



Religious Actualization And Modernization In Educational Institutions

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Abstract

Religion and modernization in educational institutions have been actualized. The relationship between religion and modernization is one of intersection; it is neither fully integrated nor completely separate. This study aims to analyze the process of actualizing religion in the context of modernization in educational institutions through a literature review approach. The modernization of education is often considered a challenge to religious values, but in practice, many educational institutions have succeeded in integrating the two harmoniously. This study reviews the literature and previous research findings that discuss how religious values, particularly in Islamic education, have undergone transformation and adaptation to the modern education system. The results of the study show that the actualization of religion has not only survived but also developed in line with advances in science and technology, without losing its spiritual essence. Institutions such as Islamic boarding schools, madrasas, and modern Islamic schools play an important role in this process through curriculum renewal, institutional management, and contextual pedagogical approaches. Thus, modernization is not a threat but an opportunity for religious-based educational institutions to remain relevant and competitive in the global era.

Abstrak

Agama dan Modernisasi pada institusi pendidikan telah teraktualisasi. Hubungan agama dan modernisasi merupakan hubungan persinggungan, tidak sepenuhnya terintegrasi dan tidak sepenuhnya terpisah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis proses aktualisasi agama dalam konteks modernisasi pada institusi pendidikan melalui pendekatan studi pustaka. Modernisasi pendidikan kerap dianggap sebagai tantangan terhadap nilai-nilai religius, namun dalam praktiknya, banyak institusi pendidikan berhasil mengintegrasikan keduanya secara harmonis. Kajian ini menelusuri literatur dan hasil penelitian terdahulu yang membahas bagaimana nilai-nilai agama, khususnya dalam pendidikan Islam, mengalami transformasi dan adaptasi terhadap sistem pendidikan modern. Hasil studi menunjukkan bahwa aktualisasi agama tidak hanya bertahan, tetapi juga berkembang seiring dengan kemajuan ilmu pengetahuan dan teknologi, tanpa kehilangan esensi spiritualitasnya. Lembaga-lembaga seperti pesantren, madrasah, dan sekolah Islam modern memainkan peran penting dalam proses ini, melalui pembaharuan kurikulum, manajemen kelembagaan, serta pendekatan pedagogis yang kontekstual. Dengan demikian, modernisasi tidak menjadi ancaman, melainkan peluang bagi institusi pendidikan berbasis agama untuk tetap relevan dan berdaya saing di era glob.

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INTRODUCTION

The discourse on religion and modernization (Steve Bruce, 1996) in sociology has been ongoing since the 18th century, as first initiated by August Comte. This was followed by Durkheim, Weber, Marx, and others. Discussions on religion in a social context have resurfaced as a topic of interest in the last two decades leading up to the 21st century.

According to Hardgrave, the symptoms of modernity can be seen in three dimensions: technological, organizational, and attitudinal. The technological aspect can be traced to the dominance of industrialization. The organizational aspect manifests itself in the level of differentiation and specialization and transforms into a simple and complex society. In terms of attitudes toward modernity, this includes rationality and secularization, as well as the conflict between scientific and magical-religious worldviews. Spirituality, as part of religion, shows a positive trend. This fact, in turn, encourages sociologists to reanalyze the relationship between the existence of religion and modernization.

Weber argued that religion is a source of ideas and practices that transcend the immanent social world, thereby having an independent and unpredictable effect on the social world (Weber, 1971). However, he also believes that religion will gradually lose its social significance as a consequence of the rationalization of modern social and economic organizations. Modernity has given rise to efficiency and effectiveness in the management of natural resources, which can save energy and funds. Information and telecommunications technology and transportation, for example, have reduced the need for physical travel in order to interact with others.

One type of social organization is educational institutions. The truth of Weber's thesis in the context of educational institutions, for example, is that religion is no longer included in the curriculum structure. Thus, the values that replace religion in the social context are findings in the field of sociology. The next example is Marx. He considered religion to be a social product and an agent of social order in pre-modern societies. Marx's critical analysis of religion can be studied in David Mc. Clellan's book entitled *Marxism and Religion* (Clellan, 1987).

