



Islamic Education and Contemporary Challenges

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Abstract

This research aims to find out and explain the problems faced by Islamic education, especially in the current contemporary era. To find out, researchers reviewed the philosophical framework of ontology, epistemology and also axiology. Based on research conducted by researchers, it is known that from an ontological perspective, Islamic education must strengthen its philosophical foundation, then from an epistemological perspective, it is necessary to improve learning practices in Islamic education, including developing dynamic-progressive curriculum policies and developing learning methods that relevant. Then finally, in terms of axiology, actors in Islamic education must have the will to produce and produce students who are competitive. So based on this, there needs to be awareness to build an Islamic education model with an integrative paradigm.

Keywords: Islamic Education, Challenges, Contemporary Era

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui dan menjelaskan problematika yang dihadapi oleh pendidikan Islam khususnya pada era kontemporer saat ini. Untuk mengetahuinya, peneliti meninjau melalui kerangka filosofis ontologi, epistemologi, dan juga aksiologi. Berdasarkan penelitian yang dilakukan oleh peneliti, diketahui bahwa dari segi ontologi, pendidikan Islam harus melakukan penguatan kembali pada pijakan filosofisnya, kemudian dari segi epistemologi, perlu dilakukan pembenahan praktik pembelajaran di pendidikan Islam, meliputi pengembangan kebijakan kurikulum yang dinamis-progresif dan mengembangkan metode pembelajaran yang relevan. Kemudian terakhir dari segi aksiologinya, para pelaku Pendidikan Islam harus memiliki kemauan untuk mencetak dan menghasilkan siswa yang berdaya saing. Maka berdasarkan hal tersebut, perlu adanya kesadaran untuk membangun model Pendidikan Islam dengan paradigma integratif.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Islam, Tantangan, Era Kontemporer

Introduction

In Islam, education is something that is very important, principled and must be possessed by anyone who claims to be Muslim¹. Islamic education, which is synonymous with *tarbiyah*—which comes from the word *rabbya yurabbi*—requires development and growth.²

Throughout its history, Indonesian Islamic education has experienced dynamics and ups and downs to be able to survive the crush of globalization-modernization without having to lose its identity. Concrete evidence of this situation is the desire and efforts to continue to improve the Islamic education system as an answer to the challenges of colonialism education.³ The institutionalization of Islamic education continues to be carried out, which was initially held in the form of surau and Islamic boarding school, but has now metamorphosed into two models of modern Islamic educational institutions. First, taking the Dutch education model but interspersed with Islamic religious learning content. Second, modern institutions which to a certain extent adopt the substance and methodology of modern Dutch education.⁴ Many efforts have been made to improve and improve the quality of Islamic education in the country. This can be seen from overhauling the curriculum, synergizing the teaching staff (HR), revitalizing the budget and so on.⁵

For example, in terms of curriculum development, the Islamic education curriculum has experienced paradigm changes, although the previous paradigm has been maintained as much as possible.⁶ The journey of Islamic education in Indonesia always faces complex problems. Starting from conceptual-theoretical aspects to operational-practical matters. This situation is certainly natural because human life from time to time inevitably experiences changes and shifts. Therefore, issues related to Islamic education will never end to be discussed. So continuous corrections need to be made as an effort to find points of relevance according to the ever-changing context of Muslim life.

¹ La Sahidin, Ridwan Rahimi, and Sumiati Sumiati, "Problematikan Dan Solusi Pendidikan Islam Kontemporer," *IQRA : Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 2, no. 01 (June 20, 2022): 64–76.

² Muhammad Tidjani Djauhari, *Pendidikan Untuk Kebangkitan Islam* (Jakarta: TAJ Publishing, 2008).

³ Azyumardi Azra, *Pendidikan Islam: Tradisi Dan Modernisasi Menuju Milenium Baru* (Jakarta: Wacana Ilmu, 2002).

⁴ Wedra Aprison, "Madrasah: Basis Epistemologi Humanistik-Religius," *Edukasia : Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Islam* 12, no. 1 (May 29, 2017): 117–40, <https://doi.org/10.21043/edukasia.v12i1.2008>.

⁵ Musleh Wahid, "Problematika Pendidikan Islam Kontemporer," *Tafhim Al-'Ilmi* 10, no. 1 (2018): 47–58, <https://doi.org/10.37459/tafhim.v10i1.3245>.

⁶ Muhaimin, *Pengembangan Kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam Di Sekolah, Madrasah, Dan Perguruan Tinggi* (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 2007).

