

Modern Islamic Boarding Schools: A review of The Philosophy of Islamic Education

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ABSTRACT

The rise of European nations with the spirit of modernism had an influence throughout the world, including Islamic education in Indonesia, namely Islamic boarding schools. The emergence of modern Islamic boarding schools is seen as an answer to the challenges of the times, so that Muslims no longer rely on the traditional education system. This research aims to review how the concept of modern Islamic boarding schools is reviewed by Islamic educational philosophy. The research method used is library research, namely research that examines books and manuscripts sourced from libraries. The results of this study show that there were differences in Islamic countries in anticipating the spirit of European modernism, one of which was the Ottoman Empire which continued to maintain the purity of madrasa education, and established a new school called the Rusydiyyah school which was devoted to studying modern sciences from European nations.

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A. INTRODUCTION

The European revival, also referred to as the Renaissance, is viewed as the beginning of a change experienced by Europeans, namely the spirit of modernism, which is viewed as a solution or escape from a grim past. The spirit of modernism bore fruit with the global dissemination of European thought, including in Islamic nations. There are numerous ways in which Islamic nations, including Indonesia, anticipate the spread of modernism. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan is one of the well-known figures considered to be the first to embrace modernism, and his legacy persisted in

the form of a structured Islamic educational institution in Ponorogo Village, East Java Province, known as the Gontor modern Islamic boarding school. It is impossible to separate the Modern Islamic Boarding School from the Darussalam Gontor-Ponorogo Modern Boarding School, East Java Province, because the Modern Islamic Boarding School was conceived in 1926 by three brothers known as Trimurti, the founders of the Gontor Islamic Boarding School: K.H. Ahmad Saha, K.H. Zainuddin Fannani, and K.H. Imam Zarkasyi. According to K. H. Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi, the emergence of contemporary Islamic boarding institutions began with a profound awareness of responding to the modernization of the world brought about by Western civilization (Zarkasyi, 2005). Moreover, K.H. Zarkasyi explained that the modern concept introduced into Islamic boarding schools did not follow or employ the Dutch concept of modern education; rather, a unique indigenous formulation was developed, which came to be known as an Islamic boarding school (Zarkasyi, 2005).

There are two key words that can be taken from K.H.'s statement. Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi, namely the modernization of the Islamic education system and institutions, where before the establishment of the Gontor Islamic Boarding School, Islamic education institutions could be said to have not been neatly organized, and also as a form of competing with the concept of modern education initiated by the Dutch. This means that Islam also has a better modern Islamic boarding school concept than the Netherlands.

Abdul Tholib, in his research entitled *Education in Modern Islamic Boarding Schools*, explains that there are characteristics of modern Islamic boarding schools that other Islamic institutions do not have, including, Firstly, spoken or conversational Arabic is the main focus of modern Islamic boarding schools. Second, modern Islamic boarding schools use contemporary Arabic book references, which is different from traditional Islamic boarding schools, which use classical Arabic books. Third, a modern Islamic boarding school under the auspices of the Ministry of Religion or Ministry of Education; Fourth, modern Islamic boarding schools form a learning process with a modern system (Abdul Tolib, 2015).

Modern Islamic boarding schools continue to apply these four characteristics, each of which has its own advantages, one of which is the emphasis on conversational Arabic, which enables graduates to communicate directly with native Arabs (native speakers). This article seeks to philosophically revisit the concept of modern Islamic boarding schools in order to find a systematic, in-depth perspective and critical reflection on the current application of the modern Islamic boarding school concept. The study employs the analytical knife of Islamic educational philosophy as a forum

for discovering the specific elements of Islamic education, such as the formulation of educational objectives, curriculum, instructors, and teaching methodologies, among others (Nata, 2005). The Philosophy of Islamic Education provides a critical analysis of the integration of modern European ideas into Islamic education, particularly in Islamic boarding schools, and its subsequent influence on all forms of Islamic education in Indonesia. This prompts a compelling re-evaluation of how modernism should be approached within the context of Islamic education.

