



ANTHOLOGY OF SCIENCE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC STUDIES

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Abstract:

This research examines the ontology of knowledge from an Islamic perspective and its implications for the development of contemporary Islamic studies. Amidst modern social, cultural, and technological changes, a comprehensive and adaptive scientific approach is needed. Using a qualitative method based on literature review, this research examines three main ontological dimensions—reality, metaphysics, and the object of knowledge—based on the thinking of classical figures such as Al-Farabi, Al-Ghazali, and Ibn Khaldun, as well as contemporary thinkers Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas and Mohammed Arkoun. The results show that the ontology of Islamic knowledge places revelation and reason as a balanced epistemological basis. Reality is understood hierarchically within the framework of monotheism, encompassing the physical, social, and spiritual dimensions. Metaphysics serves as a link between branches of knowledge, while the object of knowledge encompasses various disciplines without a hierarchy of values. Implications for contemporary Islamic studies include eliminating the dichotomy between religious and general knowledge, contextualizing scientific methodology, responding to global humanitarian issues, and developing an inclusive epistemology. Practically, this research encourages integrative curriculum reconstruction, multidisciplinary research, and strengthening the role of Muslim intellectuals in public discourse. This research emphasizes that strengthening ontological foundations is an epistemological imperative for Islamic studies to develop holistically, integratively, and provide solutions to address the challenges of modern humanity and realize the mission of rahmatan lil 'alamin (blessing for the universe).

Keywords: *Ontology of Science, Contemporary Islamic Studies, Reality, Metaphysics, Object of Science, Integration of Science*

INTRODUCTION

Changes occurring in the social, cultural, and technological realms in the contemporary era present new challenges in various aspects of life. Social realities demonstrate that modern society is now facing a multidimensional crisis, ranging from economic inequality and environmental damage to shifting spiritual values due to the rapid flow of globalization and modernization. This situation demands the emergence of a scientific approach that is not merely partial, but rather comprehensive and adaptive, including in the development of Islamic studies, so that it can provide real solutions to the problems of the people and global humanitarian issues (Marlika, Nikmah, and Mulyana 2025). In the scientific treasury, the discourse on knowledge has long been discussed

by thinkers from both Western and Islamic philosophical traditions. Figures such as Al-Farabi, Al-Ghazali, and Ibn Khaldun, for example, have formulated a structure of knowledge based on the synergy between revelation and reason. Meanwhile, in contemporary thought, figures such as Mohammed Arkoun and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas emphasize the need to reconstruct the epistemology and ontology of science so that it is in harmony with current realities (Arif 2014).

In the perspective of scientific ontology, the discussion not only touches on the nature of science in general, but also covers three main aspects, namely reality, metaphysics and the object of science. Reality questions the nature of existence which is the basis for the birth of knowledge; metaphysics reveals a transcendent dimension behind knowledge that is not limited to empirical experience; while the object of knowledge refers to what is the focus of study, both material and non-material. These three aspects are crucial in the Islamic tradition because they connect the empirical dimension with revelation and unite human knowledge with divine knowledge (Muhammad Darwis Dasopang, Anhar, Erawadi 2021).

The discussion of the ontology of science from an Islamic perspective is fundamentally urgent, as a deeper understanding of reality, metaphysics, and the object of science can provide a solid conceptual foundation for the development of contemporary Islamic studies, ensuring their relevance, adaptability, and solution-oriented solutions in addressing the complex and multidimensional problems of modern humanity (Afriandi et al. 2024).

The purpose of this research is to examine the ontological foundations of science from an Islamic perspective, examine its implications for the methodology of contemporary Islamic studies, and formulate practical contributions to the development of Islamic studies in addressing the challenges of the times. This research is based on the argument that without a strong understanding of the ontology of science particularly the dimensions of reality, metaphysics, and the object of science Islamic studies have the potential to lose direction, become trapped in textual formalism, and become unresponsive to social change. Thus, the study of the ontology of science is not merely an academic necessity, but an epistemological imperative so that Islamic studies can develop comprehensively, integratively, and provide solutions.

