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The Irfani's Epistemology - Based Islamic Education at University of Muhammadiyah: A Critical Study in Building an Epistemological Framework of Integrative-Holistic Islamic Education

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Abstract

This study focused on the phenomenon of constructing Islamic education based on Irfani's epistemology at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara and Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang. This study focused to seeks the answers of two research questions; (1) how is the construction of Islamic education based on Irfani's epistemology? and (2) how is the urgency implicative in the construction of Islamic education? Therefore, this study used a phenomenological qualitative approach where the selection of informants is determined based on purposive techniques. It was found that Irfani's epistemology in Islamic education at university of Muhammadiyah is the form of blending scientific traditions that integrates al-hikmah al-bahsiyah (discursive-logical philosophy) and al-hikmah al-israqiyah (intuitive philosophy). This combination actually perfects the epistemology of education (Islam) that is based on Aristotelian paripatetic. The effort to reconstruct Islamic education developed by university of Muhammadiyah is actually based on the integrative-holistic epistemology; that includes bayani, burhani, and irfani. Therefore, the construction of Islamic education come from the optimizing of potential ratio based on purgative and revealed instructions, thinking based on empirical data balanced by remembrance of God (contemplative), and increasing the sensitivity of the soul through fana' fi Allah (illuminative) that oriented to the reality of humanity.

Keywords: Islamic Education, Epistemology Irfani, and Muhammadiyah Higher Education

Introduction

This study focused on the phenomenon of the epistemological framework of Irfani-based Islamic education in university of Muhammadiyah— namely Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara and Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang. It is very urgent to study these dynamics; so that the construction of Islamic philosophy education is not only based on *bayani* or *burhani* epistemology. Since Islamic education has been constructed from a *Burhani* epistemological basis by testing the truth of concepts, theories, and propositions by verifying through inductive logic; namely efforts to collect some facts. Stated on Ulfat's study that actually recommends the reconstruction of the Islamic religious education system in Europe based on empirical reality.³ Some Islamic education experts who support this concept include:

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³ FatimaUlfat, Rethinking Islamic Religious Education in Europe Based on Empirical Research, Religions 14(5) 2023, 1-13.

Feisal,⁴ Muhaimin, et al.,⁵ al-Attas;⁶ Daulay;⁷ or Qamar.⁸ Even Ibn Taimiyyah, as Iqbal said, was a figure who believed in inductive logic – he was considered the only form of authoritative argument.⁹ This includes the construction of Islamic education in the style of Nurcholish Madjid - one of the reformers of Islam - also using burhani epistemology.¹⁰

It is common for academics to try to reconstruct Islamic education through philosophical endeavors; such as those offered by Suyadi & Widodo who tried to reconstruct it based on a multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach that gives birth to neuroscience-based Islamic education.¹¹ Junaedi & Wijaya also offers the reconstruction of Islamic education based on the paradigm of the unity of knowledge.¹² Razaq & Umiarso who reconstructed the epistemology of Islamic education based on Popper's falsification perspective.¹³ Therefore, this effort actually gave rise to concept offers such as Mas'ud who offered non-dichotomous Islamic education;¹⁴ Mulyana & Umiarso gave rise to a philosophy of Islamic education based on the paradigmatic unity of *burhani*, *bayani*, and *irfani*;¹⁵ Bosra, et al. proposing Islamic education based on divine awareness;¹⁶ Assegaf offers Islamic education with an integrative-interconnective paradigm;¹⁷ and also Mu'ti initiated pluralistic Islamic religious education.¹⁸

The epistemological construction of Islamic education such as the integrative-interconnective paradigm actually develops the perception that religion plays a role in the development of science, and science also plays a role in life.¹⁹ In fact, this paradigm gave birth to institutions of religious higher education that are integrative between Islam and science. Khozin & Umiarso's study found a new paradigm that integrates Islam and science with the concept on "tree of knowledge" at UIN Malang, "spider web of knowledge" at UIN Yogyakarta, or "twin towers" at UIN Surabaya.²⁰ This dynamic can be interpreted if philosophy – read the epistemological framework – in Islamic education becomes the basis for forming the education system. The previous study by Hasan, et al found that philosophy is the main perspective in viewing various educational problems.²¹ Like al-Faruqi's view of education formed from the basis of the Islamization of science that he promotes;²² or education in the style of al-Zarnuji born from

⁴Jusuf Amir Feisal, *Reorientation of Islamic Education*, (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 1995), 107.

⁵Muhaimin, et al., *Education Management: Its Application in the Preparation of School/Madrasah Development Plans*, (Jakarta: Kencana, 2015), 16.

⁶Syed Muhammad al-Naqib al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for Developing Philosophy of Islamic Education*, (Bandung: Mizan, 1992), 46.

⁷Haidar Putra Daulay, *Islamic Education in a Philosophical Perspective*, (Jakarta: Kencana, 2014), 61.

⁸Mujamil Qomar, *Initiating Islamic Education*, (Bandung: Rosadakarya Youth, 2014), 151.

⁹Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), 123.

¹⁰List Safitri, et al., *Nurcholish Madjid on Indonesian Islamic Education: a Hermeneutical Study*, *Futura Islamic Scientific Journal* 22(2) 2022, 244-259.

¹¹Suyadi & Hendro Widodo, *Millennialization of Islamic Education Based on Neuroscience in the Third Generation University in Yogyakarta Indonesia*, *Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies* 7(1) 2019, 173-202.