Research Methods

This research uses a descriptive qualitative research approach with the type of library research. This article tries to explore themes surrounding the problems of Islamic education which are increasingly complicated in the contemporary millennial era like today. In-depth analysis will be carried out through a review of ontology, epistemology and axiology. Ontology is a branch of philosophy that deals with the nature of what happens. The problems of Islamic education that are of concern to ontology are; In implementing Islamic education, a stance is needed regarding the views of humans, society and the world.⁷ In this discussion, the epistemology of Islamic education is more directed at methods or approaches that can be used to build Islamic knowledge, rather than other components. Because this method or approach is closest to efforts to develop Islamic education, both conceptually and applied. The epistemology of Islamic education can function as a critic, solution provider, inventor and developer. An epistemological approach requires certain ways or methods. He presents the process of knowledge in front of students rather than the results. This epistemological approach provides complete and complete understanding and skills. Meanwhile, axiology discusses the nature of values which include good and bad, right and wrong, as well as means and ends. Islamic education is oriented towards creating a "stable" and dynamic, independent and creative personality. Not only for students but also for all components involved in the implementation of Islamic education.

Results and Discussions

A. Development of Islamic Education in Indonesia

In the past, when the Dutch power came to power, the existence of Islamic education was suppressed and treated in a discriminatory manner. The Netherlands calls Islamic educational institutions "illegal". In fact, to get rid of it, the Dutch went to the trouble of issuing a regulation known as the *wilde schoolen ordonantie*, precisely in 1933 AD.⁸ The impact of Dutch colonial policy left Islamic educational institutions teetering and tending to close themselves off from anything—be it tradition, culture, especially thought—that came from outside the Islamic world. However, what is interesting is that the spirit of struggle among observers of Islamic education has not died out, let alone foundered. Colonial efforts to overthrow Islamic educational institutions were to no avail, meaning they had no results.

⁷ Muhammad As'adurrofik, "Tantangan Pendidikan Islam dan Solusi di Era Digital," *AL-Fathonah* 1, no. 5 (July 2, 2022): 697–708.

⁸ H. A. R. Tilaar, *Paradigma Baru Pendidikan Nasional* (Bandung: Rineka Cipta, 2004).

At that time, Muslims became increasingly enthusiastic about establishing Islamic educational institutions in droves. Their belief is very strong that the existence of Islamic educational institutions is very necessary to transmit Islamic teachings and doctrines on the one hand, while carrying out aggression against Dutch hegemony on the other hand.

What is interesting to observe is how Islamic educational institutions face challenges and dynamics of change. According to Azra, exponents of Islamic educational institutions do not appear to be in too much of a rush to transform Islamic institutional change. Ada tends to maintain a cautious policy. They accept limited renewal or modernization without having to make changes to the Islamic education system as a whole. Because in fact the practice of education in each Islamic educational institution has unique and distinctive characteristics, which sociologically and philosophically certainly differ according to the traditions and scientific disciplines developed by its founders.⁹

Islamic education in Indonesia has become an important part of the dynamics of change in the national education system. For example, Islamic boarding schools, as a form of Indonesian Islamic education, are believed to be able to bridge communication problems between the government and the lower levels of society. Because, almost the majority of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia grow and develop from the lower levels of society. Now, most Islamic boarding schools are more open to accepting the flow of modernization. This indication can be seen from the existence of various activities that encourage Islamic boarding school participation in development. Islamic boarding schools and other Islamic educational institutions are currently very open to various findings resulting from the development of science and technology. However, Islamic boarding schools and Islamic educational institutions in general need to carry out critical studies so that the results of the development of science and technology can be utilized for the greater benefit of human life. Not the other way around, the development of science and technology brings disaster to the existence of human life, because it is dominated by value-free capitalist and liberalist ways of thinking.¹⁰

In line with developments over time and the dynamics that are developing in the Indonesian education system today, the existence of Islamic education institutions is now receiving the same recognition as part of the National education sub-system. This recognition was marked by the birth of an SKB (Joint Decree of three ministers) between

⁹ Dainuri Dainuri, "Integrasi Pendidikan Islam Dalam Sistem Pendidikan Nasional," *Al Hikmah: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 8, no. 1 (November 24, 2018): 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.36835/hjsk.v8i1.3297>.

