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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A CONTEMPORARY DISCOURSE ON INTEGRATED ISLAMIC EDUCATION

Fuad Ramly[1]; Warul Walidin[2]; Saifullah Idris[3]

[123]*Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry, Banda Aceh, Indonesia*
E-mail: [1]fuadramly@yahoo.com; [2]warul@scadindependent.org; [3]saifullahnadia@gmail.com

Integrated education is a very popular issue in contemporary discourse studies. In the Islamic context, especially, it is known as integrated Islamic education, which has begun to be developed in several Muslim countries. The objective of integrated Islamic education is to help eliminate the dichotomy between Islamic (traditional) and general (modern) educational systems. Integrated Islamic education seeks to combine both of these educational systems in accordance with Islamic world views, an effort which also has its implications for the integration of sciences. Only through integrated Islamic education that Islamic and modern sciences can be seen as an indivisible entity which truly reflects Islamic intellectual values based on the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Keywords: *Islamic Sciences; Integrated, Islamic Education, .*

1. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of Modernism in the Modern Era since the 17th century has brough about radical changes to our understanding of science and religion. However, modernism along the way has created continuous conflicts between science and religion, which have previously been united in a harmonious relationship within scholastic traditions, especially during the Middle Age Period. Such a condition reflects the characteristics of modern science, which relies only on ratio and empirical experiences as the source of knowledge and ignores the authority of *wahyu* (revelation) as the foundation for religion which originates from God.

Modernism developed in the context of Western (European) imperialism and colonialism against the Islamic world. This has presented modern sciences to the Muslim communities as a colonialist intellectual heritage. Muslim scholars who were "forced" to accept, adopt, or even develop modern sciences, because they had no other choices, were imprisoned in a prolonged dilemma and epistemological crisis. On the one hand, modern sciences were needed by Muslims to alleviate the problems and reach the various aspects of easiness (effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity) in their lives. On the other hand, modern sciences were claimed as "foreign things" that had driven clashes with basic Islamic values because they were thought to contain "secular" characteristics.

Consequently, the dichotomy between modern and religious sciences across the Islamic intellectual atmosphere can be felt very strongly until now. Such a dichotomy has even driven a serious debate among contemporary Muslim thinkers who have different perspectives about the essence and genuine characters of religious (Islamic) and western (modern) sciences. Consequently, Islamic sciences tend to be exclusive since they are studied using a "rigid" interpretation and produced by some narrow minded and short-sighted scholars. On the other hand, modern sciences are also in danger of falling into a crisis due to being developed under the scientific paradigms with no spiritual values.

The dichotomy is also found in the educational areas related to scientific matters. Rusydy Zakaria asserts that the Islamic educational system produces graduates who have a strong religious knowledge base and moral attitudes but lack a methodological approach, while general education produces graduates who are strong in methodological approaches but lack a religious knowledge base (Tan, 2015: 4-430).

The dichotomy then gave rise to a new Islamic intellectual movement, which resorts to an integrative approach to solve education problems. Some Muslim thinkers have attempted to design and offer an Islamic integration concept for constructing integrated sciences. As mentioned above, this effort is made primarily to eliminate the dichotomy between Islamic (religious) and modern (secular) sciences (Kartanegara, 2005: 17-31). Azyumardi Azra (2005), emphasizes that the integration of sciences is really needed by Muslims to create a future-oriented Islamic educational model. Implementatively, it can be conducted by integrating Islamic ideologies and
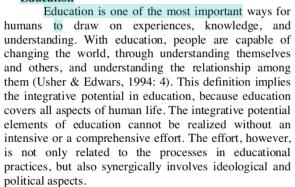
perspectives as a whole into academic subjects within Islamic institutions.

Ideally, the integrative approach is not only related to the system of science but also to the system of education. Therefore, integrated educational systems in this sense have been directly associated with efforts to find solutions to the persistence of the dichotomy between scientific and educational matters in the Islamic world. Based on the above explanation, this article proposes an alternative model which attempts to integrate the values of Islamic education into a contemporary discourse (since the 20th century). The aims to describe an integrated Islamic education model by also considering contemporary Islamic sciences, their characters, subject-matters, approaches, and implications.

2. Characterization of the Integrated Islamic Education

Education is one of the most important ways for humans to draw on experiences, knowledge, and understanding. With education, people are capable of changing the world, through understanding themselves and others, and understanding the relationship among them (Usher & Edwards, 1994: 4). This definition implies the integrative potential in education, because education covers all aspects of human life. The integrative potential elements of education cannot be realized without an intensive or a comprehensive effort. The effort, however, is not only related to the processes in educational practices, but also synergically involves ideological and political aspects.

