

Restoring the Social and Cultural Education Mission of Islamic Boarding Schools in the Flow of Modernization

Arina Fitriya Azhari¹, Nauvi Nadia², Ali Fikri Mubarok³

¹UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Indonesia, ²Cairo University, Egypt, ³Kajian Islam Intensif (KAIFA) Doha, Qatar

Email correspondence: nauvinadia04@gmail.com

Abstract

This article aims to reposition Islamic boarding schools as an Islamic educational institution that has the opportunity to make a great contribution to the formation of the identity of the Indonesian nation in the future. The discussion involves the analysis of philosophy, history, sociology, anthropology, theology, and education. The data is collected textually and contextually. Islamic boarding schools are the first Islamic educational institutions (13th century) that focus on shaping Indonesian values, morals, and socio-cultural character. Some of the orders he inherited were in the form of Indonesian Islamic law, architecture, and puppetry. There are three basic characteristics that allow Islamic boarding schools to carry out this mission; 1) an integrated institutional system with the community; 2) an intensive learning system (dormitory); and 3) based on universal Islamic teachings that can be interpreted in three dimensions, namely mystical, ontological and functional. Strategically, the three can restore the mission of the Islamic boarding schools as a character builder, moral (moral), social (ummah), culture (adab), and religiosity of the Indonesian nation.

Keywords

Social, Cultural, Islamic Boarding School

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INTRODUCTION

The big problem that is currently being faced by the Indonesian nation is the emergence of moral decadence in the social and cultural life of its citizens. This is marked by the increasing number of cases of social deviation that occur. Brawls between students, students, villages, and football supporters always decorate the front pages of newspapers. News of child abuse and rape has become a common thing heard by residents, especially in big cities such as Jakarta, Surabaya and Medan ([Kompas, 2012](#)). This is not solely a symptom of the end of the year but indicates that there has been a shift in social values and morals in the life of the Indonesian people, who previously obeyed the rules, norms, customs, culture, and religion. The existing rules were never read. Customs and social norms have begun to be forgotten. Culture and religion are only memories that become a symbol of the piety of all its adherents.

The problem of moral decadence is part of the problem of education. Even some of the cases above, such as brawls between students and students are directly part of the education problem. The public views that the rampant brawls between students and the proliferation of motorcycle gangs are caused by the weakness of educational institutions in instilling moral values and the lack of understanding of the existing socio-cultural system with the demands of an increasingly rapidly changing and diverse era (*bhineka*). Education so far has been focused on efforts to teach ready-made knowledge rather than developing new

knowledge in accordance with the development of the times (Hasbullah, 1999: p. 105-106). In connection with this fact, what needs to be done by education stakeholders is to build an education system that allows the school system (formal educational institutions) to be closer to the social and cultural system. The social and cultural system in Indonesia that is *gay* and *diverse* must be reflected in the education system. The character of the era that is globalized and full of competition must also be depicted in the education system. Because, in fact, philosophically, the school system, society, and culture must be summarized in a broad concept of the meaning of how to be a good human being, as an individual or in his environment (Suparno, 2002: p. 13).

In the social, cultural, and political context of Indonesian nationality, education is the main hope for improving the quality and character of Indonesian society. Judging from its basic role, education seeks to improve the quality of Indonesian society which emphasizes more on the development of basic qualities, such as faith, piety, personality, intelligence, discipline, and intelligence. However, from the perspective of its purpose, education has strategic value as an investment for the future, both individually and as a nation. In theory, education is the basis for economic growth, the development of science and technology, reducing poverty, and improving the quality of a nation's civilization. Education in this sense, if managed properly, can maximize the potential of natural resources to be used productively and wisely, as a future handle for the nation's generation, in order to prepare and meet the needs of life in the face of changes that are difficult to predict (Muhajir, 2011: p. 72).

Qomar (2006: p. 226) expands the scope of the meaning of education as a social and cultural system that plays a role in developing civilization so as to achieve the glory of mankind over nature (*rahmatan lil alamin*). Islamic education as one of the parts of the implementation of education in Indonesia is required to play an active role in solving the social and cultural problems of the Indonesian nationality. Theologically, Islamic education seeks to instill in the next generation of the nation the values of the Qur'an and hadith so that it becomes a way of life. The problem is that the values of the Qur'an and the hadith still have to be interpreted and interpreted in the context of Indonesianness and the universe, and at the same time protect ourselves from the onslaught of globalization that is increasingly ferocious.

