

## The Criticism of Utsman Najati to Modern Psychology

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**Abstract:** *Psychology has provided a significant effect in describing human behavior in the modern era. However, despite the extensive development of theories in modern psychology, this field of science still needs to improve in terms of terminology, epistemology, and worldview. One of the Muslim psychologists who criticized this problem was Utsman Najati. This research was library research, and the data sources consisted of primary data sources from Utsman Najati's works related to Psychology, and secondary data sources, namely in the form of books, which were relevant to this research to strengthen arguments and to complement data from research results. The data analysis technique used by the authors in this study was content analysis. The findings obtained from this paper were as follows: First, Utsman Najati revealed the disparity between the terms of psychology and research objects which were limited to behavior; Second, Utsman Najati uncovered the problem of the epistemology of psychology, which limited itself to empirical things; Third, a materialistic and atheist perspective in several schools of modern psychology contradicted the Islamic view of life.*

**Keywords:** *Utsman Najati; Islamic Psychology; Modern Psychology*

**Abstrak:** *Psikologi telah memberikan pengaruh yang signifikan dalam menggambarkan perilaku manusia di era modern. Namun, terlepas dari perkembangan teori yang luas dalam psikologi modern, bidang ilmu ini masih menyisakan masalah berat dalam hal terminologi, epistemologi, dan pandangan dunia. Salah satu psikolog muslim yang mengkritik masalah ini adalah Utsman Najati. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kepustakaan, dan sumber datanya terdiri dari sumber data primer dari karya-karya Utsman Najati yang berkaitan dengan Psikologi, dan sumber data sekunder berupa buku-buku yang relevan dengan penelitian ini untuk memperkuat argumentasi dan melengkapi data hasil*

*penelitian. hasil. Teknik analisis data yang digunakan penulis dalam penelitian ini adalah analisis isi. Temuan yang diperoleh dari makalah ini adalah sebagai berikut: Pertama, Utsman Najati mengungkap disparitas antara istilah psikologi, dan objek penelitian yang terbatas pada perilaku; Kedua, Utsman Najati mengungkap persoalan epistemologi psikologi yang membatasi diri pada hal-hal empiris; Ketiga, pandangan materialistis dan ateis di beberapa aliran psikologi modern bertentangan dengan pandangan hidup Islam.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Utsman Najati; Psikologi Islam; Psikologi Modern*

## INTRODUCTION

Psychology has made a broad contribution to modern human life. In personality, social and family problems, many psychological theories are used to understand human thought and behavior. Popular theories such as Maslow's needs, Sigmund Freud's personality level, and other psychological theories have played a role in various modern human views in understanding human behavior phenomena. In terms of the family, e.g., psychology has played a role in understanding the phases of child development, handling phobias, and matters related to learning. Another role in the criminal world, psychology has popularly contributed to detecting the lies of eyewitnesses or criminals through the 'lie detector' test. Naturally, as an academic discipline, the position of psychology in universities has grown rapidly, and nowadays, psychology is the most popular faculty in the world.

Behind the rapid developments in psychology, it is ironic that several schools of modern psychology still leave weaknesses and problems epistemologically and worldview. Henry Elenburger, for instance, strongly criticized Sigmund Freud based on his thoughts which tended to be materialistic, positivistic, and atheistic, which endangered the position of religion. This problem began when Wilhelm Wundt (1832 -1920) founded a laboratory emphasizing experimental psychology. Hence, a new direction in psychology began that would be more inclined to apply empirical and scientific methods in psychological research in the future. Modern psychology has finally eliminated the role of religion and God in understanding human beings. The implication is that modern psychology views humans as atomistic, mechanistic, and positivistic. They reflect a typical Western perspective, not necessarily under other human civilizations'

perspectives. This Western background and philosophy of life eventually became one of the objects of criticism from Muslim psychologists and the West.

The problem of epistemology and worldview in modern psychology finally encouraged Muslim psychologists to criticize modern psychology and formulate Islamic psychology. One of the Muslim psychologists who has long been criticizing and encouraging the inception of Islamic psychology is Muhammad Utsman Najati.<sup>1</sup> There is some reason why the researcher chooses Utsman Najati. *First*, Utsman Najati, through his works, 'ilmu al-Nafs wa al-Qur'ān , 'Ilmu al-Nafs wa al-Hadīs al-Nabawi , and Madkhal ilā 'ilmi al-Nafs al-Islāmi, provided a critical view of psychological schools of thought and offered a new alternative view by offering a formulation of Islamic psychology as a response to modern psychological problems. *Second*, Uthman Najati was one of the Muslim scholars who first coined the word "Islamic Psychology" as a response to Western psychology which was inconsistent with the Islamic perspective. *Third*, the idea of Islamization of Uthman Najati's psychology has not been widely studied, even though he is one of the early generations of Islamic psychology

