

ISLAMIC EDUCATION AS A SCIENCE: AN ONTOLOGICAL, EPISTEMOLOGICAL, AND AXIOLOGICAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the standing of Islamic education as a scientific discipline through ontological, epistemological, and axiological reviews, correlating these with the characteristics of Islamic teachings in religion, worship, creed, science, and culture. This research employs a qualitative library research method with a philosophical and descriptive-analytical approach. Primary data sources include the Qur'an, Hadith, and classical works of Muslim philosophers such as Al-Ghazali and Ibn Sina, while secondary sources consist of contemporary books and journals. Data collection uses documentation techniques, and data analysis is conducted using content analysis and logical synthesis. The findings reveal that ontologically, Islamic education encompasses a holistic view of reality, including both material and non-material aspects. Epistemologically, it constructs knowledge through the integration of naqli (revealed) and aqli (rational) arguments via analytical and synthetical methods. Axiologically, Islamic education contains both physical and spiritual values, with religious value as the highest objective. In conclusion, Islamic education fully meets the criteria as a valid and universal scientific discipline, holding significant relevance in addressing modern challenges. Strengthening this philosophical foundation is essential for formulating contextual and civilization-oriented Islamic education policies.

Keywords: Islamic Education, Philosophy of Science, Ontology, Epistemology, Axiology

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kedudukan pendidikan Islam sebagai ilmu pengetahuan melalui tinjauan ontologi, epistemologi, dan aksiologi, serta mengkorelasikannya dengan karakteristik ajaran Islam di bidang agama, ibadah, akidah, serta ilmu dan kebudayaan. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kepustakaan (library research) kualitatif dengan pendekatan filosofis dan deskriptif-analitis. Sumber data primer meliputi Al-Qur'an, Hadits, dan karya filosof muslim klasik seperti Al-Ghazali dan Ibnu Sina, sedangkan sumber sekunder berupa buku dan jurnal kontemporer. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan dokumentasi, sementara analisis data dilakukan dengan analisis isi (content analysis) dan sintesis

logis. Hasil temuan menunjukkan bahwa secara ontologis, pendidikan Islam memiliki pandangan realitas holistik yang mencakup realitas material dan non-material. Secara epistemologis, ia membangun pengetahuan berbasis integrasi dalil naqli dan dalil aqli melalui metode analisis dan sintesis. Secara aksiologis, pendidikan Islam memuat nilai jasmani dan rohani, dengan nilai religi sebagai puncaknya. Kesimpulannya, pendidikan Islam telah memenuhi seluruh kriteria sebagai ilmu pengetahuan yang sahih dan universal, serta sangat relevan untuk menjawab tantangan modernitas. Penguatan fondasi filosofis ini menjadi kunci dalam merumuskan kebijakan pendidikan Islam yang kontekstual dan berorientasi peradaban.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Islam, Filsafat Ilmu, Ontologi, Epistemologi, Aksiologi.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the landscape of contemporary scholarship, Islamic education is often positioned as a normative entity limited merely to the domains of worship and morality. Society in general tends to understand Islamic education simply as an effort to transfer basic religious knowledge, such as Qur'anic literacy and the practice of Islamic law, without realizing that it possesses a profound scientific structure (Aminah & Fadhilah, 2020). This reductionist view has caused the existence of Islamic education to be frequently regarded as an “auxiliary science” or a complement to general sciences, rather than as an independent discipline (Wijaya, 2021). As a result, graduates of Islamic educational institutions are often perceived as less competitive in the global intellectual arena because they are considered to lack a strong philosophical foundation (Sodikin et al., 2023). In fact, Islamic education essentially contains a systematic and comprehensive structure of thought which, when examined through the branches of philosophy—ontology, epistemology, and axiology—reveals its excellence as an autonomous field of knowledge (Huda, 2021; Salminawati, 2020). Ironically, this collective awareness has not yet been widely developed, even among Muslims themselves, so the discourse on Islamic education as a science remains an unresolved debate within academic spaces (Asman et al., 2021).

