



Islamization of Knowledge Base Education in Islamic Boarding School to Face the Challenges of Western Civilization in 21st Century

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Abstract

Islamic education faces serious challenges in modern era. One of these challenges was born as a result of massive Western secularism occurring in a number of countries where the majority of the population is Muslim. In Indonesia, for example, the education system in modern Islamic boarding school has been affected by the secularization process. Although there is no dichotomy between science and religion, there are still indications of secularism which only focuses on the implementation of general science learning. This article offers a knowledge-based Islamic boarding school education model as an alternative solution to minimize the occurrence of Islamic boarding school education secularization projects in Indonesia. By using a philosophical approach, this study wants to show that the Islamization of knowledge will be able to transform the orientation of the vision of educational institutions, and change the way students, kiai, ustadz and teachers think about general sciences. This paper concludes that the paradigm of learning general science in Islamic boarding schools should be oriented to two balances, namely aimed at meeting human needs without forgetting the divine aspect. Thus, the goals of Islamic education can be achieved better.

Keywords: Education, Islamic Boarding, Islamization of Knowledge, Western Civilization, Islamic Science

Abstrak

Pendidikan Islam menghadapi tantangan serius di era modern. Salah satu tantangan tersebut lahir akibat sekulerisme Barat yang massif terjadi di sejumlah negara yang mayoritas penduduknya Muslim. Di Indonesia, misalnya, sistem pendidikan di pesantren modern telah terpengaruh oleh proses sekularisasi tersebut. Meski tidak mendikotomikan sains dan agama, namun masih ada indikasi paham sekuler dengan hanya memfokuskan pada implementasi pembelajaran ilmu-ilmu umum. Artikel ini menawarkan model pendidikan pesantren berbasis islamisasi pengetahuan sebagai alternatif solusi untuk meminimalisir terjadinya proyek sekularisasi pendidikan pesantren di Indonesia. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan filosofis, penelitian ini ingin menunjukkan bahwa islamisasi pengetahuan akan mampu mentransformasi orientasi visi kelembagaan pendidikan, serta mengubah cara berpikir santri, kiai, ustadz dan guru terhadap ilmu-ilmu umum. Naskah ini menyimpulkan bahwa paradigma pembelajaran ilmu umum di pesantren hendaknya diorientasikan pada dua keseimbangan, yaitu ditujukan untuk memenuhi kebutuhan manusia dengan tidak melupakan aspek ketuhanan. Dengan demikian, tujuan pendidikan Islam bisa tercapai secara lebih baik.

Kata Kunci: Pesantren, Pendidikan Islam, Islamisasi Ilmu Pengetahuan, Peradaban Barat, Sains Islam

Introduction

In this 21st century, Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas argued that the world is facing serious challenges that destroy human beings. Naquib made it clear that what he means is Western Civilization itself (Al-Attas, 1993). The term "Western" here does not refer to geographic area which is often understood as part of the location between the various large continents. The term Western in this context refers more to its philosophical meaning, as meant by Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi as a way of life (Zarkasyi, 2008). The positive values from Western civilization, such as the technology advancement, science development, liberal economical and political concept, and others have greatly influenced the life of modern people. However, on the other hand, Western civilization has created a variety of hegemonic ideologies. One of them is secularism.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr interpreted secularism as an understanding that upholds the value of freedom (Nasr, 1999). Therefore, the challenges of Western civilization in the 21st century is their own views of life, secularism. The expansion of secularism has spreaded globally, including to countries with a majority Muslim population (Al Faruki & Siddky, 2017). This goes through the process of globalization so that people in any country who do not adhere to this concept are considered as part of a conservative group. Since the 16th century, secularism has been voiced by Western society, especially in the economic, political, social, cultural, and religious fields. Moreover, this expansion of understanding also invades the education aspect as a foundation of nationality.

In the current national education implementation context, the process of secularization has occurred. It can be found in the teaching and learning of both general science and religion at various levels of education. The practice of secularism can be seen in the minimal time devoted to teaching and learning religious sciences, which is unlike the time devoted to teaching general science. Furthermore, there are still some educational institutions that dichotomize religious knowledge and general science. Ironically it also happens in Islamic boarding school education system, especially in the modern Islamic boarding school.

The transformation of the Islamic boarding school education system to a more modern direction is a progressive step for implementing the Islamic educational values in the contemporary era. Nevertheless, these changes need to be reformulated to include the concept of Islamization of knowledge as the basis of Islamic boarding school education which is present to become the basis of thinking for students and teachers so that they are not trapped in the form of thinking that separates religious guidance and knowledge about the world.

