Indonesian Islamic Higher Education Institutions Against Radicalism

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A B S T R A C T

Islamic education aims to make man mature physically and spiritually. Normatively, Islamic education should not be oriented around science and technology, as they are merely tools to enable humanity to reach its fullest potential. Islamic education thus aims to develop man's character and conscience to profit from existence here and the hereafter. Islamic education is hoped to provide solutions to problems in a fast-changing globalized age at the level of society, state, and global community.

In societal development, Islamic education is challenged by rapid societal changes. Many conflicts occur vertically or horizontally. There is a need for the empowerment of Islamic Educational Institution which is always relevant to society. Using literature study, this papers aims to analyze the contribution of Islamic Educational Institution, focusing on Higher Education, against radicalism in Indonesia.

Keywords: Islamic educational institution, radicalism, spirituality

1. Introduction

Education is vital in Islam. Out of a true education, civilized individuals will emerge, enabling a moral society. Unfortunately, even though some Islamic educational institutions nowadays have possessed adequate infrastructure, civilized individuals have yet to emerge in sufficient numbers. The main reason is the lack of vision towards creating civilized individuals. Values, morality, and spirituality seem to be neglected in favor of industriousness, professionalism, and materialism, all ingredients for a thriving capitalist system instead of a civilized system.

In a capitalistic system, education is aimed to create pragmatic individuals chasing material and professional success for the benefit of self, sponsor (most times corporation), and state. Viewed crudely as a material investment, the main aim of education is deemed to be the conferment of the paper degree. Thus students compete to get their degree as soon as possible to get material payoff equally soon. Such education system, with corresponding educational institutions, may produce people of qualification. However, it will not produce people of civilization.

Normatively, Islam possesses comprehensive and integrative educational aims. The main aim of Islamic education is to seek the pleasure of Allah Almighty. This pleasure is sought by the creation of civilized individuals who benefit themselves, their family, their society, their state, and all humanity. The molding of man is the main focus of Islamic education. A key difference, however, is the composition of man according to Islam. Man is not limited to physical and material being, but also spiritual being.

Islamic education is thus not limited to the creation of individuals who possess material success but expanded to the creation of civilized individual able to obtain happiness here and the hereafter. Islamic educational institutions direct its educational participants to discipline their mind and soul, to carry out good conduct, to obtain holistic knowledge, and to possess wisdom and justice, all to prevent the participants from harm.

In essence, Islamic education aims to make man mature physically and spiritually. Normatively, Islamic education should not be oriented around science and technology, as they are merely tools to enable humanity to reach its fullest potential. Islamic education thus aims to develop man's character and conscience to profit from existence here and the hereafter. Islamic education is hoped to provide

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solutions to problems in a fast-changing globalized age at the level of society, state, and global community.

2. Methodology

This study uses the methodology of environment, documentation, interviews and library research. It is hoped this study could add to the existing knowledge of Islamic educational, orientation, system and practice in Indonesia. Also, it is hoped that relevant authorities could benefit from this study in their formulation of educational policies to suit UUD '45 and Pancasila. Ideally, the education in Indonesia is to be based on two foundational principles, Undang-Undang Dasar 1945 (UUD '45 – Foundational Law 1945) and the national philosophy of Pancasila. The current crisis of education in Indonesia is primarily caused by the failure of the operationalization of national education according to these two foundational principles. National education, which should be based on national culture and purpose, to fulfill the necessities of life, for the upliftment of national standing and enlightenment of its citizens, a commitment formulated by one of Indonesia's founder who is also its Father of Education Ki Hajar Dewantara, in its practice, always deviate and never conform to UUD '45 and Pancasila.

With the normative foundation above, it is worrying that the Head of National Body for Terrorism Countermeasures (Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Teroris - BNPT) have produced a statement pointing that places of religious worship and institutions of education have been co-opted by radicals is an alarming trend. To add to this trend, recent research by the Indonesian Academy of Sciences (Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia - LIPI) reported that as many as 86% of students in Java universities refused Pancasila as the Indonesian state foundation. Normatively, Islamic educational institution, as a system of education which aims to develop man's character and conscience to profit from existence here and the hereafter, should be at the forefront to halt this worrying trend. However, empirically, Islamic educational institutions face an even greater challenge dealing with radicalism.

3. Problems of Islamic Institutions in Indonesia

First, weak foundation, vague purpose, irrelevant curriculum, unqualified teachers, non-standard evaluation. Madrasah education is imprecisely defined from primary to tertiary levels. According to Moh Raquib, an alumni, madrasah is also not creative gauged from the abundance of unemployment among them as they prefer to become a civil servant in which quota is limited. This shows a lack of creativity to generate self-employment. This absence of creativity is often caused by the lack of emphasis on creativity in the educational system. Second, the inadequacy of the teacher's professional competence. The teachers, who are the most important component in an education system, in general lack this competence. Third, educational leaders who are weak in communication and

negotiation. They often do not have sufficient ability to build internal communication with the teachers.

In addition to internal factors, there are also internal factors:

First, the discriminative treatment of Islamic education system by the government. The fund allocation given by the government to Islamic education is comparatively very little compared the funds given to non-Islamic education system. Second, the bureaucrat's paradigm on Islamic education has been dominated by the sectoral approach, not functional approach. Islamic education is not considered as part of the education sector as it is not under the Education and Culture Department. Third, Islamic education institution is the last alternative of many youths in society after they are not accepted in the non-Islamic educational institution. This view of society can certainly be an indicator of their lack of trust of Islamic education system.