¹⁰ Affandi Mochtar, *Membedah Diskursus Pendidikan Islam* (Ciputat: Kalimah, 2001).

the Minister of Religion, the Minister of Home Affairs and the Minister of Education and Culture in 1975. Confirmed by Malik Fadjar,¹¹ the birth of the three ministers' SKB as a positive step to improve the quality of Islamic educational institutions from various perspectives; both status, quality of graduates, quality of processes or the existence of Islamic education institutions in the National education system. Recognition of Islamic educational institutions as part of national education is a "golden" opportunity that should be appreciated and grateful for. This recognition can be seen from three things. First, Islamic education is explicitly recognized from an institutional perspective. Second, Islamic education is recognized as a subject so it must be given in educational units from elementary to tertiary levels. Third, Islamic education is recognized as a value. In other words, Islamic values must be injected into every educational process.¹² With the increasingly strong position of Islamic education in the national education system after experiencing a long period of struggle, despite several shortcomings, it has shown significant results and the goals of Islamic education have been achieved, namely physical education, intellectual education and moral education.¹³

In the Indonesian context, Islamic education is actually able to respond to the dynamics of life that are currently occurring. Education actors continue to make efforts to improve, correct, evaluate and think dynamically and productively. For example, this effort was carried out by Mukti Ali in his efforts to formulate Islamic boarding school and madrasah institutions by incorporating general subject matter into institutions whose establishment was oriented towards tafaqquh fi al-din. Likewise, what Harun Nasution did in his efforts to eliminate the dichotomy of religious knowledge and general knowledge in Islamic higher education institutions or agencies, especially at IAIN Jakarta (now UIN Jakarta) by means of an institutional and curriculum approach. The institutional approach has changed the status of IAIN Jakarta to a State Islamic University, which of course has implications for developing an integrated curriculum between religious sciences and general sciences.¹⁴

It is not surprising that once again, Sairin increasingly emphasizes that the Islamic education system in Indonesia from the colonial period until today is an inseparable part of

¹¹ A. Malik Fadjar, *Madrasah Dan Tantangan Modernitas* (Bandung: Mizan, 1998).

¹² H.P. Daulay, *Dinamika Pendidikan Islam Di Asia Tenggara* (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 2009).

¹³ Muhammad Haitami Salim, *Studi Ilmu Pendidikan Islam* (Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media, 2012).

¹⁴ Mohammad Firdaus, "Integrasi Ilmu Agama dan Ilmu Umum: studi kasus pada Madrasah Aliyah Citra Cendekia" (Master Thesis, Sekolah Pascasarjana UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2020), <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/52360>.

the national education system. The occurrence of dynamic changes in the Islamic education system shows a strong indication that Islamic education can adjust and adapt to societal developments. These changes also illustrate that the Muslim community can integrate into the Islamic education system they are involved in with the dynamics that are developing in society today.¹⁵

It cannot be denied that Islamic education in terms of quantity shows dynamic development from kindergarten to university. However, in terms of quality, it is still questionable. It must be admitted that based on existing phenomena, the output of Islamic educational institutions in pursuing domestic employment is still far from society's expectations, especially when linked to global competition in the free market era. The output of Islamic educational institutions is unable to compete with the output of foreign educational institutions. Issues related to normative-philosophical issues. Islamic education has not yet been able to complete a model of educational institution that is adaptable to current developments, whether the Islamic boarding school model which displays its traditional character which idealizes the past, or the madrasa model which displays modernity which is more pragmatic and progressive, or the modern Islamic boarding school model which refers more to the future with still maintain the spirit of Islam.

Apart from that, Islamic education is still unable to find the concept of Islamic sciences, whether by exploring them from the original sources, namely the Qur'an and hadith, or by adopting secular sciences that do not conflict with the Qur'an and hadith, or by taking the concepts of secular science and looking for verses from the Koran and hadith to intimidate them, or in the form of assimilation, namely by taking the concepts of secular science and adapting them. Even though there have been thoughts towards the Islamization of science, integration of imtaq and science and technology, in practice it still leads to a dualism-dichotomy between religious sciences and general sciences in the Islamic education curriculum.

B. Problems of Ontology, Epistemology and Axiology

In Azra's notes, there are several phenomena that cause Islamic education to always be marginalized. First, Islamic education is often late in taking action when responding to changes and trends in societal development, both now and in the future. Second, most Islamic education systems are more oriented towards the humanities and social sciences rather than the exact sciences such as physics, chemistry, biology and modern mathematics.

¹⁵ Sjafrin Sairin, *Perubahan Sosial Masyarakat Indonnesia: Perspektif Antropologi* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2002).

In fact, this knowledge is absolutely necessary in developing technology. Furthermore, these exact sciences have not received the appreciation and place they deserve in the Islamic education system. Third, efforts to renew and improve the Islamic education system are often piecemeal and not comprehensive, and are only carried out haphazardly or as is remembered. As a result, no essential changes occur in it. Fourth, the Islamic education system still tends to be more past-oriented than future-oriented, or less future-oriented. Fifth, most Islamic education systems have not been managed professionally in terms of planning, preparation of teaching staff, curriculum and implementation of education, so they are unable to compete with others.¹⁶

In practical terms, according to Suyata, one of the causes of the failure of Islamic education in carrying out its main mission is because learning is separated from its context. People live their religion well when they are in places of worship. Religious learning is too normative and textual, ignoring contextual aspects so that religious praxis cannot sensitize its adherents from moral depravity that can harm themselves and the environment. Moreover, Mochtar Buchori added that the failure of religious learning was due to educational practices only paying attention to the cognitive aspects of growing awareness of religious values and ignoring the development of affective and conative-volitive aspects, namely the will and determination to practice the values of religious teachings. As a result, a gap appears between knowledge and practice.