Research Method

This study uses qualitative research methods by emphasizing the study of literature (library research). Literature study is a data collection technique based on literature searches, ranging from primary books written by scholars or scientists who are authoritative in their fields, to scientific journals, research reports and media coverage. Various literatures that are relevant to the research object are mapped into concepts that support the main arguments in this study.

Then, to strengthen the analysis in this study, the researcher made Al-Attas' thesis on Islam and Secularism as the main theory to read the object of this research in depth (Al-Attas, Islam and Secularism, 1993). In his working paper, Al-Attas explained, science is not value-free. Even the various disciplines that were born from Western civilization are not neutral, so the Islamization of knowledge is the same ontology and epistemology. At this stage, the author then relates it to various issues of Islamic education that have been secularized in Indonesia.

In addition, the researcher also uses the philosophical approach proposed by Al-Attas and Hamid (Zarkasyi, 2008) with the aim of transforming the vision orientation of Islamic education institutions in this country. According to Zarkasyi, an Islamic philosophical approach will be able to change the way students, kyai, ustadz and teachers think about learning the general sciences into an Islamic perspective. This is because Western secularism, which gave birth to advances in technology, science and modern civilization as it is today, is hegemonic in nature and marginalizes the role of religion. In this position, an Islamic philosophical approach based on strengthening aqidah, morals and

Islamic values contained in the Qur'an becomes a necessity to be the main basis for strengthening Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia.

Result and Discussion

Patrick Griffin said that the implementation of contemporary education must be in accordance with technological advances. Meanwhile, Sunaryo Katadina explained that, in the world of 21st century education, there are challenges that require every student to have the skills needed by the job they dream of (Kartadina, 2012) (Afandi, 2012).

As it has been discussed previously, The main problem of national education is the adoption of secularism in various educational concepts, such as a curriculum based on multiculturalism, gender equality, and others. The problem is, the concept of secularism which has become part of the practice of national education has not been responded to by the government at all. Secularism is not mentioned or discussed at all as a problem and challenge in the world of education, even though it is very crucial and significant (Kemendikbud, 2015).

Philosophically, education in Indonesia is directed to Pancasila as the state philosophy. Moreover, the first principle of Pancasila is oriented towards divinity and spirituality. So, education orientation should be based on religious values because it will not be lost due to the times. Therefore, religious values should be the basis of establishment and community development, especially in the context of education (Nasrudin, 2012).

In addition, the definition of national education is the realization of religious spiritual values as the initial goal. Comprehensively, in the National Education System Law (*UU Sisdiknas*) No.2/2003, Chapter 1 paragraph (1), the definition of education is already comprehensive, "Education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential, to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality qualities, noble character intelligence, and skills needed by themselves, society, nation and state.."

According to Mohammad Fakry Gaffar, every national education policy must refer to the constitutional mandate and the National Education System Law consistently so that it is always directed regularly (Fakry Gaffar, 2012). Moreover, The Constitution of Indonesia (UUD 1945) Chapter 31 paragraph (3) explained that the initial purpose of education is to form faith, piety, and noble character. It is clear that spiritual values are the goal of national education.

Meanwhile, in the context of international education, Mohammad Fakry Gaffar said that UNESCO has raised an idea that has become a global adage, "To live Together in Peace and in Harmony" so that the world runs well without conflict and tension. Therefore, the implementation of national education should

also be able to build a harmonious and peaceful society as aspired by the international community.

Islamic Boarding School Education Dynamics

By reviewing the previous three important aspects; First, the global impact of secularism; Second, the purpose of national education as an effort to strengthen faith, piety, and noble character; Third, the purpose of international education as an effort to create peace and harmony among human beings, we can know that it is not excessive if Islamic educational institutions in the form of Islamic boarding school can play a significant role in realizing the achievement of national and international educational goals.

Islamic boarding schools are considered capable of responding to the challenges of the 21st century from the influence of secularism for two reasons; *First*, "Pesantren" is an Islamic educational institution that becomes a continuation of the national education process (Madjid, 1997); *Second*, Islamic boarding school has contributed a lot to the national education system (Bani, 2015). Zaini Tamir AR considered that the existence of Islamic boarding schools was proven to be able to adapt to every period of development of society's civilization (Tamin AR, 2017). As a result of the development of modernity, the process of modernization of Islamic boarding school happened. Then, many Islamic boarding schools with traditional and modern categories were established.

It is necessary to make clear that "modern Islamic boarding school" and "traditional boarding school" are not identic to the typology of groups "Modernist Islam" dan "Traditional Islam." Traditional Islamic groups may own modern Islamic boarding school, and vice versa.. Therefore, the distinction between those two can be attributed to the style of teaching, the content of the disciplines being taught, and the Islamic boarding school management (Anwar Bachtiar, 2012).