In practical reality, the majority of Islamic educational institutions, from Islamic elementary schools to Islamic higher education institutions, still predominantly employ dogmatic and textual approaches in the learning process (Wijaya, 2021). Educators tend to present Islamic teachings in a rigid and dichotomous manner without incorporating critical analysis of the nature of existence (ontology), the ways knowledge is acquired (epistemology), and the values or benefits produced (axiology) by the knowledge being taught (Salminawati, 2020). The teaching and learning process is more oriented toward memorizing religious texts and acquiring normative understanding than toward developing scientific reasoning based on social realities and the surrounding natural world (Huda, 2021). This condition is further exacerbated by the limited philosophical training provided to educators, making it difficult for them to respond to essential questions raised by students who critically examine religious teachings (Hashim, 2021). Consequently, a significant gap emerges between the ideal aspiration of Islamic education to form the *insan kamil* and the reality of educational outputs that merely master ritual and ceremonial aspects (Asman et al., 2021). This condition indicates that strengthening

the philosophical foundation of the curriculum and learning process is an unavoidable necessity (Haneef, 2021).

Based on an in-depth literature review, studies on the philosophy of Islamic education have indeed been widely conducted by prominent scholars. Several major works, such as those written by Ahmad Tafsir, Abuddin Nata, Suparlan Suhartono, and Burhanuddin Salam, have discussed the philosophical foundations of Islamic education quite extensively, although often in a partial manner. However, based on the author's review of various library sources and scholarly articles, most previous studies remain fragmented and discuss only one or two philosophical aspects separately, for instance ontology without being intensively connected to epistemology, or axiology without a clear ontological foundation. The research gap lies precisely in the limited number of integrative studies that simultaneously connect the three branches of the philosophy of science in a proportional and balanced manner to affirm the status of Islamic education as a complete body of knowledge. This gap has made the understanding of Islamic educational philosophy appear partial, incomplete, and insufficient for constructing a holistic framework of thought for scholars and practitioners. Therefore, a comprehensive study is needed to bridge this gap through a more integrated and applicable approach.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrative effort to relate the three pillars of the philosophy of science—ontology, epistemology, and axiology—simultaneously to four main characteristics of Islamic teachings, namely religion, worship, creed, as well as knowledge and culture. This study does not merely describe the normative definitions of each philosophical branch, but critically analyzes how the three mutually reinforce one another dialectically in responding to the challenges of modernity to the existence of Islamic education. The approach employed in this study differs substantially from previous studies because it does not separate the theological dimension from the scientific dimension, but instead integrates both into a complementary epistemic framework. Thus, this study offers a fresh perspective that Islamic education is not merely a religious subject, but a system of knowledge that possesses clear formal and material objects as well as a distinctive and character-based scientific methodology. The uniqueness of this intellectual synthesis makes this study an important and distinctive reference in the development of contemporary Islamic educational philosophy amid the pressure of secular Western thought.

Based on the problems and gaps described above, this study has specific and measurable objectives to be achieved. Its main objective is to analyze and comprehensively describe the position of Islamic education as a science through an ontological review that examines the nature of Islamic reality and the universe as God's creation. In addition, this study aims to examine the epistemological aspect in depth in order to reveal how knowledge in Islamic education is acquired, tested for validity, and justified on the basis of naqli evidence, namely the Qur'an and the Sunnah, as well as aqli evidence, namely sound human reasoning. Furthermore, this study also aims to examine the axiological aspect in an applicable manner in order to explore the practical values and concrete benefits of implementing Islamic education in everyday life. Integratively, this study seeks to formulate a scientific conclusion that these three philosophical pillars constitute inseparable foundations that establish Islamic education as a well-developed and recognized academic discipline. With this ultimate aim, this study is expected to make

a significant academic contribution to the enrichment of Islamic scholarship in higher education.

