



**PROGRESIVA: Jurnal Pemikiran dan Pendidikan Islam**

Vol. 10, No. 2 (2021): July-December

E-ISSN: 2684-9585 | P-ISSN: 2502-6038

Journal DOI: 10.22219/progresiva.v10i2.18164

Homepage: <https://ejournal.umm.ac.id/index.php/progresiva/index>

# Malang City Urban Community's Perception towards Religion and Islamic Education

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## Abstract

Malang is known as a city of education, industry, and tourism. With these three names and with the various problems that exist in it, Malang is certain to experience changes in its social relations quickly. Starting from the emergence of the assumption that there has been a change in urban society, especially the view of religion, this study focuses on two aspects, namely the perception of the people of Malang towards religion and how Islamic education affects their daily religious attitudes. The results of observations made by researchers show that the level of education of the urban community is very heterogeneous. However, they were at a fairly high level of ability. This is reflected in several answers to interviews asked by the researcher. None of them did not understand certain terms related to religious education and its elements, such as improving the quality of life, religious phenomena, and others. Therefore, this finding is very different from the previous assumption which states that Malang residents will leave their religion due to various external influences caused by the increasing arrival of urban communities, industry, and tourism.

**Keywords:** Islamic Education, Malang Society, Urban Community, Diversity Attitude

### Abstrak

Kota Malang dengan beragam kompleksitasnya menurut sebagian masyarakatnya, dianggap sebagai kota pendidikan, kota industri dan kota pariwisata. Melalui ketiga kategorisasi ini bisa diduga akan terjadi perubahan yang cepat, dengan permasalahan-permasalahan yang sangat bervariasi. Berangkat dari adanya asumsi bahwa telah terjadi perubahan dalam masyarakat perkotaan tersebut, khususnya pandangan terhadap agama, maka untuk membuktikan kebenaran dari asumsi di atas perlu diadakan suatu penelitian. Penelitian ini mengambil lokasi di kotamadya Malang dengan fokus kajian, bagaimana proses pendidikan agama yang berlangsung di dalam masyarakat kota Malang dan bagaimana persepsi masyarakat terhadap agamanya. Dari hasil observasi menunjukkan bahwa tingkat pendidikan masyarakat kota sangat heterogen namun mereka berada pada level kemampuan yang cukup tinggi. Ini tercermin dari beberapa jawaban wawancara yang diajukan oleh peneliti. Hampir tidak satu pun dari mereka yang tidak paham tentang istilah-istilah tertentu berkaitan dengan pendidikan agama dan unsur-unsurnya. Seperti peningkatan kualitas hidup, fenomena beragama, dan lain-lain. Berbeda dengan yang diperkirakan sebelumnya jika masyarakat kota akan mudah meninggalkan agama mereka karena pengaruh-pengaruh eksternal yang sangat menggoda.

**Keywords:** Pendidikan Islam, Masyarakat Malang, Komunnitas Kota, Sikap Keberagaman

### Introduction

A Muslim Sociolog, Ibnu Khaldun, he explains in his masterpiece, *Muqaddimah*, that there is no society that does not change. From one era to another, civilization is constantly changing. Along with these changes, the construct of people's thoughts and culture also changes (Khaldun, 1986). One of the many factors that can cause social change is the progress of education (Soesanto, 1999). Geographically, the city starts from a village that has undergone changes, from a simple village to a more complex one, and finally turned into a city.

Not all villages can develop into cities. There are certain conditions that encourage villages to turn into cities. Among the most important factors is the change of the village into the center of government, trade center, industrial center, or mining (Rahardjo, 1993). Another theory put forward by Charles H. Cooley, an American sociologist. According to this scholar, areas where transportation stops or changes, such as ports, the latest railway stations, and the like, are development centers (Rahardjo, 1993). Thus, in urban areas that have developed, there will be various groups of people consisting of government

employees and officials, traders, and workers who work in various industrial and mining centers.

On the other hand, among them, there are those who come to the city to study by living in boarding houses around the city. In fact, there are also some residents who try their luck by trading, becoming taxi drivers, and working in various other professions. They all have a big influence on the lifestyle and mindset of people in urban areas. Thus, it can be concluded that urban society is heterogeneous, both in terms of education, economy, and culture. This condition is a distinguishing feature of urban communities.