At a micro level, the study of Islamic education concerns all components included in Islamic education. Meanwhile, at a macro level, the formal object of Islamic education is a normative effort to link Islamic education with social, political, economic, cultural and religious systems both on a regional, national and international scale.¹⁷ The study of Islamic education always begins with the problems within it, the gap between facts and reality, and the controversy between theory and empirical. Therefore, the area of study of Islamic education boils down to three main problems, including:

1. Foundational problems, which consist of religious foundation and philosophical foundational problems, empirical foundational problems (basic problems, religious foundations and philosophical-empirical foundational problems) which involve dimensions and studies of universal educational concepts, such as the nature of humans and society, morals, life, science, faith, *ulul albab* and so on. All of this

¹⁶ Usman Abu Bakar and Surohim, *Fungsi Ganda Lembaga Pendidikan Islam (Respon Kreatif Terhadap Undang-Undang Sisdiknas)* (Yogyakarta: Safitria Insania Press, 2005).

¹⁷ Muhaimin, *Pemikiran Dan Aktualisasi Pengembangan Pendidikan Islam* (Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 2011).

comes from the study of *qauliyah* phenomena and *kauniyah* phenomena which require a philosophical approach.

2. Structural problems. Judging from the demographic and geographic structure, it can be categorized into cities, suburbs, villages and remote villages. From the structure of human mental development, it can be categorized into childhood, adolescence, adulthood and the elderly. From the economic structure, it is categorized into rich, middle and poor communities. From household structure, there are career and non-career households. From the structure of education levels, it can be categorized into early childhood education, primary education, secondary education and higher education.
3. Operational problems. At a micro level, it will relate to various components of Islamic education. For example, the interactive relationship of five educational factors, namely educational objectives, educators and educational staff, students and Islamic educational tools (curriculum, methodology, management, administration, facilities and infrastructure, media, sources and evaluation) and the educational environment or context. Or it can start from the relationship between input, process and output. Meanwhile, at a macro level, it concerns the relationship between Islamic education and social, political, economic, cultural and religious systems, both national and international.¹⁸

If Islamic education prioritizes an epistemological approach during the teaching and learning process, then Islamic education will produce many graduates who are producers, researchers, inventors, explorers and knowledge developers. Because epistemology is a process-based approach, it gives rise to very complex logical and problematic consequences, some of which are:

1. Islamic education is often impressed as traditional and conservative education. In fact, this is normal, because people view that Islamic education activities are plagued by the weak use of learning methodologies that tend not to attract attention and empower.
2. Islamic education seems less concerned with the issue of how to change cognitive religious knowledge into "meaning and value" which needs to be internalized within a person through various methods, media and forums.

¹⁸ Muhaimin.

3. The teaching methodology seems to run more conventionally and traditionally, focusing on aspects of textual correspondence which emphasizes what already exists in students' ability to memorize religious texts rather than the socio-religious issues faced in the modern era such as crime, social inequality and so on.
4. Religious teaching relies on a static, indoctrinative-doctrinaire form of methodology.

Meanwhile, according to the axiological review, the five components of Islamic education (educational objectives, educators and educational staff, students and Islamic educational tools and the educational environment or context) have problems which include:

1. The aim of Islamic education is less oriented towards the values of future life, and has not been able to prepare a generation that is in line with the progress of the times.
2. Educators and their educational staff began to fade away with the initial doctrine of Islamic education regarding the concept of the value of worship and preaching Islamic teachings. Educators are also busy with technical matters such as honorarium allowances, functional allowances and certification allowances.
3. Even among students who are studying, they tend to put aside the values of *ihsan*, mercy and trust in hoping for Allah's approval.

