



Conceptualization of Wahdatul 'Ulum: A Philosophical Analysis of the Unity of Knowledge in the Islamic Scientific Tradition

Ahmad Nazir Siregar¹, Yusril Fahmi², Audia Zahara³, Pusvita Ramadhani Nababan⁴, ⁵Indra Utama Tanjung

^{1,2,3,4}Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara

⁵Universitas Pembangunan Panca budi

E-mail: : ahmadnazirsiregar030506@gmail.com, Yusrilfahmi@gmail.com, Audiazahara@gmail.com, Pusvitaramadhani@gmail.com, Indratj@dosen.pancabudi.ac.id

Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received : 2024-08-15 Revised: 2024-08-17 Published: 2024-09-30 Keywords: <i>Wahdatul 'Ulum;</i> <i>Islamic Epistemology;</i> <i>Unity of Knowledge;</i> <i>Philosophy of Science;</i> <i>Scientific Integration</i>	The development of modern science has given birth to a fragmentation of science that separates religious science and general science, thus giving rise to an epistemological crisis in the Islamic educational tradition. This condition encourages the need to reconstruct a scientific paradigm that is able to integrate various disciplines in one complete philosophical framework. This study aims to analyze the conceptualization of Wahdatul 'Ulum as a paradigm of unity of knowledge in the Islamic scientific tradition, examine its philosophical foundation, its conceptual structure, and its relevance to the development of contemporary science. The research uses a qualitative approach with the library research method. Data were obtained from various primary and secondary literature related to Islamic epistemology, philosophy of science, and the thought of Muslim scholars, then analyzed using content analysis through a descriptive-analytical approach. The results of the study show that Wahdatul 'Ulum is an epistemological paradigm built on the unity of ontology, epistemology, and axiology based on the principle of monotheism. This paradigm views revelation, reason, senses, and intuition as complementary sources of knowledge and places all branches of science as one knowledge system oriented to the benefit of humans. Compared to various other models of science integration, Wahdatul 'Ulum not only offers curriculum integration, but also reconstructs a perspective on the essence of science. Thus, Wahdatul 'Ulum has philosophical relevance as a paradigm for the development of Islamic higher education, multidisciplinary research, and strengthening the ethical foundation of science in responding to epistemological crises in the era of globalization and technological development.

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of modern science has brought extraordinary advances in the fields of science, technology, economics, health, and communication. However, these advances also have epistemological consequences in the form of a stronger fragmentation of science. Each discipline develops with different methodologies, paradigms, and orientations so that the relationship between fields of science becomes increasingly separate. In the context of Islamic education, this condition gives birth to a dichotomy between religious science and general science which not only affects the curriculum structure, but also shapes the way of thinking of the academic community in understanding the essence of science. As a result, religious science is often positioned only as an instrument of spiritual development, while empirical sciences are

considered solely oriented towards technological mastery and material development. Such a pattern of separation ultimately gives birth to an epistemological crisis that causes science to lose its ethical, spiritual, and humanitarian dimensions (Arwani, 2012).

This phenomenon is actually contrary to the classical Islamic intellectual tradition which from the beginning viewed science as a unit that comes from the same source of truth, namely Allah SWT. Muslim thinkers such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd, and Al-Ghazali have never established a dichotomy between religious science and rational science. Instead, they developed a scientific tradition that combined philosophy, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, theology, jurisprudence, and Sufism in one complementary epistemological building. This unity gives birth to a civilization of knowledge that is able to make the

development of science go hand in hand with the formation of human morality, ethics, and spirituality (Abdillah & Suryani, 2018).

The paradigm shift began to occur when the modern education system that developed in the West was introduced to various Muslim countries during the colonial period. The educational model is built on the basis of the narrowing of the specialization of science, so that there is an institutional separation between religious education and general education. In its development, the system not only influenced the structure of education, but also formed a paradigm of thinking that religious science and modern science are two independent entities. The long-term impact is the emergence of graduates who have high academic competence but are poor in ethical and spiritual orientation, or conversely have a good religious understanding but are less able to respond to the development of contemporary science (Danius, 2019).

Various global problems today show that the fragmentation of knowledge is no longer just an academic problem, but has developed into a civilizational problem. Environmental crises, abuse of artificial intelligence, exploitation of natural resources, economic inequality, and moral degradation are real examples when the progress of science is not always followed by the maturity of human values. This shows that the development of science that is independent of ethical and spiritual foundations has the potential to produce paradoxical progress, namely increasing the ability of humans to control nature while increasing the risk of damage to life itself (Darmalaksana, 2023).

It is in this context that the concept of Wahdatul 'Ulum acquires an increasingly strong relevance. Wahdatul 'Ulum is not only understood as a slogan for the integration between religious science and general science, but also as an epistemological paradigm that views all branches of science as being in one ontological, epistemological, and axiological unity. All knowledge is believed to come from the same source so that each discipline has a complementary relationship in leading humans to understand reality while getting closer to the Creator. Thus, the integration of knowledge is not just the incorporation of religious courses into the science curriculum or vice versa, but the unification of the perspective on the essence of knowledge itself (Maslan, 2024).