Thus, it can be emphasized that the ontology of science, encompassing the dimensions of reality, metaphysics, and the object of science, is a fundamental foundation for the development of contemporary Islamic studies. Without a strong ontological foundation, Islamic studies have the potential to become trapped in textual formalism and methodological fragmentation, making them less relevant to modern social, cultural, and humanitarian dynamics. (Multidisciplinary et al. 2025) Conversely, by strengthening the ontological foundation, Islamic studies can develop comprehensively, integratively, and provide solutions, so that they become not merely academic studies but also present as practical offerings capable of addressing the challenges of the times.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a library research method because it focuses on conceptual and normative studies regarding the ontology of knowledge and its influence on the development of contemporary Islamic studies. This approach emphasizes the exploration, analysis, and interpretation

of various classical and modern literary sources relevant to the research theme. The research design is descriptive-analytical, systematically presenting the thoughts of prominent figures such as Al-Farabi, Al-Ghazali, Ibn Khaldun, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, and Mohammed Arkoun, and analyzing the relevance of their ideas to the development of contemporary Islamic studies.

Data sources consist of primary literature (original works by Muslim thinkers on epistemology and the nature of knowledge) and secondary literature (books, articles, and scholarly journals related to Islamic philosophy and the ontology of knowledge). Data collection was conducted through a literature review and content analysis, with the stages of identification, grouping themes, and critical examination of the relationship between ontological concepts and the direction of development of Islamic studies. Through this method, research is expected to strengthen the conceptual foundation of contemporary Islamic studies and contribute to the development of a more holistic and contextual Islamic scientific paradigm.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Ontological Foundation of Science in the Tradition of Islamic Thought

A study of Islamic intellectual heritage reveals that the ontological construction of science is unique compared to Western traditions, particularly in its integration of revelation and reason as equal and complementary epistemological foundations (Bakar 2022).

The Conception of Reality within the Framework of Tawhid

An analysis of Al-Farabi's thought shows that reality is understood as a hierarchical order that begins with the Absolute Being and continues through particular beings. In his philosophical construction, all existing entities are emanations of the Primal Cause, so scientific activity cannot be separated from theological awareness. This framework of thought lays the foundation that true knowledge must be built on the recognition of God's existence as the pinnacle of the hierarchy of beings (Soleh 2010).

Ibn Khaldun offered an expansion of ontological horizons by positioning social phenomena as a legitimate field of scientific study. According to him, the dynamics of human civilization possess regular patterns that can be studied empirically, while still operating within the framework of the tawhid weltanschauung. Thus, reality encompasses three intertwined layers: the physical-material dimension, the socio-cultural dimension, and the spiritual-transcendent dimension (Atnawi 2009).

This finding indicates that the concept of reality in Islam is not limited to the empirical-material dimension alone, but encompasses the totality of existence integrated within the framework of monotheism. The implication is that every effort to develop knowledge in Islam must begin with an awareness of the interconnectedness between these various levels of reality, not a fragmentation that separates the physical world from the spiritual dimension.

The Role of Metaphysics in the Architecture of Knowledge

Al-Ghazali's contribution to metaphysical discourse lies in his formulation of the gradations of knowledge, consisting of knowledge based on sensory observation, knowledge based on logical reasoning, and knowledge based on spiritual enlightenment. This stratification indicates that metaphysics

in Islam is not a rejection of empiricism, but rather a refinement through a deeper, esoteric dimension (Ali, Muhdi, and Sa'ad, Suadi, and Anwar 2025).

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas emphasized the urgency of the principle of monotheism as the gravitational core of the entire scientific structure. In his view, every branch of knowledge must be reintegrated into the vision of monotheism to avoid secularization that separates science from spiritual values. This idea became the backbone of his project to Islamize science.

Mohammed Arkoun proposed a critical evaluation of conventional metaphysics, which he considered insufficiently accommodating to contemporary dynamics. He introduced a deconstructive approach to Islamic reasoning that facilitates a rereading of the textual heritage with the latest methodological tools, while maintaining Islamic metaphysical roots.

