

Challenges of Islamic education in nurturing young muslim generation in the post-truth era

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ABSTRACT

Muslim youths are a national asset that needs to be strengthened their identity in accordance with the development and needs of a civilized country. The success of a country lies in the quality and resilience of the younger generation in leading society towards success. They are the ones who will shape the ups and downs of this nation's civilization in the future because they are the heirs of the country's leadership. However, identity disorders faced by adolescents today are quite worrying, especially when they suffer from self-forgetfulness due to shallow knowledge and lack of civilization. In the post-truth era, some of them are more likely to accept an argument based on their emotions and beliefs rather than one based on facts. The research method used in this study is library research done by collecting articles or scientific papers related to learning planning, learning design, learning model in which related with Islamic Education. This concept paper examines the challenges of Islamic education in shaping the future of Muslim young generation. Based on the research conducted there are several challenges which are the position of Islamic education within the larger educational system, Islamic education processes and pedagogy, efforts of Islamic scholars, misperceptions in the West and the Muslim World about Islamic Education and politicization and militarization of Islamic education. Therefore, the current development of adolescence should be re-examined because it is seen as a long-term interest that needs to be managed as best as possible.

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Introduction

This paper focuses on the issues and challenges of Islamic education in shaping the identity of Malaysian Muslim youths. The development of adolescent identity is influenced by several factors. Among them is the positive self-esteem that exists in adolescents. Community awareness in empowering the identity of Muslim youths has implications on the efforts to intensify the national education system. This is because education is the most important tool to develop human potential and subsequently produce human capital that meets the characteristics of Islam and enhance the diverse civilization of the nation in Malaysia.

The positive self-esteem that exists in adolescents, is seen to be able to be used as a yardstick to the influence of the formation of self-identity that exists in every Muslim youth. The level of self-awareness is the state in which a person has knowledge of consciousness, an understanding of himself, his environment, and his Creator. But there is no denying that through self-development, every human being will be influenced by various factors that can affect their identity. The problem here is, there are two disorders experienced by teenagers, namely identity confusion and misconduct. According to Mahmood Nazar (2001), Talhah et al., (2019) said this confusion occurs because we are faced with the challenges posed by Modern Western philosophy and science, including its technology and ideology. These challenges threaten our values, behaviors, thoughts, beliefs, and way of life so that we evolve with the desire of this secular worldview.

The education system which is the core of the creation and development of knowledge is increasingly desperate to address the crisis of confusion experienced by adolescents. Nevertheless, the problem of education should not be seen as a big issue in the Ministry of Education alone, because it is an issue that is interconnected with each other for us to deal with it together. According to (@ Mat Zin & Buchik, 2017) by Asmah Haji Omar (1986), in a multi-racial, multi-religious, and multi-cultural Malaysian environment, the need for understanding and tolerance and mutual respect is critical to prevent any threat to the harmony enjoyed. Any feelings of dissatisfaction, worry, and hatred should be eradicated immediately as it can spark a comprehensive wave of anger to be shared by a race that feels the injustice. The event of May 13, 1969 is a useful lesson in this regard.

Now the students are growing up in the grip of a hedonistic culture that is rampant, confused with their identity, and strayed far from the guidance of the Almighty. Adolescents today are children who are fascinated by western thought patterns. As if, in this borderless world, millennials of gadgets and millenniums are the new gods in their lives. Hedonistic and materialistic culture has become a practice that influenced Muslim adolescents. Furthermore, as Ilham (2020) said education, in essence, is an effort to pass on values that will be a helper and guide of humanity in living life, and at the same time to improve the fate and civilization of humanity. Without education, it believes that humans are no different from past generations of humans when compared to their backwardness, both the quality of life and the process of designing their future. In the extreme, it can even, that the back and forth or excellent or bad civilization of a society, a nation, will be determined by how the education carried out by the nation's community.

Definition of Muslim Youth

Adolescence or youth is a change of phase from childhood to early adulthood, starting around the age of 10-12 years and ends around the age of 18-21 years. Muslim on the other hand means a person who is an Islamic religion, a follower of the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

Adolescents in Arabic are referred to as *murahaqah*. *Murahaqah* comes from the word *rahaqa* which means from the view of language is stupid, light, doing bad and cruel, and doing things that are forbidden. It is a name from the act of making a trick, which is to burden a person with something he cannot do, lie, and rush. While the word *rahiqa* means almost to adulthood and almost perfect maturity. The word *al-rahq* means to control and increase. A condition that reflects the emotional state of a teenager.