¹²Mahfud Junaedi & Mirza Mahbub Wijaya, *Islamic Education Development Based on Unity of Sciences Paradigm*, *Ulul Albab: Journal of Islamic Studies* 22(2) 2021, 292-312.

¹³Abd.WombRazaq & Umiarso, *Islamic Education Construction in the Perspective of Falsification of Karl R. Popper*, *Journal of Islamic Education* 5(2) 2019, 117-132.

¹⁴ Abdurrahman Mas'ud, *Paradigm of Humanist Islamic Education: Initiating Nondichotomous Education Formats*, (Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD, 2020).

¹⁵ Rohmat Mulyana, *Epistemology of Islamic Education: from Theocentric to Theoanthropocentric Paradigm; from Partialistic to Integralistic-interconnective Methods*, (Bandung: Rosadakarya Youth, 2023).

¹⁶Mustard Bosra, et al., *Educational Monotheistic Reason: Contemplation Towards Action*, (Bandung: Nuansa Cendikia, 2020).

¹⁷Abd.Rachman Assegaf, *Philosophy of Islamic Education: A New Paradigm of Integrative-Interconnective Based Hadhari Education*, (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2011).

¹⁸Abdul Mu'ti, *Pluralistic Islamic Religious Education: A Vision for Indonesia*, *Review of Faith and International Affairs* 21(2) 2023, 121-127.

¹⁹Rizkia Suciati, et al., *Millennial Student's Perception on the Integration of Islam and Science in Islamic Universities*, *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 12(1) 2022, 31-57.

²⁰Khozin & Umiarso, *The Philosophy and Methodology of Islam-Science Integration: Unraveling the Transformation of Indonesian Islamic Higher Institutions*, *Ulumuna: Journal of Islamic Studies* 23(1) 2019, 135-162.

²¹Aminuddin Hassan, et al., *The Role of Islamic Philosophy of Education in Aspiring Holistic Learning*, *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences* 5(2010), 2113-2118.

²²Ahmad Nabil Amir & Tasnim Abdul Rahman, *Education in the al-Faruqi's Perspective and Its Implementation in the Context of the Islamization of Knowledge*, *Southeast Asian Journal of Islamic Education*, 5(1) 2022, 65-80.

the basis of ethical philosophy;²³ *adab* education in the style of Pallathadka, et al was born from the verses of the Koran (*bayani*).²⁴

Thus, the epistemological basis determines the construction of Islamic education. It also includes Irfani's epistemology, as studied by Purwanto, et al found that there is a contribution of "*tasawuf* moderation" –in this context, Abu Hamid al-Ghazali's view-to the discourse of socio-religious movements of intellectuals in higher education.²⁵ Even through Sufism, as found by Dodi & Abitolkha's study, it is able to reduce the occurrence of social conflict and create a theology of peace.²⁶ On the other hand, this base can transform the pattern of the Islamic education system, such as the Imam Hatip Schools (IHSs) in Turkey. This educational system actually shifted from its original purpose as a religious school, due to the changing institutional axiological framework.²⁷ It is precisely the findings of Bolandhematan's study that confirm the research assumptions and dynamics of Islamic education that different philosophical and methodological bases will result in different approaches to religious education - read Islam.²⁸

Therefore, irfani's epistemology can be used as a basis for constructing integrative Islamic education. This epistemological basis reinforces the conceptuality of Islamic education itself as an educational system that does not only glorify rationality but also *adab* (*ta'dib*). Since in practice, Islamic education rarely integrates the sides of *ta'lim*, *ta'dib*, and *tarbiyah*, but it tends to focus only on the *ta'lim* side.²⁹ Through irfani's epistemology, Islamic education has the "opportunity" to reconstruct the relations of *ta'lim*, *ta'dib*, and *tarbiyah* in a unified paradigm based on a rational-(meta)empirical and revelation basis. It encourages Islamic education to reach beyond the non-critical conservative paradigm to become a critical Islamic education that is believed by Saada & Magadlah,³⁰ Saada,³¹ Saada & Gross,³² or Waghid & Smeyers³³ in accordance with the life of a modern, democratic, and pluralistic society.

According the perspective, study tried to analyze Irfani's epistemology as the basis of Islamic education with simplification principles. This analysis is an attempt to answer the research questions; (1) how is the construction of Islamic education based on Irfani's epistemology? And (2) how is the urgency implicative in the construction of Islamic education? The answers to these two questions lead to the basic framework of the philosophy of Islamic education, especially on the basis of its epistemology. Therefore, this study tends to understand and analyze Irfani's epistemological basis in contributing to Islamic education. Irfani's epistemology is able to integrate the sides of *ta'lim*, *ta'dib*, and *tarbiyah* in Islamic education while still referring to critical reasoning.

²³ MiftachulHuda, Islamic Philosophy and Ethics of Education: al-Zarnuji's Concept of Ta'lim in his Ta'lim al-Muta'allim, Ulumuna: Journal of Islamic Studies 25(2) 2021, 399-421.

²⁴ Harikumar Pallathadka, et al., The Study of Islamic Teaching in Education: With an Emphasis on Behavioral Gentleness, HTS Theologese Studies/Theological Studies 79(1) 2023, a8193.

