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BEYOND THE SCIENCE-RELIGION DICHOTOMY: A STUDY OF USTAD ABDUL SOMAD'S THOUGHT ON THE INTEGRATION OF ISLAM AND SCIENCE

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ABSTRACT

The main focus of this research is to understand how Ustadz Abdul Somad (UAS) integrates the values of science and religion in the context of education and public understanding. In this research, it refers to Ian G. Barbour's theory that divides the relationship between science and religion into four typologies: conflict, independence, dialog, and integration. With this approach, the analysis of UAS in bridging science and religion can be done in more depth. The research findings show that UAS views the Qur'an as a source of inspiration and scientific validation. He gives examples of how verses in the Qur'an can be interpreted from a scientific perspective, and highlights the concept of "scientific miracles" contained therein. Research underscores the importance of integrating science and religion in education to empower society to face the challenges of the modern era.

Keywords: *Science and Religion, Integration, Ustadz Abdul Somad,*

A. Introduction

Developments in science and technology have had a significant impact on human life, both personally and in a social context. Given the imperial experience, it is interesting to imagine that various sciences and religions came into conflict with each other during this period (Sivasundaram, 2010). Amidst the stunning success of science, there have also been problems such as the environmental crisis, moral decline, the spread of false information, and the debate between scientific and ethical principles. This has led to discussions on the extent to which science can play a role in regulating human life. In this situation, there is a need to revisit the position of religion as a source of values and ethics that can accompany scientific progress in order to remain compatible with humanity and sustainability. The history of science was once thought to be a continuous story from ancient Greece to modern science, with figures such as Galileo and Newton seen as the spiritual successors of ancient natural investigators. However, recent historians have questioned this continuity and criticized anachronistic views that equate past nature studies with modern scientific approaches (Harrison, 2010).

With the increasing awareness of the importance of ethical and spiritual aspects in scientific activities, some scientists and intellectuals have started to create a dialog between science and religion. Islam, as one of the religious traditions rich in texts and history of thought, provides a perspective that is in line with the scientific spirit. Ustadz Abdul Somad (UAS) is one of the figures who emphasizes the importance of integration between science and Islamic values. In his lectures, he shows that the Qur'an does not only contain religious instructions, but also scientific indications that can be examined more deeply through scientific approaches.

The focus of this research is interesting because it shows how modern scientific knowledge can be enriched by religious views, especially through narratives constructed by figures such as Ustadz Abdul Somad. Examples include the relationship between the practice of ablution and the biological function of the brain discussed from a neurological point of view, as well as the interpretation of the Qur'anic verse regarding "adnal ardhi" which turns out to be related to discoveries in the field of contemporary geography. This approach reflects the efforts of scientists and religious leaders to find common ground between scientific research and spiritual values.

The study uses a cross-disciplinary approach starting with science to see how certain scientific discoveries can be understood more deeply through a religious perspective. The view taken in this study is that religion, in this case Islam, can serve as an important source in interpreting and directing the use of science in an ethical and comprehensive manner. By examining scientific narratives linked to religious texts, this research argues that science and religion need not be positioned in conflict, but rather as partners in dialog.

The interest of this research is to study how science can facilitate religious reflection, as well as how figures such as Ustadz Abdul Somad use scientific discoveries to strengthen moral and spiritual values. The method applied in this research is qualitative using text studies and group discussions. Data were collected through analysis of UAS lectures, interpretation of Qur'anic verses related to scientific discovery, and observation of audience reactions. The focus of the analysis was on combining scientific and religious perspectives that complement each other in creating awareness about ecological, ethical and scientific aspects.

There are previous studies found, including Isman's study which refers that all knowledge that explains certain symptoms is seen through the Qur'an (Isman & Lola, 2023). Then the study by Masrur which concluded two things, namely the misalignment between science and technology, was not a shortcoming of the Qur'an, but because of the weakness of human nature (having the lust to always conflict and the narrowness of the mind that is concerned with the short term). Masrur also concluded that science possessed by humans is a way to reveal the truth of the Qur'an and God himself (Masrur, 2016). Then there is the study of Abnisa and Muin by providing an explanation that the foundation of all technological advances and science is sourced in the Qur'an in addition to its main use as a guide for human paths (Abnisa & Muin, 2024). This explanation is further strengthened by Khotimah's study with the explanation that the Qur'an is not just a book of science, but signs, procedures, practices and methods, even objects are found in the Qur'an complete with benefits and development models (Khotimah, 2014). Furthermore, a study by Zaedi which resulted in the conclusion that the harmony between Islam and science makes Islam one of the suitable religions to guide the way of life (Jaedi, 2019). Furthermore, a study by Adhiguna related to current science and science are two aspects that are interrelated and every basis of thought can be accounted for. Meanwhile, in the implementation process, it is processed and considered through studies in the Qur'an (Adhiguna & Bramastia, 2021).