There are several studies on Utsman Najati, but they rarely focus on the idea of his Islamization, like research from Muyassaroh with the title *Relevansi Konsep Kecerdasan Spiritual Utsman Najati dalam Bimbingan Konseling Islam*.<sup>2</sup> However, the research above does not discuss psychology's Islamization. Furthermore, there are works from Z Zaharuddin, "*Telaah Kritis Terhadap Pemikiran Psikologi Islam Muhammad Utsman Najati*,"<sup>3</sup> Who also researched Utsman Najati's Islamic psychology. However, this research must mention

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<sup>1</sup> Abdul Fattah, "Pemikiran Muhammad Utsman Najati Tentang Kecerdasan Emosional Dan Dampaknya Terhadap Pendidikan Agama Islam" (Jakarta, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, t.t.), 23.

<sup>2</sup> N Muyassaroh, *Relevansi konsep kecerdasan emosional Menurut M. Utsman Najati dengan bimbingan konseling Islam. Jurusan Bimbingan Penyuluhan Islam* (etheses.iainpekalongan.ac.id, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> Z Zaharuddin, "Telaah Kritis Terhadap Pemikiran Psikologi Islam Muhammad Utsman Najati," *Psikis: Jurnal Psikologi Islami*, 2015.

Utsman Najati's response to Western psychology. Therefore, the author focuses on how Utsman Najati criticizes Western psychology and then directs his offer regarding the Islamization of psychology.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Utsman Najati and Criticism of Modern Psychological Problems

Muhammad Utsman Najati was born in 1914 in Khartoum Sudan. He started his career in psychology at Fuad al-Awwal University in the Faculty of *Adab* (Humanities), majoring in Psychology, and graduated in 1938. Then, he continued his studies in the same department and graduated in 1942 with the thesis title "*al-Idrāk al-Hissi 'inda Ibni Sina*" (The Five Senses in Ibn Sina's review)<sup>4</sup>. This work inspired Utsman Najati to explore psychological concepts in the Qur'an and al-Hadith. In subsequent writings, Utsman Najati was heavily influenced by Ibn Sina's Islamic psychology views.<sup>5</sup> Although later on, Utsman Najati's Islamic psychological thoughts were more formed after he studied the principles of the soul in the Qur'an, the Prophet's traditions, and the works of Islamic scholars.<sup>6</sup> After that, he continued his second master's degree in Psychology at Yale University in New Haven, United States, until he finally completed his doctoral level at the University. From his academic journey in psychology, it is only natural that Utsman Najati will become one of the well-known psychologists in his own country and internationally.

After completing his doctorate, Utsman Najati was seconded to become a lecturer at Kuwait University. At this University, he completed his writing entitled '*al-Qur'an wa 'Ilmu al-Nafs*.'<sup>7</sup> He was also a Dean of the *Imam Muhammad bin 'Abdul Aziz Ali Su'ud al-Islamiyyah* University in Riyadh. Apart from being an active lecturer, he is also an active member of the psychology association and the Association of non-physician psychotherapists in Egypt, as well as a member of

<sup>4</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, *al-Qur'an wa 'Ilm al-Nafs*, 7.

<sup>5</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, *Madkhal ila 'lmi al-Nafs al-Islami*, 5.

<sup>6</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, 7.

<sup>7</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, *al-Qur'an wa 'Ilm al-Nafs*, 7.

the American Psychological Association and Applied Psychology in Belgium. In addition,<sup>8</sup> He contributed to establishing the Comparative Civilization Research Association with Professors from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and America. The writings of Utsman Najati in psychology include *'ilmu al-Nafs wa al-Hayah, Al-Idrāk al-Hissi 'Inda Ibnī Sina, Al-Dirāsāt al-Nafsiyyah 'inda 'Ulamā al-Muslimīn*, *Al-Qur'an wa 'Ilmu al-Nafs, Al-Hadīs al-Syarīf wa 'Ilmu al-Nafs, Al-Madkhal al-'Ila 'Ilmi Nafs al-Islami, 'Ilmu al-Nafs fī Hayātinā al-Yaumiyyah* and *'Ilmu al-Nafs wa al-Hayāh; Madkhal Ila 'Ilmi al-Nafs wa Tathbīqātuhu fī al-Hayāh*. He received the King Faisal International Award from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for his work. Utsman Najati passed away in Cairo in 2000,<sup>9</sup> left work in psychology and contributed to establishing the Islamic psychology discipline. For his contribution to psychology, discussing the urgency of Utsman Najati's criticism of modern psychology is essential.