THEORETICAL STUDY

1. The Understanding Philosophy

The term philosophy comes from the Greek word *philosophia* (love of wisdom), the roots of which are *philos* (love) or *philia* (friendship) and *sophos* (wisdom, knowledge, and intelligence) (Bagus, 2005). Philosophy can be understood as a speculative or critical activity involving the formulation of a systematic thought on all the problems addressed by different fields of knowledge (Bagus, 2005). Kaelan, in his book entitled *Pancasila as State Jurisdiction*, states that philosophy can be interpreted in two forms, namely, first, product, where philosophy is categorized as science or a theory in analyzing various scientific problems; Second, process, namely philosophy, as an activity in solving or finding solutions to problems that occur using scientific methods (Kaelan, 1987).

Kaelan's perspective demonstrates that the two forms of philosophy are a benchmark for conducting studies or research based on philosophical science by knowing the branches of philosophy, which are divided into two forms, namely First, general philosophy, which includes discussions of ontology, epistemology, axiology, logic, ethics, and aesthetics; and Second, specific philosophy, which includes discussions of ontology, epistemology, axiology, logic, ethics, and aesthetics (Anshari, 1979); Second, special philosophy is subdivided into numerous fields of study, such as the philosophy of science, Islamic philosophy, Islamic philosophy of education, etc (Kaelan, 2002).

In order to comprehend the essence of Islamic education and the elements that encircle it, the position of Islamic educational philosophy is classified as a special philosophy. However, as is well-known, not all pondering activities can be classified as philosophy (Kaelan, 2002). Academics classify that there are twelve characteristics of thinking that can be categorized as philosophical thinking, namely: First, systematic; second, methodical; third, coherent. Fourth, rational; Fifth, exhaustive; Sixth, radical; Seventh, universal; Eighth, critical; Ninth, most profound; Tenth, conceptual; Eleventh, speculative; and Twelfth, unrestricted (Kaelan, 2002).

These characteristics of philosophical thinking are the tools of analysis in dissecting the Islamic education system currently developing, so it is hoped that there will be scientific findings that can provide insight and intellectual treasures. One of the interesting characteristics of philosophical thinking is criticality; in this case, the author always questions everything, whether problems or other things related to Islamic education, especially modern Islamic boarding schools.

2. The Understanding Islamic Education

Yunus Abu Bakar explained that the term Islamic education cannot be separated from three terms that are always attached, as explained by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, namely *Al-Tarbiyah*, *Al-Ta'dib*, and *Al-Ta'lim* (Bakar, 2014). According to Yunus Abu Bakar, *tarbiyah* is the most common term for Islamic education, whereas the other two terms are seldom used (Bakar, 2014). If we refer to the thoughts of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas that the ideal for defining Islamic education is *ta'dib*, namely *adab*, it would be good for the author to explain these three definitions, namely:

a) *Al-Tarbiyah*

The term *tarbiyah* comes from three words, namely: first, *rabba*, *yarbu*, which means increase, grow, and develop; second, *rabba-rabiya-yarba*, namely becoming big or mature; and third, *rabba-yarubbu*, namely repairing, determining, guarding, and nurturing (Mujib, 2006). Syed Naquib al-Attas rejects categorically the use of the term *al-Tarbiyah* in Islamic education, which is defined as the development of a concealed personality that is intimately connected to physical and material objects (Al-Attas, 1991). In addition, he stated that Islamic education cannot be referred to as education because this term derives from Western civilization, which is not founded on revelation but rather on ratios and empirical tests (Al-Attas, 1991)

Examining closely the idea proposed by Naquib al-Attas that the Islamic position must emphasize that the position of revelation is at the highest level distinguishes it from Western thought, which does not recognize revelation as a scientific source, is intriguing and gives it its own color. Jaluddin, in his book titled *Theology of Education*, disagrees with Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, arguing that these three terms cannot be reduced to a single term because they are the primary foundation of Islamic education (Jalaluddin, 2001)

b) *Al-Ta'lim*

In the Arabic-Indonesian dictionary by Mahmud Yunus, it is explained that the term *al-Ta'lim* comes from the words *allama-yuallimu-ta'liman*, which can be interpreted as teaching, imparting, and transferring knowledge (Yunus, 1990). Al-

ta'lim, broadly speaking, refers to a teaching process or the transfer of knowledge from instructors to students, which begins with the purification of the psyche (Jalal, 1988).