Although the concept of Wahdatul 'Ulum has been widely discussed in various studies, most studies still place it as a model of curriculum integration or Islamic educational approaches. These studies generally focus more on institutional implementation, curriculum development, and learning strategies, while discussions on conceptual foundations, scientific definitions, epistemological characteristics, and limits of the scope of Wahdatul 'Ulum as a scientific paradigm are still relatively limited. As a result, the understanding of Wahdatul 'Ulum often stops at the level of the slogan of the integration of knowledge without an explanation of the conceptual structure that distinguishes it from the concepts of Islamization of science, integration-interconnection, and unity of science that have developed in contemporary Islamic educational literature (Salamuddin et al., 2023).

This condition shows the need for a more systematic conceptual explanation of the essence of Wahdatul 'Ulum. The affirmation of the definition, philosophical basis, scope, characteristics, and position of this concept in the development of Islamic epistemology is important so that Wahdatul 'Ulum is not understood normatively alone, but as a scientific paradigm that has a clear theoretical structure. With such an understanding, this concept is expected to be able to be the foundation for building the integration of science that is not only administrative in the curriculum, but also touches on the ontology, epistemology, and axiology aspects of science (Mariyati et al., 2023).

Based on this background, this article aims to comprehensively analyze the meaning and scope of Wahdatul 'Ulum as an epistemological paradigm in the Islamic scientific tradition. The analysis was carried out by examining the philosophical basis of concept formation, the main characteristics, the scope of its discussion, and its relevance in answering the dichotomy problem of science in contemporary Islamic education. Thus, this article is expected to provide conceptual reinforcement to the development of the Wahdatul 'Ulum paradigm as well as enrich the treasure of thought on the integration of knowledge in an Islamic perspective.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a research on Islamic law and thought that uses a qualitative approach with the method of literature study (*Library Research*) (Kusumastuti & Khoiron, 2019). This approach

was chosen because the object of research is in the form of the concept of Wahdatul 'Ulum as an epistemological paradigm in the Islamic scientific tradition that is conceptual, philosophical, and normative, so that the analysis is carried out through an in-depth study of various relevant literature sources. Research is not oriented to the collection of field data, but to the exploration and construction of thought through the study of theories, concepts, and arguments that develop in the scientific literature.

The source of research data consists of primary and secondary literature materials. Primary materials include scholarly works that specifically discuss the concept of Wahdatul 'Ulum, Islamic epistemology, scientific integration, and the thoughts of Muslim scholars such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Al-Ghazali, Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, and other contemporary thinkers who have relevance to the discussion of the unity of knowledge. The secondary material is obtained from scientific books, reputable journal articles, proceedings, and other academic documents that discuss the development of Islamic epistemology, philosophy of science, and the integration of science in Islamic higher education.

Data collection is carried out through documentation techniques by identifying, selecting, classifying, and reviewing various literature according to the focus of the research. Furthermore, the data was analyzed using content *analysis* combined with a descriptive-analytical approach. The analysis is carried out through the stages of data reduction, thematic grouping, interpretation of the main concepts, and synthesis of various views that develop to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the meaning, philosophical basis, characteristics, scope, and relevance of Wahdatul 'Ulum as a paradigm of science integration in the context of the development of contemporary Islamic science and education. Through this approach, this research is expected to be able to produce a more systematic conceptual construction of Wahdatul 'Ulum's position in the development of Islamic epistemology as well as provide a theoretical basis for strengthening the paradigm of scientific integration in the academic environment.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The Philosophical Foundations of Wahdatul 'Ulum in the Islamic Scientific Tradition

Concept *Wahdatul 'Ulum* It was born not just as a normative idea about the importance of integrating religious science and general science, but as a philosophical paradigm rooted in a worldview (*Islamic worldview*) who views all reality as a single entity that originates from Allah SWT. In the Islamic intellectual tradition, knowledge is not understood as a stand-alone collection of disciplines, but as a representation of man's efforts to understand the verses of Allah, both as enshrined in revelation (*Qauliyyah Verse*) or those that are spread out in the universe (*Kauniyyah Verses*). Therefore, the concept of Wahdatul 'Ulum is actually a logical consequence of the principle of *tauhid*, that is, the belief in the oneness of God that is not only theological, but also gives birth to epistemological implications for the way humans acquire, develop, and utilize science (Siregar, 2024).

Historically, the birth of the concept of unity of knowledge cannot be separated from the development of Islamic civilization in the golden period between the 8th and 13th centuries AD. During this period, the Islamic world experienced very rapid progress in the field of science, marked by the development of scientific centers such as *Bayt al-Hikmah* in Baghdad, the great libraries of Damascus, Cairo, and Cordoba, and the birth of Muslim scholars who mastered various disciplines in a multidisciplinary manner. In those days, a scientist was not limited by the specialization of science as it developed in the modern academic tradition. A philosopher can be a doctor, a mathematician, an astronomer, a jurisprudence, a mufasir, and even a statesman. This phenomenon shows that the structure of Islamic science from the beginning was built on an integrative paradigm that views all branches of science as part of a whole knowledge building (Zebua et al., 2022).