Looking at the descriptions above, at least a generalization can be drawn that the weaknesses of Islamic education at least include, first, the world of Islamic education is still infected with symptomatic disease and the spirit of inquiry. Second, the development of the concept of religious humanism is not optimal. The tendency of Islamic education is more oriented towards the level of "*abdullah*" (as servant) rather than "*khalifatullah*" (as caliph), and more towards *hablun minallah* than *hablun minannas*. Third, there are inconsistencies ranging from philosophical to methodological issues and down to the tradition of learning.¹⁹

C. Clash of Idealism, Pragmatism, Curriculum Innovation, Decentralization and Autonomy

Keep in mind, between one period of time and another period after or before there will definitely be different challenges. This principle applies to all lines of life without exception. So change and shifts are something that is impossible to avoid. Like education in general, Islamic education must also be willing to follow current developments. In this situation, Islamic education is indirectly forced to experience a dilemma between maintaining its identity as a custodian of the religiosity of the people who tend to be

¹⁹ Bakar and Surohim, *Fungsi Ganda Lembaga Pendidikan Islam (Respon Kreatif Terhadap Undang-Undang Sisdiknas)*.

traditionalistic, or fulfilling pragmatic needs by having the courage to "remove" some of its traditional attributes. This dilemmatic problem always seems to be something that is difficult to find a solution for.

Global flows in the contemporary era are neither opponents nor friends of Islamic education. But as a dynamist of the "machine" called Islamic education. If Islamic education appears anti-global, then the "machine" will stall, and Islamic education will experience an intellectual shutdown. Likewise, if Islamic education is swept away by global currents, the Islamic identity of an educational process will be crushed by the "machine". Therefore, Islamic education will experience long dynamics in the push and pull of globalization. The appropriate ones are withdrawn, retrieved and digested. Meanwhile those that don't fit are stretched out, released and abandoned. As Mastuhu said, closing yourself off or being exclusive will actually make Islamic education outdated, while opening yourself up risks losing your identity.²⁰

Facing the rapid flow of globalization, there are at least two big challenges faced by Islamic education, namely institutional aspects and strengthening educational materials. For the first challenge, when observing market forces we are reminded by two categories of education that are now emerging to the surface; market-driven education and market-creating oriented education. For the first category, education is swayed by market (society) tastes following its movements which are dictated by the interests of the market itself. In this context, the quality of educational services should meet the demands of public consumers. Indeed, in terms of material interests, education in this category is more profitable than others because it follows market tastes. However, education can lose identity, including idealism in creating society (the market), because idealism can be defeated by the power of market tastes. Meanwhile, education that is oriented towards market creation is able to maintain its identity and idealism. The mission of providing education can be maintained. However, the challenge it faces is the low level of public uptake and consumption of it due to the gap between educational services and market tastes.

In the midst of these two categories, the position of Islamic education is very dilemmatic. On the one hand, it is faced with market forces that must be responded to immediately, and on the other hand, it must maintain its initial mission as a medium for creating an Islamic society through the organized and institutionalized preservation of Islamic values. If it moves too far into the corner of market forces with its various tastes,

²⁰ Musrifah Musrifah, "Analisis Kritis Permasalahan Pendidikan Islam Indonesia di Era Global," *Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities* 3, no. 1 (February 12, 2019): 67–78, <https://doi.org/10.21580/jish.31.2341>.

Islamic education could lose its identity and identity. If it moves too far towards idealism, Islamic education could lose its potential market because it keeps its distance from market tastes. Islamic education must immediately be alert and respond wisely to market forces without having to lose its identity. Islamic education should not lose its identity as a medium for preserving the values and culture that have shaped Islam and Muslim society over the years. For the second challenge related to strengthening the content of educational material, Islamic education must be aware of the tendency to spread instant culture (and consumerism) among society. Islamic education should reinforce the principle that the essence of education boils down to strengthening three aspects known as trichotomy: cognitive, affective and psychomotor. The cognitive aspect is symbolized by the brain, affective by the heart, and psychomotor by the hands. The symbolism of the brain refers to the substance of increasing intellectual intelligence, while the heart explains spiritual intelligence. The hands are a symbol of practical action intelligence.

Education will be meaningless if the three intelligences above are not strengthened. How is it possible that society will experience a strengthening of intellectual intelligence if learning is not carried out well? Also, how can society experience liberation from dryness and spiritual turmoil if the spirit to be ashamed of having a bad mentality no longer exists, by always allowing the practice of plagiarism and cheating to continue. Likewise, it is difficult to expect the intelligence of practical social-individual actions to reside in students' behavior if education is not carried out correctly. The demand for graduation through a national exam must not justify any means to achieve that graduation, including using cheating and/or academic dishonesty.²¹

In relation to curriculum innovation, Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia are currently experiencing various crises in facing problems arising from social, political and cultural developments, especially the spread of globalization. Islamic education is faced with the problem of being alert in responding to the demands and challenges of innovation, especially in relation to the curriculum and syllabi used. The practice of Islamic education so far still uses old methods which in many cases are weak in responding to actual issues. This condition results in more modern sciences having the title of less important sciences to be studied in the Islamic education environment. This illustrates how difficult it is for Islamic

²¹ Nurul Husni et al., "Problematika Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia," *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu Pendidikan Indonesia* 2, no. 2 (June 22, 2023): 137–45, <https://doi.org/10.31004/jpion.v2i2.107>.

educational institutions in Indonesia to face the challenges of socio-political and cultural transformation.