The existence of this study is highly important and urgent amid the rapid flow of globalization, which gradually erodes the scholarly identity of Muslims and blurs the boundaries of Eastern values. First, this study is theoretically important as a scientific foundation for policymakers in the field of education to formulate curricula that are not only oriented toward short-term cognitive achievement, but also toward character formation and civilization building based on a strong philosophical foundation. Second, this study is crucial for educators and lecturers as a practical guide for internalizing critical and rational thinking methods in religious learning, enabling them to respond wisely to contemporary social problems. Third, academically, this study is highly significant in ending the prolonged dichotomy between religious sciences and general sciences by argumentatively proving that Islamic education possesses scientific validity that is equal to, and even superior in, the moral-spiritual dimension. Fourth, the findings of this study may serve as the spirit or driving force for the development of Islamic studies in higher education so that they become more contextual, applicable, and future-oriented, without losing their relevance in the rapidly changing era of digital disruption. In short, this study serves as a strategic entry point for rebuilding an integrated, holistic, and competitive scholarly awareness among contemporary Muslim intellectuals.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study is categorized as library research and is purely qualitative in nature, as all data and information were obtained from written sources relevant to the topic under investigation (Sugiyono, 2020). The approaches employed in this study are philosophical and descriptive-analytical approaches, which aim to explore, examine, and interpret in depth the fundamental concepts of Islamic education within the framework of the philosophy of science (Halik, 2020). The philosophical approach was chosen because the issue examined is directly related to the nature of existence, truth, and value of Islamic education as an independent scientific discipline (Huda, 2021). Meanwhile, the descriptive-analytical approach was used to provide a comprehensive description of the scientific structure of Islamic education and then break it down into smaller components—ontology, epistemology, and axiology—in order to carefully analyze the interrelationship among these components (Salminawati, 2020). Thus, this study is not intended to test statistical hypotheses or seek quantitative causal relationships, but rather to generate a comprehensive and interpretive understanding of the scientific foundations of Islamic education, in line with the tradition of philosophical research that prioritizes depth of meaning and clarity of reasoning over mere empirical generalization (Sari & Asmendri, 2020).

The data sources in this study are divided into two main categories, namely primary data sources and secondary data sources, both of which complement one another in constructing strong and credible scientific arguments (Zed, 2018). The primary data sources serving as the main references are the fundamental texts of Islamic teachings, namely the Qur'an as the principal guide and the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as its practical explanation. These sources contain foundational values concerning the nature of knowledge, reason, and the obligation to seek knowledge, along

with the classical works of prominent Muslim philosophers such as Al-Ghazali, Ibn Sina, and Al-Farabi, who explicitly discussed the structure of knowledge in Islamic civilization (Mustafa, 2020). The secondary data sources in this study include various books, scholarly journals, articles, and dissertations written by contemporary academics such as Ahmad Tafsir, Abuddin Nata, Suparlan Suhartono, Burhanuddin Salam, and Saiful Anwar, who specifically discuss the ontological and axiological dimensions of the philosophy of science. These sources are also complemented by popular scientific dictionaries and philosophical encyclopedias that assist the author in verifying key definitions and terminology (Nata, 2021). All data sources were carefully selected based on the credibility of the authors, substantive relevance, and publication year, except for classical works that are monumental in nature and remain relevant to the present day (Widiawati, 2019).

The data collection technique used in this study was the documentation method through an in-depth and systematic literature study. The author conducted intensive literature searches through various academic libraries, both physical libraries in higher education institutions and digital libraries such as Google Scholar, Academia.edu, and university repositories, in order to access indexed journals and relevant reference books (Darmalaksana, 2020). After all materials had been collected, the next step was to conduct critical reading of each text to identify sections that were directly or indirectly related to the ontology, epistemology, and axiology of Islamic education. The reading results were then recorded in the form of quotation cards or structured digital notes containing important points, key arguments, and supporting data for analysis (Sari & Asmendri, 2020). The author also classified the materials according to each branch of philosophy to facilitate the synthesis and interpretation process at the subsequent stage. The entire data collection process was carried out gradually and iteratively to ensure that no important information was overlooked and to obtain an increasingly deeper understanding of the materials examined comprehensively (Waseso, 2021).