In this study, an exploration of the relationship between science and religion, especially in the perspective of Ustadz Abdul Somad's thoughts on the relationship between religious teachings and modern science. This study not only highlights the role of humans as caliphs in maintaining balance in accordance with Islamic teachings, but also how scientific principles in the Qur'an can be integrated with scientific discoveries. The urgency of this study arises from the need to understand how religion provides a normative and epistemological foundation for the development of science and technology, while instilling awareness for humanity. In a global context facing a religious crisis and ethical challenges in technological development, this research aims to highlight the relevance of religious teachings in providing solutions to contemporary issues. In addition, this research also contributes to supporting educational approaches that integrate Islamic values with

science to create a more comprehensive and applicable understanding for future generations

B. The Relationship between Religion and Science

Ian G. Barbour divides the relationship between science and religion into four main categories: conflict, independence, dialog, and integration. The conflict category has emerged mainly since the emergence of the thought of figures such as Richard Dawkins in the 19th century, who saw a sharp conflict between science and religion. In this view, one must choose between the two because they cannot coexist. Science and religion are seen as contradictory, with science often rejecting the claims of religion and vice versa. A clear example of this tension can be seen in the case of Galileo Galilei who was sentenced by the Catholic Church for supporting the heliocentric theory that contradicted church doctrine, as well as the church's rejection of the theory of evolution proposed by Charles Darwin.

The cognitive science of religion emerged from efforts to 'scientize' the study of religion and anthropology of religion without eliminating the interpretive approach (Barrett, 2011). Scientists in this conflict approach believe that truth can only be obtained through data that can be measured and formulated mathematically. In the eyes of Western scientists who subscribe to this view, religion is considered subjective, inflexible and scientifically untestable. Hence, they conclude that science and religion are incompatible. Many thinkers take the approach that religion will never harmonize with science because religion is unable to prove its teachings with certainty. The relationship between science and religion is not separated by a thick wall but is mutually penetrating and mutually penetrable (Amin Abdullah, 2014). Meanwhile, science has the ability to test theories empirically. Religion is considered unable to provide concrete evidence of the existence of God that can be accepted by all parties, especially those who are skeptical. This shows that there is a fundamental difference between the scientific approach and the religious approach.

The independence typology refers to a perspective that sees science and religion as two separate entities, each having its own space with no necessary interaction between them. Religion and science are interrelated because both have perspectives on cosmic reality, although there are some differences in their interpretation of reality (Gyekye, 2009). Characteristically, science and religion do not influence each other, as they have different powers and methods to explain everything that exists. Science emphasizes objective facts and answers "how" questions, whereas religion leads to questions of existence and "why". Barbour asserts that according to the independence view, a conversation between science and religion is unnecessary. This approach is used to avoid conflict between science and religion, so that both can function in their respective domains without interfering with each other. While this can reduce tensions between science and

religion, it can also hinder cooperation and integration that might benefit both fields. In general, science is defined as knowledge gained through the systematic study of the physical world using observation, experimentation and theory development (Kabalmay et al., 2025).

Conflict theory according to Ian G. Barbour considers that there is a conflict between science and religion, which is likened to two polar opposites. In this view, scientists believe in the truth of science and assume that religion is unable to provide empirical and rational explanations or evidence for their beliefs. On the other hand, religionists argue that science does not have the authority to explain everything, given the limitations of human reason as an instrument of science. The conclusion of this conflict view is that religion and science cannot meet or be reconciled in explaining various aspects of life. Thus, this conflict theory emphasizes that science and religion operate in different and often conflicting realms in explaining the same phenomena.

Ian G. Barbour describes three versions of integration between science and religion. (1). natural theology, which argues that God's existence can be observed through nature and its order. (2). theology of nature, in which religious doctrines are modified to harmonize with scientific understanding. This approach recognizes that some religious teachings may be at odds with science, thus requiring modification. For example, human origins must take into account the results of recent scientific research.(3). systematic synthesis, which attempts to integrate science and religion more systematically to create a more coherent understanding. This approach seeks to establish a new framework for science and religion to support each other. Overall, Barbour emphasizes that there is a meeting point between science and religion, which can strengthen belief in the existence of God through critical reasoning about nature.