Stanley Aronowitz and Henry Giroux (1986: 20), maintain that the reformation of education is an attempt to reformulate educators' ideological and social roles. Educators in every educational strata are intellectuals who act as mediators, legitimates, and producers of social ideas and practices through their role and function with politically pedagogical nature. This implies that educators, not only have roles, functions and responsibilities in the social change process, but are also the main actors or agents who have a political power over the life of a society.

When looked at more deeply, the reformation concept as it is mentioned above cannot be separated from the existence of an education system. The reformation of education requires the reformation of its educational system. One of the strategic efforts at this point is to implement an integrated education system. Therefore, integrated education constitutes a very important approach to realize the basic potential of education itself.

The purpose of integrated education is essentially to develop a complete character of human beings, in which every part or element of the individual: mind and body, emotion and spirit, should be developed together as an integrated whole. In addition, the idea of integrated education is not only to educate people but also to produce good people. Integrated education does not only aim to give knowledge to people, but also to help them translate knowledge into true wisdom. In integrated education, there is no separation between school and community, study and human life, and knowledge and goodness (M. Fan, 2004: 28-30).

Amlata Persaud (2016: 7), notes several reasons for the importance of integrated education. 1) Education is integrally connected with other development sectors; 2) integrated approaches enhance understanding and provide solutions; 3) integrated approaches improve the effectiveness of our affairs; 4) integrated approach is very important to solve the complex problems in society. Zembylas and Bekerman (2013: 406), provides an example of a case in Europe, based on a research by Kirchberger and Tiessen in 2011, which shows that integration seeks to adopt a number of values and world views held by the majority or the powerful group as the pillars of their civilization. Migrants and minorities living in this condition will be able to live in an integrated way with citizens and indigenous peoples.

The above example, on the one hand, is similar to the treatment that occurs in Islamic education by looking at it's typical classification. Susan L. Douglass and Munir A. Shaikh (2007: 7), stated that Islamic education in general can be identified from four types of activities: 1) the education of Muslims in their Islamic beliefs; 2) education for Muslims covering the religious sciences and the general (secular) sciences; 3) education on Islam for non Muslims; and 4) education in the tradition and spirit of Islam.

However, specifically in the Islamic perspective, education must be understood as a form of *ibadah* (worship) which is based on the Qur'an and Sunnah. Education is a long process of preparing individuals to be able to actualize their role as the *khalifah* (vicegerent) of God on earth. The ultimate goal of Islamic education, as stated by Al-Attas, is the formation of character based on the ideal values of Islamic ethic (Hashim & Langgulung, 2008: 1-2). The Islamic character in the concept of Islamic education is certainly not applicable to foreign students or non-Muslims, although they learn about Islam or are educated in Islamic educational institutions. For them education is not worship and they are not prepared or promised to be a *khalifah* of Allah.

Islamic education seeks to clarify the role of human existence in order to reform and construct their lives. The concept of life in Islam is based on fundamental aspects, both individual, society, and the world. Education aims to provide a balance of relations and equality between these aspects with their interrelated and integrated characteristics, so that such an aspect is unlikely to survive without the others (Rayan, 2012: 150).

This understanding is based on Islamic characteristics that emphasize logical thinking based on harmony and integration, without separation between religion and politics and science, or without separation

between mind and sense, soul and body. Although each element (unit) is independent, all are integrated with each other. Relationships are integrated, where each unit completes and refines the other components (Rayan, 2012: 152). This integrative characterization is in line with Alfred North Whitehead's assertion that the whole connection to the parts is a central concept for understanding reality. The relatedness is a fundamental thing, so that nothing is isolated (M. Fan, 2008: 28-30). Islamic education stresses on an Islamic character itself, namely integration. Integration refers to ways by which integrated Islamic elements can be applied to every time and place and will be useful for all human beings. It also means that Islam, as a universal religion, contains universal norms that benefit all people living in the world.

3. Integrated Islamic Education and Its Implications

Philosophy of Islamic Education examines the principles and concepts of education in Islam by analyzing, critiquing, deconstructing, or integrating existing educational infrastructures, and striving to produce a new concept on an ongoing basis or offering the right concepts (Rayan, 2012: 150). This philosophical foundation is also relevant to the goal of integrated Islamic education proposed by Sobhi Rayan (2012: 150), that Islamic education accommodates all human activities, whether related to physical, mental, psychological, spiritual, and tries to find a balance between all these activities in man.