This discussion of metaphysics demonstrates that the spiritual dimension in the ontology of Islamic science serves as a bond that unites various branches of science within a unified vision of knowledge. Metaphysics is not merely philosophical speculation, but rather a foundation that provides meaning and direction for all scientific activity. This is different from the Western positivist tradition which tends to eliminate the metaphysical dimension from the scientific realm.

Spectrum of Objects of Scientific Study from an Islamic Perspective

Al-Ghazali proposed a typology of knowledge based on its level of obligation: knowledge that must be mastered by every individual, such as fundamental aqidah and fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), and knowledge that must be present within the community, such as medicine, agronomy, and engineering. This distinction demonstrates Islam's appreciation for the plurality of scientific disciplines as long as they are oriented towards collective well-being. (Harahap 2024)

Ibn Khaldun emphasized the significance of rational sciences, which have a universal character and transcend geographical and cultural boundaries. However, he positioned revealed sciences as a moral compass that guides the implementation of rational sciences so that they do not deviate from their humanistic mission. (Dan et al. 2024)

An analysis of this concept of the object of knowledge reveals that Islam does not recognize a hierarchy of values that devalues certain sciences. Each discipline has its own legitimacy and urgency in the context of the welfare of the community. The only differences are the level of priority and the obligation to master them. This perspective is highly relevant for critiquing the tendency to marginalize religious sciences in the modern education system, which is overly biased toward the exact and applied sciences.

B. Implications of the Ontology of Science for the Development of Contemporary Islamic Studies

Deepening into the ontological dimension has several strategic consequences for the reconfiguration of the methodology and orientation of Islamic studies in the contemporary era:

The Imperative of Convergence of Scientific Disciplines

The artificial separation between religious and secular sciences rooted in the Islamic education system represents a fragmentation that contradicts the

ontology of Islamic scholarship. The genealogy of classical thought demonstrates that all branches of knowledge essentially originate from the All-Knowing and must be developed within the paradigm of monotheism. The operational implication is the urgency of developing an integrative curriculum that unites Islamic studies with various contemporary disciplines.

Integration experiments initiated by a number of Islamic higher education institutions, such as the interconnection-integration model, demonstrate concrete efforts to overcome this dichotomy. This approach enables students to understand Islam not solely from a normative-theological perspective, but also from a social, historical, and scientific perspective.

This discussion emphasizes that the dichotomy between religious studies and general studies is a product of intellectual colonialism that must be addressed immediately. Integration of knowledge is not simply a merging of curricula, but rather a paradigm shift that positions Islam as a coherent and comprehensive worldview. Integration models developed by Islamic universities in Indonesia and Malaysia can serve as prototypes worthy of further development. (Bakar 2022)

Contextualization of the Methodological Apparatus

The ontological framework of Islam, which integrates reality, metaphysics, and the object of study, necessitates a methodological approach that is responsive to context. A rigid textualist-literalist orientation is no longer adequate to address the complexity of today's multifaceted problems.

Arkoun's conception of epistemological criticism and Rahman's theory of double movement provide methodological instruments that facilitate the interpretation of textual corpuses by considering historical, social, and cultural settings. This methodology enables Islamic studies to maintain fidelity to fundamental principles while adapting to practical dimensions. (Fadhli and Solikhin 2018)

This discussion of methodological contextualization underscores that methodological rigidity is one of the main factors causing Islamic studies to lose relevance. The hermeneutical approach developed by contemporary thinkers offers a solution by maintaining the authenticity of the text while opening up broader interpretative space. However, this contextualization must be carried out carefully to avoid falling into relativism that eliminates fundamental Islamic principles.

Responsiveness to Global Humanitarian Issues

The ontological dimension, which emphasizes universal benefits, requires Islamic studies to demonstrate sensitivity to global humanitarian agendas such as the redistribution of justice, economic disparity, ecological degradation, and the crisis of spirituality. The sharia-based objectives (maqasid) approach developed by contemporary thinkers offers a flexible framework for responding to these challenges without losing theological identity.