According to Muhaimin, the problems facing Islamic education in Indonesia, especially at higher education levels related to curriculum design and implementation are; 1) lack of relevance of learning materials to society; many study programs and learning materials that are not in demand by the public are still maintained, 2) lack of effective learning, namely not guaranteeing that graduates meet expectations, 3) inefficient implementation of learning, namely too much learning material so that graduate competency cannot be guaranteed properly, 4) Lack of flexibility in curriculum development to be more in line with community needs (local, global and national), 5) Many multiple interpretations of learning materials and practices, 6) only a series of courses, 7) based on subjects/delivery of material rather than objectives curricular, 8) lack of clear and strong functional reference to learning material to the main curricular tasks.²²

Islamic education also experiences the challenges of educational decentralization and autonomy. Decentralization is the delegation of authority, generally from the owner of the authority (superior) to the implementer (the authority under his subordinates) in making decisions. Meanwhile, autonomy is independence in the form of choice accompanied by ability. Decentralization and educational autonomy have characteristics; 1) The lower planning unit has the authority to formulate its own targets, 2) The lower unit is given the authority and power to mobilize existing resources and the power to reallocate financial resources has been given according to its priority needs, 3) The planning unit is have lower participation in the planning process with higher units.²³

Government policy through decentralization and educational autonomy actually provides enormous and broad opportunities for Islamic education in Indonesia to accelerate the quality of its educational provision. Islamic education should respond to this policy with a full spirit of progress. However, if this opportunity is not utilized properly, Islamic education will fail to compete with other educational institutions. Therefore, comprehensive improvements need to be made, starting from curriculum development, teaching staff, to infrastructure. The success of implementing education in an area should be an input and lesson for Islamic education to do the same in order to achieve similar success.²⁴

²² Ramayulis, *Ilmu Pendidikan Islam* (Jakarta: Kalam Mulia, 2002).

²³ Abdur Rahman Shaleh, *Madrasah Dan Pendidikan Anak Bangsa: Visi, Misi, Dan Aksi* (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 2006).

²⁴ Akhmad Muzakki and Kholilah, *Ilmu Pendidikan Islam* (Surabaya: Kopertais IV Press, 2010).

D. Unraveling the “Tangled Thread”: A Solution Offered

Issues surrounding education will never be discussed, because these issues will always be related to the contextuality of human life throughout the ages. Every development of human civilization is of course always followed by various dimensions of human life itself, including the dimension of education. Various thoughts have been developed by experts about the nature, meaning and goals of education. The color of thought is of course greatly influenced by the outlook on life and cultural values held by these experts. However, despite all the differences in views they put forward, in one thing they both agree that education aims to provide moral, intellectual and skill provisions to students so that they are ready to face their future with full confidence.

The majority of Indonesia's population adheres to Islam. However, in the context of education, Islamic education seems to be secondary when compared with national education. In this hierarchy, Islamic education is always placed in the second row. In fact, any education, whether national education or Islamic education, is actually about raising human dignity and dignity to obtain happiness in the world as a caliph, and happiness in the afterlife as a servant. So the two educations should not be placed in different positions where one is superior to the other.

The ontological dimension directs the curriculum to give students more direct contact with physical objects, as well as relating to lessons that manipulate objects and work materials. This dimension produces verbal learning, namely the ability to obtain data and information that must be studied and memorized. This dimension is taken from the learning process carried out by Allah SWT to the Prophet Adam as by teaching him the names of objects, as stated in the QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 31:

“And He taught Adam all the names (things), then presented them to the angels and said: Tell Me the names of these things if you are truly righteous!”²⁵

The implication of the ontology dimension in the educational curriculum is that the experiences imparted to students are not only limited to the physical realm but also to the infinite realm. The meaning of the infinite realm is the spiritual or spiritual realm, which leads humans to immortality. Apart from that, it is also necessary to instill knowledge about universal laws and systems which give birth to the realization of harmony in the universe which determines human life in the future. Apart from that, the face of education in the 21st century depicts a dichotomy between Western education which tends to be secular and

²⁵ Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, *Alquran Dan Terjemah* (Bandung: Penerbit J-Art, 2014).