More comprehensively, the purpose of integrate Islamic education is contained in the consensus of the First World Conference on Muslim Education held in Jedda-Mecca (1393A.H.-1977A.D.). This agreement states that the main goal of Islamic education is to produce good people. This goal must be achieved by balancing total development of personality through exercises, including: spiritual, intellectual, imaginative, physical, scientific, and linguistic exercise, individually and collectively, whereby all these aspects are holistically incorporated into the educational system that leads to the good and the achievement of perfection (Raudlotul Firdaus binti Fatah Yasin & Mohd. Shah Jani, 2013: 3).

The formulation of integrated Islamic education, as mentioned above, has widespread implications covering all aspects and dimensions of life, in addition to more specifically the education system itself. In the education system, these implications are particularly concerned with the curriculum of learning and the development of science.

Islamic leaders believe that the application of Islamic curriculum in education in Islamic countries is very important not only because of the need for knowledge of life or improvement of intelligence for economic development. The most important thing with the Islamic curriculum is the perfection of the soul and purification of personality and wisdom (Hashim & Langgulung, 2008: 16).

Therefore, Islamic education institutions need to recruit qualified scholars who have a background of expertise in the field of social sciences and Islamic intellectual heritage. This effort needs to be done in order to build a religious education curriculum from all strata of Islamic education starting from pre-school age to the tertiary education ((Hashim & Langgulung, 2008: 17).

Charlene Tan (2015: 420), claimed that religious" and "secular" knowledge are integrated in Islamic thought under al-ʿulūm al-ʿaqliyyah (rational sciences or intellectual sciences), and al-ʿulūm al-naqliyyah (the traditional sciences or revealed knowledge). According to Syed Farid Alatas (in Tan, 2015: 420), the first type is knowledge that arises from human reason, sense perception, and observation, meanwhile the second one refers to knowledge which is produced by revelation.

There are traditional sciences which includes disciplines termed as modern today, such as logic, physics, metaphysics, geometry, arithmetic, medicine, geography, chemistry, biology, music, astronomy, and science of civilisation. The acceptance of secular or modern science is not foreign to the Islamic heritage. It has been noted that the Islamic educational institutions during the Ottoman Empire incorporated al-ʿulūm al-juzʾiyyah (specific sciences) which were ḥisāb (mathematics), handasah (geometry), hayʾah (astronomy) and ḥikmah (practical philosophy) (Tan, 2015: 420).

Fathul Mufid (2013: 65-66) states that Islamic sciences contain three cluster of disciplines: normative-Islamic sciences, historical-Islamic sciences, and multidisciplinary Islamic sciences. The normative-Islamic study is more focused on Islamic religious texts, meanwhile the historical-Islamic study is focused on studying historical and social phenomena which includes Islamic culture, anthropology, psychology, law, politics and so forth. The multidisciplinary Islamic sciences are a study with various kinds of approaches, such as social sciences, humanities, and scientific.

According to Zainal Abidin (2014: 4), muslim scholars believe that it is possible for us to know both physical and metaphysical or non-physical objects. The non-physical entity such as a metaphysical concept has been well known in the Islamic epistemological perspective. The Islamic epistemological spectrum not only responds to the natural facts but also accomodates the supranatural experiences. It indicates that Islamic sciences have a unique character namely stressing on the unity between religion and science; knowledge and values; physic and metaphysic, as noted by Ziauddin Sardar (1987: 180).

Sardar also asserts that 'ilm (knowledge) unites almost all forms of knowledge, from pure observations to the highest metaphysics. The 'Ilm is a system of knowledge which contains various forms of knowledge, both metaphysical, empirical, and exact sciences. These forms of knowledge, as part of 'ilm, cannot be separated from one another but must be understood within a unified framework. All these forms of knowledge are interrelated and organically linked by the eternal soul of Qur'anic revelation (Ziauddin Sardar, 1987: 104).

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4. Conclusion

Integrated Islamic education which is being widely developed in Muslim countries aims to anticipate the dichotomy between Islamic (traditional) and western (modern) sciences. In addition, integrated Islamic education ignores the separation between Islamic and modern education systems as widely practiced in the old Islamic tradition.

Therefore, integrated Islamic education is an intellectual movement which integrates Islamic and modern education based on the Islamic world view. The purpose is to adopt modern educational components into the Islamic education as long as they are relevant to the Islamic values for the pragmatically needs of the Islamic society.

Integrated Islamic education also implies the integration of sciences. This means that Islamic science and modern sciences can be merged through integrated Islamic education based on the Qur'an and *shunnah*. This kind of education integrates numerous disciplines in the general or secular sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-ʿaqliyyah*) and religious Islamic sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-naqliyyah*) into a united and integrated scientific system.

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