The collected data were then analyzed using content analysis combined with logical synthesis and comprehensive philosophical interpretation. Content analysis was used to identify, categorize, and derive substantive meanings from each text related to the three pillars of the philosophy of science by carefully examining key words, phrases, and sentences that indicate ontological, epistemological, and axiological orientations in each data source (Pratama & Kasmar, 2022). Furthermore, logical synthesis was used to integrate partial findings from various sources into a coherent, integrated, and non-contradictory framework of thought concerning the status of Islamic education as a science. This was carried out by employing deductive logic, which begins with general concepts of philosophy and leads to specific conclusions, as well as inductive logic, which draws generalizations from specific examples found in educational practice (Anwar et al., 2022). This study was conducted through a series of planned and systematic procedures, beginning with the heuristic stage or data collection, followed by source verification to ensure the validity and accuracy of information, interpretation through the framework of the philosophy of science, synthesis of the interpreted findings into a harmonious whole, and finally report writing and final verification (Siregar, 2021). All procedures were carried out with discipline and accuracy to produce a scholarly work that is genuinely useful for the future development of Islamic scholarship. The entire analysis is presented descriptively and qualitatively in a clear and systematic academic style so that readers can

easily follow the author's line of reasoning without losing the profound philosophical essence of the discussion (Kambali et al., 2019).

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

This study produced several important findings that were analyzed in accordance with the research objectives and the formulated research questions. The analysis was conducted critically by referring to secondary data derived from official policy documents, government reports, and relevant studies.

Ontological, Epistemological, and Axiological Review of Islamic Education

Before examining further the ontology, epistemology, and axiology of Islamic education, it is first necessary to understand the meaning of philosophy, which constitutes an integral part of philosophical science itself (Halik, 2020). The word "philosophy" is derived from the term *philosophia*, which comes from Greek and means "love of wisdom." According to tradition, Pythagoras or Socrates was the first to call himself a *philosophus* as a form of protest against the Sophists, the educated people of that era who called themselves "wise," although their wisdom was considered superficial. In response to their arrogance, Socrates preferred to call himself a "lover of wisdom," meaning a person who seeks noble knowledge (*sophia*). In addition to this meaning, philosophy also refers to knowledge concerning the principles of thought and behavior, the science of seeking truth and principles through the power of reason, a worldview held by an individual, and teachings related to law and conduct (Widiawati, 2019). Thus, philosophy provides space for knowledge in all fields to examine or investigate a particular science in order to determine its truth through various approaches, including sociological, psychological, cultural, educational, and other supporting approaches, including the study of Islamic education.

In relation to Islamic education as a science from ontological, epistemological, and axiological perspectives, this discussion provides a new understanding that the scope of Islamic education is not limited merely to the study of *tawhid*, *sharia*, *muamalah*, and other Islamic sciences, but also includes its relevance in examining Islamic knowledge in order to obtain justification as an actual science that is accepted by human reason (Salminawati, 2020). In general, philosophy always raises three fundamental questions. First, "What is real?" which relates to ontology. Second, "What is true?" which relates to epistemology. Third, "What is good?" which relates to axiology (Huda, 2021). Based on this explanation, Islamic education as a science may be reviewed philosophically as follows.

Ontological Review of Islamic Education

Ontology, in English, is rooted in the Greek words *on*, meaning "being," and *ontos*, meaning "existence," while *logos* means "thought" or "reason" (Pratama & Kasmar, 2022). Ontology is a branch of philosophy concerned with what is real, with reality, and with the actual existence of something. One example of a real issue that may be questioned is: "From what does the universe originate?" This question requires investigation into its truth because the existence of reality itself cannot be denied. Ontology emphasizes what is seen or appears and becomes the object of study of a particular science. One may approach the problem of reality and appearance through the concept of "being," which is

viewed as specific diversity and an ontological procedure. This procedure is first used to distinguish what is truly real or exists from what merely appears to be real. In this context, all appearances and dimensions of existence in various realities can be accepted by human reason (Mustafa, 2020).

The ontological review described above refers to ontology in a general sense. However, when it is related to Islamic education, a comparative ontological perspective emerges, namely between general ontology and ontology rooted in the scope of education based on Islamic teachings (Nata, 2021). These two perspectives certainly differ in their ways of viewing reality. Ontological perspectives outside Islamic education may not emphasize theological, sharia, and muamalah approaches, but rather focus solely on material approaches. In contrast, the ontology of Islamic education emphasizes both material and non-material approaches as references for examining something in order to determine its truth (Kambali et al., 2019). One of the tasks of the philosophy of education is not to one-sidedly justify one teaching practice over another, but rather to establish a relationship in thinking between ideas about fundamental reality and daily procedures in the classroom (Siregar, 2021).