This situation is different from the development of modern science which tends to move towards specialization and fragmentation. The scientific revolution in Europe that developed since the 17th century gave birth to the paradigm of positivism that placed empirical science as the only source of knowledge that was considered legitimate. Consequently, the metaphysical, spiritual, and theological dimensions are slowly separated from scientific activity. When the modern education system was introduced to various Islamic regions through colonialism, the paradigm also influenced the Islamic education system. Religious education is placed in separate

institutions, while the natural, social, economic, and technological sciences develop separately without a common philosophical foundation. This separation gave birth to the dichotomy of knowledge which is still one of the fundamental problems in the world of Islamic education (Zebua et al., 2022).

The dichotomy of science is not only an administrative problem in the form of separation of religious faculties and general faculties, but reflects a paradigm difference regarding the essence of science itself. In the dichotomous paradigm, religious science is seen as only related to matters of worship, morals, and the afterlife, while general science is directed to meet worldly needs, economic development, and mastery of technology. Such a view causes science to lose its integral character. Religious science develops without adequate dialogue with the development of modern science, whereas modern science develops without a solid ethical and spiritual foundation (Salamuddin et al., 2023). As a result, scientific progress often results in paradoxes in the form of increasing human ability to control nature, but on the other hand it gives rise to environmental crises, social inequality, dehumanization, and the abuse of technology that is contrary to human values.

In Wahdatul 'Ulum's perspective, the criticism of the dichotomy of science is based on the belief that there is no ontological separation between religious science and general science. What distinguishes the two is only the object of study, method, and approach to analysis, while the source of truth still comes from Allah SWT. Therefore, each discipline actually has a complementary relationship in explaining reality. The natural sciences explain the mechanism of creation, the social sciences explain the dynamics of human life, while the religious sciences provide the moral, spiritual, and ultimate direction of all scientific activities. These three aspects cannot be separated if knowledge is to be directed to realize the benefits of humanity as a whole.

The ontological foundation of Wahdatul 'Ulum rests on the concept of monotheism which views reality as a single creation of Allah SWT. In Islamic philosophy, the existence of the universe does not stand independently, but is a manifestation of God's will and wisdom. Therefore, everything that exists has order (*Stuart T*), purpose (*Purpose*), and certain laws that can be learned through scientific activities. Wahdatul 'Ulum's ontology rejects the dualism between the material world and the

spiritual world as it develops in some Western philosophical traditions. On the contrary, Islam views that the physical and metaphysical aspects are two dimensions of the same reality so that they must be understood simultaneously. Thus, the study of natural phenomena not only produces empirical knowledge, but also strengthens human awareness of the greatness of the Creator (Tanuri, 2024).

This ontological view carries the consequence that science is not value-free (*value free*), but always have an ethical and spiritual orientation. Nature is not just an object of exploitation, but a trust that must be maintained. Humans are not just biological beings, but also caliphs who are responsible for the management of life. Therefore, every scientific activity must be directed at the achievement of benefits, justice, and balance as the main goal of Islamic law. It is in this context that Wahdatul 'Ulum positions science as an instrument to build a civilization that is not only materially advanced, but also morally noble (Yudhanegara et al., 2024).

In addition to having a strong ontological foundation, Wahdatul 'Ulum is also built on a distinctive epistemological foundation. In contrast to positivistic epistemology which only recognizes empirical experience as a source of knowledge, Islamic epistemology recognizes the plurality of sources of knowledge. Revelation is the primary source that provides absolute truth, while reason, empirical experience, intuition, and observation are the instruments that humans use to understand reality. The relationship between these sources is complementary, not competitive. Revelation provides universal principles, while reason functions to develop, explain, and actualize these principles in various contexts of life. Thus, the epistemology of Wahdatul 'Ulum places revelation as a normative foundation, while reason becomes a rational means of developing science (Mariyati et al., 2023).

This paradigm differs fundamentally from secular epistemology that separates scientific knowledge from the transcendental dimension. In Wahdatul 'Ulum, rationality is never opposed to religiosity. In fact, the ability to think rationally is seen as a gift from God that allows man to understand the laws of nature and take wisdom from every phenomenon he observes. Therefore, scientific research activities are part of the implementation of the Qur'an's command to read (*Iqra'*), observe (*Nazara*), think (*Squirt*), and take

lessons (*Tadabbur*) against all of Allah's creation (Maslan, 2024).

From the axiological side, Wahdatul 'Ulum views that the ultimate goal of science is not solely to produce technological innovation or knowledge accumulation, but to form human beings who have faith, morals, and are able to realize the benefits of life. The value of a knowledge is not only measured based on its practical benefits, but also based on its contribution to the formation of a just, dignified, and service-oriented civilization to Allah SWT. Therefore, the moral dimension is an inseparable part of every process of seeking knowledge. Science that develops without ethics has the potential to produce damage, while ethics without science will lose effectiveness in answering the challenges of the times (Salamuddin et al., 2023).

The philosophical foundation of Wahdatul 'Ulum took on an increasingly systematic form through the thought of classical Muslim philosophers. Al-Farabi views that all branches of science have a complementary hierarchical relationship. In his classification of science, he places logic as an instrument of thinking, natural sciences as a means of understanding the physical world, metaphysics as the study of the essence of existence, and political science as the implementation of wisdom in social life. For Al-Farabi, all these disciplines boil down to the achievement of happiness (*Al-Sa'adah*), which is a state when humans are able to actualize their intellectual and spiritual potential in a balanced manner. This view shows that the integration of knowledge is not just a curriculum issue, but a consequence of a comprehensive knowledge structure (Rosyadi, 2022).