Islamic education which is mostly confined within a circle of rigid dogma. This is one of the epistemological problems of Islamic education that needs to be addressed. Realizing this misunderstanding, ideas and discourse emerged to integrate Islam and science. This idea is known as the Islamization of science and the target is the internalization of Islamic values into modern science.²⁶ This effort is important to eliminate the dichotomy paradigm between religious knowledge and general science, science is not free of values, but is free to be assessed. That is why enlightenment is needed in seeking scientific integration.²⁷ Apart from this, solutions that can be offered to reduce the epistemological problems of Islamic education include:

1. Changing the pattern of Islamic education from indoctrination to a participatory pattern between teachers and students. This pattern provides space for students to think critically, be optimistic, dynamic, innovative, provide logical reasons, and students can even criticize the teacher's opinion if there are errors. In essence, this epistemological approach requires teachers and students to be equally active in the teaching and learning process.²⁸
2. Changing the ideological paradigm into a scientific paradigm that is based on the revelation of Allah SWT. Because, because of its authority, this ideological paradigm can bind the freedom of scientific, creative, open and dynamic traditions. Practically, the ideological paradigm does not provide room for argumentative reasoning or responsible free thinking. In fact, revelation really provides freedom for the human mind to study, research, make observations, and discover knowledge with the guidance of Allah SWT's revelation. And a scientific paradigm without being based on revelation will still be secular. Therefore, in order for the epistemology of Islamic education to be realized, the consequences must be based on Allah's revelation.
3. In order to support and base this epistemological approach, it is necessary to reconstruct the curriculum, which is still secular and free of spiritual values, into a curriculum based on monotheism. Because all knowledge that originates from the results of research on the universe (*kauniyyah* verses) and research on *qauliyyah* or *naqliyyah* verses (al-Qur'an and *al-Sunnah*) is the knowledge of Allah SWT. This means that all knowledge comes from Him. The realization is that the creators of this

²⁶ Syamsul Kurniawan and Mahrus Erwin, *Jejak Pemikiran Tokoh Pendidikan Islam* (Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media, 2011).

²⁷ Muhammad In'am Esha, *Institusional Transformation, Reformasi Dan Modernisasi Pendidikan Tinggi Islam* (Malang: UIN Malang Press, 2016).

²⁸ Sutrisno, *Pembaharuan Dan Pengembangan Pendidikan Islam* (Yogyakarta: Fadilatama, 2011).

monotheism-based curriculum must have comprehensive knowledge about Islam. Because the curriculum is a means to achieve educational goals. Regarding the development of the Islamic education curriculum, things that are still lofty, dogmatic and transcendental need to be lowered and linked to the empirical world in the field. Sciences that are based on the reality of empirical experience, such as sociology, psychology, critical philosophy which are grounded in nature need to be used as a basis for learning, so that science truly touches on empirical problems and experiences.²⁹

4. 4) The epistemology of Islamic education is oriented towards a harmonious relationship between reason and revelation. This means that the orientation of Islamic education emphasizes the integral growth of faith, knowledge, charity and morals. All of these dimensions move to complement each other, so that the combination of all these dimensions is able to produce a perfect human being who has strong faith, spiritual depth, breadth of knowledge, and has noble character which is based on "everything comes from Allah, everything belongs to Allah, functioned to carry out his duties as caliph of Allah SWT as well as 'abdullah, and will return to Allah SWT."
5. Another consequence is changing the approach from a theoretical or conceptual approach to a contextual or applied approach. From here, Islamic education must provide various supporting media to achieve the expected educational results. According to the Islamic perspective, Islamic educational media is the entire universe or the entire creation of Allah SWT. The words of the Messenger of Allah, which means "think all of you about the creatures created by Allah SWT, don't think about Allah SWT, in fact you will not be able to think about Him." (HR. Abu Sheikh from Ibn Abbas).
6. There is an increase in the professionalism of teaching staff which includes personal competence, pedagogical competence, professional competence and social competence. So by fulfilling these competencies, an educator is able to find the desired method as expected in epistemological studies.

Terakhir, terwujudnya kondisi mental-moral dan spiritual religius menjadi target arah pengembangan sistem pendidikan Islam. Oleh sebab itu, berdasarkan pada pendekatan etik moral pendidikan Islam harus berbentuk proses pengarahan perkembangan kehidupan dan keberagamaan pada peserta didik ke arah idealitas kehidupan Islami, dengan tetap

²⁹ As'adurrofik, "Tantangan Pendidikan Islam dan Solusi di Era Digital."