The purification of the soul in question is done by always performing ablution before starting the teaching and learning process, and this is what makes Islamic education different or unique, so that the process of al-ta'lim gets the pleasure of Allah SWT. The position of *al-Ta'lim* in Islamic education is very important because in it there is a process of transferring knowledge from teacher to student, and this process in Islam can be realized by purifying the soul between the two, teacher and student. This is also one of the characteristics of Islam, where non-physical aspects are used as a benchmark for truth.

c) *Al-Ta'dib*

al-Ta'dib is derived from the Arabic phrase *addaba-yuaddibu-ta'diban*, which implies education in etiquette (Yunus, 1990). One of the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad SAW used to interpret *al-Ta'dib*, namely *Addabani Rabbi fa ahsan ta'dibi*, means that God has educated me so that my education is excellent. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas defined ta'dib as the inculcation of Islamic pedagogical values in students so as to inspire their devotion to Allah SWT (Al-Attas, 1991). Al-Ta'dib education is a process of introducing students to God through the practice of religious teachings' values. Knowledge-seeking students are required to apply the dimensions of al-Ta'dib in the process of knowledge transmission. In her research titled *Implementation of the Ta'dib Concept in Islamic Education to Create Students with Character*.

Maria Ulfah stated that the term al-Ta'dib is divided into four forms: first, *Ta'dib Adab al-Haq*, or *adab* education that emphasizes the spiritual; second, *Ta'dib Adab al-Khidmah*, or *adab* education in community service, Islamic boarding schools, and so on Third, *Ta'dib Adab al-Syariah*, which is *adab* education for carrying out religious mandates. Fourth, *Ta'dib Adab al-Shuhbah*, the education of etiquette toward others or in interpersonal relationships (Ulfah, 2011).

3. The Philosophy of Islamic Education

Islamic educational philosophy differs from educational philosophy founded on Western perspectives. The distinguishing feature of Islamic educational philosophy is that it gives the revelation of Allah SWT, which is superior to reason, the highest place, whereas the philosophy of education gives reason and empirical reasoning the highest place and does not give the revelation of Allah SWT a place. The initial basis of Islamic educational philosophy is found in Surah al-A'raf verse 172, where Allah's Word is cited.

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ شَهِدْنَا أَنْ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ

172. and (remember), when your Lord brought forth the descendants of the children of Adam from their groves and Allah took testimony against their souls (while saying): "Am I not your Lord?" They answered, "That's right. You are our Tuban. We are witnesses." We do that so that on the Day of Resurrection you will not say, "Indeed, we (the Children of Adam) were those who were heedless of this (the oneness of God)."

Imam Barnadib explained that, according to the above verse of the Qur'an, every child born on earth carries faith or monotheism within him; therefore, this is consistent with the goals of Islamic education, namely developing all the potential in students to become good Muslims (Barnadib, 1994). Imam Barnadib explained that, according to the above verse of the Qur'an, every child born on earth carries faith or monotheism within him; therefore, this is consistent with the goals of Islamic education, namely developing all the potential in students to become good Muslims (Barnadib, 1994).

According to Imam Barnadib, the fundamental philosophy of Islamic education is to guide students in becoming individuals who are devoted to Allah SWT. This is the distinguishing feature of Islamic education that sets it apart from the Western education system.

4. The Scope of Islamic Education Philosophy Studies

A. Haris Hermawan, in his book entitled *Philosophy of Islamic Education*, citing the views of Muzayyin Arifin, explains that the discussion of Islamic educational philosophy is entering the area of fundamental, systematic, logical, and comprehensive thinking regarding Islamic education (Hermawan, 2009).