According to the *Kamus Dewan*, adolescents refer to those who are beginning to grow up, to reach puberty, old enough to get married and also, they are young. In English, adolescence is derived from the Latin word *adolescere* which means 'growing up' or 'growing up to maturity'. According to Jas Laile & Suzana Jaafar (1996), adolescence is a process and not a period. The process here means achieving or acquiring the attitudes and beliefs needed for effective involvement in society.

Furthermore, the English Dictionary call teenagers, an adolescent. It means almost gradually reaching maturity. Indications of a teenager's maturity can be seen from sexual maturation and reproductive gland maturation. Adolescence or *murahaqah* for a woman starts between the ages of 11-13 years and for male starts between 12-14 years. The adolescence of a woman continues until she is 17 years old. Men, on the other hand, last until they are 18-19 years old.

When we look at the definition of adolescence, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) defines adolescents between the ages of 10 to 18 years, are the world's majority population equivalent to 1/5 of the world's population. In 2008, the WHO released the latest statistics saying the number of teenagers in the world is about 18% of the world. This shows that teenagers are a group that needs to be taken care of and shaped well from all angles. Whereas according to the definition of Dr. Mustafa Fahmi (2012), in the book *Psychology of Children and Adolescents*, adolescence means a gradual increase in the maturity of the body, gender, emotions. Meanwhile, according to Muhd Mansur Abdullah and Siti Nordinar (1994), adolescents are young people who experience a transition between children and adult behavior.

Adolescents are the golden age that needs to be guided because at this point the mind, maturity, and soul will be formed and built. Enthusiasm, the attitude of wanting to try and wanting to have fun, is inherent in teenagers, but how and where it is directed, is a question that must be answered by each of us. In fact, in a teenager, both good qualities and bad qualities are accumulated. Being stupid, committing evil and tyranny, doing things that are illegal and dangerous, forcing and urging, and being hasty is among the negative attitudes of a teenager. If they are not educated and taught with noble manners and Islamic morals, these teenagers will continue to drift without control. At the same time, at this age teenagers are also already reaching maturity and ready to shape themselves to be good and responsible. That is why some scholars equate the phase of adolescence with the phase of *murahaqah*. Where a person reaches puberty and can accept responsibilities such

as avoiding what is haram and doing what is halal. Thus, Islam emphasizes faith education, manners, jurisprudence, and muamalat since childhood. This is a command to prepare the growing child to reach adolescence so that they can accept responsibility and grow to be mature and wise.

What Is Islamic Education?

The meaning of Islamic education may differ according to who is writing about it and from which angle. Some stress the “*tarbiya*,” or character development. Others define it as religious education, with stress on the Quran and other basic Islamic teachings and values. For the sake of this research paper, Islamic education refers to *tarbiya* and any other topics in particular related to that development.

Components of Islamic Education Curriculum

Based on this review of the content of Islamic education, the following topics are usually taught in educational institutions that focus primarily on Islamic education. Such curricula may exist in exclusively Islamic education institutions, or in institutions that offer a strong dose of Islamic education combined with a general education curriculum:

a. Quranic Interpretation (Tafsir):

This subject includes reviews of the classic interpretations of the Quran according to several early scholars such as Ibn Kathir, El- Tabari, and Ibn Taymiyya. In some institutions, the interpretations provided by contemporary scholars such as Sayed Qutb and Mawdudi may also be included.

b. Prophet’s Sayings and Practices (Hadith):

This subject addresses the processes used to ensure the authenticity of stories and statements related to the Prophet Mohammed, and review of the collections compiled by earlier scholars such as Bukhari and Muslim.

c. Islamic Jurisprudence (Fiqh):

This subject includes the methodologies used by various scholars, especially those representing the major four schools of jurisprudence in Sunni Islam (Shaf’i, Hanafi, Malki, and Hanbali), and their rulings on a variety of subjects, usually cataloged under categories such as prayer, marriage, divorce, charity, and jihad.

d. Islamic Basic Beliefs (‘Aqaid):