In his criticism of the science of psychology, in his book *al-Qur'an wa 'Ilmu al-Nafs*, Utsman Najati first questioned the naming of 'psychology,' which had eliminated the soul in his studies. He states that modern psychiatrists have used research methods from the physical sciences, limiting their study of mental symptoms that can only be observed objectively.<sup>10</sup> As a result, the dominance of this materialistic view makes psychology only refer to physiological factors, just as humans are seen as mere animals. He claims that the fundamental difference between humans and animals lies in the spiritual aspect only humans have.<sup>11</sup> Finally, the term 'psychology' for modern psychiatrists does not match their

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<sup>8</sup> Amir Reza Kusuma, "Konsep Jiwa Menurut Ibnu Sina dan Aristoteles," *Tasamuh: Jurnal Studi Islam* 14, no. 1 (2022): 22, <https://doi.org/10.47945/tasamuh.v14i1.492>.

<sup>9</sup> [https://sst5.com/authorinf.aspx?Author\\_id=246](https://sst5.com/authorinf.aspx?Author_id=246). 01/09/2022.

<sup>10</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, *al-Qur'an wa 'Ilm al-Nafs*, 7.

<sup>11</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, 7.

research. Instead of studying the soul, psychology only focuses on the physiological or behavioral aspects.<sup>12</sup>

The problem of modern psychology in the view of Utsman Najati is even in line with the criticism of a modern psychoanalyst Erich Fromm, who said:

*It tried to understand those aspects of man which can be examined in the laboratory and claimed that conscience, value judgments, and the knowledge of good and evil are metaphysical concepts, outside the problems of psychology; it was more often concerned with insignificant problems, which fitted an alleged scientific method than with devising new methods to study the significant problems of man. Psychology thus became a science lacking its primary subject matter, the soul; it was concerned with mechanisms, reaction formations, and instincts, but not with the most specifically human phenomena: love, reason, conscience, and values.<sup>13</sup>*

In simple translation, according to Erich Fromm, psychology tries to understand human aspects that can only be examined in a laboratory. Thus, conscience, value judgments, and knowledge of good and evil are considered metaphysical concepts outside the discussion of psychology. Finally, psychology is more often concerned with insignificant problems imposed according to the scientific method than with devising new methods for studying critical human problems. Hence, Psychology becomes a science that does not have its main subject, namely the soul. Modern psychology is only concerned with mechanisms, reaction formations, and instincts. However, it does not touch on the most specific human phenomena in the form of love, reason, science, and values.

Furthermore, related to the meaning of Psychology (*Ilmu al-Nafs*), Utsman Najati affirms the meaning expressed by Ibn Sina. Psychology, according to him, is divided into two parts. *First*, the psychology of the metaphysical dimension (*Ilmu al-Nafs al-Mītāfīzīqī*). This psychology section discusses the existence of the soul. Its essence is a discussion regarding whether the soul is material or non-material, along with the relationship between the soul and the body and other discussions outside the scope of the current discussion of modern

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<sup>12</sup> Amir Reza Kusuma, "Konsep Psikologi Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas," 2022, 11, <https://doi.org/DOI : 10.15548/alqalb.v13i2.4386>.

<sup>13</sup> Erich Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), 6.

psychology. Second, psychology of the natural dimension (*Ilmu al-Nafs al-Thabi'*). This psychology examines the various strengths of the soul. Sometimes, it is related to growth through nutritional intake and is occasionally also related to the senses, including the outer and inner senses.<sup>14</sup> According to Utsman Najati, this division distinguishes it from the discussion of modern psychology, which is limited to the physical realm.<sup>15</sup> Through this understanding, Utsman Najati emphasizes that the discussion of psychology must include the physical and metaphysical soul, as is the name of psychology.

More specifically, Utsman Najati explained that Islamic Psychology (*ilmu al-Nafs al-Islami*) is the science of the soul, which stands on Islamic principles to distinguish it from Western psychology, which is built on secular foundations and pays no attention to Divine sources. This understanding shows that in Islamic psychology, apart from being studied through the thoroughness of scientific research, humans will also be studied through the realities about humans contained in the Qur'an,<sup>16</sup> al-Sunnah, and the thoughts of Islamic scholars in the field of theology, philosophy, and Sufism in studying the soul.<sup>17</sup> This view of Utsman Najati has provided an alternative perspective different from modern psychiatrists studying psychology based on the Islamic *worldview*.<sup>18</sup>

Based on this explanation, Utsman Najati has different views on understanding psychology from modern psychologists. By affirming Ibn Sina's opinion, he understands the science of psychology with a more comprehensive aspect, namely the physical and the metaphysical aspects. In contrast, modern psychology tends to understand psychology as physical things that can be

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<sup>14</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, *al-Idrak al-Hissi 'inda Ibni Sina*, 30.

<sup>15</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, *Madkhal ila 'lmi al-Nafs al-Islami*, 41–47.