This means that, based on this understanding, the philosophy of Islamic education can be interpreted as a critical and systematic examination of Islamic education that examines a phenomenon or something in depth. According to Uyoooh Sadullaoh, the study of Islamic educational philosophy examines the Islamic view of reality, knowledge, values, the objectives of Islamic education, and the strategies for attaining those goals (Hermawan, 2009)

B. RESEARCH METHODS

This study is qualitative in nature, and library research was used to collect data. Library studies, as defined by Sofian Effendi, are studies or research based on literary treasures such as scientific journals, books, etc (Effendi, 1989)

There are two categories of data used in research: primary data, which consists of books that serve as the primary resource for researchers examining the concept of modern ideas in Islam, and secondary data, which is derived from secondary sources. Secondary data, such as books or references in the form of journals and scientific research that are still pertinent to this research, are referred to as secondary sources. This research entails accumulating library sources pertinent to the object of study and analyzing the gathered data using descriptive analysis techniques. The objective of descriptive analysis, according to Surakhmad, is to explain the relationship between variables in research, which is directed by the problem that is the subject of the study, so that researchers can discover theoretical concepts that are consistent with the problem formulation (Surakhmad, 1982).

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Definition of *Pondok* and *Pesantren*

In interpreting the term *pesantren*, there are differences in its meaning in several regions of Indonesia. Some regions understand that the term boarding and institutionalized Islamic education is called *Pondok Pesantren*, but others just call it only *pesantren*.

The term cottage comes from the Arabic word *funduq*, which means hotel or dormitory (Hardoyo, 2008). As for the term *pesantren*, almost a lot of people don't understand it and often think that Islamic boarding school is Arabic vocabulary. The term Islamic boarding school is rooted in the word *santri*, which comes from the Indian language *Shastri*, meaning they study specifically and understand the holy books of the Hindu religion (Heriyudanta, 2016). The word *Shastri* comes from the word *Shastra*, which is interpreted as holy books, religion, and knowledge (Heriyudanta, 2016). Another view states that the term *santri* comes from the Tamil language, namely *sattiri*, namely people who live in a poor house or building in general (Dhofier, 1984).

It is clear that Santri are individuals who study religion and lead a modest lifestyle. Imam Zarkasyi stated that modern and traditional Islamic residential schools mean the same thing, namely a representative Islamic educational institution with a dormitory system, and there are charismatic figures known as Kyai, Tengku, Abu, etc (Hardoyo, 2008).

Modern Islamic boarding schools are not only viewed as a response to contemporary challenges, but also as a way to add a new dimension to Islamic education, which was previously provided by traditional Islamic residential schools.

Therefore, it is essential to have a comprehensive understanding of the meaning and definition of modernism, which has had a significant impact on Islamic education.

2. Modern Understanding

Modern is defined in two ways in the Big Indonesian Dictionary: first, as the most recent, and second, as attitudes and methods of thinking that are consistent with contemporary developments (Kebudayaan RI, 2016). Harun Nasution explained that the term "modern" refers to a movement and endeavor that seeks to alter an old understanding so that it is in line with new perspectives and circumstances, as well as the advancement of science and technology (Nasution, 1996).

In accordance with the views of Harun Nasution, Muslim scholar Nurcholish Madjid explains that a simple comprehension of modernization is a movement founded on *rasio (akal)*, characterized by a shift from irrational to rational thought patterns (Madjid, 1997). The pattern of emphasis at Nurcholish Madjid resides in the dimension of reason or reason, indicating that modernization plays a significant role or makes extensive use of reason or reason in observing and implementing Islamic education.

The conclusion is that modern is a mental activity carried out by individuals or groups who desire to create a business, system, perspective, or institution for new things. In Islam, the person who initiated reform is known as the *mujaddid*, or reformer.

3. Modern Islamic boarding schools: K.H Ahmad Dahlan and Gontor Islamic Boarding School

K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, in the author's opinion, was the first individual in Indonesia to introduce the concept of modern Islamic education in that country, so any discussion of modernity and its ideas and applications cannot be divorced from his contributions. Muhammad Kamaludin and Nafik Muthohirin explained that the modern concept of K.H Ahmad Dahlan originated from his interaction with Muhammad Rasyid Ridho during the Hajj through the intermediary of K.H Bakir (Kamaludin & Muthohirin, 2022).