Dialogue theory, this view proposes a constructive, communicative relationship between science and religion. Both have commonalities that can be discussed and support each other. This view recognizes the interrelationship between science and religion, so that both can go hand in hand in a mutually beneficial collaboration. Dialogue between science and religion offers an alternative to cooperation by setting limits on certain questions and methodological alignment. In bridging the relationship between religion and science, this opinion is represented by Albert Einstein, who said, "Religion without science is blind, science without religion is lame." David Tracy, a Catholic theologian, also emphasized the religious dimension in science. According to him, understanding the world requires the deepest rational basis, which comes from classical religious texts and the structure of human experience (Meliani et al., 2021; Taufikin & Falah, 2025).

C. The Existence of Science and Religion

The discourse on the relationship between science and religion has always been a fascinating topic of discussion, especially since the emergence of modernity and secularization in the West (Assya'bana et.al., 2026). Science is important and upholds the value of rationality so that everything is adjusted to logic. However, we as Muslims must uphold the value of Islam even though we have to adjust to the times. One of the popular arguments regarding science education in Islamic teachings is the hadith of the Prophet SAW which means "The Prophet SAW. said: seeking knowledge is obligatory for every male and female Muslim (Az-Zarnuji & Burhanudin, 2014) The Integration view argues that religion and science can contribute to the development of a metaphysics that has the potential to fulfill the demands and goals of both. However, this view requires some traditional religious beliefs or doctrines to be reformulated in the light of scientific discoveries or theories (Ecklund & Park, 2009). The nature of the hadith clearly states that the law of seeking knowledge is obligatory (must be done per individual). Many opinions have arisen regarding which knowledge is meant in the hadith. The difference in opinion can be interpreted in general that Islamic teachings also include science education which in fact is knowledge that is useful for the life of the world or humans (Lailiyah, 2018). The science (science) studied must have the aim to educate the nation's life, improve the welfare of the people and broadcast the teachings of Islam. If there are Muslims who study science only for the sake of pursuing a rank, seeking a title and personal gain then this is not justified in Islam. On the contrary, we must spread the knowledge gained (taught to others) and practice (behavior in accordance with their knowledge).

Quoted from the book (Murtadho Muthahari, 2007: 88) which provides a conclusion that humans and religions often make the holy book a guardrail between science and religion which triggers riots and destruction that is difficult to fix. So this is where the role of science is used to meld the two aspects, faith that ignores the role of science can trigger irrational fanaticism from its followers. So, it is important that each element supports each other and runs together (Meliani et al., 2021; Taufikin, Nurhayati, Muzakki, et al., 2025).

Science or better known as science is a topic that is still ongoing and does not fail to invite polemics. The emergence of various types of ideas, both constructive and destructive, has colored the development of science. This is what is then called the dialectical model, where such a style can be found in the study of science, especially in the West. In addition, Western science, in Ian G Barbour's view, is strongly influenced by modern philosophy which has now hegemonized the funeral of science. Reconciling science and religion by assuming each applies to different domains is rejected, in favor of seeing them as complementary perspectives on the same phenomena (Watts, 1996). It is this notion that has ultimately led us to define science as sensory, rationalist and measurable. In the end, it has shifted the position

of religion in the study of science. In fact, something based on religion cannot be considered scientific and hinders progress.

However, at the level of methodology, religion and science still cause conflict and even between the two cannot be united, because religion which is a representation of God's revelation is considered different, separate and cannot be united with science which is represented by human reason. There are some experts who think that religion with its methods is not opposite from science. One that we can take is Ian G. Barbour with the thought of the integration of religion and science. The discussion of religious methods is divided into three parts, namely: First, experience and interpretation in religion. In his view, there are some similarities between science and religion, which include the interaction of experience and interpretation, the role of religious communities and the use of symbols, analogies and models in religious language. Secondly, it talks about personal development and religious belief, with the contrast between religion and science highlighted. Third, it deals with revelation and uniqueness. Religion is completely different from what is seen in science. Biblical religion depends on specific historical events. There is a relationship between theologians, scientists and historians which is then compared.

D. Ustadz Abdul Somad's Integrative Paradigm on the Correlation of Islam and Science

In the modern era, the debate on the relationship between religion and science has become increasingly relevant in the context of education and scientific thinking. One of the main challenges faced is the separation between general science and religious science in the education system in many Muslim countries, including Indonesia. This separation stems from the process of secularization (Al-Faruqi, 1982). In this context, the importance of synergy between religious and scientific perspectives (Khalifah & Qonitah, 2026). This integration can also be applied to dialogic and contextual religious education (Afdila et.al., 2026).

