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Western and Islamic Perspective Epistemology

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to discuss epistemological issues by focusing on several key epistemological concepts, such as the meaning of science, objects of knowledge, sources of information, validity of science, and appropriate methods for obtaining and using knowledge. We will first discuss the idea of epistemology as a subfield of philosophy before turning to epistemological principles in Islamic and Western contexts. The study of epistemology, which is often called Theory of Science, is very important for the progress of a country's civilization and culture. Every culture develops an epistemology according to its worldview. As a result, each civilization—including Islamic and Western epistemologies—has its own epistemology. There is a unique principle that distinguishes these two epistemologies. Their different worldviews explain the real differences between Islamic and Western epistemologies. Islamic epistemology is based on the study of metaphysics, while Western epistemology is based on assumptions. Islamic epistemology refers to the Koran, common sense, the five senses, and intuition, while Western epistemology exclusively considers reason (ratio) and empirical facts as sources of knowledge.

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INTRODUCTION

In the Islamic environment, ongoing research regarding philosophy and theories of knowledge needs to be sustainable. Many new discoveries are being made, and our environment is changing all the time. The dynamics of international interactions and interpersonal relationships continue to develop. Rapid advances in science and technology led to the abandonment of old ideas and an incomplete understanding of newly discovered phenomena. Humans are forced to make decisions regularly. The emergence of alternative epistemologies is crucial in this situation and cannot be ignored. There are at least two possible methods. First, look at the history of the growth of scientific thought in the Islamic tradition and attempt to reinterpret the fundamental ideas put forward by Islamic scholars. Second, consider the knowledge that Muslims have accumulated.

Scientific procedures originate from ontological research which is the source of general knowledge. As shown by the tradition of Western philosophy of science which has experienced rapid progress, especially in the fields of technology and science. The welfare of society has benefited greatly from many amazing scientific advances. For example, the discovery of electrical energy by Thomas A. Edison has provided unexpected benefits to mankind. Likewise, medical advances have led to the development of important treatments and effective treatments for a number of diseases previously thought to be incurable, including dysentery and

smallpox. By relying on human sensory perception, modern scientific methodology has made it possible to achieve hitherto unthinkable feats. In the field of contemporary science, physics research represents extraordinary achievements, from the study of individual atoms to the exploration of space and the cosmos.

Nevertheless, we cannot ignore the influence of modern knowledge on science today. Therefore, it is important to continue to evaluate critical thinking and reasoning while continuing to contribute to the latest advances in science. However, this critical attitude will be difficult to maintain if we only focus on modern philosophy and science without critically comparing the philosophy of science and philosophy of religion with other philosophical traditions. Without these critical comparisons, it will be difficult for us to understand modern science and apply it to other fields, just as we are unable to understand the concept of "day" without comparing it with "night"..

Since epistemology is a philosophical discipline that discusses the foundations of knowledge, it plays an important role in this context and should not be ignored. In addition to engaging in intellectual endeavors, reason enables humans to construct and understand the universe. Humans are also able to develop science and technology through their efforts in the field of philosophy. This is all a multigenerational process that takes a long time. Unfortunately, the problem that arises in the course of scientific progress that is not related to the epistemology of Western scientists is the clash between philosophy, science and religion which seems unavoidable. All three reject opinions outside the scientific paradigm because they believe these opinions are correct. Events like this are examples of the epistemic color that permeates Indonesian science, especially in Islamic educational institutions. We need to discuss scientific epistemology so that we can better understand the relationship between religious knowledge and current scientific advances. Because everything ultimately leads to the idea of Tawhid, the combination of these two qualities can bring a person to perfect knowledge, which leads to satisfaction in this world and the hereafter. Therefore, discussing events only from a physical point of view as is done in Western scientific epistemology is not enough because it only considers part of reality.