Through this literature, it is known that Marx assessed that the main function of religion in producing order did not arise from a commitment to common social ideals, but was more of a justification for the extremely evil rules of injustice and violence perpetrated by the feudal class against the peasants, or by the capitalists against the working class. Religion becomes a tool to obscure social inequality in society and uses God's rules to legitimize these conditions. As a result, religion becomes an opiate that numbs the people in an atmosphere of oppression with promises of reward, happiness in the afterlife, and compensation for the misfortunes they experience through religious rituals (Northcott, 1999). Marx's analysis can be understood because he views religion solely as a socio-cultural phenomenon.

Contemporary religious sociology researchers do not all agree with the above thesis. The first researcher to argue for the return of religion to the stage of human history was Danil Bell (Bell, 1960-1980). The group that rejects the above thesis puts forward a counter-thesis which states that modernization does not cause the death of religion but rather gives rise to new forms of religion that are more individualized or mystical, which continue to provide meaning and information about identity in the consciousness of individuals and groups (religious movements; small). After Bell, Jose Casanova supported Bell's opinion by presenting his research that religion has experienced a resurgence in various parts of the world over the past 30 years (Casanova, 1994).

Some rejections of the thesis of early sociologists can also be seen in several works by scholars in Muslim countries, although their style is still idealistic and apologetic rather than supported by empirical data. In this case, one reference is Yusuf Qardhawi's book entitled *al-Din fi 'Ashr al-'Ilm*. In this work, he writes that the sociologists' thesis is an assumption that is clearly

far from the values of truth and is not based on scientific elements at all. He counters this thesis with the opinion that religion exists and is useful for humanity; it is not something that happened suddenly or incidentally. Religion is embedded in the hearts and minds of human beings and cannot be viewed as a complementary element that can be ignored at any time (Qardhawi, 2003).

In response to Auguste Comte's thesis, Yusuf Qardhawi specifically presented historical data about the golden age of Islam, which had reached its peak in various disciplines. During that period, Islamic scholars were able to maintain a balance between scientific progress and religious beliefs. Ibn Rushd, for example, was not only an expert in Aristotelian philosophy, but also in religion and medicine. In the field of religion, his expertise can be seen in his internationally recognized works such as *Bidayah al-Mujtahid wa Nihayat al-Muqtashid*, and in the field of medicine, he wrote a work entitled *al-Kulliyah*.

Before Yusuf Qardhawi, there was Sayid Qutb, who also rejected the above thesis and proposed the thesis that the future of humanity would embrace divine values, and Islam was one of them religion that can be expected to lead the evolution of human history. Sayid Qutub analyzed that religion, which some sociologists believe will be abandoned by humans in modern life, is in fact a sacred belief. Religion remains within humans, only its manifestation has shifted to science and its creators.

In the context of schools, William Jeynes' work entitled *Religion, Education and Academic Success* indirectly proposes a thesis that could undermine the conclusions of some early sociologists regarding the relationship between religion and modernization. Jeynes' research uses historical data which states that the history of education with a religious identity began in Massachusetts in the 17th century by Christian missionaries. In today's modern context, schools with religious identities still exist. In fact, several studies he cites mention a positive relationship between students who are religiously committed and their academic achievement (Jeynes, 2003).

For the Indonesian context, research results and articles on the issue of religious education and modernization can refer to the work of Azyumardi Azra. In one of his articles, he writes that nowadays more and more people are interested in revisiting religions and spiritual teachings. Many people feel that they need something to hold on to. This is a response to something that is deviant and occurring in modern society. This deviation is a side effect of rapid changes in all aspects of life.