The position and role of Islamic education with its variety of educational institution are still topics of contention. Islamic education should be able to play its part as alternative education promising a good future. But the fact remains, madrasah, school, and Islamic higher education institutions tend to affiliate with Islamic social organization such as Muhammadiyah, NU, and Persis or Perguruan Islam bodies/foundations.

Realizing this, BNPT has created cooperation with educational institutions, including Islamic ones, to start Research Centre for Terrorism and Radicalism Countermeasures. BNPT Head Ansyaad Mbai insisted that these centers should expose the true meaning of terrorism and radicalism so that students do not fall into the trap of terrorists and radicals. In a Religious Education Curriculum Workshop jointly held by BNPT and the Faculty of Islamic Thought (Ushuluddin) and the Faculty of Islamic Communication (Dakwah) of IAIN Solo, Ansyaad stated that "The problem of terrorism can be closely related to education as wannabe terrorist often uses education to brainwash the wannabes."

According to Ansyaad, three sources of radicalism could be found in an educational institution such as public school, higher education institution, and even religious institution. However, Ansyaad emphasized that the institutions should not be blamed as they were only used by radicals to spread their ideology. As such, the institutions should be 'straightened', such as done by IAIN Solo which is the first higher education institution to cooperate with BNPT to elaborate a religious education curriculum. In North Sumatra, BNPT has cooperated with the North Sumatra Regional Government (Pemerintah Provinsi Sumatera Utara - Pemprovsu) and the North Sumatra University (Universitas Sumatera Utara - USU) to establish a Research Centre for Conflict and Radicalism Management (Pusat Kajian Penanganan Konflik dan Radikalisme) with the slogan 'Diversity, Togetherness, Peace' focusing on 'Radicalism, Terrorism, Deradicalization.

Also in North Sumatra, IAIN North Sumatra cooperated with BNPT in 2011 to hold a seminar to prevent radicalism among students. In the seminar, IAIN North Sumatra

Rector stated that IAIN as the premier Islamic institution of higher education should be a fortress against radicalism, in addition to being able to provide solutions to societal problems. A main role of IAIN is to maintain the United State of Indonesian Republic (Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia) against the terrorists. The cooperations elaborated above are forms of resistance of Islamic educational institutions against radicalism throughout Indonesia.

In addition, in line with BNPT effort above, Ahmad Asroni also suggested curriculum reconstruction as one of the most effective methods to prevent radicalism in educational institutions. According to Asroni, it is not a secret that many students possess an only partial understanding of Islam. Religious education curriculum and method only emphasizes on cognitive-psychomotor aspect instead of critical-inclusive-transformative aspect. Emphasizing more on formalities and dogma, most religious education today stresses on symbol instead of the essence of religion.

Values of love, respect, and justice are seldom manifested in religious education. Success is often measured only on the ability of educational participants to acquire religious symbolism, for example, if they have mastered the science of tajwid, memorized hadith, and Qur'anic verses, and dressed the Arabic way. Such measure of success has been proven to produce humans without a sense of humanity. Educational participants then often perceive the world and action in a binary sense, right or wrong, or black or white. A possible result is educational participants trapped in a shallow and extreme religious understanding.

Asroni further suggested that the subject of 'History of religions' and 'Multicultural education' should be included in the education system. Hence, the students will at least possess a cognitive understanding and potentially able to be tolerant of people of other faith. The depth of own religious understanding along with knowledge of other religions will result in educational participants able to engage fairly and proportionally to other religions and the West and its product such as modernization and capitalism. As such, radicalism among educated Muslims may be reduced and someday eliminated altogether.

In addition, some institutions (or their senior management) go as far as prohibiting extra-campus organizations (such as Front Pembela Islam) from holding events in Islamic/Muslim higher educational institution. Instead, they often encourage students to participate in mass-movement towards spiritualism in 'traditional' or 'modern' form. An example of 'traditional' spiritualism will be zikr movements such as those propagated by Arifin Ilham in a national context and Amiruddin MS in a local context (Sumatra). Islamic universities senior management also often encourage their students to participate in 'modern' spirituality training such as those propagated by Ary Ginanjar Agustian through his ESQ movement. More known as a motivational movement, ESQ is also deemed able to prevent radicalism among these Islamic educational institution students and staff.

4. Conclusion

Islamic higher educational institution mentioned above are against radicalism and strives to prevent their students and staff from engaging in radicalism, not least due to the normative vision of Islamic education highlighted early in this paper. Empirically, these institutions are also found to be against radicalism by cooperating with BNPT and encouraging their civitas academic to participate in spiritual activities, be they traditional or modern. As encouraging as this finding is, efforts to prevent radicalism in this fast-changing globalized age cannot cease. Islamic educational institutions must be able to handle change, else radicalism might only be the slightest of their problems.

In the spirit of decentralization which allows society to channel its aspiration and participate in education quality development and improvement, society needs to have a high degree of care of educational institutions in their vicinity. This could inculcate a high degree of ownership through contribution in management, control, development, and other forms of participation to make the local community proud of an educational institution in their midst. The problem of madrasah arises due to the forgetting of its roots. There is dual interpretation. Madrasah is not an extension of pesantren. On one hand, madrasah is identical with school because it has a relatively similar curriculum with non-Islamic school. The solution of madrasah problem is the policy taken to determine madrasah's fate, which should not put at a disadvantage its Islamic specialty in the short and long term.

Acknowledgements

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