<sup>16</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, *al-Qur'an wa 'Ilm al-Nafs*, 24.

<sup>17</sup> Ibrahim Syauqi Abdul Hamid dkk., *Ilmu al-Nafs fi al-Turats al-Islami* (Kairo: Dar al-Salam, 2008), 17.

<sup>18</sup> Nur Hadi Ihsan dkk., "WORLDVIEW SEBAGAI LANDASAN SAINS DAN FILSAFAT: PERSPEKTIF BARAT DAN ISLAM," t.t., 31, <https://doi.org/DOI:10.28944/reflektika.v17i1.445>.

observed.<sup>19</sup> This metaphysical aspect provides space for Islamic teachings to provide many insights into the development of Islamic psychology both in the classical and modern Islamic eras. Finally, the Qur'an and al-Sunnah are not only examined as religious texts but are also influential in building a scientific paradigm.<sup>20</sup> of psychology based on Islamic principles.

The implication paradigm of Islamic psychology will construct a different epistemology between Islamic psychology and Modern psychology.<sup>21</sup> Epistemologically, modern psychology has yet to find a meeting point between science (*positivism*) and humanism (*non-positivism*).<sup>22</sup> Positivist epistemology is used by behaviorism, while non-positivist is used by psychoanalysis and humanistic. However, unfortunately, of all these schools of thought, they have not epistemically given a role to religion in their psychological views.<sup>23</sup> Even these schools of thought are dichotomous towards other sources of knowledge. In contrast to Islam, according to Utsman Najati, Islam generally has two essential knowledge sources. First, *Basyari* (knowledge originating from humans) is sensory based on a ratio. Second, *Ilahi* (knowledge from God) is a revelation that reaches humans through the Prophets and Apostles.<sup>24</sup> In Islamic Psychology, the theories developed later are based on the thoroughness of scientific research and on human realities contained in the Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the epistemological distinction between modern psychology and Islamic

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<sup>19</sup> Duane P. Schultz dan Sydney Ellen Schultz, *Sejarah Psikologi Modern*, 141.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas S. Kuhn dalam *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, explained, "*Paradigms, a term that relates closely to normal sciences... examples which include law, theory, application, and instrumentations together, provide models from which spring particular coherent traditions of scientific research.* ", Thomas S. Kuhn and Ian Hacking, *The structure of scientific revolutions*, Fourth edition (Chicago ; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), p. 11.

<sup>21</sup> Baharuddin, *Paradigma psikologi Islami*, 347.

<sup>22</sup> Gregg Henriques, "The Problem of Psychology," dalam *A New Unified Theory of Psychology*, oleh Gregg Henriques (New York, NY: Springer New York, 2011), 35, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-0058-5\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-0058-5_2).

<sup>23</sup>. Baca lebih lanjut, Muhammad Utsman Najati, *Madkhal ila 'lmi al-Nafs al-Islami*, 69–71.

<sup>24</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, 46.

<sup>25</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, *al-Qur'an wa 'Ilm al-Nafs*, 8; Muhammad Utsman Najati, *al-Hadis al-Nabawi wa 'Ilm al-Nafs*, 13.



psychology appears more holistic and centered on the source of revealed knowledge.<sup>26</sup>

However, Utsman Najati's Islamic perspective in studying modern psychology did not make his antipathy to all modern psychological theories from the West.<sup>27</sup> He accepts and recognizes modern psychological theories based on authentic experimental results that can be applied in life, such as sensory knowledge, memory, learning, and the theory of 'forgetting.'<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, suppose these Western or modern psychologists provide theories based on their materialistic and atheistic perspective of life in viewing humans, life, and existence; thus, according to him, Muslim psychologists will not accept these modern psychological theories.<sup>29</sup>

This materialistic tendency of modern psychology, for instance, according to Utsman Najati, can be seen in the research of modern psychologists through animals in studying humans<sup>30</sup>. He states that this method was heavily influenced by Charles Darwin's theory of evolution (1806 – 1882 AD), which saw humans as developing animals. He then continued his explanation as follows:

Modern psychologists believe that conducting experiments on animals will avoid many of the complexities that occur due to many uncontrollable variables when researching humans. They apply the results of their experimental studies on animals to humans. They neglect to distinguish humans from animals in this spiritual aspect of their psychological life. They believe that science must investigate what can be observed and seen. Meanwhile, what cannot be observed and seen, they will not study<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> Baharuddin, *Paradigma psikologi Islami*, 348.

<sup>27</sup> Zaharuddin, "Telaah Kritis Terhadap Pemikiran Psikologi Islam Muhammad Utsman Najati," 104.