So it is not surprising that all religious and spiritual teachings are reviving in various ways (Azra, 2008). Furthermore, he advised Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTI) not to worry too much about their future. To that end, what needs to be done is for PTIs to improve their Islamic education systems and content and develop certain aspects to meet the needs of modern life and be able to make a better contribution to humanity. Thus, Azumardi Azra's observations above indirectly contradict the thesis of some early generation sociologists.

METHODS

The qualitative literature review method is a research approach that collects and analyzes data from written sources and literature, such as books, journals, and documents, to produce descriptive and narrative findings. Data collection is carried out by searching for sources and reconstructing them from various sources such as books, journals, and existing research. The analysis method uses content analysis and descriptive analysis. Library materials obtained from various references are analyzed critically and in depth in order to support propositions and ideas (Fadli, 2021)



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The Response of Modern Society to Religious Education

Modern society can be identified with urban society. Urban society was formed due to the migration of rural communities. Rural communities live largely dependent on natural resources such as agricultural land and plantations. Meanwhile, urban communities make their living in the service sector and manufacturing industry. These urban communities are commonly referred to as city communities. Thus, modern society is a further social stage in the history of modern society, which can be traced back to the War of Independence, also known as the Renaissance, which proclaimed liberty, equality, and fraternity.

Based on the three keywords above, the snowball of modern philosophy continues to roll, forming a new school of thought in science and human civilization. In the field of science (both social and exact), this school of thought only recognizes empirical and rational objects as fields of study (Lash, 1990). The response of modern society to religious education is a reflection of the ongoing debate about the significance of religion in the modern era. In the social sphere, this debate continues in the realm of education. In the American context (for example), since the 1960s, religious education has not been included in the school curriculum government (public) This is done to respect the diversity of identities among school students (Marsden, 1996).

In France, Emile Durkheim wrote a work on moral education. This work was compiled from lecture materials presented at the Sorbonne University. It was also a response to how modern society positioned religious education by replacing moral education values derived from religious teachings. Instead, he developed a concept of moral education based on pure rationality. The pure rationality model of moral education bases its educational elements on the values of discipline and commitment to group bonds (Durheim, 1990). In the case of the country mentioned above, it has succeeded in separating religion from the public sphere.

Responses such as those above have been occurring since the beginning of modern civilization until two decades ago. Since the 1980s and the beginning of the 21st century, society has undergone significant changes as a result of the high sophistication of information and communication technology. Even in the historical school of postmodern thought, this has had a significant impact. The resulting changes have automatically influenced the world of education.

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Scholars such as Amin Abdullah describe the response of religious education to modernization by first mapping the challenges faced into three areas, namely economic progress (giving rise to consumerism, materialism, and hedonism), the information revolution

(easily accessible foreign cultures and lifestyles that are destructive), and plurality, imaa, (the conventional boundaries between “faith” and “culture” appear to be blurring).

He continued his mapping by providing notes that essentially stated that religious education needed to be reconstructed using a model that took into account the realities of modern social structures, considered the socio-historical factors behind the emergence of religious doctrines, balanced study and memorization, used a Sufi approach in addition to kalam and fiqh, and shaped public morality (Abdullah, 2005). With this analysis, Abdullah still appears optimistic that religious education still has a significant role to play in modern society.

Amin Abdullah's opinion above is more philosophical and idealistic. The writing was not born from research that used empirical-positivist objects as the basis for his opinion. That opinion is more accurate. It is referred to as a contemplative result of the reality of religious education and modernization. Therefore, in the context of the relationship between religious education and modernization, this opinion can implicitly be categorized as intellectual support for the idea that religious education still has social significance in the modern era.

A historical review of religious education in the context of modern Indonesia shows that its existence is a continuation of community-based education. Religious education in an institutional context that solely teaches religious subjects and classical Islamic references can be traced back to Islamic boarding schools, which have a history older than Indonesia itself (Steenbrink, 1994). This means that during that period, institutional religious education had become an important tradition that enriched Indonesian culture.