Muhammad Rasyid Ridha is a student of the reformer Hasan al-Banna, whose reformist ideas include the notion that Muslims must be able to reform education to meet contemporary challenges. The meeting provided K.H. Ahmad Dahlan with inspiration and ideas for establishing a modern religious school oriented toward inclusiveness, rationality, and progressivism (Kamaludin & Muthohirin, 2022).

These three orientations are required for K.H. Ahmad Dahlan to integrate Islamic sciences with general/modern sciences. In his book titled Nurcholish Madjid,

Traces of Thought from Reformer to Teacher, Jalaluddin Rakhmat explains the emergence of modernism in Islam as a result of a profound awareness of the setbacks Muslims have endured, exemplified by the behavior of many Muslims who have departed from the principles of Islamic teachings (Ismail, 2011).

Three Kyai, known as Trimurti, K.H. Ahmad Sahal, K.H. Zainuddin Fananie, and K.H. Imam Zarkasyi, were inspired at the time to establish an Islamic boarding school with a modern approach in order to provide a new breakthrough in Islamic education, i.e., one that did not exclusively focus on the classical system. Until now, it can be said that the concept promoted by Trimurti has been successful, as many modern Islamic boarding schools in various regions of this country have adopted the Gontor Islamic boarding school's concepts, curriculum, teaching staff, etc.

Trimurti was required to be aware of the formation of modern-based Islamic boarding school education at a time when the Dutch had successfully dichotomized education in Indonesia, where Dutch colonial schools were considered modern schools and traditional schools were Islamic boarding school education.

Therefore, it is not remarkable that at a time when Islamic residential schools were considered antiquated, unkempt, and without a clear future, the ulama and prominent figures saw the need for an institutionalized Modern Islamic education, leading to the establishment of the Gontor Modern Islamic residential School. In his book titled *Character Education à la Gontor Islamic Boarding School*, Muhammad Ihsan Dacholfany explains that the modern term inherent in designating the Gontor Islamic Boarding School consists of eight characteristics that cannot be separated: First, Syumuliyah, or comprehensive, exemplified by the Gontor Modern Islamic Boarding School, provides instruction in both religious and general sciences concurrently, so that there is no separation between the two. Second, every activity at the Gontor Islamic Boarding School, both academic and extracurricular, adheres to dynamic principles, i.e., adapting to new developments. Third, Systematic, the education and teaching process at the Gontor Modern Islamic Boarding School is governed by a set of principles that are strictly adhered to. Fourthly, Homogenizing, specifically Gontor Islamic Boarding School, provides a forum for students to accommodate all of their talents and interests. Fifth, Progressive, which is the belief that the future will be superior to the present and the past. Sixth, Innovative, is defined as renewal, in that the Gontor Modern Islamic Boarding School always innovates in the implementation of education and teaching, but there are limitations in its implementation, namely adhering to what the Gontor Islamic Boarding School's founders have established; Seventh, Irreversible, is a stipulation that is unambiguous and unchangeable, namely

that the Gontor Islamic Boarding School does not alter its vision, mission, values, or discipline; Gontor Islamic Boarding School always conducts evaluations in phases (Ihsan, 2015). The unity of meaning is a concept or paradigm for the form of Islamic education reform proposed by the architects of the modern Islamic residential school Gontor. This provides evidence that renewal is not viewed as a pestilence or creature capable of destroying values, but modernization and renewal must be balanced as a means of response. adversities of the times.

4. Critical Reflection

The prevalence of the idea or concept of a Modern Islamic Boarding School as a response to the traditional Islamic education system of the time. Those who initiated the modern concept asserted that traditional Islamic education was deemed unable to meet the challenges of the times, prompting Pendi to have the Netherlands adopt the modern concept, which was regarded as the premier educational model at the time.

Abuddin Nata stated that traditional Islamic boarding schools are unable to meet the challenges of the modern era due to two factors: first, the curriculum; in this case, traditional Islamic boarding schools only teach students religious knowledge, so graduates cannot work if general knowledge requirements are required; and second, the teaching methodology. This aspect is that graduates of traditional Islamic residential schools are unable to communicate orally in Arabic and can only read the Yellow Book in Arabic (Nata, 2000).