This research aims to discuss epistemological issues by focusing on several key epistemological concepts, such as the meaning of science, objects of knowledge, sources of information, validity of science, and appropriate methods for obtaining and using knowledge. We will first discuss the idea of epistemology as a subfield of philosophy before turning to epistemological principles in Islamic and Western contexts. It is hoped that by doing this, we will gain a deeper understanding. This is in accordance with the opinion of scientists who state that knowledge of more general concepts is needed to understand specific topics

METHOD

The nature of the research in this writing is descriptive which was carried out using a normative juridical approach. The type and source of data used is secondary data. Data collection was carried out mainly using document study techniques (library research and online research) by inventorying the required secondary data, whether in the form of primary, secondary or tertiary legal materials, then carrying out historical searches and synchronizing the legal materials. The primary legal material used consists of statutory regulations, especially those relating to Indonesian state fiscal policy from an Islamic economic perspective during the time of Caliph Umar Bin Affan. The secondary legal materials that will be used include: scientific works, research results and literature related to the substance of the research. Tertiary legal materials, namely materials that support information on primary and secondary legal materials, including data from newspapers, journals, dictionaries, encyclopedias

RESULTS

A. Understanding Epistemology

Epistemology consists of two basic words; "episteme" which means "knowledge" and "logos" which means "knowledge". Epistemology as an active word means the science of knowledge (Muliawan, 2008). Epistemology is usually defined as a branch of philosophy that discusses science in a comprehensive and fundamental way. In short, epistemology is referred to as "theory of knowledge" (Husaini, 2013).

Meanwhile, in terms of terminology, epistemology is a branch of philosophy that examines in depth and radically the origins of knowledge, structure, methods and validity of knowledge. Epistemology also means the branch of philosophy that studies the nature, limits and application of science (Khobir, 2007). D.W Hamlym defines epistemology as a branch of philosophy that deals with the nature and scope of knowledge, the basis of assumptions and in general it can be relied upon as confirmation that people have knowledge (Qomar, 2005).

Meanwhile, according to Dagobert D. Runes, epistemology is the branch of philosophy that discusses the sources, structure, methods and validity of knowledge. Meanwhile, Azyumardi Azra added that epistemology is "a science that discusses the authenticity, understanding, structure, methods and validity of

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knowledge. (Qomar, 2005). Epistemology is an area of science that discusses how science works in obtaining knowledge and how to measure the truth of knowledge (Mulyana, 2011). Thus, from the definition above, according to experts, the author can conclude that epistemology is a branch of philosophy that discusses science in a comprehensive and fundamental way which is used as a study in the scientific field that will be discussed.

B. Western Perspective Epistemology

Everyone knows that they are aware of their own skills. However, what really needs to be investigated is where the information comes from or how the information was obtained. As a result, concerns arise regarding the acquisition of information and its origins. Regarding the sources of knowledge, there are several points of view on this matter. Namely:

1. Idealism

Idealism is the belief that soul and spirit are the only way to understand the essence of physical reality. The term "ideas" describes the concepts that exist in someone's mind, this is where the concept of idealism comes from. The concept of idealism, sometimes known as rational idealism, highlights the importance of concepts, categories, or forms found in reason as a source of knowledge. Plato, who developed from 427 to 347 BC, is considered the main figure in the formation of this school of idealism. According to Plato, the nature of sensory perception is always changing so it is unable to produce reliable knowledge.

According to Plato, the only way to gain profound knowledge is through precise and consistent observation, which can only be done in a timeless and unchanging cosmos. This is the "realm of ideas," as Plato said, where people are born with ideas. Humans are endowed with the ability to understand and identify a wide range of life experiences, and science was born from their need to understand the world around them. According to Plato, the physical world perceived by our senses is only a shadow of the world of ideas, which he believed to be true reality.

2. Empiricism

The term empirical comes from the word "empeirikos", which in Greek means "based on experience". According to this theory, people learn from their experiences. Returning to Greek etymology, the experience in question is sensory experience, or experience obtained through the five senses. (Tafsir, 2002). Often considered the founder of this school of empiricism, Aristotle (384–322 BC) strongly disagreed with his instructor Plato's ideas about intrinsic concepts. According to Aristotle, knowledge and law are obtained through extensive human empirical experience. This empirical paradigm argues that, although reason plays an important role in connecting humans with their environment, the senses are the only valid tools for doing so. However, this ratio is still within an empirical framework. In other words, the function of the mind is to carry out experiments because the mind cannot know anything without the help of the senses, and reality cannot be understood without sensory observation.