This subject focuses on the fundamental Islamic beliefs such as unity of God, existence of angels and Satan, Day of Judgment, heaven, and hell.

e. Arabic Language:

As Arabic is the language of the Quran; almost all educational institutions that focus on Islamic education provide education in the Arabic language. Proficiency in Arabic is usually regarded

highly in such institutions.

f. Islamic Rituals:

This subject deals with how Muslims should perform their rituals such as prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage to Mecca. Fiqh books include elaborate volumes on those subjects.

g. Islamic History:

This subject focuses primarily on Islamic history from the time of Prophet Mohammed to the present.

h. Islamic Manners and Values (akhlaq):

This subject includes focused education especially for children on proper Islamic manners as preached and practiced in the formative era of Islam; an era regarded by most Islamic scholars as a golden age from which many positive lessons and models may be drawn. In educational institutions that offer primarily a general education curriculum, the subject of religion usually includes elements of Islamic manners and values.

The Challenges of Islamic Education

One obvious influence during the 19th century and most of the 21st century occurred soon after the arrival of the colonialists and the establishment of their institutions. The cultural norms dictating access to resources, power, and status shifted not only towards the attainment of Western-style education, but also to the adjustment of manners and lifestyle to resemble those of Westerners. Under the model of dual educational systems, with the modern general education offering access to status and power, and the Islamic education system becoming more and more limited in what it could offer its graduates, the bulk of ambitious elites and middle-class directed their—and their children's—education to modern general education institutions, including missionary schools. Islamic education institutions became a symbol of backwardness and became associated with poor and rural populations. Islamic education faces challenges from within as well as the challenges that the system poses to communities and societies in the Muslim world and beyond Shah et al., (2015) :

a. The Position of Islamic Education within the Larger Educational System

Based on the discussion of Islamic education within larger educational systems, it becomes clear that students in Islamic education institutions find themselves in dead-end sub-systems. In addition, in many instances the educational system does not recognize Islamic education institutions' degrees or limits their usefulness. On the other hand, general education systems usually limit access to Islamic education in general education schools, which opens the door for seeking knowledge about Islam from sources that may be militant or radical. Finally, as Islamic

education has not received much attention compared to general education, the management system faces several challenges.

b. Islamic education processes and pedagogy

In some religious circles, a belief continues to exist that religious education is The Knowledge ('ILM). This attitude reflects negatively on efforts to modernize Islamic educational systems. In addition, a common pedagogy used is based on memorization, with less emphasis on individual contributions. Another major prevalent challenge is punishment of students in Islamic education institutions, which is almost a chronic problem in the entire Muslim world. Finally, as a result of ages of stagnation, teaching methods in Islamic education institutions have not seen improvement.

c. Efforts of Islamic Scholars

The challenge to stay current, especially during this time of rapid technological advancements—specifically in the areas of communication, and economic and social globalization—poses new challenges to education in the Muslim world in general and to Islamic education in particular. In addition, the threat of militancy and terrorism in the name of Islam as a response to perceived injustices and radical fundamentalism as a response to cultural changes are troubling. Unfortunately, in the face of those challenges, contemporary Islamic scholars concerned with Islamic education seem to fall short in providing effective guidance to address them. This is because contemporary scholars often use approaches that reflect, to a great extent, a siege mentality and produce ad-hoc approaches to the study of Islamic sources on education.

d. Misperceptions in the West and In the Muslim World about Islamic Education

In the West, and among elites in the Muslim world, especially after the tragic events of September 11, 2001, media formulated a singular image of Islamic education institutions by focusing on children memorizing the Quran and shouting "jihad". This resulted in presenting the system as one that is backward, oppressive to children, and used as a seedbed for militancy and extremism. Those negative views of Islamic education institutions misrepresent several aspects. First, the vast majority of these institutions provide more than just mechanical Quranic memorization; they offer a wider range of religious education in addition to modern education. Second, they serve millions of children; girls and boys in the Muslim world who otherwise could be deprived of any education. Third, these institutions in many countries of the Muslim world provide invaluable social services to the communities by offering shelter and education to orphans. Finally, most of those institutions are moving forward with modernization plans.

e. Politicization and militarization of Islamic education

It is unfortunate that governments and militants, in the Muslim world and the West, have on several occasions exploited those Islamic education institutions to advance their own political agendas. The trouble with those policies is that, as the whole world has witnessed in the past few years, such indoctrination and utilization of Islamic education institutions as centers for Islamic Jihad International, do not cease to exist once the purpose they were initiated to address is fulfilled. The indoctrination and the militant fraternity live beyond the fulfillment of the immediate purpose. The violent force associated with them continues to affect the entire world in an unprecedented wave of terror.