This thought was then developed by Ibn Sina who placed science as the process of perfecting the human soul. According to him, knowledge is obtained through a combination of rational ability, empirical experience, and intellectual enlightenment. He developed a synthesis between Aristotelian philosophy, medical science, and Islamic theology so as to give birth to a system of thought that showed that scientific research and religious beliefs could run in harmony. In Ibn Sina's perspective, the higher the quality of one's knowledge, the closer one is to the recognition of the essence of God as the source of all existence.

Meanwhile, Al-Ghazali provides a more comprehensive dimension by integrating reason, revelation, and spiritual experience in the epistemological structure of Islam. He criticized

two extreme tendencies, namely rationalism that ignores revelation and literalism that rejects the function of reason. According to Al-Ghazali, true knowledge is a science that is able to lead humans to *Ma'rifatullah*. Therefore, all disciplines, whether fiqh, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, and philosophy, have an equally important position as long as they are used to bring people closer to Allah and provide benefits for life. This view shows that the integration of knowledge in Islam actually had a strong philosophical foundation long before the emergence of the concepts of science integration in the modern era (Firdaus & Achmad, 2024).

In contemporary developments, the idea of the unity of knowledge has gained a new formulation through the thought of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas. According to Al-Attas, the main crisis of the Islamic world lies not in the decline of science, but in the loss of manners (*loss of adab*) in understanding knowledge. He argued that knowledge should be placed according to the hierarchy of truth that comes from revelation. When knowledge is released from the Islamic worldview, there is conceptual chaos that causes humans to lose their moral and spiritual orientation. Therefore, Al-Attas emphasizes the importance of Islamization of science as a process of returning knowledge to the foundation of monotheism so that all academic activities have a clear ethical and transcendental direction (Nursalim, 2014).

This idea has a wedge with the thinking of Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi who developed the *Islamization of Knowledge* project. Al-Faruqi considers that the dualism of the Islamic education system is the main cause of the birth of the dichotomy of knowledge. According to him, religious education and modern education must be reintegrated through the preparation of a curriculum based on Islamic values while being open to the development of modern science. The integration is not intended to reject modern science, but to reconstruct the paradigm so that all scientific activities remain within the framework of monotheism. Thus, science is able to develop without losing its moral and humanitarian orientation.

When analyzed philosophically, the thoughts of Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Al-Ghazali, Al-Attas, and Al-Faruqi show a common thread, namely the recognition of the harmonious relationship between revelation and reason. In the Islamic scientific tradition, revelation and reason are not

two sources of knowledge that contradict each other, but two instruments that have different but complementary functions. Revelation provides universal principles that are absolute, while reason is in charge of understanding, explaining, developing, and implementing these principles in human life. When the two run synergistically, science not only develops rationally, but also has strong ethical and spiritual legitimacy (Salamuddin et al., 2023).

Thus, the philosophical foundation of Wahdatul 'Ulum shows that this concept is an epistemological paradigm built on the principle of monotheism as an ontological basis, the integration of revelation and reason as an epistemological basis, and the orientation of benefit and devotion to Allah SWT as an axiological basis. This paradigm was born as a response to the tendency of fragmentation of knowledge that develops in the modern tradition while reviving the original character of the Islamic scientific tradition which views all branches of science as a whole unit. Therefore, Wahdatul 'Ulum not only has historical value as the intellectual heritage of Islam, but also has philosophical relevance in rebuilding a paradigm of science that is more holistic, integrative, and oriented towards the benefit of humanity.

B. Conceptualization of the Unity of Knowledge in the Perspective of Wahdatul 'Ulum

Discussion on *Wahdatul 'Ulum* It cannot stop at the normative understanding of the unity between religious science and general science. Such an understanding tends to simplify this concept into simply an effort to combine two groups of disciplines in one educational curriculum. In fact, philosophically, Wahdatul 'Ulum is a scientific paradigm (*Scientific Paradigm*) which builds a new perspective on the essence of science, sources of knowledge, interdisciplinary relations, and the ultimate goal of science development. Thus, the conceptualization of Wahdatul 'Ulum must be understood as an epistemological construction that forms the entire edifice of science in an Islamic perspective, not just an administrative approach in the implementation of Islamic higher education (Siregar, 2024).

The essence of knowledge in the perspective of Wahdatul 'Ulum departs from the view that knowledge is a manifestation of truth (*Al-Haqq*) which comes from Allah SWT. Therefore, science

is not independent of divine values, but is part of man's mechanism in understanding the signs of His greatness. In Islam, knowledge is not just the accumulation of information, mastery of technology, or the results of empirical observations, but is a means to obtain a correct understanding of reality so that humans are able to carry out their caliphate functions on earth. This concept shows that science has a broader ontological dimension compared to the understanding of science in the tradition of modern positivism which tends to limit science to only empirical facts that can be verified through sensory experience (Mariyati et al., 2023).