John Locke stated that the human brain is like a blank white sheet of paper when they are born. This shows that knowledge comes to humans through experience gained from sensory perception, not from genuine ignorance. (Tafsir, 2002). David Hume, one of the main thinkers of empiricism, said that humans do not have true knowledge from birth, as quoted in the book "Philosophy of Science" by Amsal Bakhtiar. Human knowledge comes from observation. Ideas and impressions are the two main components in the observation process. Direct sensory experiences, such as feeling the heat from a burned hand, are called impressions. Ideas, on the other hand, are images or representations of less precise observations that arise during introspection or the study of impressions of experience. (Bakhtiar, 2011).

This principle states that reason can only be used to manage concepts originating from sensory experience, that is, to organize and categorize them. The main source of knowledge according to the empirical perspective is empirical evidence obtained from the five senses. Reason has a narrow function, largely limited to the formation of imprecise concepts. (Bakhtiar, 2011). However, there are several obstacles in this flow, such as:

a. His senses are limited; for example, distant objects appear small when they are actually larger. This limited understanding can lead to wrong interpretations.
b. The senses are fallible; Malaria sufferers, for example, may find cold air or sugar bitter. Additionally, this may result in erroneous empirical knowledge.
c. Everything has the ability to deceive the senses; This is especially true of mirages and illusions, when real objects appear different to the senses than they really are.
d. Information is simultaneously obtained from objects and the senses. In other conditions, for example when observing a buffalo, the senses may not be able to fully understand the animal because they cannot see it in its entirety. Therefore, it can be concluded that empiricism has weaknesses due to the limitations of human senses.

3. Rationalism

The word "rationalism" has its etymological roots from the English word "rationalsm". The root of the word is "ratio," which is Latin for "reason." Meanwhile, rationalism can be interpreted as a view that firmly

emphasizes the function of reason as the main source of human knowledge and as the highest authority in assessing the truth of human knowledge in a terminological context. (Adian, 2002). Many Western philosophers, including Rene Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, and Christian Wolf, are often associated with this school. However, in fact, the fundamental ideas of classical philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle can be found in their writings. (Muslih, 2005). The rationalist school believes that "innate ideas" that humans have from birth are the origin of human knowledge. These intrinsic concepts, according to Descartes, can be divided into three groups:

a. Cogitans" or thinking, which states that humans are born with innate concepts that allow them to recognize their status as thinking creatures. This is where the famous quote from Descartes appears, "cogito ergo sum", or "I think, therefore I am".
b. "Allah" or "Deus," which implies that humans instinctively believe in the existence of a perfect being, known as God.
c. The idea that matter has dimensions in space is an important human concept known as "extensia" or expansiveness.

In rationalist thought, this third intrinsic concept is seen as an unquestionable axiom of knowing. Descartes applied the technique of doubt (also known as the method of systematic doubt) in his approach to acquiring knowledge. This method means doubting everything, including things that are considered certain within the parameters of human understanding. Then, through this process of uncertainty, the public obtains reliable and certain information.

4. Positivism

The growth of positivism, pioneered by Immanuel Kant and August Comte, was aided by the weakness of empiricist and rationalist approaches to the development of scientific methods. August Comte believed that although the senses were essential to learning, they also needed to be strengthened through experimentation and assisted learning. Within the framework of discussions of philosophy and science, everything outside of fact or reality that cannot be witnessed is ignored. Positivism is a philosophical system based on observable factual evidence. (Syadali & et al, 2004). Experimental techniques allow correction of potential errors in sensory observations, and the experiments themselves require the use of precise measurements, such as measuring temperature in degrees or distance in meters. It is not enough to simply say something is "hot" or "not hot"; we also want precise measurements. The true evolution of science has just begun. Reason and measurable empirical data help achieve accurate knowledge.