²⁵ YediPurwanto, et al., Tasawwuf Moderation in Higher Education: Empirical Study of al-Ghazali's Tasawwuf Contribution to Intellectual Society, Cogent Social Sciences9(1) 2023, 1-18.

²⁶ Limas Dodi & Amir Maliki Abitolkha, From Sufism to Resolution: Examining the Spiritual Teachings of Tarekat Shiddiqiyah as the Theology of Peace in Indonesia, Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies 10(1) 2022, 141-174.

²⁷ Mahmut Zengin & Abdurrahman Hendek, The Future of Imam Hatip Schools as a Model for Islamic Education in Turkiye, Religions 14(3) 2023, 1-11.

²⁸ KeyvanBolandhematan, Spiritual Education in Islamic Tradition: Revisiting Ghazali's "Delivrance", Religious Education 114(2) 2019, 110-129.

²⁹ Suhayib& MF Ansyari, Design of Islamic Religious Education: Purposes, Alignment of Curriculum Components and Contexts, British Journal of Religious Education 2023.

³⁰ NajwanSaada & Haneen Magadlah, The Meanings and Possible Implications of Critical Islamic Religious Education, British Journal of Religious Education 43(2) 2021, 206-217.

³¹ NajwanSaada, The Theology of Islamic Education from Salafi and Liberal Perspective, Religious Education 113(2) 2018, 406-418.

³² NajwanSaada& Zehavit Gross, Islamic Education and the Challenge of Democratic Citizenship: a Critical Perspective, Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education 38(6) 2017, 807-822.

³³ Yusef Waghid & Paul Smeyers, Re-envisioning the Future: Democratic Citizenship Education and Islamic Education, Journal of Philosophy of Education 48(4) 2014, 539-558.

Research Method

Approach, Type, and Research Design

This study tried to understand and analyze the basis of Irfani's epistemology forming the construction of Islamic education in university of Muhammadiyah— namely at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara and Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang. Irfani's epistemological basis tends to contain theological-philosophical values as sources and methods interpreted by researchers based on the framework of Islamic education. Therefore, this study was expected to provide a critical description through a comprehensive *verstehen* pattern based on an interpretive paradigm on the phenomenon of the epistemological framework of irfani-based Islamic education in university of Muhammadiyah. Therefore, this study used a qualitative approach, since the researchers can position themselves as researchers and as flexible subjects, able to approach the research subjects with an open mind, and do not make assumptions before this study begins. This study used the phenomenology with a multi-site design, namely: Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara and Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang.

On the other hand, this study understood the meaning behind the realization of Irfani's epistemology in building and designing socioanthropological and theological awareness as the axiological value at university of Muhammadiyah. It is oriented in order to understand the paradigmatic background that becomes the way of life and the implications of Islamic education based on Irfani's epistemology that is factually expressed in university of Muhammadiyah. However, the researcher began with an attitude of following "what is" in order to be able to reveal the "essential" meaning of the reality being investigated while still emphasizing the subjective aspects of the academic community. Schematically the flow can be described as follows:

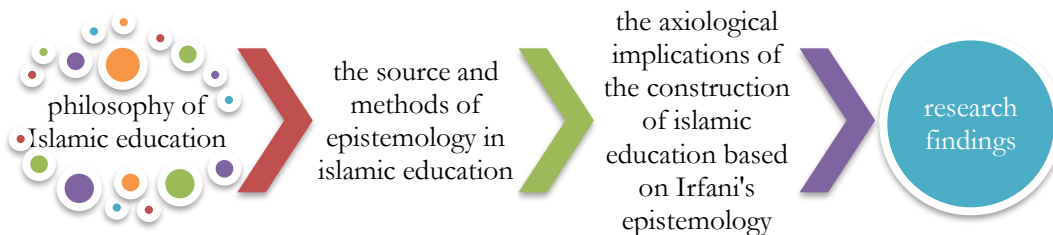


Image: Irfani Epistemology Base Research Flow.

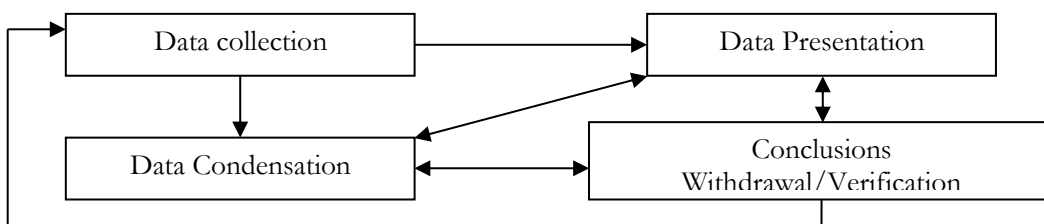
Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection was obtained from December 2022 to May 2023 by using three techniques commonly used in qualitative research, namely: in-depth interviews; participant observation and documentation studies. However, the researcher emphasized that the data was examined by internal and external aspects. The "internal" aspect emphasizes whether the data is accurate or not and has something to do with the significance of the focus and purpose of this study. Likewise, the "external" aspect includes the authenticity of the data to be obtained. Therefore, the selection of informants was carried out by using a purposive sampling technique, that is based on the informants' understanding about the focus of this study. Therefore, researchers are able to collect data according to the research focus in depth and comprehensively.

Table: Initials of Informants and Position.