### **Religious Patterns and Values**

The social formations of religious elites in Malang are divided into two categories. Those are fundamentalist and moderate religious communities (Zainuddin, 2019). The community group in the first category is *deontic-diacronic/non-reduksionis*, which means that they acknowledge Prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h as the prophet and also apostle who perfected previous religions. He is the apostle who persuade people to follow the teachings of Islam as implementation of the command of Allah, The Almighty. On the other hand, the community group in the second category is *Normative-religious pluralism*, which means that they become people who always call on people about tolerance and keeping away arrogance. This group stated that religious truth is relative, every religion has the same truth value, and that no religion is superior to the other.

Menurut Zainuddin (Zainuddin, 2019), The pattern of relations and dialogue between religious communities in the city of Malang also varies. The pattern of relations between fundamentalist Islamic groups tends to be co-existent, while moderate groups are pro-existent. One group is still limited to establishing a passive tolerance relationship between different religious groups, while the second has been very active and collaborative. That study only observed one part, namely religious community groups at the elite level. According to Zainuddin, this group relates to the texts and mindsets used by the predecessors through the basis of text arguments in strengthening their every opinion. (Zainuddin, 2019). In this case, text (*nash*) is positioned centrally and becomes the main reference for their view of life.

Nevertheless, the citizens of Malang still make religious education an important part of strengthening their religious foundations. For them, religious education always teaches tolerant, inclusive, humanist, and pluralist attitudes (Muthohirin, 2019) (Mahmud, 1995) (Mahfud, 2011) (Nurcholis, 2019). Religious education is an effort to prepare students to believe, understand, appreciate, and practice religion through continuous guidance and teaching.

Efforts to reconstruct Islamic education need to pay attention to a number of principles, including: *First*, as a part of the Islamic life system. Therefore, the

process of internalizing and socializing moral values can be done through Islamic educational institutions; *Second*, the integration of Islamic education with other sciences inseparably; *Third*, viewing Islamic education as a lifelong educational process; *Fourth*, the continuity of the dynamics of the Islamic education process that is able to create a dialogue and interactive atmosphere between educators and students.

Finally, Islamic education can be given through various moral messages to students. These principles are expected to open opportunities and become the foundation for the creation of the concept of Islamic education that is able to capture various social changes. This is added by placing faith as a source of motivation to enrich knowledge through the integration of reason and conscience (Zainuddin, 2019) (Amin Abdullah, 2017).

Social relations in rural communities are full of a sense of kinship. The religious atmosphere is very real, and the attitude of helping each other becomes a habit of the citizens. Especially if the interaction is related to the application of religious education in mosques, Islamic schools, and Islamic boarding schools. The socio-religious activities are carried out in various forms, ranging from Islamic study forums, schools in Islamic schools, to all community affairs being resolved with a religious approach.

The problem is, with the occurrence of social change towards an increasingly complex urban society, the religious atmosphere is fading. The sincere attitude of helping each other is also getting thinner. Everything is calculated based on profit or loss. Soerjono Soekanto argued, among the many characteristics that stand out from urban communities when compared to rural communities is the reduced atmosphere of religious life (Soekanto, 1996).

In this regard, Daldjoeni said, religion in traditional societies plays an important role. The reason is because religion underlies all views, family life, to group life based on work. Thus, the presence of big cities puts the human mind in the most important position by subordinating the role of doctrine and thought based on religion (Daljuni, 1990).

In line with the problems that have been described, this study aims at two things: *First*, to know the perception of the people of Malang, as citizens who live in urban areas, towards religion; *Second*, to find out how big is the influence of Islamic education on the formation of religious attitudes of the people of Malang who are urban residents.

## **Research Method**

This research uses qualitative research method. This research can be ascertained as a series of filtering information related to the objects being studies. This research uses three data sources; literature, field, and personal data source. Therefore, this research also uses three data collecting method; observation, interview, and documentary. Furthermore, in analyzing the data, the researcher reads, studies, and examines all available data. Then, the researcher abstracted,

as an effort to make a summary of the core. Data that has been reviewed, summarized and taken to the core while maintaining the words or questions directly from the data source that really supports the existence of the data. The next stage is compiling the data in sentences containing strong arguments, categorizing the data and finally presenting it in descriptive analytical form.