On the other hand, according to Azyumardi Azra's analysis, since modernism has entered the practice of Islamic education, not many Islamic boarding schools have been able to survive. Most Islamic boarding schools are influenced by the dominating general education system (Azra, 1997). Thus, there is something missing from the Islamic boarding school tradition as an Islamic educational institution that produces prospective ulama or theologian. This is also one of the factors reducing the number of ulama with Islamic boarding school backgrounds.

In this contemporary era, many Islamic boarding schools adopt general education systems such as providing students with choices of study focus, in the form of majors in natural science, social science, language, and others. This, in fact, is the result of the modernization process of Islamic boarding school which should be appreciated. However, there is a lack. The integration of general

sciences with religious science is unequal – not to say that it does not exist. What happened is as if the two were taught separately. Therefore, according to the researcher, in this context, there is a process of secularization between the general sciences and the religious sciences which dichotomizes the two.

Epistemology of Science Islamization

Hossein Nasr assumes that Modern society today does not consider nature and reality as God's creation, but as power and wealth (Nasr, *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis in Modern Man*, 1990). Moreover, Modern humans today have damaged the quality of the sanctity of nature due to a way of thinking that is dominated by secularism (Nasr, *Religion & The Order of Nature*, 1996). In addition, the method of knowledge of Western society which is oriented towards secularism only relies on empirical and rational aspects. Furthermore, Western knowledge is not based on transcendental values nor is it connected with religious faith. Therefore, Western science is entirely secularized (Hashim, 2000).

Based on the global expansion of the secular worldview, science has undergone a process of secularization in the contemporary era. Western methods of knowledge are considered incomplete, thus making Muslims look back at an alternative view of the Islamic world again (Hashim, 2000). Therefore, Muslim reformists conceived an idea namely "Islamization of Knowledge."

Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi and Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas are Muslim scholars who pioneered the idea of Islamization of Knowledge as well as formulating it comprehensively. Al-Faruqi defines the Islamization of Knowledge as follows:

"Recast modern discipline within the framework of Islamic Principles and ends, thereby bringing to normalcy the Islamic vision, methodology, education, and personality. This is the way to reassert the dynamism of the individual and collective Islamic existence and vitality" (Al-Faruqi, 1997).

Meanwhile, Al-Attas identified that the Islamization of knowledge is a logical consequence of Islamization. Therefore, he defines it as,

*"As the liberation of man first from magical, mythological, animistic, nation-cultural tradition opposed to Islām is the whose reason and his languages" (Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*, 1993).*

Historically, the idea of Islamization of Knowledge began in 1977, precisely after the world-class Islamic education conference in Makkah held by King Abdul Aziz University. The event focused on Islam's response to contemporary issues, ranging from politics, culture, social, and philosophy. In fact, it specifically discusses the influence of secularism on Muslim countries.

Therefore, there are institutions that try to formulate the concept of Islamization of science. Among the institutions that pioneered this idea were: the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) in Herndon Virginia (1987) by Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) in Kuala Lumpur (1987), and International Institute of Islamic Science and Technology (IIST) by Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Dr. S. Waqar Ahmad Husaini in Washington D.C (1998) (Adebyo, 2015).

The main aspect that is always emphasized in the Islamization of knowledge is that science is neither value-free nor neutral. This is because the philosophical views of the Western world have given birth to contemporary science which is not value-free at the level of ontology and epistemology. (Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*, 1993). Hossein Nasr uses the term desacralization of knowledge to refer to the fact of secularism in the field of religion. According to him, almost all knowledge is de-sacralized by the human race which is transformed by modernization. Therefore, science is not value-free because it has been de-sacralized. (Nasr, *Knowledge and The Sacred*, 1989). On the other side, Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi argues that the modern era and its civilization that brought new changes have intentionally made nature a heritage of civilization (Al-Faruqi I. R., 1997). Thomas Khun also explained that science is not only achieved through human experimentation and experience, but also based on philosophical assumptions (Khun, 1970). Thus, science is not value free but value laden.

Muslim scholars have various views regarding the concept of Islamization of science. Among the most prominent is the view of Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, who formulated it with the concept called "*Al-Tauhid as Worldview*" (Al-Faruqi i. R., 1992), whereas Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas formulated the concept called "*Islamic Worldview or Ru'yatul Islam lil wujud*" (Al-Attas, *Prolegomena to Metaphysics of Islam An Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Wirlldview of Islam*, 1995). Furthermore, Hossein Nasr formulated it as "*Scientia Sacra*" which is originated from a transcendent tradition (Nasr, *Knowledge and The Sacred*, 1989). Muzzafar Iqbal formulated the concept of Islamization of this knowledge more definitively as "*Qur'anic Worldview*" (Iqbal, 2007). Thus, it is clear that each of the previous Muslim reformers had a unique style and methodology in formulating the concept of Islamization of Science (Hoodbhoy, 1991). However, there is a common platform called "Islamic Science."

