from the logic of the positivists which until now has been abandoned by the world of education.

To accept the truth of this "meaning" theory, Hardie at the same time excludes (puts aside) the ethical aspect of the philosophy of education. For positivistic logic, statements related to ethics are merely expressions of personal (individual) feelings and not interests that are seen as a policy. But here it is said that ethical neglect is irrational since educational thought and practice have been heavily influenced by value issues and problems on the one hand and unfavorable policies on the other. Policymakers in an educational institution must choose or oppose bureaucratic/authoritarian policies in schools. This body must consider the moral basis as a guide for students, freedom in the teaching and learning process, authority, and supervision in the educational process. Educational experts are required to reflect on the meaning of these principles,

because without clarification and based on a good perspective from (educational) experts, discussions on moral issues at all levels of education will tend to be biassed and narrow-minded.

a. Positivism in Educational Research

Positivism has made some surprising breakthroughs in educational research. The basic principle used by this school is that if we are a researcher and are guided by the basics of positivism, then we must look for data that can be verified by other qualified researchers from anywhere in the world. If we are researching a lesson or a staff member, the data we record must be free from personal interpretation. Our research must match the research of trained researchers. If possible the data we use is quantitative, but it is not an absolute requirement. Some empirical findings can be characterized and expressed by terms in the form of gradations, such as weak, moderate, and strong, and are not merely numbers (Sumadisastro et al., 2025).

Our next step is to generalize the data, to formulate hypotheses, starting from a specific environment and based on things that can be observed. In contrast to phenomenologists, we do not see this problem as a case study, such as a particular teacher and school. Unlike hermeneutics, we don't ask whether our data has any meaning for humans. Unlike the structuralists, we do not accept, let alone make a proposition, an abstract structure and draw conclusions based on logical consequences. Instead, we take the approach of physicists and biologists. We carry out a plan, namely generalizations about types that can be observed or objects that do have regularities in the educational process, namely generalizations that can be tested carefully through observations and various experiments that have been carried out by other researchers.

Our final step is to construct a theory by concluding the generalizations of the highest-level hypotheses. The hypothesis will explain why things that are regulative can happen and then lead to an intellectual schema of the relation of each fact, which was previously unrelated (Setiabudi, 2026). In many fields of educational research, this step may not be possible because there are not many generalizations that can be tested. Nevertheless, this is ideal in educational research.

There are at least three things that form the basis for an open positivistic approach to educational research. First, positivists assume that educational phenomena, such as teacher-student relationships, can be understood by everyone. They don't pay much attention to the fact that each class of students sees this relationship differently, and each student in the class gives his or her interpretation of the relationship. Second, some other positivists, such as behaviorists, tend to ignore the inner life. Indeed, some acknowledge the existence of the inner life, but it is seen as a system of variables, for example, memory, motivation, and awareness, which are related not only to each other but also to other independent variables of each individual. can have a direct effect on each student. Thus the positivist views individuals, such as students and teachers as objects not only receiving external stimuli but also stimuli from their respective mental processes. Third, positivists see school as an object (out there) and not only see it as a group of people involved in it, positivists tend to talk more about this world as part of the natural order. For positivists, the world of education is described and explained as it is (Bora & Altun, 2025; Martínez-Parés et al., 2026).

The application of the natural sciences, as positivist methods, to the social sciences, in which there is education, can be understood if we first understand the basic assumptions of

natural science research. First, a physicist, biologist, or chemist observes falling objects, cells, or acidic solutions in his laboratory at a distance, dealing with the natural processes as mere objects. The researcher took a full stance. Second, with full discretion, he must face his object as a "neutral fact", namely data that is clean of subjective elements, such as desires, dreams, passions, judgments, morals, and so on. Thirdly, he can manipulate his object in the experiment to find knowledge according to the "cause-and-effect" model. Fourth, the result of manipulation is a knowledge of necessary laws. For example, if acids are mixed, they become salts; if water is heated to 100 degrees Celsius, then the water will boil; if gene "A" is paired with gene "M" then it becomes organism "P" and so on. Such linguistic formulations are called deductive-nomological formulas (if…., then…) and are nothing but part of the laws of nature. Fifth, the resulting theory is a knowledge that is free from interests, can be applied instrumentally, universally.

