



Wahdat AL Ulum and Academic Ethics

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| Info Articles | Abstract |
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| Article History Received: 2025-04-10 Revised: 2025-05-10 Published: 2025-05-30 Keywords: <i>Philosophical spiritual; correspondence; Wahdat Al Ulum</i> | Wahdat al-'ulum teaches that no knowledge is value-free. Every knowledge should bring humans closer to their Creator and encourage the creation of a just and moral civilization. Therefore, this approach is highly relevant to the education system, especially in universities, which are the breeding ground for various branches of knowledge. Within this framework, wahdat al-'ulum is not only a philosophical concept but also a foundation for shaping the character of academics with integrity, honesty, and social and spiritual responsibility. This definition implies that knowledge is the knowledge possessed by a subject about an object that is true. The truth contained in this knowledge is correspondence, because there is a match between the subject's knowledge and the objective conditions of the object being known. There are two ways to know an object correctly. The first is through the subject's observation of the object. In observing objects, humans have different methods and abilities, so the accuracy of the results varies. The better the tools used and the higher the capabilities of the tools used to observe the object, the more accurate the knowledge obtained. This kind of knowledge is referred to as knowledge obtained through reason. |

I. INTRODUCTION

The very rapid development of science and technology in the modern era has had a significant impact on various aspects of human life, including the way people view science.(Arivianto et al., 2022)Amidst the currents of globalization and secularization, a sharp dichotomy has emerged between religious knowledge and worldly knowledge. This dichotomous view positions religious knowledge as something spiritual, dogmatic, and limited to the realm of worship, while worldly knowledge is seen as a product of rationality and empiricism that is autonomous from spiritual values.(Bagir, 2005)This view not only influences the education system and the development of knowledge, but also shapes the mindset of society, which is increasingly moving away from integrating divine values into the process of seeking knowledge.

In the context of the Islamic world, this dichotomy of knowledge has long been a focus of Muslim scholars because it fundamentally

contradicts the classical paradigm of Islamic scholarship. In the Islamic intellectual tradition, all knowledge, both naqli (based on revelation) and aqli (based on reason and observation), is recognized as originating from a single divine source, namely Allah SWT.(Arivianto, S., David, A., Syahputra, Y., & Nur, 2022)Therefore, there should be no separation between religious knowledge and worldly knowledge because both have the same goal: to bring humanity to the truth (al-haq), benefit (maslahah), and closeness to the Creator.

As a response to this dichotomy, the concept of Wahdat al-'Ulum (unity of knowledge) was born, which carries the basic idea of integration between religious sciences and empirical sciences in a single framework of values based on monotheism.(Anwar, WTL, Asmadi, SZ, Handayani, I., Pratama, IP, Daulay, H., & Dahlan, 2025)This concept emphasizes that every scientific process must be inseparable from Islamic moral, spiritual, and ethical values.

Wahdat al-'Ulum is not only an ideal philosophical concept, but also a methodological and practical proposal for formulating a holistic and transformative educational system.(Siregar, 2024)In this approach, knowledge is not separated from values, and academics are not merely collectors of knowledge, but also agents of change with social and spiritual responsibilities.

The application of the concept of Wahdat al-'Ulum is crucial in the context of higher education, which currently faces various challenges, including a crisis in academic ethics. Academic ethics, as a set of values, norms, and moral principles that govern behavior in education and research, has experienced serious degradation.(Suryani et al., 2023)The phenomena of plagiarism, fabrication and falsification of data, and even the misuse of academic degrees are clear examples of the moral rift in the academic world. This demonstrates that educational success is determined not only by academic achievement but also by the development of character and personality that uphold integrity and ethics.