This discussion demonstrates that Islamic studies should not be isolationist and focused solely on the internal problems of the ummah. The principle of rahmatan lil 'alamin (blessing for all the worlds) demands active involvement in resolving global humanitarian crises. The maqasid sharia approach provides methodological flexibility that allows for contemporary ijtihad without violating the basic principles of sharia. This is what distinguishes Islam from secular ideologies that lack a strong moral-spiritual anchor. (P 2019)

Construction of an Inclusive Epistemology

The ontological foundation of Islam opens up opportunities for the articulation of alternative, more accommodating epistemologies. The concept of intuitive knowledge (ma'rifah) in the Sufi tradition can complement the rational-empirical epistemology that dominates modern science. A cross-disciplinary approach that acculturates diverse methodologies from the social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences is essential in the development of contemporary Islamic studies.

Analysis of this inclusive epistemological construct reveals that Islam possesses a rich epistemological treasure trove that remains underexplored in contemporary academic discourse. The Sufi tradition, for example, offers an epistemology that differs from mainstream Western rationalism yet remains valid and productive. Recognizing this epistemological plurality is crucial to avoid the hegemony of a single scientific paradigm that can diminish the complexity of reality. (ZUKHRUFIN 2024)

C. Practical Contributions of the Ontology of Science to the Revitalization of Islamic Studies

Based on an examination of its ontological basis and methodological implications, several applicable contributions can be identified that can be implemented in the development of contemporary Islamic studies:

Reconstruction of Curricular Architecture

The design of the Islamic education curriculum requires fundamental reconstruction by substantively integrating the study of Islamic ontology and epistemology. Students are equipped not only with textual-normative competencies, but also with the capacity for philosophical, critical, and contextual thinking. Courses in Islamic philosophy, the history of Islamic thought, and Islamic research methodology need to be core components of the curriculum, not merely supplementary.

Curriculum reconstruction must be fundamental, not merely a partial change. Basic courses such as Islamic philosophy and research methodology should be placed in the early semesters to build a foundation for critical thinking from an early age. Furthermore, the development of a more dialogical and participatory pedagogical approach is necessary, replacing learning methods that focus on memorization and one-way knowledge transmission. (ZUKHRUFIN 2024)

Intensifying Multidisciplinary Research

Islamic research institutions need to promote a multidisciplinary research agenda that combines Islamic perspectives with various disciplines. Studies of Islamic economics with a sociological approach, Islamic jurisprudence with an anthropological approach, or Quranic hermeneutics with a contemporary linguistic approach are research models that can enrich the Islamic intellectual tradition and increase its relevance in the global context.

This discussion underscores that multidisciplinary research is not simply an academic trend, but an epistemological necessity aligned with the holistic ontology of Islamic knowledge. However, its implementation faces various institutional obstacles such as rigid organizational structures, a lack of incentives for cross-disciplinary collaboration, and the persistence of a silo

mentality within the academic tradition. Structural and cultural reforms are needed to create a research ecosystem conducive to multidisciplinary approaches.

Revitalization of Traditional Educational Institutions

Pesantren and madrasah, as bastions of Islamic intellectual tradition, require revitalization by maintaining the excellence of classical scholarly traditions while adopting modern methodological instruments. Hybridizing the pesantren education system with university academic standards can be an effective formula for bridging the continuity of tradition and the demands of modernity.

This discussion on the revitalization of pesantren and madrasah emphasizes that modernization does not necessarily mean Westernization or secularization. Pesantren have advantages in character formation and mastery of classical traditions that modern educational systems lack. What is needed is modernization of methodology and management without sacrificing the spirit of the pesantren. The model of student pesantren or ma'had 'ali, which has developed in various Islamic universities, can be a successful example of this hybridization. (Khoiriyah 2021)

Strengthening Participation in Public Discourse

Contemporary Islamic studies must be able to contribute to public discourse by presenting a rational, moderate, and humanistic Islamic perspective. Muslim intellectuals need to actively participate in global dialogue on contemporary issues such as democratization, pluralism, gender equality, and environmental conservation. Intellectual outreach through academic publications, scientific forums, and the mass media is a crucial medium for constructing a progressive and solution-oriented Islamic narrative.