Name	Position	Gender	Affiliate
AL	Dean	Man	UMSU
KZ	Dean	Man	UMM
HM	Deputy Dean I	Man	UMSU
Ca	Lecturer	Man	UMSU
DA	Lecturer	Man	UMM
HS	Lecturer	Man	UMM

After the data was collected, this study analyzed the data with the principle of on going analysis, that was done through a repetitive pattern between simultaneous data collection and analysis. The analysis model used the interactive Miles, Huberman, and Saldana model; that consists of four stages, namely: data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion; as shown in the following figure:

**Image:** Interactive Model Data Analysis.

Results and Discussion

Irfani's Epistemology at University of Muhammadiyah

There is a belief at university of Muhammadiyah that the scientific construction of Islamic education will not be able to materialize without a philosophical basis. They have the assumption that the construction of Islamic education was born as the results of philosophical, theological, and sociological thinking. However, the philosophical basis is precisely the foundation of construction of science including perennial scholarship; such as Islamic education. Therefore, it tends to be analyzed into a perspective of study by academics; such as Lovat's study on *"Gifted Education and Islamic Educational Philosophy: A Neat Convergence"* that analyzed gifted education associated with Islamic educational philosophy;³⁴ or Varaki, et al's research on *"Philosophy of Education in New Key: Reflection on Higher Education in Iran"* that analyzed the weakness of the philosophy of higher education in Iran to the extent that there is Islamization in the framework of the education system.³⁵ There is also an analysis that focused on the philosophical thoughts of Islamic education figures; such as Ahmed's study on the thoughts of Naquib al-Attas;³⁶ Nor & Bahroni's study on Muhammad Iqbal's thoughts;³⁷ and by Safitri, et al on the thoughts of Nurcholish Madjid.³⁸

³⁴Terence Lovat, *Gifted Education and Islamic Educational Philosophy: A Neat Convergence*, *Gifted Educational International* 39(1) 2023, 47-60.

³⁵Bakhtiar Shabani Varaki, et al., *Philosophy of Education in New Key: Reflection on Higher Education in Iran*, *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 54(8) 2022, 1198-1215.

³⁶ FarahAhmed, *An Exploration of Naquib al-Attas' Theory of Islamic Education as Ta'dib as an "Indigenous" Educational Philosophy*, *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 50(8) 2018, 786-794.

³⁷ MohdRoslan Mohd Nor & Imam Bahroni, *Iqbal's Philosophy on Islamic Education: A Historical Perspective*, *Global Journal al-Thaqafah* 1(1) 2011, 15-24.

³⁸Lis Safitri, et al., *Nurcholish Madjid on Indonesian Islamic Education: A Hermeneutical Study*, *Futura Islamic Scientific Journal* 22(2) 2022, 244-259.

These various studies showed the importance of the basis of scientific construction in Islamic education, particularly on the basis of its epistemology. Since it is the "womb" that determines the scientific construction that outlines the methodology of thinking in the stages of the process. According to the assessment of the Dean of Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara, the developing epistemology of Islamic education tends to rely on the power of rationality (*burhani*) and text (*bayani*). Without providing broad access to intuitive transcendental possibilities in constructing Islamic education. Though science is formed not only on the basis of empirical-rationality reality by simply eliminating the role of intuition (*irfani*) as a source of knowledge. Intuition is only able to increase the sensitivity of the subject of knowledge with the authority of the source of knowledge, namely God. On the one hand, like Bagir's statement in "Epistemology of Sufism: An Introduction" that through intuition, gaining knowledge means the same as gaining experience about it; that means direct intuition of its constituent elements.³⁹

Therefore, irfani's epistemology in the context of Islamic education at university of Muhammadiyah can be said to be a center of study that outlines ways to acquire knowledge, conditions, boundaries, validity and nature of knowledge as well as origins or sources of knowledge. The construction of Islamic education knowledge (experiential) is analyzed in a discursive-logical (demonstrational) manner when it is obtained thoroughly, directly, and intuitively. *Irfani's* epistemology in Islamic education at university of Muhammadiyah is a form of blending scientific traditions that integrate – borrowing a term from Suhrawadi, the founder of illumination philosophy – between *al-hikmah al-bahsiyah* (discursive-logical philosophy) that stands firmly on inference, theorization and demonstration (verification) and it was born out of Aristotle's philosophy, and *al-hikmah al-israqiyah* (intuitive philosophy) that based on *kaasyf* and *isyraq* (illumination) and emerges from Plato's philosophical framework. If the schematic will look like this:

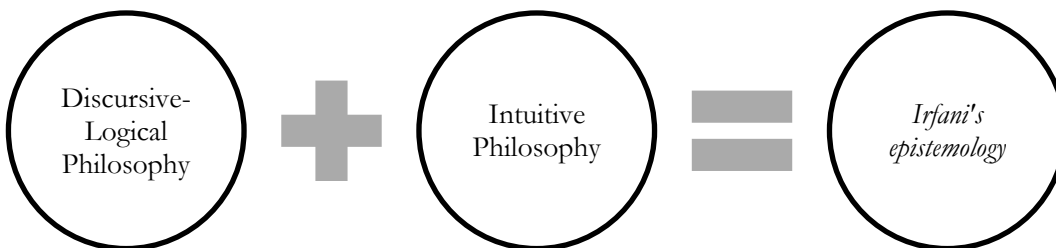


Image: Integration of Scientific Tradition in Irfani's Epistemology.