To conduct this systematically, the ontological dimension presents idealism, which views everything seen in the world as real, although it is only a limited expression of the ideas that underlie it. Thus, Islamic education as a science represents an idealistic view, namely that something real, such as the existence of the universe, can be understood by human reason as God's creation and accepted logically through the study of Islam (Anwar et al., 2022). In addition, there is realism, which is grounded in scientific knowledge. Realist philosophers consider the real world in which humans live to be the primary basis of reality, and all its components move and behave according to definite natural laws. Its relevance to Islamic education as a science lies in the fact that the natural world, as a form of reality, encourages belief in non-empirical realities such as the hereafter through reflection on natural phenomena. These phenomena serve as a driving force in the study of Islamic philosophy, enabling statements within Islamic education to be accepted through a factual approach (Salminawati, 2020).

Epistemological Review of Islamic Education

Etymologically, epistemology is rooted in the Greek word episteme, which means knowledge or science (Halik, 2020). An epistemological review may reveal several related elements, particularly the nature of knowledge and the limits of knowledge. In discussing the nature of knowledge, namely something independent of the subject who observes it, two schools of thought—realism and idealism—provide conflicting answers to the question of what knowledge truly is (Widiawati, 2019). According to realism, knowledge is an objective copy of what exists in the real world, namely facts or essence, as well as a subjective representation of what exists in reality. Thus, according to realism, knowledge is nothing other than an exact portrait of the actual state of things. This differs from idealism, which views knowledge as a construction of the mind that is clearly impossible to be identical with reality itself (Huda, 2021). Epistemology is a field of philosophical inquiry that examines matters concerning knowledge, including how knowledge is obtained, the nature of knowledge, and the truth of knowledge (Pratama & Kasmar, 2022). Within these epistemological issues lies an important value, namely the path or method of

inquiry toward the attainment of true knowledge. The methods referred to are analysis and synthesis, both of which constitute fundamental methods applicable to any field of science (Mustafa, 2020). In general, philosophy provides guidance for science regarding the appropriate use of investigative methods and valid criteria of truth.

Epistemology in Islamic education as a science provides a distinct space for examining the nature of Islamic education as a body of knowledge that can be implemented in everyday life. Through such examination, a meaningful and high-quality study can be produced based on naqli evidence derived from Allah Swt. and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad Saw., without neglecting material realities. In fact, existing material realities serve as references for discussing or studying Islamic teachings through an epistemological approach (Kambali et al., 2019). Discussion of the foundation of knowledge is also related to the limits of knowledge, because the subsequent question is the extent to which knowledge obtained through empirical experience, reason, evidence, or intuition can be trusted as true (Nata, 2021). Two theories discuss the scope of knowledge, namely skepticism and objectivism. Skepticism holds that the domain of knowledge is limited only to what exists at the present moment in the soul as a mental construction, namely what is present in consciousness at a particular instant; in the next moment, however, it no longer becomes the limit of knowledge because it has already passed (Siregar, 2021). Skepticism comes from the word skeptic, meaning doubt, while subjectivism only recognizes individuality and rejects particular states, characteristics, and other objective conditions. Such a position was found among the Sophists, the rhetoricians and thinkers of the Socratic era (Anwar et al., 2022).