<sup>28</sup>, Alice F. Healy dan Irving B. Weiner, *Experimental Psychology*, Handbook of Psychology 4 (New York: Wiley, 2003), 482; Ibrahim Syauqi Abdul Hamid dkk., *'Ilmu al-Nafs fi al-Turats al-Islami*, 19; Muhammad Utsman Najati, *al-Qur'an wa 'Ilm al-Nafs*, 211.

<sup>29</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, *Madkhal ila 'lmi al-Nafs al-Islami*, 68.

<sup>30</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, *al-Qur'an wa 'Ilm al-Nafs*, 7.

<sup>31</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, *Madkhal ila 'lmi al-Nafs al-Islami*, 70.

Utsman Najati's criticism, as revealed by Malik Badri, is that the experiment on animals is from an atheist point of view. Psychology without a soul studies humans who are also soulless.<sup>32</sup>

Furthermore, Utsman Najati provides a critical note on the psychology of behaviorism. Behaviorism underpinned its view of the study of conditioned reflexes.<sup>33</sup>, which were experimented on at almost the same time in Russia by the Russian neurologist Bekhterev (1857-1927) and the physiologist Pavlov (1848).<sup>34</sup> Based on his theory, Utsman Najati views that behaviorist psychology tends to understand humans purely materialistically by eliminating the role of the spirit or soul in human behavior.<sup>35</sup> This opinion is under criticism from Robert Agros and George Stancio, who reveals that Behaviorism does not try to place reason on the matter. In this case, behaviorism finally understands that the human body is the only human reality. Therefore, the mind has lost its charm in the field of science. Behaviorism is more preoccupied with materialism. Behaviorism presents matter and material combinations as the sole cause of human behavior.<sup>36</sup> With this point of view, Utsman Najati shares the same view as Agros and Stancio that Behaviorism only considers humans as lifeless parts of matter that external forces must operate.

Concerning his criticism of psychoanalysis<sup>37</sup>, Utsman Najati provides a reasonably broad portion in reviewing the views of this school. According to him, Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939), the originator of this school, did not employ standard scientific research methods among psychologists at that time to construct his doctrine. Freud showed no interest in experimental research to test the validity

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<sup>32</sup> Malik Badri, *Dilema Psikologi Muslim*, trans. oleh Siti Zainab Luxfiati (Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 1993), 4.

<sup>33</sup> Charles Donald Spielberger, ed., *Encyclopedia of applied psychology*, 1st ed (Amsterdam; Boston: Elsevier / Academic Press, 2004), 345; Alan Porter, Terj : Dharmawati Chen, *Psikologi*, 24.

<sup>34</sup> Alan Porter, Terj : Dharmawati Chen, *Psikologi*, 23.

<sup>35</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, *Madkhal ila 'lmi al-Nafs al-Islami*, 74.

<sup>36</sup> Robert Agros and George Stantio, *al-'Ilmu fi Manzhurihi al-Jadid*, trans. by Kamal Khayali (al-Kuwait: 'Alam al-Ma'rifah, 1989), pp. 83–84.

<sup>37</sup>, Matt Jarvis, *Teori-Teori Psikologi*, 47; Duane P. Schultz dan Sydney Ellen Schultz, *Sejarah Psikologi Modern*, 489–90.

of his theory. Instead, his genuine interest was focused on the inner workings of the psyche and the unconscious workings of the mind, a new area of research unknown to psychologists at the time.<sup>38</sup> His theory of psychosexual development<sup>39</sup>, for instance, believes that psychoanalysis does not adhere to scientific principles, even allowing for apparent unscientific deviations from its adherents. Even for Najati, psychoanalytic views depend on unreliable facts. The data is also a conclusion from the statements made by the patient during his analysis. He says that this kind of data is subjective.<sup>40</sup> Utsman Najati's observation of Sigmund Freud's theories shows that not all theories in modern psychology are based on scientific research (*positivism*). Malik Badri reveals that most of Freud's theory is ultimately only limited to speculation that cannot be scientifically true.<sup>41</sup>

Furthermore, according to Utsman Najati, Freud and psychoanalysts view humans with a mechanical, materialistic view. Man is understood to be just an animal motivated by his sexual and aggressive instincts. Finally, the spiritual aspect of human life that distinguishes humans from animals is ignored. On this basis, Utsman Najati views psychoanalysis as influenced by Darwin's view that humans are at the top of the evolutionary ladder from lower animals. In Freud's view, man is soulless. Values, morals, culture, and civilization are nothing but a distortion or transformation of the sexual instinct. In short, human activities are understood as a form of diversion from human sexual goals.<sup>42</sup>

Utsman Najati also gave a critical note on Freud's view of religion. For Freud, religious ideas are delusional. Humans are considered to have created religion to reduce anxiety about the dangers of life and due to their inability to fight life's problems. Then, Freud continues that man discovers in his illusions a

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<sup>38</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, *Madkhal ila 'lmi al-Nafs al-Islami*, 75.