Immanuel Kant also emphasized the importance of carrying out further investigations into what the senses have shown with the data available in this context, followed by more extensive research incorporating experiments. Kant gives an example of how careful investigation and testing can lead us to the conclusion that the bacteria that cause typhus also cause typhus fever. From this research it can be concluded that the bacteria that cause typhus and typhoid fever have a causal relationship. According to Auguste Comte and Immanuel Kant, in theory, this school of philosophy does not exist in a vacuum; On the contrary, by including aspects of experimentation and careful measurement, it enhances and complements the currents of rationalism and empiricism.

C. Islamic Perspective Epistemology

There are several terms used to refer to science, such as science, knowledge, al-'ilm and science. Perhaps to simplify matters, the four terms are considered to have the same meaning and intent so that these terms are freely used in scientific discourse without being associated with specific and certain connotations of understanding. In scientific discussions it turns out that each of these terms has different meanings, not just because of the origin of the language, but also the substance of the meaning contained in each term. Each of these terms has a different range of meaning and weight of truth, at least in the view of the reviewers (Qomar, 2005). This shows the need for caution when combining phrases with similar meanings. For example, when we talk about "knowledge", we mean something that is obtained from ordinary experience and cannot yet be categorized into a formal body of information i.e., "Knowledge". The "knowledge" stage appears before the "science" stage if seen from the phases of development. In addition, there are different levels of truth; "Science" has a higher level of truth than "knowlrdge"

Furthermore, because these two concepts originate from different intellectual traditions, it is not appropriate to refer to "Science" by using the terms "Science" and "science" interchangeably. The term "Science" as used in Islamic and Western contexts is actually not interchangeable. These two names come from at least two different places and have different meanings. Within the Islamic framework, "science" is incapable of producing ultimate truth. Since "science" consists of two parts, "al-'ilm" is a better term to describe it. First, revelation or the Koran, which is the source of ultimate truth, is the source of all knowledge. Second, coherent and methodical ways of studying information are all equally valid and produce realities and

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truths that are very helpful in solving existing problems. The combination of these two elements gives the impression that “al-‘ilm” has a more solid foundation than “science” in the Western world.

The main source of "al-‘ilm” is actually the All-Knowing Allah, who is theologically recognized as the Almighty. As the main source of knowledge, revelation provides a strong foundation for knowledge to develop. Normative beliefs and teachings can be transformed into credible theories through revelation. Furthermore, the Koran offers intellectual support beyond the reach of reason or empirical observation. Therefore, knowledge based on revelation has a greater intellectual history than science. The Qur’an is a source of information that can be used both in routine and introspective situations. This implies that the Quran, in its inspiring and sometimes lucid setting, can serve as a reference source for information whenever needed. As a result, there is a vertical relationship between the information revealed in the Koran and Allah, the source of knowledge that governs the entire universe.

We must be aware of the demands of science if we are to recognize the influence of the Qur’an on the development of scientific methodology. First, the understanding that everyone has the inalienable right to seek knowledge, regardless of caste, creed, gender, or age. Second, the scientific process includes categorizing facts, showing relationships between those facts, and using data as a basis for developing hypotheses in addition to observation and testing. Third, everyone must recognize how great the value and benefits of science are for individuals and society as a whole. (Qadir, 2002).

Islam has highly valued education since its inception. According to historical records, the Prophet Muhammad SAW was sent by Allah as an apostle to a very primitive culture at a time when paganism dominated Arab life. In this case, Islam highlighted this problem and raised the illiterate Arab society to the level of knowledge and civilization. The early history of Islam is marked by a deep belief in the value of knowledge. The first command given to Rasulullah SAW when receiving the first revelation was to read… Jibril ordered Muhammad in Surah Al-‘Alaq verse 1:

ٱقۡرَأۡ بِٱسۡمِ رَبِّكَ ٱلَّذِي خَلَقَ

“Read in the name of your Lord who created.”

Gabriel repeated these instructions several times before the Prophet could receive the revelation. The term “iqra” has many different meanings that may be derived from it, such as reading, investigating, understanding, analyzing and studying written and unwritten materials and being aware of the properties of things. (Shihab, 2001). Furthermore, there is also another verse contained in Surah Az-Zumar verse 9:

قُلۡ هَلۡ يَسۡتَوِي ٱلَّذِينَ يَعۡلَمُونَ وَٱلَّذِينَ لَا يَعۡلَمُونَۗ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُوْلُواْ ٱلۡأَلۡبَٰبِ

“Say, Are those who know the same as those who do not know? Actually, only people with common sense can accept lessons.”