Axiological Review of Islamic Education

Axiology is the study of values, where value refers to something valuable and desired by every human being (Halik, 2020). The values referred to include, first, physical values consisting of life values, pleasure values, and utility values; and second, spiritual values consisting of intellectual values, aesthetic values, ethical values, and religious values (Widiawati, 2019). These values are arranged in a sequential system, namely life values, aesthetic values, ethical values, and religious values. Life value is the basic value, namely something pursued by humans for the continuity of life, while religious value is the highest value, namely something desired by humans for the nobility of the self (Huda, 2021). Examples of these values include life values, such as health and illness, preservation and destruction; pleasure values, such as joy and sorrow, fragrance and foulness; utility values, such as benefit and harm, taking and discarding; intellectual values, such as accuracy and carelessness, intelligence and ignorance; aesthetic values, such as smoothness and defect, blooming and budding; ethical values, such as devotion and disobedience, honesty and deceit; and religious values, such as monotheism and polytheism, impossibility and possibility (Pratama & Kasmar, 2022). Of these seven values, it is often observed that life values are paired with pleasure values, intellectual values coexist with aesthetic values, and ethical values are closely related to religious values (Mustafa, 2020). Utility value, which appears to stand separately, is actually related to pleasure value; however, because it depends on other things, people often fail to recognize it. In essence, utility value refers to something that functions as a means toward a particular purpose (Nata, 2021).

In its position as a driving force, the desire to know does not yet mean everything, for it merely functions as a motor that moves one toward thought (Kambali et al., 2019). It is

thinking that leads the capacity to know and the desire to know toward proper knowledge, and, if possible, toward true knowledge. To achieve this aim, thinking must be straight or correct. Thinking is considered correct if it fulfills the following requirements: first, the reasons presented are solid and strong; second, the facts presented are true; and third, the path taken is appropriate (Siregar, 2021). These three requirements of thinking support one another. If one requirement is not fulfilled, then thinking becomes illogical. Therefore, it is necessary to consider whether the reasons held, the facts obtained, and the path taken can be rationally accepted (Anwar et al., 2022). Islamic education as a science, from an axiological perspective, refers to the implementation of Islamic education derived from studies that are theoretical-rational and empirical-practical, or situated between these two types of knowledge (Salminawati, 2020). Thus, Islamic education may also be understood as a study of values, namely Islamic values contained within it, which serve as a reference for education and science in general, especially among Muslims (Halik, 2020).

Ontological Review of Islamic Education and Its Correlation with the Characteristics of Islamic Teachings

Etymologically, philosophy means “love of wisdom.” To love wisdom means to desire a life characterized by just attitudes and behavior (Salminawati, 2020). A just life is a harmonious and happy life, as well as a dynamic and creative life directed toward growth and development for a better future (Halik, 2020). Furthermore, based on its object of inquiry, philosophy is a field of study that questions the essence of everything that exists (Huda, 2021). From this philosophical perspective, education emerges and begins its work. Humans begin to attempt to educate themselves and others with the aim of fostering awareness of the existence of life, where educational activities emphasize materials containing general knowledge about origins, existence, and the purpose of life (Mustafa, 2020). The Greeks, approximately 600 years before the Common Era, stated that education is an effort to help human beings become truly human, because humans need assistance in order to succeed in becoming human (Pratama & Kasmar, 2022). A person can be said to have become fully human when they possess human values or qualities; therefore, the aim of education is to humanize human beings so that this goal can be achieved (Widiawati, 2019).

From various written sources on Islam, it is known that Islam has distinctive characteristics in the fields of religion, worship, muamalah or human relations—which includes education—science, culture, social life, economy, politics, life, the environment, and Islam as a scientific discipline (Kambali et al., 2019). Based on this, the ontological review of Islamic education and its correlation with the characteristics of Islamic teachings can be explained as follows.

First, in the field of religion, the characteristics of Islamic teachings not only acknowledge pluralism as a reality, but also affirm universalism, namely teaching belief in God and the Hereafter, commanding good deeds, and inviting humanity toward salvation (Nata, 2021). For an individual, religion is a form of belief that raises questions related to reality in answering the existence of the religion embraced, such as Islam. For example, how do Islamic teachings originate from Allah Swt., and how are they connected to the reality of life in this world? (Anwar et al., 2022). By understanding ontology in relation to

Islamic education, these questions can be examined factually, and no contradiction with Islamic teachings is found (Siregar, 2021).

Second, in the field of worship, worship literally means human devotion to Allah Swt. The Islamic vision of worship represents the nature, spirit, and mission of Islamic teachings, as human beings are commanded only to worship Him (Salminawati, 2020). Worship performed by Muslims is part of human devotion to Allah Swt. in accordance with Islamic guidance or sharia. However, it also requires questions that can be accepted by reason and grounded in factual foundations, such as the consequences of a person's worship of God (Halik, 2020). By understanding ontology in relation to Islamic education, worship can be examined by considering existing elements of reality so that theoretical concepts and empirical realities can be brought together (Huda, 2021).