<sup>39</sup> Harold L. Miller, ed., *The Sage Encyclopedia of Theory in Psychology* (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE, 2016), 338.

<sup>40</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, *Madkhal ila 'lmi al-Nafs al-Islami*, 78.

<sup>41</sup> Badrī, *The Dilemma of Muslim Psychologists*, 57.

<sup>42</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, *Madkhal ila 'lmi al-Nafs al-Islami*, 79.

strong and gentle king who can protect him and relieve the severity of his anxiety. Therefore, according to Freud, religion is just an illusion humans create.<sup>43</sup> Based on this Freud's view, Utsman Najati views that Freud's view was only born from the background of his life philosophy as an atheist.<sup>44</sup>

Based on the descriptions of psychoanalysis, Utsman Najati concludes that:

The translation is simply as follows: from the previous description, materialistic views dominate Freud's views. His views on humans are nothing more than animals driven by his instincts. Because of his atheistic convictions, he denied divine religions and considered their ideas created by humans. Among the many criticisms of his views, Freud's views contradict Islam's basic principles. Therefore, Muslim psychologists cannot accept his theories.<sup>45</sup>

Utsman Najati's critical attitude towards behaviorism and psychoanalysis did not make him pessimistic about modern psychology. For him, there is a new direction that is more optimistic in the next psychological school, i.e., the Humanistic school, starting from a group of psychologists who opposed the materialistic view of the psychology of behaviorism and psychoanalysis. Finally, the humanization process in psychology was carried out. The Humanistic school pioneered by Abraham Maslow and Frankl views humans as having the potential for the power of thought. Thus, reason, awareness, and perception are critical human parts that should not be ignored. Hence, for Utsman Najati, there is a good development in the new direction of psychology after behaviorism and psychoanalysis, which emphasizes values, morals, and spiritual aspects in humans.<sup>46</sup>

Unfortunately, according to Utsman Najati, there are differences in the meaning of spiritual value in humanism and Islam. According to him, the spiritual motives understood in this school are not motives related to spirituality in the

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<sup>43</sup> Sigmund Freud dan James Strachey, *The Future of an Illusion* (New York: Norton, 1975), 22–33.

<sup>44</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, *Madkhal ila 'lmi al-Nafs al-Islami*, 68.

<sup>45</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, 82.

<sup>46</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, 86–87.

religious sense understood in Islam, but the intended humanistic school is noble motives for human values that achieve human self-realization.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, according to Najati, a humanistic view is a more progressive view. Gradually, a humanistic can encourage the emergence of psychology with a new perspective that will accept the concessions of religion and the existence of God in psychology.<sup>48</sup> It is also what Agros and Stancio predict that religion will be the future of a new outlook that shows the return of human culture to believe in the existence of God Almighty and a re-emphasis on the spiritual aspects of human nature. New views on psychology and cosmology will focus on teleology, God, beauty, spiritual elements, and human dignity."<sup>49</sup> Thus, Uthman Najati provided a positive view on the value of spirituality in this school, although he still gave critical considerations Islamically on the intended spiritual value in this school.

Utsman Najati's view of the Humanistic school indicates a fair and objective attitude toward modern psychology. Indeed, even in the flow of psychoanalysis, although Utsman Najati strongly criticized some of Freud's views, on the other side, he affirmed some of Freud's views, such as the importance of experience in the early stages of development in the formation of a child's personality, subconscious motives in individual behavior, and the concept of ego defense in worry.<sup>50</sup> This wise attitude indicates that Utsman Najati was highly open to all theories of modern psychology as long as he relied on reliable research and did not contradict the Islamic view of life.

Based on these descriptions, three problems of Modern Psychology have become Utsman Najati's critical objects in the previous discussion. *First*, there is a disparity in meaning between psychological terms and research objects limited to behavior. According to him, psychological terms should align with the reality of

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<sup>47</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, 87.

<sup>48</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, 88.

<sup>49</sup> Robert Agros dan George Stancio, *al-'Ilmu fi Manzhurihi al-Jadid*, 147.

<sup>50</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, *Madkhal ila 'lmi al-Nafs al-Islami*, 82.

research conducted by modern psychology. *Second*, the epistemological crisis in several schools of modern psychology. A positivistic epistemological view dominates behaviorism that, ultimately, humans are understood in a reductionistic way. Meanwhile, psychoanalysis presents pseudoscience in some theories and even views humans deterministically. As for his views on humanism, Utsman Najati still believes that this school has not touched the epistemology of revelation, so it has not played a central role in religion and God.<sup>51</sup> In contrast to Islam, according to Najati, Islam has a more comprehensive epistemological aspect of all these schools, including *Basyari* (human) and *Ilahi* (revelatory) sources. *Third*, modern psychology describes a materialistic and atheist Western *worldview*, especially Islam, that is not necessarily under other worldviews.