This research is conducted in Malang, considering that this city is a city of education, industry, and tourism, so that the culture has rapidly acculturating. This development causes the growing of the diversity of people's religious attitude.

The choice of Malang as a city that has various religious views is important to mention because it can provide a description of the informants who have been interviewed. The number of community groups that are used as subjects can vary depending on developments that occur in the field.

Afterwards, the data collected are analyzed in a measurable manner, and the analysis is carried out inductively and descriptively to obtain the desired results and adequate conclusions.

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## **Results and Discussion**

The religious style of each individual is based on a mixture of various factors. These factors can be the impact of the social environment, family, psychology, and God's gift. However, there is one significant factor in the development of the human soul, that is the education factor. Parents as the first educators are the starting point for children's growth and development. Meanwhile, teachers as educators are given the mandate to not only transform knowledge, but are also responsible for being a facilitator for the development of students. In this case, educators must be able to: (a) Motivate and stimulate the attention of students so that they want to practice religious values; (b) Try to correct their mistakes and misunderstandings about religious values that have been known so fari; (c) Internalize the transferred religious values by learning by doing.

Meanwhile, according to Jalaluddin Rahmat, the formation of the religious spirit of students is influenced by the ability of teachers to motivate them in understanding religious values. The next factor is the subject who is educated. According to the history of traditional education, students are passive organisms. They only receive information from adults. However, along with the development of science and information and communication technology, every student in the same age and class level in the past and present can have different results. Educational materials that are more dense and comprehensive also cause the development of understanding to be more complex.

The last factor is the environment, both natural and social. The natural environment includes land, air, water and the state. While the social environment is a society or association. Someone who is in a religious environment will have an impact on his religious behavior every day. On the other hand, those who are not in a religious environment will affect their religious motivation.

Malang is a city with heterogeneous culture and community characteristics. The population comes from various economic backgrounds, social status, education level, type of work, and even different political orientations. Moreover, nowadays, Malang is filled with housing and small clusters inhabited by young families. They generally come from educated groups who are selective in making any choices, including choosing friends to hang out with.

### **The Religion of City Community**

Traditional societies still hold firmly to ancestral cultural beliefs that should not be abandoned in the past. Therefore, efforts to reform traditions or customs that have long been in effect in certain social circles are taboo. This taboo becomes a “fortress” for indigenous peoples so that the traditions that have prevailed for years can be preserved.

Thus, various influences that come from outside the tradition can be well anticipated. However, the common mind of the community is not always strong. People's desire to change will surely appear in the future. Modernization that occurred in all aspects of life became the beginning of a change in a very traditionalist agrarian society that was transformed into a very modernist industrial society. Kuntowijoyo explained, industrialization is not a single-linear historical journey from an agrarian society to an industrial society, from a traditional society to a modern society; but rather a multilinear evolution. Not every society will experience the same process, the same speed, and the same consequences (Kuntowijoyo, 2018).

The field of religion also gets the same touch of modernity as other fields. This can be seen from the enactment of a code of conduct based on religious teachings and customary law. If someone violates certain rules, violators can be charged with punishment based on the provisions of religious teachings or applicable customary law.

In contrast to urban people who live a religious life based on ratios, this situation is supported by the modern world of thought which requires them to always think logically in determining the management of life. They no longer rely on past thoughts that depend on religious doctrine and customary law. Oktavia RA (25 years old), a resident of Malang, expressed her perception about the rational, critical, and modern construction of thinking in the religious community in Malang. According to him, the general view that is believed by religious people is that usually religious people will live their lives in peace,

especially if they are able to understand the nature of religion (Octavia, 2020). In fact, that's not necessarily true because even those who are agnostic and atheist can feel that peace.

The answer reveals a mind that does not absolutely assume that truth is one-way. However, the religious pattern of the Malang people can be seen from various sides. They see religion as a form of thought, which is then actualized in the form of religious attitudes that are shared by everyone regardless of any background. In addition, the statement also implies an egalitarian attitude by not assuming that only the religious community can determine a person's good and bad. Egalitarian-looking social response can only be found in today's modern era, especially through the image of an inclusive urban society.

They get this inclusive religious behavior from the Islamic education system that has implemented modern patterns, patterns that are not limited to providing religious lessons, but are integrated with various general subject matter or science.