Yet, what does "Islamic Science" means? To answer that question, we can find various perception of Muslim reformers about Islamic Science, and each of them may be different. In this case, Adi Setia, a Profesor at Centre for Advanced Studies on Islam, Science, and Civilization (CASIS), after researching various understanding about Islamic Science from a number of figures, classified it into three parts: *First*, Sains Islam sebagai sebuah disiplin ilmu yang mengkaji sejarah peradaban Islam serta kaitannya dengan perkembangan sains dan teknologi di dunia Barat; *Second*, Islamic Science as a scientific discipline in the field of

Philosophy of Science and Islamic Philosophy that formulates concepts, philosophies, and scientific methodologies that should guide scientific activities in Islamic civilization, whether for the past, present, or in the future; and *Third*, Islamic Science as a discipline that examines the reformulation of “Islamic Science” as a long-term research program that is experimental (*tajribi*), practical (*amali*), and empirical (*inderawi*), which aims to implement the values of science and Islamic Adab values in all modern science and technology activities (Arif, 2016).

Indeed, Islamic Science is a revitalization of the glory of Islam in the past few centuries (Iqbal, 2007). This is evidence that shows the importance of science and religion in reviving Islamic civilization. In this context, Rafiu Ibrahim Adebyo emphasized that science and religion are important in the process of human development to become better (Adebyo, 2015).

Islamization of Knowledge Based in Islamic Boarding School

In general, the science-based Islamic boarding school places scholars and scientists to collaborate in the study of religious sciences that are considered secularized. The goal is none other than to make the process of Islamization of science happen. After that, the students can learn the results of the sciences that have been in accordance of Islamic teachings, which can then be implemented in personal and social life. With this, it is hoped that both students and the community can increase their faith and good deeds through education.

In addition, it is hoped that this educational model can achieve the goals of Islamic education itself, which if based on the perspective of Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, education must be able to create good and 'perfect' human beings, useful for religion and the state. (Al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education*, 1999). It can also achieve educational goals in increasing faith, piety, and noble character. Therefore, the international education goals set by UNESCO with “To live Together in Peace and in Harmony” will be easily achieved.

An important aspect of this educational model is that it does not only pay attention to horizontal relationships among human beings. More than that, it is also accompanied by the human relationship with God as the vertical aspect. This is where the implicit elements of the secularization process of education can be removed.

More systematically, the application of this method is described in several stages as follows: *Pertama*, the *kiai, ustad*, scientists (general science teachers), and students must first understand the concept of science in Islam (Husaini, 2013). On the other side, they should have the principle that seeking knowledge is an obligation in Islam (Al-Thabrani, 1994); *Second*, there should be discussion and

dialogue between *kiai*, *ustad* and scientist in formulating some contemporary-secular general science subjects. This is where the *kiai* and *ustad* can carry out the process of Islamization of knowledge with various models (Arif, 2016). The results of this general science filtering are expected to suppress the occurrence of paradigm shifts and build a more Islamic framework of thought.

Third, after the second process, the students can learn the results of various contemporary-secular disciplines that have been Islamized, both in terms of methods and ways of thinking which are carried out through the learning process. This process can be implemented both in dormitories, mosques, and classrooms, as well as in the life of social interaction in other places; *Fourth*, therefore, the santri already have a more Islamic frame of mind in understanding contemporary general sciences. Then the students are expected to be able to apply the results of their understanding to the community, both when serving at the Islamic boarding school or after graduating; *Fifth*, all these processes lead to the final stage. That is the achievement of the goal of national education to create faithful generation with noble character as stated in the 1945 Constitution.

Conclusion

As an educational plan, Science Islamization-based Islamic boarding schools can achieve the goal of Islamic education, National-International education simultaneously, and becomes an alternative of secular and liberal education models. This education model can also create a generation of Muslims who can use their faith as the basis for participating in solving human problems. This is as clearly illustrated in Quran, Surah Ali-Imrān, verse 190-191.

Moreover, this educational model will reform Islamic boarding school institutions so that they are not only able to create scholars who are experts in religious science, but also experts in the general sciences. With the integration of faith and the use of common sense in the implementation of the Islamic boarding school education model based on science, this approach will foster a sense of "divine awareness" to always be submissive and pious to Allah, The Almighty.

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