The essence of knowledge in Islam also shows that there is no separation between theoretical and normative aspects. Knowledge is not only aimed at producing scientific truth (*Scientific Truth*), but also directs man to moral truth (*Moral Truth*) and spiritual truths (*Spiritual Truth*). Therefore, the more a person's knowledge develops, the greater the ethical responsibility that he must bear. Within the framework of Wahdatul 'Ulum, the progress of science is never separated from the improvement of the quality of faith, morals, and social benefits (Maslan, 2024). Thus, the success of a discipline is not only measured by the ability to explain natural phenomena, but also by its contribution to realizing justice, welfare, and the benefit of humanity.

This conceptualization has implications for how to understand the source of science. In contrast to the secular paradigm that only recognizes ratios and empirical experience as the main source of knowledge, Wahdatul 'Ulum develops an integral epistemological structure. Revelation occupies a position as a primary source because it provides absolute truth and becomes the normative basis for all scientific activities. However, revelation does not work exclusively. Revelation actually gives legitimacy to the use of reason, observation, experiment, historical experience, and even intuition as an instrument to understand the reality of God's creation. Thus, the source of knowledge in Islam is not singular, but plural and complementary in producing complete knowledge (Mariyati et al., 2023).

Reason acquires a very important position because it is the main instrument in reasoning, analysis, synthesis, and theory development. However, reason in the perspective of Wahdatul 'Ulum is not positioned as an absolute authority as

in modern rationalism. Human rational abilities have limitations so that they require the guidance of revelation so as not to get caught up in value relativism or speculation that is far from the purpose of human creation. On the other hand, revelation does not negate the function of reason. Many verses of the Qur'an explicitly command people to think (*Squirt*), using reason (*Ta'qilun*), paying attention to natural phenomena (*Nazara*), and take lessons (*Tadabbur*). This shows that revelation and reason form a dialectical relationship that strengthens each other in the process of seeking knowledge (Salamuddin et al., 2023).

In addition to revelation and reason, the senses have a function as a means of obtaining empirical data through the process of observation of the universe. Observation of physical phenomena allows humans to discover the laws of nature that are the basis for the development of science and technology. However, the results of sensory observation cannot stand alone because they still require rational interpretation and normative verification based on the principles of revelation. On the other hand, intuition (*Kasyf* or *Dzauq*) is also recognized as one of the instruments of knowledge, especially in the Sufism tradition. Intuition allows man to gain a deeper understanding of metaphysical reality through the process of purification of the soul. Thus, the relationship between revelation, reason, senses, and intuition in Wahdatul 'Ulum forms a comprehensive epistemological structure, in which each has a different but complementary function (Mariyati et al., 2023).

The epistemological structure then influenced the way Islam classifies science. In the classical tradition, scholars developed various models of classification of science, but all of them showed one common character, namely the absence of a substantive separation between religious science and general science. Al-Farabi grouped the sciences into linguistics, logic, mathematics, natural sciences, metaphysics, politics, and sharia sciences without placing any of them as separate groups. Ibn Sina also distinguishes between theoretical and practical sciences, but still places the two in one interrelated structure of knowledge. Al-Ghazali distinguishes knowledge *Fardhu 'Ain* and *Fardhu Kifayah* not to dichotomize knowledge, but to show the level of obligation to learn it based on the needs of the people. Thus, the classification of knowledge in

Islam is more functional than dichotomous (Mufid, 2021).

In Wahdatul 'Ulum's perspective, the classification of science is not intended to create interdisciplinary barriers, but to be an instrument for systematically understanding the complexity of reality. The religious sciences serve to provide normative and ethical foundations, while the empirical sciences explain the mechanisms of nature and society. Social science explains human behavior, economics regulates the distribution of welfare, law maintains justice, medical science maintains life, while technology provides instruments to improve the quality of life. All of these disciplines have an equally important position because each contributes to the main purpose of the Shari'a, which is to realize the benefits (*Maslahah*) for humans (Salamuddin et al., 2023).

Based on this construction, the relationship between religious science and general science is no longer understood as a subordinate or competitive relationship, but an integrative relationship. Religious science does not function to dominate general science, nor does general science replace the function of religious science. Both work in different spaces but towards the same goal. For example, medical science explains the biological mechanisms of disease, while religious science provides an ethical foundation regarding respect for human life, fairness in health services, and the moral responsibility of medical personnel. Similarly, in economics, theories about market efficiency require an ethical foundation so as not to give birth to exploitative practices or social inequality. This integration shows that Wahdatul 'Ulum does not remove the characteristics of each discipline, but builds synergistic relationships.

The conceptualization of Wahdatul 'Ulum can then be analyzed through the three dimensions of integration that form the structure of his scientific paradigm, namely ontological integration, epistemological integration, and axiological integration. In the ontological dimension, all objects of knowledge are understood as part of a single reality created by Allah SWT. There is no separation between sacred and profane objects because all existence has a relationship with God's will. The difference lies only in the characteristics of the object of study and the method used to understand it. Thus, the sciences of physics, biology, economics, law, and interpretation both

examine the reality that comes from the same source of creation (Maslan, 2024).

The integration of epistemology is realized through the recognition of the plurality of methods of acquiring knowledge. Revelation, reason, empirical observation, experiments, philosophical reflections, and intuition are not contradicted, but are placed according to their respective areas of work. Empirical knowledge is necessary to understand natural phenomena, while revelation provides a normative framework so that the results of this knowledge are not misused. This epistemological integration also shows that Wahdatul 'Ulum rejects the claim of a monopoly of truth by one particular method. Scientific truth is understood as the result of the synergy of various instruments of knowledge that are under the guidance of divine values.