The current reality is that there is a gap between Islamic boarding schools with traditional and modern concepts; however, for Azyumardi Azra, the presence of renewal or modernity in Islamic boarding school education demonstrates the distinctiveness or individuality of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, as this modern concept is very different from what is in effect or in operation. in the Near East (Azra, 2012). This distinction is evident in the combination of general science and religion in a single learning period.

Azyumardi Azra then added that the Ottoman Empire implemented a very interesting modernization of education, in which madrasa education was not targeted as a form of reform, but rather the Ottoman Empire established a new school called Rusydiyah, which was adapted to the European education curriculum (Azra, 2012).

The Ottoman reforms did not compromise madrasa education, so madrasas continue to serve as traditional Islamic educational institutions to this day. Hidayati Noorazmah explained that Sultan Mahmud II initiated the Rusydiyyah school as a precursor to the modernization of Western civilization's ideology (Hidayati, 2020). The formation of the Rusydiyyah school was not combined with Medresse Islamic

education, which had been established for a long time. Islamic education remained true to its identity, completely teaching religious knowledge, while the Rusydiyyah school taught various kinds of modern sciences, such as military schools, engineering, medicine, and etc (Hidayati, 2020).

It is fascinating to examine in detail how the Ottoman Empire responded to anticipating the reform and modernization of Islamic education by not founding new schools and preserving the sanctity of religious schools, also known as madrasas. Noorazmah Hidayati continued by explaining that Sultan al-Majid, the successor to Sultan Mahmud II, issued an official state regulation in 1846 separating Islamic education from general education (Hidayati, 2020). Religious schools or medresse are under the auspices of Shaykh al-Islam, while public schools are placed under the responsibility of the government (Hidayati, 2020). In order to confront the surges and currents of modernization, each Islamic nation, including Indonesia, has adopted its own policy. In addition to the imperative of modernizing Islamic education, efforts must be made to preserve the integrity of Islamic values and teachings, as the Ottoman Empire did. Islamic education in Indonesia, particularly modern Islamic boarding schools, is currently viewed as an attempt by reformers to combine Islamic teachings and the spirit of modernization; however, there is still a need for a study to define and re-evaluate the lengthy journey from the beginning of the movement to the present.

D. CLOSING

In Islamic countries, the diversity of perspectives and approaches to modernization in Islamic education has its own effect on the application of Islamic teachings. The solution adopted by the Ottoman Empire is one of the most effective responses to the global expansion of Western education. Obviously, in this instance, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan and Trimurti Pesanten Gontor's ideas are not entirely incorrect; however, there are a number of issues that must be studied or re-discussed when reviewing the philosophy of Islamic education.

This reexamination can be seen whether or not it is accepted that modern ideas in Islamic education will diminish or diminish a student's spiritual values, because, as can be seen from the definition of modern, it is the complete use of reason or logic, as well as the emergence of this modern concept. It is a Western concept to which Islam responds by incorporating religious values. The author believes that the combination of two sciences (religious sciences and general sciences) that are the specialty of Modern Islamic Boarding Schools will have an effect on students' uncertainty, namely whether to become scholars or scientists, because in the curriculum there is an

integration of two dissimilar sciences, namely religious sciences. and general sciences, whereas the West separated them due to their disagreement.

In Islamic education, either principles or idealism are required, implying that combining two different elements is detrimental to the mental health of students receiving knowledge; consequently, when it is hoped that this education will be beneficial to society, many graduates are confused about finding solutions to society's increasingly complex problems.

As of now, since the Gontor Modern Islamic Boarding School initiated the concept of Kulliyat Muallimin and Muallimat, Modern Islamic Boarding School graduates in the research field are limited to the teaching aspect; therefore, the Gontor modern Islamic boarding school produces graduates who can enlighten the people. Therefore, other Islamic residential schools must conduct in-depth research prior to implementing the concept of modernizing Islamic education.

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