Science is seen as a tool to liberate religion from myths and unfounded doctrines, such as the belief that the earth is the center of the universe according to Claudius Ptolomeus. Meanwhile, religion is considered a moral basis that can direct the application of modern technology, which has the potential to be used for both positive and state purposes (Al-Faruqi, 1982).

While there is truth in the statement, the text ignores the complex nuances of each field, science can also inspire a sense of awe and spirituality, and religion can provide an epistemological foundation for exploring the world. However, secularization is a complex process with various interpretations and consequences. Not all forms of secularization necessarily lead to a sharp separation between science and religion. The idea that religion is needed to morally direct the application of technology implies that technology itself is neutral. Some

philosophers of science and technology argue that technology is never neutral, as it always reflects certain values and interests. Therefore, it is important to critically analyze the assumptions underlying technology and its impact on society. The relationship between science and religion has undergone major changes over time and varies across cultures. Understanding the history of this interaction can help us avoid over-generalizations. To understand this complex relationship more accurately, we need to acknowledge that science can inspire spirituality, religion can provide epistemological grounding, secularization has diverse forms and consequences, technology is not neutral, and the science-religion relationship varies greatly historically and culturally. This more nuanced understanding is important to promote constructive dialog and address the ethical challenges that arise in the modern era.

Ustadz Abdul Somad revealed that religion and science cannot be separated, as they complement each other in understanding life. In a scientific study at Riau University, he shared his experience of discussing with a brain specialist about Quranic verses related to thinking and reason. From the meeting, Ustadz Abdul Somad gained many new insights, especially about the verse "nasiatin kadibatin khotiatin," which refers to the "lying and disobedient head." The brain specialist explained that the front of the brain plays a role in the thinking process, so the verse can be understood scientifically as a reference to the function of the front of the brain.

Ustadz Abdul Somad elaborated on the practice of wiping the head five times a day during ablution, namely at zuhur, asar, maghrib, isya', and dawn. According to the brain specialist's explanation, the head is naturally cleaned by the "tools and software" in our brain five times a day, according to the times of ablution. This shows the connection between religious teachings and newly discovered modern scientific knowledge.

Ustadz Abdul Somad also mentioned the scientific miracles found in the Quran. One of them is the verse that states that the Romans were defeated on the "nearest earth" (fi adnal ardhi). After research, the location of the battle was found to be around the Dead Sea, Jordan, which is the lowest point on the earth's surface, about 280m below sea level. The Dead Sea is described as "dead" because the salt content is so high that it is impossible for fish to live in it. This fact shows that the Prophet Muhammad, who did not have the ability to read and write, had obtained very accurate scientific knowledge long before modern science discovered it.

In closing, Ustadz Abdul Somad emphasized that if Muslims explore science sourced from the Quran, they will be more convinced that all of Allah's creations have purpose and meaning. This knowledge comes directly from Allah SWT through revelation given to the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Therefore, the integration between science and religion is essential to strengthen the faith and understa nding

of Muslims, as well as to answer the challenges of those who doubt the truth of the Quran and the prophethood of Muhammad SAW.

The paragraph above emphasizes that religion and science are inseparably linked, complementing each other in the understanding of life. This view is in line with the integration theory proposed by Ian G. Barbour, which shows the correlation between religion and science in solving various problems (Handayani, 2022; Taufikin, Nurhayati, Badawi, et al., 2025).

In the context of Ustadz Abdul Somad's thoughts on the relationship between religion and science, it is clear that the two cannot be separated. Revelation in the Quran contains scientific truths that exceed human understanding in its day. Ustadz Abdul Somad's approach strongly supports the faith of the people by opening space for productive dialog between Revelation and reason, as well as between religious values and scientific facts. The integration of religion and science not only strengthens the faith of Muslims, but also equips them with a deeper understanding to face the challenges of this modern era.

One tangible form of the integration of religion and science is how Muslim scientists utilize the Quran as a source of inspiration in the development of science. For example, many Quranic verses discuss the creation of the universe, such as the concept of the "big bang" in surah Al-Anbiya verse 30, which inspired modern cosmological research. In addition, in the field of medicine, the principles of hygiene and health taught in Islam, such as the importance of maintaining cleanliness and a healthy diet, have encouraged research in the medical and public health fields. Another reality is the development of halal technology, such as genetic engineering in food and pharmaceutical products, which still maintains the values of sharia. Through this approach, religion not only becomes a source of ethics, but also encourages people to advance in science without leaving the values of faith.