The process of religious education enters the school curriculum structure through quite long dynamics. Before education became one of the ten compulsory subjects in the school curriculum (Depag, 2006), its existence was not allowed in the Dutch colonial school curriculum, this was stated because religious education was seen as a family responsibility and the colonial government considered it not to interfere with it. Apart from that, the colonial government assessed that religious education had the potential to raise national and state awareness (Shaleh, 2000). So the proposal from the people's representatives in the Volkraad that religious education be included in school subjects is always rejected. Therefore, religious education runs itself as a non-formal program in society.

The knowledge that the existence of religious education in public schools, despite much criticism, suggests that the process of santrization rather than secularization would lead to psychological symptoms that are less likely to be felt. Therefore, groups supporting the inclusion of religious subjects in the public school curriculum essentially want to assert the thesis that religious education (in the sense of religious morality) is more appropriate for modern Indonesia because it aligns with the traditions of its religious society. The thesis seems to want to explain that if the concept of religious education in the rational moral sense is included in the school curriculum, then this nation has denied its identity as a religious society and given birth to a colonialist biased educational choice for its children.

B. Modernization of Religious Education

In the context of religious education, Indonesian Muslims are actualizing their learning models in various ways. First, revitalizing the position and role of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). Second, incorporating religious education into the school curriculum. Third, integrating madrasahs (Islamic schools) into the mainstream of the national education system. Fourth, establishing superior Islamic schools for the Muslim middle class. Pesantren are the educational institutions of the Indonesian archipelago's Muslim community.

The presence of Dutch colonialists in the Indonesian archipelago presented its own challenges for Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). The Dutch brought traditions completely at odds with the pesantren's orientation. Therefore, when the Dutch introduced a policy of opening

an open education system to native Indonesians, the pesantren chose to pursue their own path rather than join the government (Steenbrink, 1994). This system survived until the Dutch colonialists were expelled from the Nusantara.

The choice not to be part of the Dutch colonial education system did not mean that Islamic boarding schools were completely alienated from their educational system. This is at least evident in the efforts of Islamic boarding schools to modernize themselves by adopting certain aspects of Dutch colonial education, such as curriculum content and learning. This was first demonstrated by the Manba'ul Ulum Islamic boarding school in Surakarta in 1906, which introduced arithmetic and reading Latin letters (Steenbrink, 1994).

Then, in 1911, the Gontor Ponorogo Modern Islamic Boarding School emerged, using a classical system, teaching Latin letters, foreign languages, and arithmetic in its curriculum (Azra, 2008). After independence, Especially since the late 1970s, Islamic boarding schools have modernized even more drastically by expanding their educational units, such as madrasas/schools (from elementary, high, and vocational levels) and universities. In this context, using Azyumardi's term, pesantren act like holding companies, leaving only their boarding system intact (Azra, 1999).

Recent developments, following the ratification of Law No. 20 of 2003, have recognized Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) as part of the national education system, specifically religious education (Yasmadi, 2002). This means that alumni of Islamic boarding schools have a role to play in public sector development (both private and government) according to their specializations. Transformation has not only occurred in Islamic boarding schools; Indonesian Muslims have established madrasas (Islamic schools) in response to the educational initiatives introduced by the Dutch colonial government and the modernization movement of the Islamic world in the early 20th century.

The innovation of establishing madrasahs to date is estimated to have been initiated by Abdullah Ahmad (1909) and Zainuddin Labai al-Yunusi (1915) in Sumatra and religious organizations such as Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama, Jamiatul Khairiyah, Persatuan Umat Islam and so on in Java (Maksum, 1999). The madrasah education system is basically similar to that of Islamic boarding schools because the curriculum content is predominantly religious (tafaqquhu fiddiri). The difference is that madrasas use class management and classical methods and include several general subjects in their learning.