This analysis of the importance of public participation reveals that intellectual isolation is a major cause of the marginalization of Islamic studies in global discourse. Muslim scholars must emerge from the ivory tower of academia and actively engage in public debate. However, this engagement must be based on solid academic competence and a deep understanding of the issues discussed, not merely emotional reactivity or superficial apologetics. (Hermawan and Murjoko 2025)

Synthesis and Critical Reflection

The findings of this study indicate that the ontology of science from an Islamic perspective—which encompasses the dimensions of reality, metaphysics, and the object of study—provides a solid and comprehensive conceptual foundation for the development of contemporary Islamic studies. A thorough understanding of these ontological aspects has broad implications for methodology, curriculum design, research orientation, and the practice of Islamic education.

By strengthening this ontological foundation, Islamic studies can develop holistically, integratively, and provide solutions to the complex challenges of our time. However, it is important to recognize that this paradigmatic transformation will not occur automatically. It requires political commitment, institutional support, and systematic cultural change. Furthermore, a balance must be maintained between openness to modernity and the preservation of the authenticity of Islamic tradition.

Equally important is the realization that the development of contemporary Islamic studies is not merely an academic project, but rather part of a prophetic mission to realize rahmatan lil 'alamin (blessing for all the worlds). Therefore, all scientific efforts must be oriented towards making real contributions to the resolution of the multidimensional problems of modern humanity, ranging from social injustice, ecological crisis, to spiritual emptiness. (Lestari 2009)

CONCLUSION

Based on an in-depth examination of the ontology of knowledge from an Islamic perspective and its influence on the advancement of contemporary Islamic studies, this research yields the following important findings:

The ontology of Islamic knowledge is built on three essential pillars: reality, metaphysics, and the object of knowledge, which form a distinctive epistemological structure. Understanding reality is multi-level within the framework of monotheism, encompassing physical-material, socio-cultural, and spiritual-transcendental aspects. The metaphysical dimension acts as a glue that integrates various branches of knowledge into a unified vision of knowledge, while the object of knowledge encapsulates the diversity of disciplines without any distinctions of value that discredit any particular field.

Deepening ontological foundations has strategic implications for the development of contemporary Islamic studies through the unification of various disciplines to end the separation between religious and general knowledge, adapting methodologies that respond to the dynamics of the times, addressing universal humanitarian issues, and developing an inclusive epistemology that appreciates the diversity of scientific approaches, including the legacy of the Sufi tradition.

Practical contributions of the ontology of knowledge include an integrative restructuring of the curriculum by making Islamic philosophy and research methodology the main components of learning, strengthening interdisciplinary research that combines Islamic perspectives with various modern scientific fields, renewing traditional educational institutions such as Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) and madrasahs (madrasahs) through a combination of systems, and increasing the involvement of Muslim scholars in international public discourse with a rational, moderate, and humanistic approach.

The paradigm shift in Islamic studies requires political commitment, institutional support, and a planned cultural transformation that maintains a balance between openness to modernity and the preservation of the authenticity of Islamic tradition. The development of contemporary Islamic studies is an integral part of the prophetic mission to realize rahmatan lil 'alamin (blessing for all the worlds) oriented toward factual contributions to resolving the problems of modern humanity.

This research confirms that strengthening the ontological foundation is an absolute epistemological necessity for Islamic studies to grow holistically, integratively, and provide solutions. Without a solid ontological foundation, Islamic studies can become entangled in textual formalism and lose their relevance. The scientific contribution of this research lies in the formulation of an ontological conceptual framework that can be used as a basis for developing a methodology for Islamic studies that is relevant, adaptive, and solution-

oriented in facing the complex and multidimensional challenges of contemporary humanity.

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