The Role Islamic Education

Islamic education in Malaysia first recorded its presence during the period of the Malaccan Sultanate (1414–1511). Malacca witnessed the birth of prototype boarding schools known as pondok, literally meaning “hut,” in which the master or tok guru assumed full control. Malay students started to study at al-Azhar University in Cairo in the 1920s. Upon returning to Malaya, this new generation of Middle Eastern graduates significantly contributed to the changing face of Islamic education. They converted umum (general) pondoks into madrasahs, adopting the nizami (structured) system, which combined instruction in Islamic fundamentals with Western-influenced pedagogy and technology. Realizing the deep attachment of the Malays to Islam, the British incorporated some form of Islamic education into Malay vernacular schools. With Malaysia’s independence, centralization of the administration and curricula of all schools that offer some kind of Islamic education has dominated the Ministry of Education’s efforts in the realm of formal Islamic education. There is continuous endeavor to bring an end to dualism between secular and religious education, as manifested in the marriage between Islamic and secular sciences in tertiary-level courses.

In 1973, a Religious Education Division (Bahagian Pelajaran Agama) was established within the Ministry of Education to coordinate Islamic education. In 1983, it was renamed Islamic Education Division (Bahagian Pendidikan Islam). In 1995, it was restructured as Islamic and Moral Education Division (Bahagian Pendidikan Islam dan Moral). It has now reverted to Islamic Education Division, and its task is to manage the Islamic educational policy and curriculum, the Arabic-language policy and curriculum, the recruitment and in-service training of Islamic education and Arabic-language teachers, and missionary and leadership training for Islamic education staff and students, and to aid and raise the standards of both national secondary religious schools. Centralization of the administration and curricula of all schools that offer some kind of Islamic education has dominated the Ministry of Education’s efforts in the realm of formal Islamic education. Curriculum has been designed to accomplish the aims of the Islamic Philosophy of Education. There is a continuous

endeavor to bring an end to dualism between secular and religious education, as manifested in the marriage between Islamic and secular sciences in tertiary-level courses. There are approaches for improving education in Islamic School:

- a. Encourage, rather than hinder, community ownership of Islamic education institutions Islamic education institutions in several Muslim countries were the products of successful social entrepreneurship. That is, those institutions have often been initiated and maintained by visionary community leaders whose aims were to provide educational services to their impoverished communities, and to provide shelters to orphans. This spirit must be encouraged, and maintained. It should not be hampered by efforts to supervise the curriculum.
- b. Promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence Islamic education institutions do not exist in a vacuum. They are strongly influenced by political, social, and cultural factors. In this time of massive, easily accessible information technology, the spread of radical Islamic doctrines, via what appears to be legitimate and credible religious sources may negatively influence the worldview of the young generations in the Muslim world in general. This, in turn, may influence Islamic education institutions. Efforts must be made to provide religiously credible and legitimate information about tolerance and peaceful coexistence via various information dissemination venues such as the internet and media.
- c. Support Islamic education, especially in public schools The Islamic aspects of identity in the Muslim world continue to influence those societies. Because of the strong presence of Islam as an identity element, people in the Muslim world will continue to seek knowledge about Islam, and will view efforts to reduce Islamic education as an infringement upon a sacred aspect of their existence and identity. It is not recommended in this research to continue with efforts to eliminate or reduce Islamic education, especially in public schools.
- d. Monitor, not mandate, Islamic curriculum content. The involvement of governments in the Muslim world, and elsewhere, with Islamic curricula to serve security objectives could lead to uncontrolled negative outcomes. The outcomes of such involvements have been devastating on a wide scale. While state supervision of Islamic curriculum is necessary to guard against the spread of radical and militant views, states in the Muslim world, and elsewhere, must refrain from politicizing this education. Provide careful supervision of Islamic education institutions and curriculum. The examples of the government role with Al-Azhar in Egypt and with Islamic education institutions in Indonesia demonstrate that state supervision prevents the spread of such institutions in unpredictable directions. In this regard it is important to assert that issues related to Islamic identity and education are highly sensitive materials not suitable for free exchange and handling. Monitor curriculum for education quality and negative messages. The peaceful revival of Islam has been expanding into the middle and upper classes of most Muslim

