

THE IMPROTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING THE HISTORY OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION

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Abstract

This article describes the basic concepts of history, education, and Islam and their relationship in Islamic education. History, which comes from the Arabic word “tarikh” and the English word “history,” studies past events to understand the present and the future. Education is the process of changing attitudes and behavior through teaching, while Islamic education shapes good Muslim character by guiding physical, spiritual, and intellectual development. The history of Islamic education covers the growth and development of Islamic education, both informal and formal. The usefulness of Islamic educational history covers general and academic aspects, providing insight into the development of Islamic education and inspiration for facing current educational challenges. The functions of history include moral education, reasoning, politics, policy, change, the future, beauty, and as an auxiliary science. The history of Islamic education helps foster new perspectives and relevance in the development of science and technology.

Keywords: History, Education, Islam, Development.

INTRODUCTION

Education is an important element in the development of human civilization¹. From ancient times to the present, education has been the primary means of passing on knowledge,

¹Hasbullah, *Dasar-Dasar Ilmu Pendidikan*, Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 2012, hlm. 1.

values, and traditions to the next generation². In Islamic teachings, since its inception, education has received great attention as a way to shape the personality of the ummah, strengthen faith, and create a knowledgeable and moral society. This can be seen from the first revelation that commanded humans to read (Iqra'), as a sign of how knowledge and the learning process are the main foundations of Islam.

The study of the history of Islamic education aims to trace the development of educational concepts and practices in the lives of Muslims from the time of the Prophet Muhammad to the present day³. Through a historical approach, we can understand the development of Islamic education systems and institutions, from the halaqah at the Prophet's Mosque, basic education at the kuttab, classical madrasas, to Islamic universities such as Al-Azhar. These changes and advances are certainly inseparable from the influence of social, cultural, political, and intellectual conditions that developed during each period of Islamic history.

As an academic discipline, the history of Islamic education encompasses concepts and their role in shaping worldviews and human behavior. According to Professor Kuntowijoyo, history is an attempt to reconstruct the past, although not all aspects of the past are studied. The focus of Islamic educational history lies primarily on the past of humankind⁴. Meanwhile, Hasan Langgulung argues that education can be viewed from two perspectives: society and the individual. From a societal perspective, education serves as a tool for passing on culture from one generation to the next. Meanwhile, from an individual perspective, education is a process of

²Tilaar, H.A.R., *Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, dan Masyarakat Madani Indonesia*, Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2002, hlm. 5

³Zuhairini dkk., *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam*, Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 2015, hlm. 9

⁴Kuntowijoyo, *Pengantar Ilmu Sejarah*, Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2013, hlm. 18

developing one's potential. This view is supported by Omar Muhammad at-Toumy al-Syaibany, who sees education as a desired change in individuals and groups through interaction with the environment⁵.

The history of Islamic education encompasses various dimensions, including curriculum, learning methods, educational institutions, accompanying concepts, and important figures who have influenced its development. This is in line with Qasri Azizy's thinking on the definition of Islamic religious education, which emphasizes the process of teaching Islamic values and instilling an understanding of religious teachings⁶. In this realm, the aspect of faith occupies a central position because Islamic education aims to shape individuals who are faithful, intellectually intelligent, and have noble character.

Harun Nasution categorizes the historical journey of Islamic education into three main phases, namely the classical period, the medieval period, and the modern period⁷. This classification illustrates the breadth and dynamics of the function of Islamic education in society throughout time. Education experts also emphasize that Islamic education is not only related to religious and moral aspects, but also includes the academic, physical, and health development of students.

⁵ Omar Muhammad at-Toumy al-Syaibany, *Falsafah Pendidikan Islam*, terj. Hasan Langgulung, Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1979, hlm. 32.

⁶A. Qodri Azizy, *Pendidikan (Agama) untuk Membangun Etika Sosial*, Semarang: Aneka Ilmu, 2003, hlm. 9.

⁷Harun Nasution, *Islam Ditinjau dari Berbagai Aspeknya*, Jakarta: UI Press, 2010, Jilid I, hlm. 56–58.

In addition to covering religious and moral education, the object of study of Islamic education history also includes academic aspects, physical development, and student health⁸. The scope of Islamic education history covers various components of education, such as objectives, teaching materials, methods, the role of educators, student characteristics, the use of media, evaluation systems, types of educational institutions, and the environment in which education takes place. This historical study not only serves to understand the development of Islamic education in the past, but also provides an important foundation for deepening our understanding of the religious values, philosophical foundations, and psychological and sociological aspects that surround it.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a Literature Study approach, which involves a series of activities related to library data collection methods, reading, analyzing, recording, and processing relevant research materials⁹. Data collection in this study was conducted by searching journals in several electronic media such as digital libraries and the internet. Journal searches were conducted through Google Scholar and academic literature related to the history of Islamic education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Definition of history

⁸Muhaimin, *Paradigma Pendidikan Islam: Upaya Mengefektifkan Pendidikan Agama Islam di Sekolah*, Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2011, hlm. 38–40.