This integration encourages an axiological unity between value and reality; or subject and object of knowledge in Islamic education at university of Muhammadiyah. Louchakova-Schwartz's study found that within the framework of illumination between subject and object knowledge actually have functions as the basis for the transcendental unity of self and reality, and also as a condition for constructing knowledge.⁴⁰ It means, the nuances and scientific systems of education that formed have transcendentalistic values and morality that become normative references. Similarly, the Islamic education system at university of Muhammadiyah refers to human and divine values. Like al-Ghazali's educational thought which refers to and has an

³⁹Heydar Bagir, *Epistemology of Sufism: An Introduction*, (Bandung, Mizan, 2017), 56.

⁴⁰ Olga Louchakova-Schwartz, *The Way Into Transcendental Philosophy from the Argument in Suhrawardi's Philosophy of Illumination*, *Open Theology* 5(1) 2019, 278-298.

epistemological basis, Irfani is closely related to divine values.⁴¹ This axiology can also be practiced in other dimensions such as politics; in which Tohis's research findings state that the political system contained in the philosophy of illumination is divine, theocratic, and the concept of power is based on self-control.⁴²

Thus, the characteristics of the *irfani's* epistemology of Islamic education at university of Muhammadiyah are very different from Western epistemology that has a strong dichotomous nuance between values and facts; objective and subjective reality; or the subject and object of knowledge. In fact, for Western epistemology, reality can only be known through observation and rational reasoning or rational syllogism. It also has the characteristics of desecralization (knowledge elimination) of transcendentalistic knowledge. It is common for intuition, that is the medium of introduction to God, not to function; so that institutions are seen as irrational means of constructing knowledge.

Naturally, *Irfani's* epistemology in Islamic education at university of Muhammadiyah appears to perfect an educational epistemology based on Aristotelian parity. The proof of a proposition or theory of Islamic education with an *irfani's* epistemology is not monolithic-authoritative, but rather intersubjective. That is, the truth of knowledge can be proven based on a plurality of spiritual experiences about the same object. Although paradoxical logic is a method framework in explaining the presence of the existence of reality, *irfani's* epistemology tends to lose the argumentation of the causes of the emergence of reality. This weakness encourages the university of Muhammadiyah— read Muhammadiyah in general – like Abbas's study findings to try to relate and also interweave the three epistemologies (*burhani, bayani*)⁴³

Indeed, *Irfani's* epistemology is one of the rooms in the philosophy of Islamic education that fosters ontological and axiological awareness of humanity and divinity. The Islamic education system at university of Muhammadiyah has an epistemological unit; namely the unity of rational-empirical dimensions, intuition and revelation that has the ability to develop knowledge of *caliphs* and *'Abdullah's*. Based on the philosophical basis and ability of Islamic education, it can be said that *Irfani's* epistemology can perfect the axiological dimension in the form of divine awareness. Since the means of *irfani's* epistemology lies in the spiritual aspect of divinity as the essence of human reality. Therefore, Islamic education at university of Muhammadiyah needs to try to place it as an alternative education system that offers a set of moral values on the basis of humanity and divinity. Nowadays, according to Melnyk et al.'s research findings; humanistic orientation is still a methodological guide and regulator of science and technology development that has lost moral and spiritual values.⁴⁴

Irfani's epistemology comes from *qolbu* that reflects the reality of knowledge-reading the construction of Islamic education. It is common that the method used is intuitive understanding or knowledge of illumination (*kasyf*). The resulting knowledge is built on the basis of the subject's active role in the awareness of faith in the reality of God. It was formed at university of Muhammadiyah because of the integration between knowledge and faith; or between socioanthropological and theological dimensions. Although on the one hand, *Irfani's* epistemology in Islamic education does not recognize pantheology or all-theological thinking that eliminates the role of reason. It is represented based on the firmness of the *Qur'an* that

⁴¹Omar M. Khasawneh, et al., Educational Philosophical Thought and Implications of Abu Hamid al-Ghazali: An Islamic Teacher Education Perspective, *International Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Society* 12(1) 2022, 115-132.

⁴²Reza Adeputra Tohis, Political Philosophy of Illumination: An Analysis of Political Dimensions in Suhrawardi's Thought, *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 12(2) 2022, 151-163.

⁴³ Afifi Fauzi Abbas, Integration Approach of Bayani, Burhani, and Irfani in Muhammadiyah Ijtihad, *Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 12(1) 2012, 51-58.

⁴⁴ Olga Melnyk, et al., Theoretical and Methodological Aspects of the Humanistic Reorientation of Modern Society, *Wisdom* 22(2) 2022, 59-67.

opens up space for methodological rationality, empirical observation, experience or intuition to be able to construct knowledge as well as truth.

This phenomenon in Muhammadiyah indicates the strengthening of epistemology that is able to unravel physical and metaphysical realities. One of the lecturers at Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang stated that if epistemology that develops in the current education system is more inclined to the framework of Western philosophy. Naturally, if it is not able to provide alternative solutions to all problems in the context of socio-humanistic knowledge, especially perennialist knowledge. It means, philosophical paradigms such as rationalism, empiricism, or criticism are not able to transform themselves into a normative framework or a perspective on the construction of educational theory that oriented towards perennialistic or eschatological discourse. For this reason, the epistemology that claimed to be able to answer this problem is *Irfani's* epistemology.