This is where the relevance of Wahdat al-'Ulum becomes particularly strong. This concept offers a philosophical and spiritual foundation for reconstructing an academic culture that not only pursues intellectual excellence but also upholds moral and spiritual values. By integrating Wahdat al-'Ulum into the curriculum, teaching methods, and research culture, it is hoped that it will produce academics who are not only intellectually intelligent but also wise in living their lives.(Mariyati et al., 2023)The ideal generation of Muslim intellectuals within this framework are those who not only master knowledge but are also capable of upholding the values of truth, justice, and trustworthiness in every aspect of life.

Thus, Wahdat al-'Ulum is not only the answer to the crisis of dualism of knowledge, but also a strategic foundation in building an academic culture oriented towards human wholeness in its rational, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects. The integration of Wahdat al-'Ulum and academic ethics in higher education is a necessity in facing the increasingly complex challenges of the times. This is the main focus of this journal study, namely exploring and analyzing the strategic role of the

Wahdat al-'Ulum concept in fostering an academic culture that is ethical, moral, and oriented towards the welfare of the people.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach.(Kusumastuti & Khoiron, 2019)This approach was chosen to gain a deep and contextual understanding of the concept of Wahdat al-'Ulum and its implementation in academic ethics in higher education. Qualitative research allows researchers to explore the meaning, values, and principles underlying the integration of religious and worldly knowledge, as well as their relevance to the formation of an ethical and moral academic culture.

In this study, a case study approach is used to specifically examine the application of the concept of Wahdat al-'Ulum and the principles of academic ethics in a specific academic context, including the mechanism for resolving ethical violations through internal campus mediation and arbitration processes. The research focuses on how the values of the unity of knowledge and the principles of justice are applied in resolving academic conflicts, such as cases of plagiarism, violations of scientific integrity, or abuse of academic authority.

Data were obtained through observation techniques, in-depth interviews with key informants (such as lecturers, educational staff, and students), and documentation studies of academic regulations and codes of ethics applicable at the relevant universities. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive qualitative methods, emphasizing interpretations of social and academic phenomena based on the framework of the values of wahdat al-'ulum.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The Concept of Wahdat al-'Ulum

Etymologically, the word 'ilman' comes from the Arabic 'alima-ya'lamu-'ilman, which means knowing or being aware of something.(Muliani, 2016)In Islam, the meaning of knowledge does not simply refer to the accumulation of information, but to an awareness of reality as it is. Imam al-Ghazali defined knowledge as al-'ilmu

huwa ma'rifatu al-syai' 'ala ma huwa bihi, which means "knowledge is knowing something according to the thing itself." (Harahap, 2024) This definition demonstrates that true knowledge is knowledge that harmonizes subject and object, a true, objective, and profound understanding. In the Islamic scientific tradition, this understanding is a form of correspondent truth, that is, truth that arises from the correspondence between knowledge in the mind and objective reality outside the mind.

However, the Islamic understanding of knowledge goes far beyond mere epistemology. Knowledge in Islam is not merely a product of rational and empirical processes, but also part of humanity's spiritual journey toward Allah SWT. There is no separation between religious and worldly knowledge in the Islamic perspective. (Nurcholis, 2021) Every science that leads humanity to truth, strengthens faith, and promotes social welfare is part of the science that originates from God. Therefore, the dichotomy between religious and worldly knowledge that has developed in the modern era actually contradicts the integrative and transcendental roots of Islamic epistemology. Classical scholars such as Al-Ghazali and Ibn Sina have demonstrated this in their works, where philosophy, science, and theology work harmoniously within a single value system rooted in monotheism. (Hayati, IK, Istiqliana, A., Lathifah, N., Tausiah, A., & Parhan, 2025).