Meanwhile, the integration of axiology means that all scientific activities must be directed to the benefit of humans and devotion to Allah SWT. The value of a knowledge is not only measured by the level of innovation or productivity, but also by social benefits, justice, environmental sustainability, and moral formation. Therefore, scientific research in the perspective of Wahdatul 'Ulum always contains the dimension of moral responsibility. Science that results in environmental damage, economic exploitation, technological manipulation, and human rights violations is seen as contrary to the essential purpose of science in Islam.

The conceptual uniqueness of Wahdatul 'Ulum is increasingly visible when compared to several paradigms of scientific integration that have developed in the contemporary Islamic world. The idea of Islamization of science pioneered by Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas and Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi focuses on the process of filtering and reconstructing modern science to suit the Islamic worldview. This paradigm was born as a critique of the dominance of Western epistemology which is considered secular and value-free. The Islamization of science emphasizes the transformation of the content of modern science through the process of integrating Islamic values into theory, methodology, and scientific practice (Mariyati et al., 2023).

In contrast to the Islamization of science, Wahdatul 'Ulum does not depart from the assumption that modern science must first be Islamized. This paradigm views that all knowledge essentially comes from Allah SWT, so the main problem does not lie in the object of

knowledge, but in the human paradigm in understanding and using it. Therefore, Wahdatul 'Ulum emphasizes the development of a perspective that unites all branches of knowledge in one knowledge system based on monotheism.

The difference is also noticeable when compared to the concept *Unity of Science* that develops in various Islamic universities. Unity of Science is generally directed to eliminate barriers between fields of science through multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary approaches. Its main focus lies in the integration of methodologies and academic collaboration. Meanwhile, Wahdatul 'Ulum did not stop at methodological integration, but moved more fundamentally by building the unity of ontology, epistemology, and axiology of science. Thus, methodological integration is only one of the consequences of the paradigm of unity of knowledge, not the end goal (Maslan, 2024).

The concept of Integration-Interconnection developed by M. Amin Abdullah also has a great contribution in developing the dialogue between religious science and general science. This approach emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary reciprocity through the process of interconnection so that various contemporary issues can be understood more comprehensively. However, Integration-Interconnection is more oriented towards the development of academic study methodologies and higher education curriculum design. Wahdatul 'Ulum has a more fundamental scope because it seeks to build a philosophical framework regarding the essence of science itself before it is implemented in the process of education and research.

Similarly, various models of scientific integration are applied at State Islamic Religious Universities (PTKIN), including the concept of *integrated twin towers*, knowledge trees, scientific cobwebs, and other scientific paradigms. Most of these models are institutional strategies to implement knowledge integration through curriculum development, institutional structures, and academic governance. Although it has made a significant contribution to the reform of Islamic higher education, it is essentially a form of operationalization of a more fundamental paradigm of unity of knowledge.

Based on this analysis, it can be understood that Wahdatul 'Ulum has a different character from various other models of scientific integration. This concept cannot be reduced to just curriculum design, learning methods, or

institutional policies. Wahdatul 'Ulum is a philosophical paradigm that forms a perspective on reality, the essence of knowledge, the source of knowledge, the method of obtaining the truth, and the ultimate goal of scientific development. Curriculum, research, and educational governance are just practical manifestations of this paradigm. In other words, if the Wahdatul 'Ulum paradigm has not been embedded in the way of thinking of the academic community, then the integration of knowledge will only stop at the merger of courses or organizational structures without producing a real epistemological transformation.

C. The Philosophical Relevance of Wahdatul 'Ulum to the Development of Contemporary Islamic Scholarship

The transformation of science in the 21st century has fundamentally changed the way humans understand reality, generate knowledge, and utilize technology in life. Digital revolution, the development of artificial intelligence (*Artificial Intelligence*), biotechnology, *Big Data*, quantum computing, and industrial automation have brought the world into an era marked by the acceleration of innovation and the complexity of global problems. On the one hand, these developments provide various conveniences in human life, but on the other hand, they also give birth to various ethical, social, legal, economic, and environmental problems that cannot be solved only through a one-discipline approach. This condition shows that the main challenge in the contemporary world is no longer limited information, but the ability to integrate various forms of knowledge comprehensively. It is in this context that the paradigm of Wahdatul 'Ulum acquires an increasingly strong philosophical relevance as a framework of thought that is able to connect various disciplines in one complete value orientation (Siregar, 2024).

The fundamental problem faced by the development of modern science does not lie in the progress of scientific methodology, but in the epistemological crisis born due to the fragmentation of knowledge. Since the development of the positivism paradigm, science has experienced an increasingly narrow specialization so that each discipline builds its own methodology, object of study, and measure of truth. This condition does increase the depth of analysis in each field, but at the same time reduces the ability of science to understand reality

holistically. Multidimensional humanitarian problems are finally partially understood because each discipline only sees reality from its own perspective. As a result, science loses the ability to build a synthesis between the empirical, moral, spiritual, and humanitarian dimensions.