Oktavia also considers the urgency of religious education to be relative. Some people think it's really important, and some don't. This statement is not surprising because the construction of urban thought is not based on a single objectivity of truth. Not only social issues, religious truth is also considered as something subjective. Therefore, relativity in judging the truth is a characteristic feature of urban society in responding to various socio-religious problems. However, that doesn't mean they don't have a way of life. The most important thing for them is that any truth must be scientifically proven.

Then, in terms of the sustainability of religious education, its implementation is considered adequate, both in terms of theory and practice. However, its success still depends on each individual. Thus, it is very clear that the construction of thoughts about religion in Malang residents cannot be related to public affairs. They see substantively that religion is a private matter. That is, by using the parameters of adequate religious education, one's religion should not be questioned, and also to interfere in dealing with these private issues.

Chustika, a resident of Malang City, has an opinion about the implementation of Islamic education in Malang. According to her, various Islamic educational institutions that have been established in Malang have played an important role in shaping the religious attitudes of citizens (Chustika, 2020). The educational institutions in question are not only formal ones, but also non-formal ones. In fact, formal and informal education is attached to the way a person interacts in the family and the surrounding community. Loresta Nusantara, 29 years old, also believes that in matters of religion, the community considers it very important. However, there are still some residents who always make religion the only point of view in seeing every problem (Nusantara, 2020).

In this case, the word "some" indicates that not all Malang residents have the same opinion in viewing every problem. In fact, some of them do not involve

religious doctrine in any of their decisions. It can be stated that the people of Malang are very dependent on self-motivation in religion. Because of this psychological aspect, Malang residents tend not to impose their will on others in religion. They realize that religious matters are private matters.

Therefore, this is in accordance with what was mentioned (Kuntowijoyo, *Dinamika Sejarah Umat Islam Indonesia*, 2017), that there is a major transformation in the social structure of religious communities in Indonesia. It is changes in the character and behavior of religious communities from traditional to modern societies. However, this change is natural for the people of Malang City to accept as an agreement that must be respected together.

### **The Meaning of Religious Education for City Communities**

The history of religions spans a very long time. The resilience of religions goes hand in hand with the progress of human civilization from time to time. One of the keys to religious resilience comes from the role of humans (religious people) who always preserve it with religious education. Hans J. Daeng revealed, education is a form of living together that brings students to the stage of becoming perfect human beings. The key word for education is togetherness, a long time that is carried out continuously, and everyone communicates and understands each other for a specific purpose (Daeng, 2012). Furthermore, Daeng explained that every religion based on love always invites its followers to continuously improve themselves by avoiding all evils.

After finding the religious patterns of urban communities in the sub-themes above, the researcher questioned the issue of religious education in urban communities. This is important to reveal because Religious Religious Education (PAI) is still taught in all schools. Although there are a few groups that advocate the elimination of religious lessons in public schools, in general, many parties do not want these subjects to be removed from the national education curriculum. Instead, to perpetuate the PAI curriculum, the Ministry of Religion established a director general who specifically handles religious education. However, whether at the implementation level, it is in line with what the government expects.

First of all, the researcher asks about the current condition of religious education in schools, whether it is adequate or not. Of the 29 informants that the researchers meet, only 3 people say 'not yet', the rest say 'already' even though they add various arguments.

According to the researcher, the interesting thing is for those who say no, because from that statement, the researcher continues to question their reasons, under the pretext that the government has totally supported religious education. According to Pradita P, 22, the reason is because not everyone gets the religious education they need (Pradita, 2020). So, furthermore, according to him, what is given is not in line with what is desired. He says, there is an error in the management of religious teaching or, in educational terms, there is an error in

the application of the curriculum. Therefore, it is necessary to review the religious education curriculum in schools, especially those related to the suitability of the needs and desires of the community.

From the second informant, Dhina, 27 years old, the answer is similar to the first. According to Dina, there are still many people who need religion more deeply. If it is connected with the first statement, it can be understood why they feel they are not well informed about religion (Dhina, 2020). Then, what is more surprising is the perception of religion conveyed by Lutfi, 45 years old. He is a senior teacher at a favorite school in Malang. He said that the implementation of religious education in Malang is not adequate due to lack of implementation. The knowledge matter is difficult to understand and apply to students (Luthfi, 2020). The pessimism expressed by him is interesting to discuss because of his long teaching experience, so that he is more aware of the conditions and results of the process of giving religious knowledge to students.