In Islam, the path to acquiring knowledge can be in two main forms. The first is *kasbi* knowledge, which is knowledge acquired through intellectual effort, observation, learning, and research. This knowledge encompasses various disciplines such as mathematics, medicine, astronomy, and even Islamic sciences, studied through rational and deductive methodologies. The accuracy of *kasbi* knowledge depends heavily on the precision of observational tools and the capacity of reason. (Alwi, 2015) The sharper and more sophisticated the tools and understanding used, the deeper the knowledge gained. Second is the science of *laduni*, or the science of *mukasyafah*, namely knowledge bestowed directly by God to His servants through inner enlightenment and

purification of the heart. This knowledge is intuitive, spiritual, and cannot be reached through ordinary reason. Imam al-Ghazali placed the science of *mukasyafah* as the pinnacle of all forms of knowledge, because only through this knowledge can one understand the essence of divinity, prophecy, metaphysical reality, and the secrets of creation. (Hatta, Moch, Erawadi Erawadi, 2024).

The science of *mudasyafah* appears as a light that shines on a heart that is clean from despicable qualities. The purer a person's heart is, the stronger the light illuminates the truth, so that the knowledge gained becomes brighter and deeper (Amin, 2022). People who reach this level are referred to as *al-shiddiqin* (righteous people) and *al-muqarrabin* (those who are close to Allah) (Kendal, 2024). They are able to understand the meaning of revelation, recognize Satan's deception, witness the wisdom of creation, and know supernatural things such as angels and the afterlife. The science of *bukashafah* is not the monopoly of the prophets, but can be accessed by anyone who cleanses his soul and dedicates his knowledge to the truth. On the other hand, this knowledge will not be given to those whose hearts are filled with lust, love of the world, and love to sin (Amin, 2022).

This view demonstrates that in Islam, knowledge is never value-free. Every pursuit of knowledge must be conducted within a moral and spiritual framework. The ultimate goal of knowledge is not power or domination over the universe, but rather the knowledge of a deeper recognition and understanding of Allah SWT as the source of all knowledge. Knowledge in Islam must lead humans to dignified manners, morals, and civilization. Therefore, the scientific process cannot be separated from spiritual and humanitarian goals. The pursuit of knowledge is not merely a cognitive activity, but also an act of worship that demands sincerity of intention, honesty in method, and responsibility in its application.

This concept became the basis for the birth of *Wahdat al-'ulum*, namely the unity of knowledge that rejects the separation between science and religion. *Wahdat al-'ulum* not only bridges the gap

between the two domains of knowledge but also integrates the cognitive and spiritual dimensions into a unified Islamic epistemology.(Salamuddin et al., 2023)Within this framework, a scientist is not only required to think rationally but also to possess a deep ethical and spiritual awareness. Science is not only a tool for understanding the world, but also a path to drawing closer to God.

The relevance of this concept in the academic world is immense. Academic ethics, a pillar of higher education, cannot be established without a strong foundation of values. In the current context, where academic violations such as plagiarism, data fabrication, and even degree manipulation are commonplace, instilling spiritual values through the concept of wahdat al-'ulum (unity of understanding) is crucial. Academic ethics in Islam is not merely a normative rule, but a reflection of the awareness of monotheism, which demands honesty, trustworthiness, and responsibility in all scientific activities.(Mariyati et al., 2023).

Thus, knowledge in Islam is understood not only as the accumulation of knowledge, but also as a means of purifying the soul and developing morals. Knowledge is a trust that must be guarded with integrity, for from it comes the power to build or destroy a civilization. Therefore, the integration of knowledge and values in the concept of wahdat al-'ulum is not only theoretically relevant but also urgently needs to be implemented in the education system, particularly in academic environments, which serve as centers for the development of knowledge. This concept teaches that true intellectualism is one that is aligned with morality, and that the advancement of knowledge must always be accompanied by the advancement of faith and morals.

B. Academic Ethics from an Islamic View

Academic ethics is a set of values, norms, and moral principles that serve as the foundation of higher education, encompassing learning, research, and community service activities. These ethics reflect scientific integrity and intellectual responsibility and are a key determinant in maintaining the quality and dignity of academic

institutions.(Salsabila & Sohidin, 2024)In practice, academic ethics not only regulates the behavior of students, lecturers, and researchers, but also instills a scientific culture that upholds honesty, fairness, and respect for intellectual property rights.