In the perspective of the philosophy of Islamic science, such fragmentation is a consequence of the separation between the ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions of science. Science developed as an activity oriented towards the achievement of empirical objectivity, but it slowly detached itself from questions regarding moral purpose, values, and responsibilities. This phenomenon gives birth to the paradox of modern civilization, namely the increasing ability of humans to control nature through technology, but followed by increasing environmental damage, economic inequality, social conflicts, misuse of digital technology, and moral crises. Thus, the crisis of modern science is not merely a crisis of methodology, but a paradigm crisis that separates science from the values that are the orientation of its use (Salamuddin et al., 2023).

The Wahdatul 'Ulum paradigm offers a solution to the crisis through a reconstruction of the perspective on the essence of science. Wahdatul 'Ulum views that all branches of knowledge are part of a system of knowledge that comes from the same source of truth, namely Allah SWT. Therefore, no single discipline can claim itself as the only instrument of understanding reality. Each science has different areas of study, methods, and functions, but they are all complementary in building a complete understanding of life. Thus, the integration of science is not intended to eliminate the identity of each discipline, but rather to build an epistemological dialogue that allows each field of science to enrich each other's perspectives.

The relevance of this paradigm can be seen in the development of Islamic higher education. Over the past few decades, the transformation of the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) into a State Islamic University (UIN) is a form of response to the need for scientific integration. The change is not just the addition of general faculties to the institutional structure, but reflects the awareness that Islamic education must be able to produce graduates who master modern science without losing their Islamic identity. However, institutional transformation alone is not enough if it is not accompanied by a change in the academic

paradigm. Many universities still understand the integration of science as limited to the merger of religious courses and general courses, so that the epistemological relationship between sciences has not been fully built. In this context, Wahdatul 'Ulum provides a philosophical foundation that integration does not start from the curriculum, but from the perspective of the academic community on the essence of science itself (Maslan, 2024).

The paradigm also has important implications for the development of multidisciplinary research. The complexity of contemporary problems shows that research that relies on only one discipline is often unable to provide comprehensive solutions. The problems of climate change, poverty, global health, cybersecurity, and digital transformation involve scientific, social, economic, legal, cultural, and religious aspects simultaneously. Therefore, multidisciplinary research is not enough to just combine various disciplines in one research project, but requires a paradigm that is able to integrate the ways of thinking from each of these disciplines. Wahdatul 'Ulum provides a philosophical foundation for the development of multidisciplinary research because he views all knowledge as part of a system of knowledge that complements each other in achieving human benefits.

The relevance of Wahdatul 'Ulum is even more evident when faced with the development of *Artificial Intelligence* (AI). The advancement of AI has transformed various sectors of life, from education, healthcare, industry, government, to the justice system. Although it offers high efficiency, AI also raises serious problems regarding data privacy, algorithmic discrimination, legal liability, information manipulation, and threats to human dignity. These problems cannot be answered only through the approach of computer science or software engineering. Contributions from philosophy, ethics, law, sociology, psychology, and even theology are needed to ensure that AI development still respects human values. In Wahdatul 'Ulum's perspective, technology is not a value-free entity, but an instrument that must be directed to the goal of benefit in accordance with the principles of monotheism, justice, and moral responsibility. Thus, the development of AI must always be accompanied by ethical reflection that comes from the integration between science and technology and Islamic values.

The same applies to the development of biotechnology and bioethics. Advances in genetic engineering, reproductive technology, organ transplantation, *Gene editing*, to the use of artificial intelligence in health services has opened up various new opportunities in improving the quality of human life. However, these developments also raise ethical questions regarding the limits of human intervention on life, respect for human dignity, protection of patients' rights, and fair access to health technology. A positivistic approach that is only oriented towards technical success is not able to provide an answer to this problem. The Wahdatul 'Ulum paradigm offers a more comprehensive approach by combining medical science, ethics, law, sharia maqashid, and moral philosophy so that every biotechnological innovation is not only judged on its effectiveness, but also on its conformity with the principles of life protection (*HUFZ al-NAFS*), Sense (*Hifz al-'aql*), descendants (*HUFZ al-Nasl*), and the public interest (Nasution, 2019).

The same perspective can also be applied to environmental issues. The climate crisis, ecosystem damage, biodiversity loss, and exploitation of natural resources show that a development approach that is only oriented towards economic growth is no longer adequate. Wahdatul 'Ulum views nature not only as an object of economic exploitation, but as a mandate of Allah SWT that must be maintained in its sustainability. Therefore, environmental, economic, legal, and theological sciences must work synergistically in formulating development policies that are not only economically efficient, but also ecologically just and morally responsible. This paradigm shows that the relationship between humans and nature is not exploitative, but a caliphate relationship that demands a balance between utilization and preservation.

In the field of economics, Wahdatul 'Ulum also offers an approach that goes beyond the conventional economic paradigm. Modern economic systems often place economic growth as the primary indicator of development success, while the distribution of justice, social welfare, and environmental sustainability receive less attention. Wahdatul 'Ulum's perspective places economic activities as part of human responsibility in realizing just prosperity. Therefore, economic theory cannot be separated from the principles of Islamic ethics, law, and spirituality. The concepts of distributive justice, prohibition of usury, social responsibility, zakat,

productive waqf, and partiality towards vulnerable groups are examples of how the integration of economics with religious values is able to produce an economic system that is not only efficient, but also fair.