### **Towards Islamic Psychology**

Several psychological schools of thought previously discussed show that religion does not play a significant role in psychology. In comparison, the aspect of spirituality in humans is an aspect that cannot be ignored.<sup>52</sup> For instance, William James explained that attitudes, feelings, and religious experiences are essential for human life that cannot be denied.<sup>53</sup> Through his work, '*The Varieties of Religious Experience*,' William James is among the scientists who have successfully employed qualitative methods in studying human religious experience. Therefore, it will be a weakness in Psychology if the human religious experience is not correctly studied in human psychology. However,<sup>54</sup> unfortunately, due to the limitations of the scientific method in studying religious experience, the phenomenon of spirituality is eventually sidelined in psychology.

In this case, the relationship between psychology and religion is an interesting new alternative perspective to be reviewed. Thus, the scope of

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<sup>51</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, *Madkhal ila 'lmi al-Nafs al-Islami*, p. 71.

<sup>52</sup> Lihat Gallup dan Lindsay dalam, JS Reber, "Secular psychology: What's the problem?," *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, no. Query date: 2022-09-01 01:57:24 (2006): 196, <https://doi.org/10.1177/009164710603400302>.

<sup>53</sup> William James, Eugene Taylor, dan Jeremy Carrette, *The Varieties of Religious Experience a Study in Human Nature*, Centenary ed (London: Routledge, 2002), 386.

<sup>54</sup> Reber, "Secular psychology: What's the problem?" 199.

methodology in psychology must be expanded to obtain human phenomena. Not precisely a phenomenon that adapts to existing methods.<sup>55</sup> Hence, integration between religion and psychology in a fair manner is needed. Unfortunately, because of the effect of secularization on psychology, religion frequently negates the role of science. Therefore, there must be an improvement in the perspective of religion's position in knowledge; thus, there is fair participation in exchanging views on values, ethics, and perspectives on life to describe the whole human experience.<sup>56</sup>

As a Muslim psychologist, Utsman Najati has been working on the problem of relationship and integration between Psychology and religion for a long time. The hegemony of Western civilization in modern psychology, which negates God and religion, encouraged Utsman Najati to offer concrete steps to build Islamic psychology. He offers the following steps: *First*, according to him, Muslim psychologists must study modern psychology perfectly. Every discussion in psychology and even its derivative branches must be mastered. This work is certainly not easy. Therefore, Usman Najati encouraged Muslim psychologists to establish particular institutions in this project through Islamic universities. Then, it is necessary to map the discussion, explain the history of its development, and reveal the methods used and the prevailing discourse in modern psychology. It was then consulted with Islamic scholars in shari'ah and ushul fiqh to discuss the suitability of the studied psychological discourse.<sup>57</sup> Usman Najati's first step is crucial, as stated by Al-Attas, as the first attempt to identify and isolating all essential elements and concepts forming Western civilization and culture in every field of modern science.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Reber, 198.

<sup>56</sup> Reber, 202.

<sup>57</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, *Madkhal ila 'lmi al-Nafs al-Islami* (Kairo: Dar al-Syuruq, 1968), pp. 57–58.

<sup>58</sup> Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1993), 138.

*It was second*, knowing the basics (*Ushul*) and Islamic principles. It is to obtain a discussion of Islamic principles related to psychological themes. Then, a comparison of agreed and disagreed aspects of Islamic principles (*Mabādi al-Islam*) is carried out. Therefore, the Al-Qur'an and Hadith should not be neglected to be used as the primary reference in disclosing psychological concepts. Likewise, the factors that affect personality, the causes of happiness and sadness, even deviations of the soul, and how to educate the soul in Islam. This section is vital to correctly understanding *tashawwur al-Islami* (Worldview of Islam) in building Islamic psychology. Finally, which parts of modern psychology are agreed upon by the Islamic Worldview and which are not will be found. Utsman Najati emphasizes that within this framework, it does not mean that modern psychology is wholly rejected but that modern psychological theories that align with the Islamic worldview will be adopted and affirmed by Islam.<sup>59</sup>

*Third*, understanding the psychiatric studies that past scholars have carried out. According to him, *Ulama, tasawwuf*,<sup>60</sup> *Kalam* and Philosophy have conducted many studies and provided their views on psychology. There was an attempt at reconciliation by the previous scholars in the psychological studies of the Islamic and Greek traditions. This work maps the historical development of psychology, the terms used by the scholars, and the methods used in reconciling psychological topics in Greek and Islamic traditions. Therefore, we can also find out which Greek thoughts are in line with the Islamic worldview (*Tashawwur al-Islami*) and not through studies that Muslim scholars and scholars have carried out in the past.<sup>61</sup>

*They were fourth*, conducting a critical analysis of issues in modern psychology based on the balance of Islamic principles (*mabādi al-Islam*). Based on the principles of the Qur'an and Hadith, which have been discussed as the basis

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<sup>59</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, *Madkhal ila 'lmi al-Nafs al-Islami*, 59.