All these assumptions (full dissent, neutrality, manipulation, laws, free of interest, universal, instrumental) by positivism are applied to social research, only now the object is not white rats, animals, machines, cells, and so on, but social reality. If this view is applied to education and still refers to Hardiman's expressions, the resulting educational science is believed to be a portrait of social facts commonly known as "value-free", that is, it does not contain subjective interpretations from the researcher. Anyone, as long as they fulfill the research procedures above, does not affect the knowledge they produce, so that knowledge can be used instrumentally by anyone because it is universal and instrumental. By quantifying data and reaching a nomological deductive formulation, educational science then aims to predict and control educational processes, according to Comte's motto, savoir pours prevail (knowing to predict). In this way, educational science can help create a rational society.

b. Integration of Islamic Sciences in Islamic Higher Education

For the Indonesian context, Islamic Religious Colleges (PTKI) is one of the educational infrastructures that are influenced by positivism. The pioneering system of Islamic education in Indonesia was originally adapted from Al-Azhar University in Egypt. The faculty structure and curriculum adapt to al-Azhar, including the Faculty of Sharia, Ushuluddin, and Adab. To meet domestic needs, two faculties were added, namely the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Da'wah (Saleh & Nasution, 2025). The pattern of education in this early period was religious education for theological orientation; Muslims study in Educational institutions to be able to become better Muslims with a deep understanding of its teachings.

During the New Order era, the government reoriented Islamic education in Indonesia. Through figures such as A. Mukti Ali and Harun Nasution, the government carries out the agenda of integrating Islamic education. What is meant by integration is maintaining religious education with a theological orientation, and introducing a secular scientific approach (Sahlan et al., 2025)? Here, more or less positivism entered the Islamic education system in Indonesia. As a result, Islamic studies in Indonesia have begun to adopt approaches that are based on factual empirical data such as historical approaches. One of the moments of this shift was the publication of the book Islam in terms of its various aspects by Harun Nasution (Muthohirin, 2025).

In subsequent developments, the integration of Islamic sciences in PTAIN is growing. Each university introduces its integration paradigm. One example is Amin Abdullah when

he served as Chancellor at UIN Sunan Kalijaga (Haggag et al., 2026). At that time, he separated the concepts of normativity and historicity in religious studies. The normative mindset is a theological mindset, which is a description of the first stage in Comte's theory of development. Meanwhile, historical Islam is empirical Islam, which can be verified with definite data (Moosa & Haji, 2026).

As the most obvious point, call it sociology. In addition to the ideals of creating a positive society, Comte is also recognized as a pioneer in Sociology (Siswomiharjo, 1996). Currently, sociology has become one of the alternative approaches in the study of religion besides theology. Although the recognized scholar as the originator of the sociology of Religion is E. Durkheim, Durkheim's position as a proponent of Comte's positivism makes this relationship indispensable. Likewise, even though the study of Religion was also influenced by the development of science after positivism, in simple terms, the sociology of religion could not be separated from the positivism of Auguste Comte itself. As a separate discipline, Comte has been instrumental in opening the area of sociological study to the religious life of the community (Imroati, 2020).

Therefore, it is no exaggeration to say that the theory of the living Qur'an or the living Hadith which was developed at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta was inspired by Auguste Comte's sociology. This is evidenced by the frequent use of sociology as an approach in researching the living Qur'an or living hadith. If previously Q.S. al-Anfal verse two is always reviewed from a theological point of view, for example, by paying attention to the dictions of nahnu, al-zikra, hafizun followed by linguistic analysis, then with a new scientific approach, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd has explained how Muslims keep the Qur'an in the concept of the Qur'an in Everyday Life (Munawar et al., 2025). Likewise with Cliffort Geertz's explanation of the diversity of the santri and abangan communities in Java (Ali et al., 2025). These two examples are only a few of several studies of religious studies that have used a scientific approach, where this cannot be separated from the influence of the development of scientific epistemology, including positivism (Achmad & Erlina, 2025; Khodijah & Monang, 2025).

CONCLUSION

This article demonstrates that although the philosophy of positivism initiated by Auguste Comte did not succeed in removing the role of religion from human life, the paradigm of thought it introduced has made a significant contribution to transforming the paradigm of Islamic education in Indonesia, particularly in higher education. Positivism has shifted the orientation of Islamic education from a solely theological approach to a more integrative one, combining both spiritual and empirical perspectives. The relevance of positivism in Islamic education is especially evident in Islamic higher education institutions, where it plays a crucial role in advancing educational research, refining curriculum design, and integrating Islamic sciences with empirical and scientific methodologies. This integration facilitates a more comprehensive and balanced approach to knowledge that respects both revelatory sources and empirical evidence. Furthermore, adopting a positivistic approach can strengthen research methodologies within Islamic education without compromising its spiritual and ethical foundations. By selectively utilizing positivism as a methodological tool, Islamic higher education can enrich its academic traditions, foster critical thinking, and better prepare students to engage with contemporary challenges in a globalized world. Thus, positivism serves not only as a philosophical influence but also as a practical instrument for the modernization and development of Islamic education in the modern era.

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