The Scientific Basis of Islamic Education at Muhammadiyah Higher Education

According the explanation above, if irfani's epistemology is the nature, basis, and limits of knowledge of Islamic education at university of Muhammadiyah. Interestingly, the various discourses on Islamic education at Muhammadiyah are often associated with Sufism that also has an epistemology based on intuition (*irfani*). The implication is that there is an assumption that Islamic education tends to be doctrinal when it internalizes religious values, "goes high" in the development of knowledge, and specifically examines religious substance. Even Islamic education is considered to still adhere to the school of dichotomy of knowledge between religious and general sciences; or between *naqliyyah* and *aqliyyah* science. In fact, university of Muhammadiyah has made a breakthrough in uniting the dichotomy of knowledge in their education system. The implication, between the traditionalist style of Islamic education that emphasizes doctrinal-normative aspects that are exclusively apologetic; and the modernist Islamic education model (Western style) that suspected to have eliminated transcendentalistic values, capable of being integrated into a unified discourse and practice. Tamami in his study acknowledged the role of Muhammadiyah through an integrative and modern Islamic education system to educate society;⁴⁵ or in other study, it was said as integrative-holistic education.⁴⁶

Interestingly, this construction actually creates educational dynamics in the midst of Muhammadiyah in the form of axiological values of human and divine awareness. Where the subject of education has a strong character towards the development of science; while still orienting it to transcendentalistic values. Even one of the lecturers at Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang assessed that this construction seemed to be a linearity of the stages of human thought when building its civilization. Since modern civilization displays people's lives with antagonistic double faces; modernism contributed to the development of science and technology. But on the other hand, it also blurs the face of humanity with the arid socio-religious problems and dynamics.

"Based on the progress of science and technology, modern society seems no longer need a dimension of religious spirituality or divine reality. He arrogantly and despotically feels that he has the ability to solve all the dynamics of humanity and natural problems. Universalism of religiosity is not used as the epicenter of people's lives and tends to deny these values. Even

⁴⁵Tasman Tamami, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama Education: Two Main Pillars of Nation Education in Indonesia, *Journal of Islamic Religious Education* 18(2) 2021, 307-330.

⁴⁶Tasman Tamami & Zalik Nuryana, A Holistic-Integrative Approach of the Muhammadiyah Education System in Indonesia, *Theological Studies* 78(4) 2022, 1-10.

the dimension of religious spirituality and the reality of divinity are claimed as a reality that is not needed in society.

Therefore, *irfani's* epistemology in university of Muhammadiyah is integrated –read functionalized- in Islamic education, one of them is the study of Sufism, particularly the Philosophy of Islamic Education. Their goal is to counterbalance the dominance of Western approaches and epistemology in Islamic education; namely skeptical, rational-empirical, dichotomous, and positive-objective approaches that are anthropocentrically oriented and do not recognize the transcendentalistic-spirituality dimension. Through *irfani's* epistemology, Muhammadiyah has room to reconstruct the sources of propositions, hypotheses, or theories of Islamic education. One way to increase God's awareness is to purify the heart (purgative), remember God (contemplative), or *fana'fi Allah* (illuminative). In this position, Muhammadiyah simultaneously functions *burhani* and *irfani's* epistemology by orienting the construction of the education system to socioanthropocentric and theocentric. In this context, *Irfani's* epistemology can also integrate the sides of *ta'lim*, *ta'dib*, and *tarbiyah* in Islamic education.

There are two domains that are systemically constructed in Islamic education learning at university of Muhammadiyah, namely their human awareness and their divinity. They believe that awareness can be obtained through definitions and conceptions formed from dialectics between subjects and objects of knowledge. The truth of knowledge is built on the basis of confirmation through verification or falsification of the definitions and conceptions; while still referring to the normative basis of *Qur'an* and *al-Hadith*. The confirmation results are negotiated with the reality of society in order to realize their theological ideals on the socio-anthropological stage; such as the concept of *Dar al-Abdi wa al-Syahadah* that is based on *al-Mann* theology;⁴⁷ or the theological contribution of *Ahlussunnah Waljamaah* in building Islamic moderation in Indonesia.⁴⁸ Eventhough, it turns out that there are still Muhammadiyah members who are exclusively *puritan* in their theology.⁴⁹

Thus, for university of Muhammadiyah, learning process is not only a form of educational subject activity in receiving, responding to, and analyzing learning materials. However, learning is a process of building awareness of humanity and divinity through experience, stimulus-response, habituation, imitation, understanding and appreciation. In this context, the theological and philosophical basis of Muhammadiyah becomes a normative value for exploring the behavior of educational subjects in the midst of society. Learning is used as a vehicle for transforming educational subjects to humanize themselves through the development of knowledge through *burhani*, *bayani*, and *irfani's* epistemologies. Mastery of knowledge is oriented towards the subject of education, other people, and society based on the monotheistic spirit of God with their awareness – that in this context is often said to be *ihsan*.

On the other hand, university of Muhammadiyah also makes efforts to integrate *bayani* epistemology with other knowledge. It starts from the study of *al-Islam* and *Kemuhammadiyah* (AIK) material that tries to string together Islamic values as the main basis for the development of other sciences. The revelation text of *Qur'an* is positioned as the source of studies on the development of non-perennial scientific disciplines. Hanny & Rizal's study found that there was an effort to integrate Islamic values with accounting disciplines carried out by university

⁴⁷Ilham Yuli Isdiyanto, et al., Tracing the Roots of Muhammadiyah Thought on the Concept of Dar al-Ahdi wa al-Syahadah, Legality: Scientific Journal of Law 30(1) 2022, 147-165.