In the Islamic context, academic ethics cannot be separated from the concept of morals.(Aziz, 2018a). Scientific activity, in Islam, must be based on sincere intentions for the sake of Allah, distanced from worldly interests alone, and aimed at the welfare of the community. The concept of science in Islam emphasizes not only intellectual achievement but also morality and social responsibility. Therefore, violations of academic ethics, such as plagiarism, data manipulation, and theft of ideas, are not merely considered technical or administrative violations, but also constitute a betrayal of the scientific trust and a violation of Islamic values.

The scientific tradition in Islam has a long history of highly valuing scientific integrity. Previous scholars such as Imam al-Ghazali, Ibnu Sina, and Ibnu Khaldun were not only known for their intellectual brilliance, but also for the depth of their morals in demanding and imparting knowledge.(Kendal, 2024)They taught that knowledge is a light that will not be given to hearts darkened by sin, including intellectual deception. Principles such as sincerity, manners, humility, respect for knowledge, as well as hard work and consistency in learning are core values that continue to be instilled in the Islamic scientific tradition.(Kendal, 2024).

For example, sincerity is the foundation of pursuing knowledge. In Islam, knowledge sought solely for praise, popularity, or personal gain will not bring blessings. Sincerity is a form of purification of intention so that the academic process truly becomes an act of worship. Meanwhile, etiquette in an academic context refers to good manners and respect for teachers, colleagues, and the scientific work of others. Etiquette is demonstrated not only through outward behavior but also through an inner attitude that places knowledge in a noble light.

Humility is also an important principle that every academic should possess. In an increasingly

competitive world, humility serves as a balance to prevent intellectual achievement from degenerating into scientific arrogance.(Lestari, 2024)On the other hand, respect for knowledge is a manifestation of the awareness that knowledge is not merely a tool, but a trust that must be faithfully safeguarded. Therefore, stealing or copying another person's scientific work without proper attribution is a serious violation of this principle.

Furthermore, the spirit of hard work and consistency is highly valued in Islam. Seeking knowledge cannot be achieved instantly; it requires a long and tiring process, accompanied by patience and perseverance. This principle aligns with modern academic ethics, which demand sincerity, tenacity, and the ability to take responsibility for the process and outcomes of learning and research.

Thus, academic ethics and the Islamic tradition of scholarship are closely linked and mutually reinforcing. Modern academic ethics, which emphasize honesty, responsibility, freedom of thought, and respect for copyright, are essentially values that have been taught in Islam for centuries. Therefore, integrating academic ethics with Islamic values is not only relevant but also essential in developing academics who are not only intellectually intelligent but also morally dignified.

C. Integration of Wahdat al-'Ulum and Academic Ethics

The concept of wahdat al-'ulum, or the unity of knowledge, is a philosophical foundation in Islamic thought, which affirms that all forms of knowledge, whether revealed (religious) or the result of observation and reason (empirical), ultimately originate from the One Almighty God, namely Allah SWT. This view rejects the dichotomy between religious and worldly knowledge, and instead emphasizes that all branches of knowledge are manifestations of Divine truth.(Anwar, WTL, Asmadi, SZ, Handayani, I., Pratama, IP, Daulay, H., & Dahlan, 2025). In the context of contemporary higher education, especially in the academic world which is often trapped in the secularization of knowledge, the

integration of the values of wahdat al-'ulum becomes very urgent to return the purpose of education to its original function: as a means of forming a complete human being, not just an intellectually intelligent individual, but also noble in morals, spirituality, and socially.(Siregar, 2024).

The application of the concept of wahdat al-'ulum in higher education encourages a holistic approach to knowledge.(Maslan, 2024). Knowledge is not only seen as a tool to dominate the world or fill the job market, but also as a path to closeness to Allah SWT and a means to achieve tazkiyah al-nafs (purification of the soul). In this framework, every academic process, whether research, teaching, or publication, must be framed in correct intentions, noble ethics, and spiritual responsibility. Higher education should not only produce graduates who are superior in cognitive and technical aspects, but also create civilized people, as developed by Islamic thinkers such as Al-Attas and Al-Ghazali, who emphasized the importance of ta'dib (moral and ethical education) in building a scientific civilization.(Kendal, 2024).