Islamic boarding schools are one of the Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia which is seen as having a socio-cultural image of Indonesia on the one hand, and on the other hand upholding the universal values of the Qur'an and hadith. Systematically, the main mission of the Islamic boarding schools is to teach religious sciences such as *Sufism*, *fiqh*, *aqidah*, and *morals*. Historically, Islamic boarding schools actually describe social and cultural education that is explored from the basic values of Indonesian independence (Baso, 2012: p. 5).

METHOD

This research basically uses a descriptive qualitative research method, which is to describe as deeply as possible how to restore the social and cultural education mission of Islamic boarding schools in the current context. Research data is obtained from relevant sources and references, such as books and journals. Data analysis was carried out using descriptive analysis techniques followed by drawing conclusions critically.

This paper intends to position Islamic boarding schools as one of the Islamic educational institutions in the future that has the opportunity to make a great contribution to the Indonesian nation, on the one hand in dampening the rapid flow of lifestyle changes and on the other hand developing Indonesian identity to the stage of world civilization. This paper is part of the study of Islamic education because the subject being studied is Islamic boarding schools which are one of the typical Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. The viewpoint of discussion involves the analysis of philosophy, history, sociology, anthropology, theology, and education. Data is collected textually (document analysis) and contextually (observation). The social and cultural phenomena that have encompassed the entire life of the Indonesian nation since the birth of Islamic boarding schools (17th century), colonization, and the period of independence until now are studied and formulated in a scientific framework of Islamic education.

DISCUSSION

From Theological Mission to Indonesian Socio-Culture

Dhofier said that the origins of Islamic boarding schools are closely related to the history of the entry of Islam into the archipelago. Islam began to be known in the archipelago in the 7th century AD thanks to the services of Gujarati Muslim traders. From the 11th century, Islam began to enter the cities around the coast of Indonesia and intensively spread from the 13th century to the end of the 17th century. At that time, Islamic centers of power were established, such as in Aceh, Demak, Giri, Ternate, and Gowa. From here, Islam spread to all corners of the archipelago through traders, guardians, scholars, and missionaries by establishing Islamic boarding schools (Java), *dayah* (Aceh), and *surau* (Malay). Since then, Islamic boarding schools has become part of Indonesia's social and cultural treasures. The intersection of Islamic boarding schools with Western Culture (Dutch), according to Geertz, has formed independence, thickened love for the homeland (*hubbul wathan*), and instilled a patriotic attitude.

Although initially, it was only a religious spiritual education institution, Islamic boarding schools then prioritized social and cultural mental development for their students. The socio-cultural existence of Islamic boarding schools is increasingly real when developing itself into various religious and community organizations, such as Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and Persis. In its development, Islamic boarding schools are increasingly developing in remote villages. Thus, in the social and cultural context, Islamic boarding schools have socio-cultural roots that are typical of Indonesia/*Indigeneus*.

One of the main characteristics of Islamic boarding schools is their familiarity with the community. There is a coupling between theoretical and practical aspects. The material taught in Islamic boarding schools is not only about *monotheism*, *law*, and *fiqh* but also the moral aspect whose expansion and understanding penetrate the basic values of human life, as social and cultural beings (A'la, 2006: p. 17-18). Islamic boarding schools are influenced by the social and cultural environment of the Indonesian people. In Java and Madura, Islamic boarding schools occupy strategic positions in various levels of society (Sukamto, 1999: p. 12). The world of Islamic boarding schools has become a reference for the community in various dimensions of life. The things developed by the Islamic boarding schools world then become a model for the community. This fact shows that Islamic boarding schools have a strong role in the formation of the character of students, both as individuals and as a society

(Ghazali, 2003: p. 3).

The vision and mission of Islamic boarding schools not only emphasize the mission of education but also da'wah. The educational mission is described from the purpose of Islamic boarding schools, which is to teach Islamic religious knowledge. The mission of da'wah is marked by the position of Islamic boarding schools that play a role in transforming social and cultural values that are in line with the Qur'an and hadith. Theologically, the mission of Islamic boarding schools is to fight against all forms of superstition and polytheistic behavior of people in Indonesia with religion and monotheism (Mastuhu, 1994: p. 47). Ethically and sociologically, Islamic boarding schools struggle to eradicate division, prostitution, robbery, gambling, and other social diseases. Anthropologically, Islamic boarding schools strive to build a safe, peaceful, and creative society (Qomar, 2006: p. 11).

Nowadays, Islamic boarding schools have a great contribution in developing the potential of the community by making various creative ventures that are start-ups and providing life examples in various things to the community at large. Here, Islamic boarding schools are a reference for social welfare in the community. The charm of Islamic boarding schools that causes the allure of the community is always based on the concept of individual and community development that is independent, intelligent, plural, tolerant, cosmopolitan, and ethical. This shows that Islamic boarding schools as one of the Islamic educational institutions that strategically continue to strive to shape the social and cultural character of the dignified Indonesian nation.

