

(Research Article)

Islamic Education Policy in Indonesia

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Abstract: The integration of Islamic education into a nation's educational system represents a strategic effort to align religious and national educational objectives under a unified policy framework. In many Muslim-majority countries, the responsibility for managing Islamic education is delegated to local governments as part of a broader national consensus involving various educational stakeholders. This arrangement, however, often raises tensions because education policy is inherently a political decision influenced by state interests and ideological considerations. The process of incorporating Islamic education within the national system reflects the dynamic interplay between religion and politics, where Islamic education both shapes and is shaped by political structures. This study explores how political power affects the development, autonomy, and implementation of Islamic education policies. The objective is to highlight the challenges of maintaining educational freedom and religious authenticity while ensuring state oversight and quality assurance. The findings emphasize that a deep understanding of educational politics enables Muslim educators and policymakers to advocate for Islamic education that aligns with Islamic principles yet remains relevant within the national educational framework. Therefore, the balance between state control and institutional independence is essential in realizing the holistic goals of Islamic education in contemporary society.

Keywords: Educational Politics; Institutional Autonomy; Policy Implementation; Religious Authenticity; State Control.

1. Background

Education is a system that is essential for developing one's intellect and achieving specified aspects. With education, a person is able to engage in social interaction and compete with the goal of fulfilling needs and achieving desired goals. The educational system implemented in a country, although derived from aspirations developing within society, must ultimately be decided by the ruling government at that time as a national consensus binding all educational personnel. No matter how great the educational ideas developed by educational leaders, ultimately must consider legal aspects to be well-received. The parameter used by education users today is the legality of an educational institution with political recognition. Therefore, education is inseparable from politics (Tilaar 2003). All policies regarding education are essentially political decisions, both at the local and national levels (Supriadi 2003).

The consequences of education that require political legitimacy even has been going on since the early days of the concept of the state. In this regard, Azyumardi Azra cites Coleman's theory, "As is the state, so is school," which means that as is the state, so is school. A dominant theory in democracy assumes that education is a correlation, if not a requirement, for a democratic order (Azra 2012).

The intended democratic order can be interpreted as the goal of a nation's formation. The nation will mobilize all available resources to realize a democratic order, including education. Therefore, a nation's education system will be directed toward the realization of democracy through a system of control over the ideas expressed by educational practitioners and thinkers. Educational ideas will be championed and must integrate democratic concepts, which will then be standardized into a set of curricula and educational standards bound by laws established by the local government.

The modernization of Islamic education is currently underway in both Muslim and Western countries. This should be addressed not only to refute Western accusations, but also

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to provide a comprehensive overview of the development of modernization of Islamic education in Muslim countries. Ahmad Baso's statement points to the need to consider how the idealism of Islamic education has been imbued with political policies, particularly in Indonesia. A comparative review of education across diverse contexts will reveal the distinctive characteristics of state-provided education for its citizens. This article explores Islamic education policy in Indonesia and its comparisons.

2. Research Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of research used being descriptive-comparative, which will at least follow the procedures of problem formulation (definition), forecasting (prediction), recommendations (prescription), monitoring (description) and evaluation (Fatah 2013).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Islamic Education and Power

The current development of Islamic education is a continuation of the educational ideas and achievements created by previous actors. Educational actors and the institutions established in each era cannot be separated from the circle of power that protects them and fosters mutually reinforcing reciprocal relationships. Syafarudin states that schools, as a social subsystem, carry out cultural transformation from one generation to the next. As an institution or social institutional unit, schools have historically imparted beliefs, convictions, values, knowledge, science, and technology, which serve as tools in the process of political indoctrination or socialization, an essential function in every political system (Syafarudin 2008).

The concept of Islamic education in relation to cultural transformation is rooted in the notion of "modernism" in Islamic thought and institutions as a whole. The development of Islamic education, as an effort to transform from old to new forms, is inextricably linked to modernization. Modernization itself is a process of transformation, from a change toward greater progress or improvement in various aspects of social life. Modernization is the process of shifting from traditional methods to new, more advanced methods to improve the well-being of society (Khoiriyah 2012).