No less important implications can be seen in the development of legal science. Societal changes due to digitalization, electronic commerce, virtual assets, artificial intelligence, and cybercrime have given birth to various legal problems that have never been imagined before. It is not enough to solve these problems through a normative approach that is only oriented to the text of laws and regulations. A multidisciplinary approach that integrates law, information technology, ethics, economics, and philosophy is needed. In Wahdatul 'Ulum's perspective, law is understood as an instrument to realize substantive justice, not just formal certainty. Therefore, the development of legal science must always consider the moral, humanitarian, and beneficial dimensions so that the law is able to keep up with technological developments without losing its ethical orientation.

The challenges of globalization further strengthen the urgency of the Wahdatul 'Ulum paradigm. The flow of globalization has accelerated the exchange of knowledge, culture, technology, and information, but it has also brought about the homogenization of values, increasingly fierce economic competition, and the increasing dominance of materialistic paradigms in various aspects of life. In such conditions, the Islamic world faces the challenge of remaining open to the development of global science without losing its epistemological identity. Wahdatul 'Ulum offers a balance between openness to scientific innovation and commitment to the values of monotheism, so that the process of globalization is not seen as a threat, but as a space for civilizational dialogue that can enrich the treasures of science.

This paradigm also has significant relevance in facing the *Society 5.0 era*. The concept of Society 5.0 places humans at the center of technological development by utilizing artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, *big data*, and robotics to improve the quality of life of society. Nevertheless, the implementation of Society 5.0 often emphasizes aspects of technological efficiency and innovation more than the formation of human character. Wahdatul 'Ulum offers a philosophical correction to this tendency by asserting that technological progress must always be directed at

strengthening human values, justice, social solidarity, and spiritual responsibility. Thus, human beings do not become objects of technology, but remain subjects who control the development of technology based on ethical and transcendental values.

The relevance of Wahdatul 'Ulum is also in line with the *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs). The seventeen SDGs goals basically require a cross-disciplinary approach because they relate to poverty alleviation, health, education, gender equality, clean energy, decent work, environmental protection, and global partnerships. Wahdatul 'Ulum's paradigm provides a philosophical foundation that sustainable development is not only oriented towards achieving economic and social indicators, but must also consider the moral, spiritual, and intergenerational dimensions of responsibility. Thus, the concept of sustainable development gains stronger ethical legitimacy because it is understood as part of the mandate of the human caliphate in maintaining life on earth.

Based on the overall analysis, it can be seen that the relevance of Wahdatul 'Ulum does not lie in his ability to integrate religious and general science courses alone, but in his capacity to rebuild the paradigm of science that has been fragmented by the development of modernity. This paradigm offers a philosophical reconstruction of the relationship between ontology, epistemology, and axiology of science so that every scientific activity always has a moral, spiritual, and humanitarian orientation. In other words, Wahdatul 'Ulum is not intended to replace modern scientific methodology, but to complement it through a philosophical framework of science that is able to connect rationality, empiricism, ethics, and revelation in one coherent system of knowledge.

On that basis, Wahdatul 'Ulum deserves to be positioned as an Islamic epistemological paradigm that offers solutions to the modern epistemological crisis. The crisis of contemporary science is in essence not caused by the progress of science, but by the disconnection between science and values. Through ontological integration that views all reality as God's creation, epistemological integration that synergizes revelation, reason, senses, and intuition, and axiological integration that directs knowledge to the benefit of mankind, Wahdatul 'Ulum presents a scientific paradigm that is not only able to explain reality scientifically, but also provides normative

direction for the development of a just, sustainable, and service-oriented civilization to Allah SWT. Thus, the main strength of Wahdatul 'Ulum lies in his ability to reconstruct the foundations of the philosophy of science so that modern science does not lose its ethical, spiritual, and humanitarian dimensions in the midst of the dynamics of global development.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusion

The conceptualization of Wahdatul 'Ulum shows that the unity of knowledge in the Islamic scientific tradition is a philosophical paradigm based on the principle of monotheism, not just the concept of integration between religious science and general science. This paradigm is built through the unity of ontology that views all reality as the creation of Allah SWT, the unity of epistemology that integrates revelation, reason, senses, and intuition as complementary sources of knowledge, and the unity of axiology that directs all scientific activities to the realization of benefits, justice, and devotion to Allah SWT. The thoughts of Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Al-Ghazali, Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, and Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi show that the Islamic intellectual tradition from the beginning has placed science as a complete building of knowledge and does not recognize the dichotomy between religious science and general science. In the contemporary context, Wahdatul 'Ulum has strong relevance in responding to the modern epistemological crisis due to the fragmentation of science. Through a holistic paradigm, this concept is able to become a philosophical foundation for the development of Islamic higher education, multidisciplinary research, the use of technology, and the development of science that remains oriented towards ethical, spiritual, and humanitarian values.

B. Suggestions

The Wahdatul 'Ulum paradigm needs to be implemented more substantively in the development of higher education, research, and academic policy through ontological, epistemological, and axiological integration, so that it does not stop at the mere incorporation of the curriculum. The next research is expected to develop an empirical study on the implementation of Wahdatul 'Ulum in various disciplines and evaluate its effectiveness in answering the challenges of scientific and

technological development in the contemporary era.

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