Apart from these verses, there is also a hadith of the Prophet which emphasizes the obligation to seek knowledge, namely: “Seeking knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim.” Thus, the Qur’an and hadith are used as sources of knowledge developed by Muslims. People who have knowledge, both religious knowledge and general knowledge, will find it easy for that person to travel through life in this world and in the afterlife, in this world they will be able to create various types of jobs and in the afterlife it will be easier for them to enter heaven. Apart from these words, the Prophet also mentioned in a hadith that acquiring knowledge is an obligation for all Muslims. Therefore, Muslims rely on the Qur’an and hadith as their main sources of information. Those who have knowledge of both general and theological knowledge will find it easier to navigate this world and the afterlife.

Knowledge will help them to produce various jobs in this world and the Function of science is related to many factors:

1) Science uses intelligence guided by conscience as a means of discovering truth. Even though truth is subjective, humans can still find it in their lives.
2) Knowledge is considered as a need for appropriate action. Only those supported by science are able to follow the path of truth that meets the unwavering demands of Almighty God, and with knowledge and faith, man can reach the pinnacle of humanity.
3) Science is seen as an instrument for managing natural resources to fulfill Allah’s pleasure. Science functions as a tool to achieve God’s goals, namely maximizing human happiness and His pleasure.
4) Because science helps in understanding and teaching the mind to think scientifically, which can hone human thinking abilities, science is used as a technique to improve thinking abilities.
5) The progress of human reason is what led to the creation of science. Knowledge is generated through the thinking process. This procedure requires a series of cognitive stages that follow a certain line of reasoning to arrive at findings that are accepted as scientific.

Quraish Shihab quoted Imam Al-Ghazali who said that Al-Qur'an Al-Karim is the source of all knowledge. However, Imam Asy-Syathibi's perspective is different from Al-Ghazali's view. According to

Quraish Shihab, conclusions regarding the suitability of the Qur'an with science should not be made solely based on the number of scientific fields that may be related to the Qur'an or the truth of scientific hypotheses. The most crucial thing is to take into account ratios that are in line with the logic of science and the holiness and purity of the Qur'an. There is no need to do research if computer science, botany, mathematics, or other scientific subjects are covered in the Qur'an.

D. Differences between Western and Islamic Epistemology

The principles of both can be distinguished from several aspects which can be seen in the table below:

Table 1 Differences between Western and Islamic Epistemology

Islamic Epistemology	Western Epistemology
-Based on metaphysical studies. -Source of relevation, common sense and intuition. -The approach is tawhid. -The object of physical and metaphysical at the same time. -Required khnowledge with value (full value). -The validity of truth of the context (data & fact). -Oriented to the world and the hereafter.	-Based on presumtions -Source only of reason (ratio) and empirical data. -The approach is dichitomous. -The object is physical. -Value free knowledge. -The validity of the truth only relies on empirical ratios -Oriented only to the world

This leads to the understanding that the striking differences between Islam and the West stem from differences in their respective worldviews, which originate from the most fundamental aspects of both: Islam and the West. Apart from that, the brief explanation presented in this article also provides an understanding that the substance of epistemology is not limited to scientific methods as is often stated by modern scientists, but extends deeper, namely the epistemological beliefs that accumulate in the minds of scientists. Individuals and then form their own epistemological thought patterns.

CONCLUSION

The study of epistemology, which is often called Theory of Science, is very important for the progress of a country's civilization and culture. Every culture develops an epistemology according to its worldview. As a result, each civilization—including Islamic and Western epistemologies—has its own epistemology. There is a unique principle that distinguishes these two epistemologies. Their different worldviews explain the real differences between Islamic and Western epistemologies. Islamic epistemology is based on the study of metaphysics, while Western epistemology is based on assumptions. Islamic epistemology refers to the Koran, common sense, the five senses, and intuition, while Western epistemology exclusively considers reason (ratio) and empirical facts as sources of knowledge.

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