⁴⁸Imam Kanafi, et al., The Contribution of Ahlussunnah Waljamaah's Theology in Establishing Moderate Islam in Indonesia, Theological Studies 77(4) 2021, 1-10.

⁴⁹Ahmad Najib Burhani, Pluralism, Liberalism and Islamism: Religious Outlook of Muhammadiyah, Studia Islamika 25(3) 2018, 433-470.

of Muhammadiyah through the hidden curriculum concept.⁵⁰ Moreover, the nature of Muhammadiyah's educational goals is very progressive that emphasizes social reconstruction to advance people's lives;⁵¹ based on theological values. It can be said, Islamic education developed by Muhammadiyah has an integrative-holistic epistemological basis that includes *bayani*, *burhani*, and *irfani*. The schematic can be seen as follow:

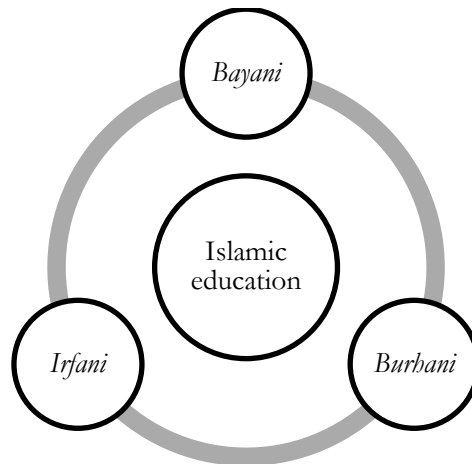


Image: Integrative-Holistic Epistemological Basis.

This effort is one of the progressive and as the preventive movements carried out by university of Muhammadiyah. A lecturer at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara stated that:

“Today's modern society really glorifies the rational-empirical method and orients science within an anthropocentric framework. Finally, the human self is crowned as "prima causa" that determines the reality of truth from science itself. In fact, based on his rationality, he designs certain criteria as parameters in determining the truth, so that he feels no needs other criteria that are beyond his strength. This view actually ignores the awareness of humanity itself as a creature of God; who is bound by transcendentalistic values. The implication is that humans reject the existence of the spiritual elements of humanity as a means to receive *taufiq* and guidance from the reality of divinity. It is natural that the dimension of spirituality is not considered as a source of value in theories, systems and philosophical insights of humanity that gave rise to educational hypotheses and theories.”

This anxiety causing a reconstructive effort to the basic framework of Islamic education theory through its epistemological basis. It is very clear that the process of developing Islamic education at university of Muhammadiyah is based on an integrative-holistic epistemology. This epistemological as the basic concept of human philosophy, so that humans get a normative title as God-like beings. This integrative-holistic epistemology has the following characteristics: (1) it is based on a transcendentalistic-spirituality dimension; (2) set harmony between revelation, reason, and intuition; (3) the interdependence of reason with intuition that is dialectical with revelation; (4) knowledge construction is oriented to theoanthropocentric framework; and (5) bound by human and divine values. Naturally, if Muhammadiyah designed the development of Islamic religious knowledge based on a multi-disciplinary approach, such

⁵⁰ YustriantheRahmawati Hanny & Noviansyah Rizal, Hidden curriculum: The Concept of Integrating Islamic Value in Higher Education Accounting at Muhammadiyah on Ulul Albab Perspective, *Journal of Advanced Research in Dynamical and Control System* 12(1) 2020, 113-121.

⁵¹ MohammedAli, Dissecting Muhammadiyah Education Goals, Prophetics: *Journal of Islamic Studies* 17(1) 2016, 43-56.

as interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary. This approach is indeed at this time, as revealed by Abdullah, becoming "a must" for the Islamic sciences so that religious understanding is more contextual.⁵²

A lecturer at Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang termed the Islamic education reconstruction effort as a *tajdid* movement; namely a renewal movement in the form of a reconstruction of a philosophical basis that is contextual and interconnected refers to Islamic normative values and norms. Therefore, when university of Muhammadiyah carries out educational development, it is determined to refer to the theological basis, so that the holy messages in *Qur'an* and *al-Hadith* are positioned as an ontological reality as well as the source of inspiration. In line with this context, the research findings of Khoirudin, et al state that Muhammadiyah's educational philosophy is based on *al-Ma'un* theology and *al-'Asbr* theology with the aim of developing divine awareness (*ma'rifah* quotient).⁵³

University of Muhammadiyah carries out a *tajdid* movement with a pattern of re-actualizing Islamic education to its normative ideal as an education system that is formed through an integrative-holistic epistemology with humanity and divinity nuances to create a complete human being (*al-insan al-kamil*). The *tajdid* movement is the main alternative then Islamic education can face social transformation with the format of epistemological reconstruction. It encourages Islamic education to have a comprehensive, multi-aspect, and multi-paradigmatic theoretical framework in order to answer all the challenges. For instance, when society is currently faced with the plurality of religions, ethnicities, races and classes, educators must be able to play the role of educators of peace. The conceptuality of this peace educator according to KH.⁵⁴