⁹Mestika Zed, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan*, Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2008, hlm. 3.

The word for history in Arabic is *tarih*, which literally means the determination of time or period. The science of “history” basically refers to a discipline that covers or discusses the recording of events and the causes behind those events¹⁰. In English literature, the concept of ‘history’ is expressed by the term “history,” which more accurately describes the collective experience of humankind over the course of time¹¹.

Terminologically, history is understood as a branch of science that studies real events that occurred in the past, then describes and organizes them in chronological order, and examines them through reliable evidence. Through this study, history helps humans understand how life and changes in society have taken place over time.¹²

Thus, history in a terminological perspective is not merely a story about events in the past, but rather a scientific study that seeks to explain what events have occurred, when and where they took place, and the reasons and processes that led to them. According to one expert (Moh Ali), history is a science that systematically studies past events and incidents, identifies cause-and-effect relationships, and can be used as a guide for society¹³.

2. Understanding the history of Islamic education

According to some literature, the history of Islamic education is defined as an account of the growth and development of Islamic education over time, from the birth of Islam to the

¹⁰Louis Ma'luf, *Al-Munjid fi al-Lughah wa al-A'lam*, Beirut: Dar al-Masyriq, t.t., hlm. 58.

¹¹Kuntowijoyo, *Pengantar Ilmu Sejarah*, Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2013, hlm. 18–19.

¹²Sjamsuddin, *Heliu, Metodologi Sejarah*, Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2012, hlm. 13–15.

¹³Moh. Ali, *Pengantar Ilmu Sejarah Indonesia*, Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2005, hlm. 12.

present day¹⁴. In this case, the history of Islamic education includes studies on the journey of education for Muslims throughout history based on concrete evidence and reliable sources.

As'ad Thoha stated that Islamic education began when the Prophet Muhammad SAW was appointed as the Messenger, where he himself was the first and foremost teacher in transferring religious education to his companions¹⁵. Thus, the history of Islamic education traces how the learning and teaching process took place since the prophetic period.

Endang Saifuddin Anshari defines Islamic education as a process of guidance carried out by an educator towards the spiritual and physical development of students using materials and content sourced from Islamic teachings, with the aim of forming a complete Islamic personality¹⁶. This understanding explains that Islamic educational history contains elements of process, purpose, and sources of educational values that are unique to Islam.

3. History of islamic educatio

The history of Islamic education cannot be separated from the journey of Islamic civilization, because education has been an important element in the lives of Muslims since the early days of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Broadly speaking, the development of Islamic education can be divided into three main phases, namely the classical, medieval, and modern periods¹⁷. This division illustrates the process of change and progress in Islamic

¹⁴Abuddin Nata, *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam*, Jakarta: Prenadamedia Group, 2014, hlm. 5.

¹⁵As'ad Thoha, *Pendidikan Islam dalam Perspektif Sejarah*, Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 2000, hlm. 23.

¹⁶Endang Saifuddin Anshari, *Wawasan Islam: Pokok-Pokok Pikiran tentang Islam dan Umatnya*, Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 1983, hlm. 85.

¹⁷Abuddin Nata, *Sejarah Sosial Intelektual Islam*, Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 2013, hlm. 18.

education that took place gradually, adapting to the social and cultural dynamics as well as the demands of society in each era.

During the Classical Period (610–1250 AD), Islamic education entered a fundamental stage. The Qur'an and Hadith became the main sources of knowledge, containing not only commands and rules, but also historical stories, moral messages, and explanations of various aspects of life¹⁸. The life of the Prophet Muhammad SAW became a concrete example of ideal education, both in theory and practice. The educational methods and processes exemplified by the Prophet became the main foundation for the development of education in the Islamic tradition.

with his companions as students. The Prophet Muhammad SAW was not only an educator, but also a charismatic role model with extraordinary spiritual power in managing material, place, and conditions of society and teaching aids. The teaching and learning process carried out by the Prophet to his companions proved to be very effective and efficient¹⁹. The material presented by him came from the revelations of the Qur'an and the words of the Messenger of Allah, which later became known as the Hadith.