Academic ethics in this case are not merely administrative or procedural norms that regulate plagiarism, scientific honesty, and neutrality of assessment, but are the embodiment of the spiritual values contained in Islamic teachings.(Aziz, 2018b)When a researcher or student compiles a scientific paper while upholding honesty, avoiding data manipulation, properly citing citations, and avoiding plagiarism, they are not only following academic procedures but also fulfilling the mandate of science from an Islamic perspective. Honesty (ʿsidq), trustworthiness, and responsibility are part of Islamic morals inherent in scientific practices with integrity.(Ramadani, Suci, 2025)Thus, academic ethics is not a stand-alone entity, but rather a branch of Islamic morality implemented in the context of modern science.

Furthermore, wahdat al-'ulum also demands that lecturers, researchers and the entire academic community do not separate professionalism and spirituality.(MESSY, 2023)A lecturer teaches not only by transferring knowledge but also by transmitting values. Sincerity in teaching, fairness in grading, and

exemplary behavior are reflections of moral integrity grounded in the belief that knowledge is a trust. A lecturer's role is not merely as a transmitter of material, but also as a murabbi (educator) who shapes the character and outlook of students. In this context, a violation of academic ethics is not only a violation of campus regulations but also a betrayal of God's trust. (Aziz, 2018b).

The current reality of higher education, which tends to be trapped in a pragmatic paradigm that measures educational success through formal academic achievements such as GPA, degrees, number of publications, and citation index, has distanced the academic world from the spirit of education itself. This orientation creates excessive pressure, unhealthy competition, and various academic deviations for the sake of quantitative achievement. The concept of wahdat al-'ulum (unity of understanding) presents itself as a critique of this reductionist approach, offering a new orientation that emphasizes the importance of integrating knowledge and values, reason and heart, cognition and spirituality. The ultimate goal of education is not merely worldly success, but also divine approval, as enshrined in the principles of sincerity and righteousness in Islam. (Salamuddin et al., 2023).

Thus, the application of wahdat al-'ulum in academic ethics is not an additional burden in the world of education, but rather an approach to purifying intentions and returning the meaning of knowledge to its noble essence. When spiritual values are brought to life in every academic process, scientific activity is no longer dry and transactional, but becomes an activity full of meaning, blessings, and self-transformation. An academic world grounded in the unity of knowledge and ethics will foster a scientific atmosphere that is not only critical and objective, but also full of responsibility, honesty, and good manners. This is the foundation that will produce a generation of Muslim intellectuals who are not only brilliant in thought but also excel in morals and capable of carrying out the mandate of civilization amidst the complex challenges of our times.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusion

The concept of wahdat al-'ulum (unity of knowledge) is an important philosophical foundation in the Islamic scientific tradition, rejecting the dichotomy between religious and worldly knowledge. In this view, all knowledge is seen as originating from Allah SWT and serving the same purpose: to guide humanity toward truth, goodness, and well-being. Therefore, the process of seeking knowledge cannot be separated from spiritual and moral values. In the context of higher education, the integration of wahdat al-'ulum and academic ethics is crucial for building an academic culture that is not only intellectually superior but also dignified and grounded in Islamic values.

B. Suggestion

Academic ethics such as scientific honesty, responsibility, and integrity are manifestations of the values of wahdat al-'ulum. An academic who is honest and trustworthy in pursuing and disseminating knowledge is a reflection of a civilized, knowledgeable person. Therefore, to create a comprehensive and meaningful education system, collective awareness is needed to comprehensively implement the concept of wahdat al-'ulum. This will not only improve academic quality but also shape academics with spiritual awareness, social responsibility, and dedication to the values of truth and justice in life.

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