societies. While the impression about Islamic education institutions among large segments of these classes remains negative, increasing numbers of people among these classes are seeking Islamic education that is combined with modern education. This is resulting in the emergence of new models of Islamic/modern educational institutions that cater to those classes. While governments should encourage this trend because it provides an attractive educational venue to members of those classes, governments must also carefully review both the general education and Islamic education curricula to ensure that they meet quality standards, and that the religious curricula do not contain negative, antagonistic messages.

- e. Encourage the infusion of general education into Islamic education institutions the dual model of education (general education institutions and Islamic education institutions) in several Muslim countries is going through changes in which most Islamic education institutions are incorporating general education curriculum into the Islamic curriculum. In doing so, those institutions are receiving financial support and recognition of their certificates, which increases the choices of their students regarding their future education. The trend towards infusing general education curriculum into Islamic education institutions must be encouraged, and incentives must be developed to attract more exclusive Islamic education institutions to incorporate general education Curriculum.
- f. Support and promote new student-centered, action-oriented classroom instruction, the quality of teacher preparation, pedagogical approaches, and teacher-student relations in Islamic education institutions has been of concern to all involved. The traditional approaches based on memorization are depriving students of creative thinking and addressing new challenges and contemporary issues. Corporal punishment concerns many students in those institutions. At the same time, administrators and teachers in those institutions welcome learning new approaches to education. Encourage efforts to provide teacher training programs and exchange programs to introduce more participatory, less memorization-based, approaches to education and teaching.
- g. Spread the word about successful new models. The growing interest in studying Islamic education in the Muslim world has led to the discovery of intriguing new models of Islamic education institutions. Several of these models strike an effective balance between providing Islamic education, modern education, and civic education. A compilation of "best practices" among Islamic education institutions in the Muslim world, and the dissemination of the compilation in various formats (for example, in hard copies, CDs and on the internet) may expand these models into more countries, especially if the implementation of these models is connected to some form of incentive. One significant advantage of this process is that those models have been "home grown" within "Islamically-credible" institutions. This will eliminate the concern that these are Western imposed models.

Conclusion

Adolescents are agents of change. Today's youth are the leaders who will lead the country in the future. Today's increasingly critical youth problems require a comprehensive and integrated effort from all parties. This is not the right time for us to point the finger at certain parties to shoulder this burden and responsibility. This is a national issue that must be addressed by all of us as a common agenda. Islamic religious education by re-emulating the great Islamic Sirah and civilization is the last bastion in dealing with this problem. The occurrence of Muslim adolescents is also strongly influenced by the factors of learning discipline and peer environment. To improve learning performance, adolescents must be able to develop the discipline of learning from their awareness to master the knowledge of learning and understanding to produce results obtained to form self-identity towards excellence. Learning should also be done continuously and make it a routine habit. Concentration while studying will also influence school teenagers to understand what they are learning and not play or sleep during classroom time.

Moreover, parents are reminded to educate their children to be guided by the Qur'an and the glorious Hadith as well as nurtured with the learning of Sirah to become useful teenagers. Parents should portray a good and superior attitude so that children can emulate that personality. Parents need to be concerned about whom their children associate and make friends with to prevent children from behaving negatively and unwantedly as a result of peer friends. Parents also need to be sensitive to what is happening around their children whether it is cultural elements or the current mass media, especially those brought from the West which is now difficult to curb. Parents need to wisely control this influence from influencing children's mental and personality development. Ultimately, the need to care about the knowledge of Islamic history by thinkers and researchers, including educators and school teenagers is very important. This is because the knowledge and learning will be very helpful for them to understand current events to be used as comparisons and lessons, as well as to solve the problems that are happening. This is because history will repeat itself. Ibn Khaldun once said that in the science of history, it is not accurate if one only studies it but does not compare it with what is and will happen in the future.

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