The argument put forward by Luthfi is an expression of his disappointment, which has received little attention from the government. He says that religious education is very important as the main bulwark against radical religious ideologies. Thus, religious education becomes a great hope for the daily social behavior of urban communities. It is in this position that religious material is absolutely present in all subject matter in schools. Nur Ainiyah reveals, all teachers should be able to implement religious education in all the material taught as a form of character education as a whole (Ainiyah & Husain Hadi Pranata Wijaya, 2013).

However, among the pessimism of some of the informants above, many other informants still have high hopes. Through the same question, they answers that the implementation of religious education in Malang is still adequate. This is based on the consideration of the existence of socio-religious study forums at the non-formal education level.

Almost all of the informants gave the same opinion by giving notes and arguments from their respective points of view. This is acceptable because the urban community, who are generally relatively highly educated, are able to provide arguments, although it is difficult to say that they are right on target. This is supported by a critical urban community environment. This is different from the nature of the village community who tend to accept the situation, especially if it is related to issues of religious doctrine.

Although the rationality in the arguments of the urban community needs to be reexamined, it does not stop them from continuing to express ideas that may be new. Not to mention the abundance of information from social media and the average community in the city already uses gadgets as their daily needs. Electronic media such as television and radio have been considered to be left behind in informing novelty. Intelligence and speed seem to be a new format for city people in realizing their desires.

What is important to note in this study is the ambiguous attitude of the urban community between fulfilling spiritual needs and abandoning religious sacred values. If at the beginning of this paper the researcher gave information about taboos that functioned as preservers of traditional values, then it seems that it is not in line with the mindset of urban people who avoid being trapped in the sacred values of religion. religious taboos try to be violated in order to get a rational explanation for the actions committed.

The results of the observations show that the education level of the urban community is very heterogeneous. However, they were at a fairly high level of ability. Almost none of the subjects of this research interview did not understand certain terms related to religious education and its elements.

In relation to the things above, especially the first question in the formulation of the problem regarding the perception of the people of Malang City towards religion, the answers vary. These various answers lead to a thesis that depends on the level of individual need for the existence of an adequate religious education institution in Malang City.

Then, secondly, it is difficult for them to say that religious values are sacred. In this case, there has been a dualism of understanding of sacred values and vitality of needs. This means that on the one hand they consider religion to be a necessity that motivates them to improve themselves, but on the other hand, sacredness is not important, because there is an assumption that something that is considered sacred is very close to taboo.

## **Conclusion**

The results of this research lead to several conclusions as follows: *First*, the initial hypothesis of this study states that the urban community of Malang will leave the role of religion when this area is transformed into an urban area filled with industrialization and tourism projects. However, on the contrary, religious education becomes an important need that serves to improve self-quality, calm the mind, reconcile thoughts, and pacify social relationships.

*Second*, Malang residents seem to understand more about personal needs, including matters related to worship according to the religion that everyone adheres to. Therefore, they become part of a religious community that is not easily dictated by religious doctrine. This urban community has critical reasoning so that they can distinguish between religious doctrine and public affairs. Indeed, there has been a rapid transformation of the citizens of the city who used to think of religion as the fulfillment of spiritual needs *an sich*, but now they are critical because religious education plays a major role in the formation of their religious thoughts. Their attitude cannot be categorized as disobedience to religion, but any new information or knowledge requires critical and deep thinking, as many recent narratives contain the abuse of religion for personal, political, and economic interests. As a result, they become a group that does not easily accept the style of religious teaching accompanied by pretense.

Third, religious education is the center of knowledge that shapes human thought as a whole. Thus, the people of Malang really need religious knowledge to guide them on the right, good, and useful path. Fourth, urban communities consider religious education to be relevant to be taught, even though they are not too concerned about whether it is taught in schools or in other non-formal places, such as social media.

Observing the results of this study, according to the author, it becomes a big challenge for religious educators and policy makers, especially with regard to religious education, that the management of religious teaching should be given more attention. As with the compilation of interviews with the sources of this research, religious education must look at the social reality that is happening, so that the materials are always in line with the various problems that are happening. Urban society does not expect monotonous teaching with repetitive material, because it will seem to judge someone's actions. For urban communities, corrective action or giving advice is more important as a form of improvement to positive behavior.

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