Third, in the field of creed (aqidah), the characteristics of Islam can be understood through the fact that Islamic creed is pure, both in its substance and in its process (Mustafa, 2020). The only being believed to be God and worthy of worship is Allah, and this belief cannot be attributed to anyone else. In Islam, aqidah includes conviction in the heart regarding Allah as the only God who must be worshipped, verbal affirmation through the declaration of the two testimonies of faith (shahadatayn), and its influence on all human activities so that every action performed may possess the value of worship (Pratama & Kasmar, 2022). Aqidah is a human belief in God as the Creator and in oneself as His creation. However, the issue that arises is how the concept of Islamic creed can be accepted by human reason, such as how God's absolute power can be understood rationally (Widiawati, 2019). Through an ontological approach, the power of God can be demonstrated through a factual approach (Kambali et al., 2019).

Fourth, in the fields of knowledge and culture, the characteristics of Islamic teachings are open, accommodative, yet selective (Nata, 2021). On the one hand, Islam is open and accommodative in accepting various external contributions. At the same time, however, Islam remains selective, meaning that it does not simply accept all forms of knowledge and culture, but only those that are in harmony with Islamic teachings (Anwar et al., 2022). Islamic education is not only oriented toward issues of creed, sharia, and muamalah, but also addresses the authority of knowledge and culture as integral parts of Islamic education itself (Siregar, 2021). By using an ontological review, this issue can be examined by identifying the compatibility between Islamic theories or concepts and existing realities, so that the authority of knowledge and culture will not create polemics that contradict Islamic principles (Salminawati, 2020).

4. CONCLUSION

Based on an ontological review, Islamic education possesses a strong scientific foundation with a holistic view of reality, encompassing both material and non-material realities, such as the existence of God, the unseen realm, and the essence of human beings as His creations. Unlike secular science, which is limited to physical reality alone, the ontology of Islamic education broadens the horizon of human thought to reach the essence behind the phenomena of the universe as evidence of the power and oneness of Allah Swt. The task of the philosophy of education in this domain is to establish a relationship between ideas concerning fundamental reality and practical procedures in the classroom.

This is manifested through the perspective of idealism, which views the universe as God's creation that can be accepted through logic, as well as realism, which encourages belief in unseen matters such as the Hereafter through a factual approach to existing natural phenomena.

From an epistemological perspective, Islamic education has a framework of knowledge derived from two main pillars, namely naqli evidence originating from the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad Saw., and aqli evidence derived from sound and critical human reasoning. These two sources complement one another and do not contradict each other, producing knowledge that is constructed through methods of analysis and synthesis while encouraging the continuous search for truth without being trapped in a skeptical attitude that doubts everything. Meanwhile, axiologically, Islamic education contains implementative values that include physical values, such as life, pleasure, and utility values, as well as spiritual values, such as intellectual, aesthetic, ethical, and religious values, with religious value serving as the highest aim desired by human beings for the nobility of the self. Thus, Islamic education does not merely transfer knowledge theoretically, but also transforms divine and human values in a balanced manner through a logical thinking process that fulfills the requirements of strong reasoning, valid facts, and an appropriate path.

The correlation between the ontological review of Islamic education and the characteristics of Islamic teachings in the fields of religion, worship, creed, as well as knowledge and culture affirms that Islam is an integral, tolerant, accommodative, yet selective system of knowledge toward external influences. With clear formal and material objects, systematic methodology, and concrete beneficial values for human life, Islamic education is proven to fulfill all criteria as a valid body of knowledge that can be universally accepted. Therefore, a deep understanding of this philosophical foundation is highly important for academics, educators, and policymakers in formulating curricula and learning methods that are more contextual, critical, and oriented toward the formation of an excellent Islamic civilization, so that the essential goal of Islamic education—achieving happiness in this world and the hereafter—can be realized continuously.

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