In the midst of the vortex of modernity, which is often accompanied by waves of secularization, a crucial issue arises that inspires the minds of educational thinkers and practitioners in the Islamic world: how to establish a harmonious relationship between religion and science? This issue is increasingly relevant given the tendency to separate the two domains of knowledge in the education system, which in turn can create a counterproductive dichotomy.

In this context, Ustadz Abdul Somad (UAS) comes as a figure who offers a fresh and constructive perspective. He is not fixated on the mainstream that separates religion and science, but instead seeks to knit back the disconnected threads, believing that both have synergistic potential to enrich and strengthen each other.

UAS flatly rejects the idea that science should displace religion from the center of life, or conversely, that religion should hinder scientific progress. He criticizes the view that sees religion as a collection of irrational dogmas and science

as an absolute truth that can answer all questions. For him, both religion and science have their limitations, and their strength lies in their ability to complement each other.

UAS views Islam, especially the Quran, not only as a holy book containing moral and spiritual teachings, but also as a source of inspiration and even validation for science. He believes that the Quran contains clues about the universe and life that can be revealed through scientific research. He gave examples of how Quranicverses can be interpreted scientifically, such as in his discussion with a brain specialist about the verse about "the head of the lying and disobedient," which was linked to the function of the forebrain. This shows that the UAS not only accepts science, but also seeks to find harmony between science and the Quran, believing that both come from the same source, namely Allah SWT ((Al-Faruqi, 1982).

Furthermore, UAS highlighted the concept of "scientific miracles" in the Quran, which is considered as evidence that the Quran contains knowledge that surpasses the limits of human understanding in its time, even preceding modern scientific discoveries. He used examples such as verses about the creation of the universe, the development of human embryos, and other natural phenomena to show how the Quran has provided clues about scientific realities long before modern science was able to reveal them. Of course, this kind of interpretation needs to be done carefully and critically, taking into account the relevant historical, linguistic and scientific context.

Thus, UAS not only seeks to reconcile religion and science, but also to empower Muslims not to feel inferior in the face of scientific and technological advances. He encourages them to actively engage in the development of science, using the Quran as a moral and spiritual compass to guide their steps. He wants to show that Islam is not an anti-science religion, but a religion that encourages its people to continue to seek knowledge and contribute to building a better civilization.

UAS's view is in line with the classical Islamic intellectual tradition that values reason and science. Muslim scientists in the past, such as Ibn Sina, Al-Khwarizmi, and Ibn Al-Haitham, did not see any conflict between religion and science. Instead, they used the Quran and Sunnah as a source of inspiration and motivation in developing science. They believed that by understanding the universe, they could get closer to Allah SWT.

Of course, the UAS approach does not escape criticism. There are some who argue that scientific interpretation of Quranic verses can open the door to subjective and speculative interpretations. There are also concerns that this approach could reduce the meaning of the Quran to just a science book, and ignore its spiritual and moral dimensions. However, despite these criticisms, UAS's views remain relevant and important to discuss, especially in the context of Islamic education in the modern era.

In conclusion, Ustadz Abdul Somad firmly rejects the idea of separation between Islam and science. He believes that the integration of the two is the key to the progress of Muslims in the modern era, by making the Quran a source of inspiration and validation for science, and making science a tool to understand and practice Islamic teachings more deeply. He seeks to prove that Islam is not an anti-science religion, but rather a religion that encourages its people to continue to seek knowledge and contribute to building a better civilization, as well as building bridges between tradition and modernity, revelation and reason, faith and science.

E. Conclusion

Based on the main findings related to the relationship between religion and science according to Ian G. Barbour, the integration approach is the most effective and constructive way to understand the relationship between the two today. Results from leading journals provide a fairly accurate guide to the character of the academic mainstream, and thus the extent of its engagement with religious issues. Theoretically, these findings confirm the importance of an interdisciplinary approach that recognizes the harmony between revelation and reason, which in turn can deepen religious understanding while fostering the development of science. To understand the complex interactions between natural science and religion, a good general knowledge of at least one religion and one major natural science is require.

This research has the limitation of the possibility of subjective and speculative interpretations in relating science to sacred texts, which need to be done with caution and consideration of context. Therefore, theoretical recommendations that can be proposed are the need for the development of a more structured dialogue framework between religion and science, as well as further research that explores historical, linguistic, and epistemological aspects to avoid simplification of meaning while strengthening meaningful and applicable integration, especially in the context of Islamic education and scientific research policies.

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