During the Middle Ages (1250-1800 AD), three major empires, namely the Ottoman Empire in Turkey, the Mughal Empire in India, and the Safavid Empire in Persia, played important roles. Although these empires showed significant progress in the military field, their

¹⁸Ahmad Syalabi, *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam*, Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1976, hlm. 32

¹⁹Abuddin Nata, *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam*, Jakarta: Prenadamedia Group, 2014, hlm. 27.

development of Islamic education was still relatively weak when compared to the progress of education in Europe²⁰.

In the Modern period (1800-present), the development of science and technology played a central role. Initially, the Islamic world was under the influence of colonialism, but in the mid-20th century, the Islamic world began to rise and free itself from colonial rule²¹. The process of Islamic educational reform began in order to adapt to the changing times, by adjusting the curriculum, methods, and educational situation in a more rational and professional manner. The factors that drove this reform included internal factors, such as the Muslim community's need for a better education system, and external factors, such as contact with the West, which encouraged Muslims to learn from Western progress²².

The renewal of Islamic education can be grouped into three forms, namely renewal that imitates the Western education system, renewal that returns to authentic Islamic teachings, and renewal based on the spirit of nationalism²³. The renewal process includes changes in the political power structure, curriculum development, and improvement in the quality of educators. In essence, Islamic education has a very broad scope, covering religious education, morals, science, ethics, manners, and even physical aspects. Through Islamic education, all human potential can be developed—from the cognitive, affective, to

²⁰Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, hlm. 201–230.

²¹Muhaimin, *Pengembangan Kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam*, Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2012, hlm. 34.

²²Azyumardi Azra, *Rekonstruksi Kritis Ilmu dan Pendidikan Islam*, Jakarta: Logos, 2000, hlm. 67.

²³Abuddin Nata, *Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, Jakarta: Prenadamedia Group, 2016, hlm. 112.

psychomotor domains—so that individuals with noble character and well-rounded development can be realized²⁴.

4. The scope of the history of Islamic education

a. Object

The object of study in Islamic education history is the facts of Islamic education in the form of information about the growth and development of Islamic education, whether formal, informal, or non-formal²⁵. Thus, what is obtained is what is called an all-encompassing history, which is in line with the role of Islam as a religion that calls for goodness, prevents evil, and leads to a prosperous life, both materially and spiritually²⁶. However, as a branch of science, the object of Islamic education history is generally not much different from that of other objects of education history, such as the characteristics it possesses. In other words, it is subjective history.

b. Method

Regarding the methods of Islamic educational history, although there are specific aspects, the rules of historical writing apply²⁷. The practice of historical research and writing involves a unique combination of intellectual skills. Historians must master analytical tools to assess the authenticity of the actual material, and the combination of collecting and interpreting this material into a meaningful story. As experts, historians must have a critical framework of thinking both in examining the material and in using

²⁴Hasan Langgulung, *Asas-Asas Pendidikan Islam*, Jakarta: Al-Husna, 1988, hlm. 102.

²⁵Zuhairini dkk., *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam*, Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 2015, hlm. 14.

²⁶Abuddin Nata, *Pendidikan Islam di Era Global*, Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 2010, hlm. 21.

²⁷Sjamsuddin, Helius, *Metodologi Sejarah*, Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2012, hlm. 17.

its sources. To understand the history of Islamic education, an approach or method that can be used is a combination of descriptive, comparative, and synthetic analysis methods. With the descriptive method, the teachings of Islam brought by the Prophet Muhammad, as contained in the Qur'an and explained by the Sunnah, especially those directly related to Islamic education, can be described and explained as they are. In this way, the contents of Islamic teachings can be understood²⁸.

CONCLUSION

In the study of Islamic education history, various methods are used to explore and analyze the development of Islamic education from the past to the present. Oral, observational, and documentary methods are used for data collection, while descriptive, comparative, analytical, and synthetic methods are used to analyze and present the information found.

Oral methods involve interviews with eyewitnesses or informants, while observational methods involve direct observation of related phenomena. Documentary methods rely on written documents such as classical texts and historical records to obtain information. Once the data has been collected, descriptive methods are used to accurately describe the situation, while comparative methods compare Islamic teachings with other historical facts.

Analytical methods are used to identify and analyze important components in Islamic education, while synthetic methods combine elements of the history of Islamic education to

²⁸Amayulis, *Ilmu Pendidikan Islam*, Jakarta: Kalam Mulia, 2012, hlm. 31.

form a comprehensive picture. Through a combination of these methods, researchers can understand the development of Islamic education from various perspectives and analyze it comprehensively.

In conclusion, historical methods of Islamic education are important tools in understanding and analyzing the development of Islamic education over time. By using these various methods, researchers can present accurate and comprehensive information about the role and influence of Islamic education in human civilization.

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