Paulo Freire noted that, from a global perspective, some churches have abandoned traditional perspectives and adopted new attitudes. History shows that these new attitudes began to emerge when elements of modernization replaced traditional social structures. Social groups once crushed by history are now beginning to rise again and adapt to the industrial era. Society is also changing. New challenges must now be faced by the ruling class, necessitating different approaches (Freire 2004).

As an influence or consequence of modernization, educational policy should be able to serve the needs of educational institutions to foster mutually beneficial relationships. A characteristic of educational policy is that it must meet at least the following criteria: educational objectives, in accordance with official laws and regulations, operational concepts, drafted by authorized parties, evaluable, and systematic. Based on these criteria, educational policy can be understood to incorporate Islamic educational ideas and meet the aspects of educational orientation and institutional legality.

3.2 Islamic Religious Education Policy in Indonesia

The growth of madrasas in Indonesia represents a more progressive response from the Muslim community. The development of madrasas during the Old Order era, from the beginning of independence, was closely linked to the role of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, due to the standardization of names, types, and levels of madrasas, as they exist today. These madrasas are divided into two groups. The first is madrasah, which provides 30% religious instruction, as is the case with basic subjects, and 70% general education. The second is madrasah, which provides purely Islamic religious instruction, called Madrasah Diniyah.

When the New Order government intensified the 9-Year Compulsory Education program, which required completion of primary education, Muslims felt compelled to contribute to the success of the program by transforming Madrasah Diniyah into a formal education system, renaming it Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI). Classes were held in the morning, similar to those in traditional elementary schools, but religious instruction was significantly greater than

in elementary schools. This change did not discontinue the afternoon madrasah, although it remains, even today, under the name Madrasah Diniyah (Ali 2009) .

3.3 Comparison of Islamic Education Policies in Indonesia and Others

Direction of Education

In Indonesia, the implementation of the National Education System Law provides a legal and constitutional basis for the integration of religious education into the curriculum in schools, both public and private. This is explicitly stated in Article 37 paragraph (1) that the primary and secondary education curriculum must include religious education, civics, language, mathematics, social sciences, arts and culture, physical education and sports, skills or vocational education, and local content.

Institutional Legitimacy

It can be said that all the rulers in all the countries discussed have accommodated the interests of Islamic education by recognizing it as an integrated educational institution within the national education system. In Indonesia, the existence of madrasahs is recognized under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and Islamic religious education in public schools is under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Culture. Madrasah education is tiered, starting from elementary MI (Islamic Junior High School) and MTs (Islamic Junior High School), through secondary MA (Islamic Senior High School), and higher education, which takes the form of Islamic religious colleges (PTKIS) and Islamic Religious Faculties at community-run universities.

The practice of Islamic education today cannot be separated from the development of Islamic educational modernization in the Middle Ages. In this regard, Hefner notes, the implementation of Islamic education, in terms of references to religious texts, always refers to the authority of scholars who have produced monumental works (Hefner 2009). However, considering the discussion of Islamic education policy above, it appears that Islamic educational institutions today cannot separate themselves from the involvement of local governments due to mutual dependence. Currently, the process of institutionalizing Islamic education requires the integration of Islamic education into the educational systems implemented throughout Muslim countries.

4. Conclusion

Based on the explanation above, viewed from the perspective of Islamic education policy, it can be emphasized that Islamic education can influence politics, and conversely, politics can be accommodated through Islamic education. This is evident in efforts to modernize Islamic education, where governments seek to facilitate their interests through the establishment of Islamic educational institutions and the integration of Islamic education into the national education systems of each country. This accommodation is made in order to facilitate state control over Islamic education, which often expresses its idealism. It is hoped that Muslims will understand the politics of education, so that Muslims, especially in Indonesia, can advocate for the needs and interests of Islamic education.

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