memperhatikan dan memperlakukan peserta didik sesuai dengan potensi dasar yang dimiliki serta latar belakang sosio budaya masing-masing.³⁰ Selain konteks etika profetik, aksiologis dalam pendidikan Islam meliputi estetika yang merupakan nilai-nilai yang berkaitan dengan kreasi yang berhubungan dengan seni. Dengan seni itulah, nantinya bisa dijadikan sebagai media dan alat kesenangan, sebagai ekspresi yang sebenarnya tentang pengalaman. Namun, lebih jauh dari itu, maka dalam dunia pendidikan hendaklah nilai estetika menjadi patokan penting dalam proses pengembangan pendidikan yakni dengan menggunakan pendekatan estetis-moral, di mana setiap persoalan pendidikan Islam dilihat dari perspektif yang mengikutsertakan kepentingan masing-masing pihak, baik itu siswa, guru, pemerintah, pendidik serta masyarakat luas. Ini berarti pendidikan Islam diorientasikan pada upaya menciptakan suatu kepribadian yang kreatif, berseni (sesuai dengan Islam) sehingga pendidikan Islam tetap memiliki daya tarik dan kajian yang senantiasa berkesinambungan serta relevan hingga akhir zaman. Ada beberapa nilai etika profetik dalam rangka pengembangan dan penerapan Ilmu Pendidikan Islam yang antara lain adalah:

1. The value of worship, namely for practitioners and observers of Islamic education, in all processes and thinking it is always recorded as worship, as He says in QS Ali Imron [3] 191:

“Those who remember Allah while standing or sitting or lying down and they think about the creation of the heavens and the earth (saying): Our Lord, You did not create this in vain, Glory be to You, so protect us from the torment of Hell.”³¹

2. The value of ihsan, namely the implementation of Islamic education should be developed on the basis of doing good to others. Allah says in QS. Al-Qashash [28] 77:

“And seek what Allah has bestowed upon you (happiness) in the land of the hereafter, and do not forget your share of worldly (pleasures) and do good (to others) as Allah has done good to you, and do not cause damage to (your face) earth. Indeed, Allah does not like those who do damage.”³²

3. Nilai masa depan, pendidikan Islam hendaknya ditujukan untuk mengantisipasi masa depan yang lebih baik, karena mendidik berarti menyiapkan generasi yang hidup dengan tantangan yang jauh berbeda dengan periode sebelumnya, yakni menyiapkan sumber daya manusia yang cakap, terampil dan profesional. Dalam QS. Al-Hasyr

³⁰ Mamdukh Budiman, “Aksiologi Rekonstruksi Pendidikan Islam Perspektif Al Syaibani,” *Maharot : Journal of Islamic Education* 2, no. 2 (December 25, 2018): 49–70, <https://doi.org/10.28944/maharot.v2i2.378>.

³¹ Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, *Alquran Dan Terjemah*.

³² Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia.

[59] The value of the future, Islamic education should be aimed at anticipating a better future, because educating means preparing a generation that will live with challenges that are very different from the previous period, namely preparing human resources who are capable, skilled and professional. In QS. Al-Hasyr [59] 18 Allah SWT says 18 Allah SWT berfirman:

*“O you who believe, fear Allah and let everyone pay attention to what he has done for tomorrow (the afterlife); and fear Allah, surely Allah is All-Knowing of what you do.”*³³

4. 4. The value of mercy, namely Islamic education should be aimed at the interests and benefits of all mankind and the universe, as stated in QS. Al-Anbiya' [21]: 107, *“We did not send you, but to (be) a mercy to the worlds.”*³⁴
5. 5. The value of da'wah, namely the application and development of Islamic educational knowledge is a form of spreading the message of Islam, as in the QS. Fussilar [41]: 33, *“Who has better words than the one who calls on Allah, does righteous deeds, and says: Indeed, I am one of those who surrender.”*³⁵

Conclusion

From the description of the discussion in the previous sections, there are several common threads that can be concluded as an effort to untangle the "tangled threads" of the problems of Islamic education that are being shared together. First, from an ontological perspective, Islamic education must be strengthened again on its philosophical basis. Several points that fall into this category are strengthening the concepts of ta'lim, ta'dib and tarbiyah. These three are a complete package and are one unit that cannot be separated. Second, from an epistemological perspective, strengthening learning practices which include developing dynamic-progressive curriculum policies and developing relevant learning methods. Third, from an axiological perspective, Islamic education must have the will to produce people who are competitive in a serious and planned manner. Imtaq and imptek competencies are targets that students must have. For this reason, awareness to build an Islamic education model with an integrative paradigm is urgently needed. Concerns internal and classical issues related to educational issues, including; 1) inadequate quality of teachers, 2) limited human resources and funds, 3) poor quality institutional productivity, 4) low educational efficiency, 5)

³³ Kementrian Agama Republik Indonesia.

³⁴ Kementrian Agama Republik Indonesia.

³⁵ Kementrian Agama Republik Indonesia.

relevance of education to the world of work, 6) educational management that is not yet uniform, 7) rigid learning process, 8) incomplete infrastructure, 9) inadequate libraries, and 10) low quality of input and output. All of these components must also be repaired and reorganized.

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