The *tajdid* movement actually started with the functioning of the irfani epistemology, so that the Muhammadiyah College was able to integrate Islam, science, and philosophy. They try to expand the philosophical paradigmatic of Islamic education by carrying out thoughts on the integration of knowledge, the unity of the human spirit, and bringing together the treasures of Islamic and Western thought. Precisely his greatest hope is an effort to "ground" Islamic education based on theoretical to practical thinking; from the aspect of authority to rationality; from eschatological to futurological bases; or from divine reality to humanity. According to Anwar's study, the integration of Islam and science can be carried out by using an object approach; namely through the reconstruction of the structure of knowledge including (ontological) paradigms, (axiological) methods, and expediency (axiology); and a subjective approach, namely developing the scientific insights of scientific producers.⁵⁵ In this context, the object approach corresponds to the phenomenon of reconstruction of the epistemological basis of Islamic education at university of Muhammadiyah.

This phenomenon actually indicates the development of a new thought in Islamic education in the form of an epistemological integration paradigm; so the knowledge is born from optimizing ratio potentials based on purgative and revealed instructions, thinking based on empirical data -with physical and metaphysical ontotexts - balanced by contemplative remembrance of God; and increasing the sensitivity of the soul through *fana'fi Allah* (illuminative) that oriented to the

⁵²M.AmenAbdullah, Religion, Science and Culture: An Integrated Interconnected Paradigm of Science, al-Jami'ah 52(1) 2014, 175-203.

⁵³Azaki Khoirudin, et al., Exploring Muhammadiyah's Historical Civilizational Dimension of Social Reconstruction in Indonesia: Humanitarian and Cosmopolitan Approaches, Journal of al-Tamaddun 15(1) 2020, 183-197.

⁵⁴Purwadi, et al., The Attributes of Peace Educators from Sang Pencerah, the Biography of KH. Ahmad Dahlan: A Hermeneutic Study, Theological Studies 78(4) 2022,1-8.

⁵⁵Syamsul Anwar, Developing A Philosophy of Scientific Advancement in Muhammadiyah Higher Education Institutions Based on al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah(AIK) Principles, Afkaruna Journal 17(1) 2021, 98-112.

reality of humanity. The entry of Islamic education into this new stage also refutes the views of two sociologists who divide the development of human thought into three stages, namely: (1) Auguste Comte began with the theological, metaphysical, and positivistic stages; (2) Cornelis Anthonie Van Peursen divided it from mystical, theological, and functional stages. These stages are no longer relevant and not be used as a standard for dividing human civilization that runs linearly. However, the stages of human thought actually run linearly that develop into four stages, namely: (1) theological-apathy, (2) metaphysical-critical, (3) positivistic-materialistic, and (4) positivistic-spiritualistic; as shown in the following schematic:

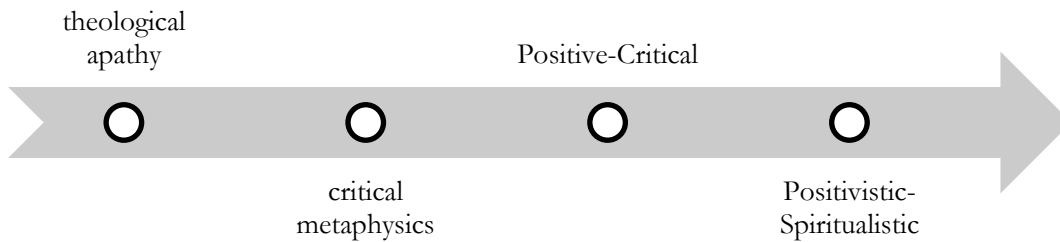


Image: Stages of Integrative-Holistic Epistemology-Based Thinking.

However, these stages run linearly with the unique characteristics through the thinking of "progressive" Islamic education. It means, the transformation of the dynamics of Islamic education – generally can be said that human life – has unique characteristics and runs simultaneously with its linear nature towards the perfection of human civilization.

Conclusion

Irfani's epistemology in Islamic education at university of Muhammadiyah is built in the form of combination of integrative scientific traditions between *al-hikmah al-bahtsiyah* (discursive-logical philosophy) that stands firmly based on inference, theorization and demonstration (verification) based on Aristotle's philosophy, and *al-hikmah al-isyraqiyah* (intuitive philosophy) that is based on *kasyf* and *isyraq* (illumination) from Plato's philosophical framework. This epistemological basis is actually an attempt by university of Muhammadiyah to reconstruct Islamic education through the integration of *burhani*, *bayani*, and *irfani* epistemologies. The integration of this epistemology gave birth to a design for the development of Islamic religious knowledge based on a multi-disciplinary approach; namely interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary

Through *irfani's* epistemology, Islamic education at university of Muhammadiyah is constructed in an integrative manner based on the unification of potential rationality-empiricalism and intuition based on verbalistic revelation (*al-Qur'an* and *al-Hadith*). Islamic education can develop learning patterns that lead to the improvement and development of human and divine awareness of educational subjects while still oriented on a theoanthropocentric basis. The practical implication that emerges from this framework is the axiological dimension of Islamic education in the form of values and norms for developing educational subjects to become *al-insan al-kamil*. This educational subject has the ability to develop knowledge of *caliphs* and *abdullahs* based on theoretical to practical thinking; from the aspect of authority to rationality; from eschatological to futurological bases; or from divine reality to humanity.

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