<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, for example of Tashawwuf and his relation with Islamic thought, see Nur Hadi Ihsan, Fachri Khoerudin, dan Amir Amir Reza, "Konsep Insan Kamil Al-Jilli Dan Tiga Elemen Sekularisme," *al-Afkar, Journal For Islamic Studies*, 9 Oktober 2022, 48–65, <https://doi.org/10.31943/afkarjournal.v5i4.323>.

<sup>61</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, *Madkhal ila 'lmi al-Nafs al-Islami*, 60.



of the Islamic view of life (*Tashawwur al-Islami*), an analysis process is carried out to broadly find the position of modern psychological topics. Modern psychological theories agreed upon in Islamic principles will be integrated as Islamic scientific treasures. Meanwhile, those not agreed upon will be modified so that the theory is under Islamic principles. If not, then the theory will not be accepted as part of the method or theory of Islamic psychology.<sup>62</sup>

*Fifth*, conducting psychological research based on an Islamic view of life. According to Utsman Najati, the process of constructing Islamic psychology is not limited to criticizing topics and concepts; scientific knowledge in Islamic psychology must also be enriched. Therefore, new research is needed in many Islamic societies from an Islamic point of view, which aims to solve significant problems of the *ummah* to achieve a better soul life. Hence, it is crucial that in this final process, every researcher at various Islamic universities compiles and exchanges information and works together to form a community in applying Islamic psychology science based on an Islamic worldview.<sup>63</sup>

*Sixth*, organizing scientific seminars and conferences. In this step, psychologists, Sharia scholars, and Ushul fiqh from various Islamic universities discuss the research results that had been conducted. The experts present are also expected to exchange views on the general approach, its difficulties, problems, and ways to overcome them. This step is significant to strengthen relations and coordination between researchers in various scientific institutions and achieve the general knowledge needed for scientific research in the future.<sup>64</sup>

*Seventh*, rewriting psychology within the framework of Islam. As research in psychology from an Islamic perspective developed and new information was accumulated in this field, it is gradually possible for psychologists to rewrite

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<sup>62</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, 60.

<sup>63</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, 62.

<sup>64</sup> Muhammad Utsman Najati, 65.

many psychological topics within an Islamic framework. Finally, through this process, a new psychology textbook will be created that is consistent with the principles of Islamic psychology.

The seven steps taken by Utsman Najati are precise and systematic. It was conducted for the first time by deeply understanding modern psychology to identify the building of modern psychology as a whole. Then, Usman Najati collaborated with Muslim psychologists, in this case, with shari'ah scholars, in considering, selecting, and reconstructing modern psychology under the Islamic worldview. The results of these steps are thus expected to create a new alternative in psychology based on an Islamic view of life.

## **CONCLUSION**

Utsman Najati has contributed significantly to presenting a new perspective in Psychology. As a Muslim psychologist studying modern psychology, he has seen problems in psychological theories. The problems he highlighted, from terminological and epistemological to worldview aspects, showed his thoroughness in highlighting modern psychology's central aspects. However, his critical attitude toward modern psychology did not make him take a random attitude against psychology. He carefully sorted out psychological theories that intersected with Islamic principles of life. Then, he appreciated with an honest attitude that, on the other side, some modern psychological theories had a positive value in the development of psychology. However, on the contrary, he firmly rejected these theories in the discourse of Islamic psychology, which was born from the philosophy of life of atheism and materialism, and was contrary to Islamic life. Finally, for his efforts, there will be a collaboration between two perspectives that need each other and benefit each other.

The collaboration offered by Utsman Najati, as has been described, has built good relations and reconciliation between modern and Islamic Psychology; His steps through the seven stages of work toward Islamic psychology become a

fair and careful constructive process in bringing up psychology with a new Islamic perspective. These steps also show that the development of Islamic psychology is not solely the individual work of each Muslim psychologist but is a collective work between scientific experts and scientific institutions or communities interested in the development of Islamic psychology. This collective work is carried out because studying psychology, deepening Islamic principles (*Mabādi al-Islam*), criticizing psychological theories, and producing discourses on Islamic psychology are not easy jobs. They take thoroughness and much time to ideally give birth to the science of psychology from an Islamic perspective. Therefore, what was written by Utsman Najati, from criticism to reconciliation, was significant to continue to develop.

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