Post-independence, madrasas did not show significant transformation except after the issuance of a joint decree by three ministers in 1975, which essentially positioned them on a par with public schools (Zuhdi, 2005). Until the most recent developments following Law No. 20 of the National Education System (SISDIKNAS) in 2003, madrasas were referred to as public schools with Islamic characteristics, managed under the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Depag) of the Republic of Indonesia. In addition to modernizing Islamic boarding schools and madrasas, the Indonesian Muslim community also not wanting to lose momentum with the rapid spread of public schools after independence.

Public schools are educational institutions with historical roots in the ethical policy of the Dutch colonial government. Since Indonesia's proclamation, public schools have been managed by the Ministry of Education and Culture, with Ki Hadjar Dewantara as its first minister. The Dutch colonial government's ban on religious education in the school curriculum has gained momentum since Indonesia's independence (Mudzhar, 1981). Therefore, the Indonesian people felt the need to capitalize on this momentum.

The government, through the Central National Committee for Religious Education (BPKNP), formulated a national education outline, one of the points of which stated that religious education is included in the general school curriculum and begins in the fourth grade of elementary school (Steenbrink, 1994). This policy has been continuously refined, from the

original religious education being provided after obtaining parental approval (Law No. 4 of 1950 Article 20) to religious education as a mandatory subject in the curriculum (Law No. 20 of 2003 Article 37).

The continued *ijtihad* of Indonesian Muslim society in modernizing its education can be seen in the establishment of Islamic schools. Some Islamic schools emerged during the New Order era and experienced growth in the 1980s and 1990s (Lubis, 2008). The emergence of Islamic schools was motivated by dissatisfaction among some middle-class Indonesian Muslims with the education system offered by public schools and Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) and *madrasah* (Rifai, 2006). Another opinion states that the establishment of Islamic schools arose from the Muslim middle-class's need for education, not merely oriented towards educating children to become morally upright carried out by Islamic boarding schools and *madrasahs* but also because of demands to guarantee improvements in social status and a bright future (Fadjar, 1999).

A leading Islamic school is essentially a general education school with the addition of religious instruction (Rahim, 2005). As a general school, the focus of its educational delivery is primarily on student academic achievement in science and technology. In practice, this additional religious instruction can take the form of diversifying the teaching subject from Islamic religious education to new subjects such as faith and morals, Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), the Quran and Hadith, Islamic history, and Arabic.

Furthermore, efforts are being made to create an Islamic-themed environment, such as requiring all female students to wear the hijab, and establishing a mosque within the school grounds, where congregational Dhuhr prayers are held. Based on these characteristics, it can be concluded that the presence of leading Islamic schools serves to prepare and cultivate a class of Muslim technocrats who are expected to play a vital role in Indonesia's development process.

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The content of religious education in Indonesia is committed to instilling in students a sense of identity as a religious nation. Each institution exhibits its own characteristics, reflected in the emphasis of its respective curriculum. This diverse character reflects a shared orientation: preparing students to become actors in Indonesia's development (modernization) while maintaining its identity (values) as a religious nation.

Conclusion

The modernization of education is often perceived as a threat to the sustainability of religious values. This view is slowly changing as various educational institutions strive to harmonize religious teachings with modern needs. During the Dutch colonial period, the formal education system was introduced on a limited basis and primarily for the elite. Traditional religious-based educational institutions such as Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) and *surau* (prayer houses) served as the primary bulwarks in upholding Islamic teachings and local cultural values. However, these institutions were generally not integrated with the modern education system promoted by the colonial government, either in terms of curriculum, methodology, or administration.

During the New Order era, the government began formulating a more inclusive national education system. Religious education was enshrined in the National Education System Law,

making religion a compulsory subject at all levels of education. Madrasahs and other religious schools began to receive state recognition and gradually underwent modernization through integrated curricula, teacher training, and infrastructure development. Despite a strong emphasis on political stability and state ideology, the government began to place greater emphasis on Islamic education through the Ministry of Religious Affairs. However, the modernization approach during this period was often top-down and did not fully engage with the cultural roots of Islamic boarding school communities, resulting in religious actualization being more administrative than substantive.

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