Social and Cultural Education Development Strategy of Islamic Boarding Schools

The ethical foundation of social and cultural education in Islamic boarding schools is moral or character education. All students who study at Islamic boarding schools must learn to have noble ethics, namely honesty, discipline, and responsibility. A number of dispositions formulated in character education require students (students) not only to be intelligent but also to have the power to carry out something that is considered right and able to make others give support to what they are doing (Munir, 2010: p. 2-3). Islamic boarding schools are designed to prepare their students to become people of religious knowledge and practice them in society (Arifien, 1993: p. 248).

Mastuhu (1994: p. 55) formulated that Islamic boarding schools are traditional Islamic educational institutions to study, understand, explore, and practice Islamic teachings by emphasizing the importance of religious morality as a guideline for daily behavior. The moral values that are always taught in Islamic boarding schools are sincerity, independence, simple lifestyle, ascetic (*ukhrawi*) and always being oneself.

Islamic boarding schools enrich the thinking of their students with religious lessons, raise morals, train the spirit of sacrifice, respect spiritual and humanitarian values, teach honest and moral attitudes and behaviors, and prepare students to live a simple and clean life. Each student is taught to accept religious ethics above other ethics. The purpose of Islamic boarding school education is not to gain worldly power and wealth, but solely to fulfill obligations and serve God (Dhofier, 1994: p. 21).

Qomar (2005: p. 6-7) details the special purpose of Islamic boarding schools to be, *first*, educating students to become Muslims who fear Allah SWT, have a noble character, are intelligent, skilled, healthy, and understand the social and cultural norms of Pancasila. *Second*, educating students to make themselves scholars and missionaries who are sincere,

steadfast, resilient, and always practice Islamic teachings in a complete and dynamic manner. *Third*, educating students to acquire personality and strengthen the spirit of nationality in order to grow human beings who can be responsible for the development of the nation and state. *Fourth*, educating micro (family) and regional (rural, community, and environment) development extension workers. *Fifth*, educating students to become skilled in various sectors, especially mental-spiritual development. *Sixth*, helping students improve the social welfare of the community in their environment. That means Islamic boarding schools emphasize the enforcement of Islamic values as a source of moral teachings in daily life. Islamic moral values are the key to a person's success in life in society. As Dixon believes, when religion as the strongest foundation for moral formation has weakened, it is difficult to find a replacement (Thoha, 1996: p. 297).

The learning process in Islamic boarding schools emphasizes guidance for mental, mental, and heart discipline, so that it can direct students to achieve high ethics (Hadi, 2012: p. 7). Moral development in Islamic boarding schools synergizes with cultural formation. Instilling morals is less effective if it is done formally and structurally, so another complementary approach is needed, namely the cultural approach (Zaini 1995: p. 92). The cultural approach assumes that religion has three functions, namely mystical, ontological, and functional (van Peursen, 1988: p. 63).

The mystical function of religion in Islamic boarding schools is illustrated in the learning activities of *monotheism* and *tirakatan* (against lust). The spirit of monotheism is institutionalized in the behavior of surrendering to the god of the universe. The ontological function of religion in Islamic boarding schools is described in an effort to develop a mindset (teaching *manthiq*/logic and Arabic). Functional religion in Islamic boarding schools is manifested in the activities of students when cultivating together agricultural land owned by kiai/Islamic boarding schools. Islamic boarding schools functions to evacuate religion by directing the knowledge of students to a world outside of themselves, namely the community (Roibin, 2009: p. 75). The operationalization of the three religious functions in Islamic boarding schools is manifested in social, educational, religious and political organizations based on figures and values of Islamic boarding schools such as Nahdhatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, Syarikat Islam, PERTI (Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah) and Masyumi (Abdullah, 1987: p. 29-35).

These three spirits of religious life should be reflected in all aspects of Islamic boarding school life today. Islamic boarding schools are currently challenged not only to solve the problems of the Indonesian nation and state but also to be able to face and even contribute to building a global world civilization and keep many of these problems (Tafsir, 1996: p. 1).

Steenbrink (1994: p. 16) emphasized that in order for Islamic boarding schools to be not only respected as a place of learning but more seen as a residential institution where all of their lives are fulfilled and infused with Islamic religious values, everything that is done in Islamic boarding schools should be done on the basis of awareness and implementation of universal, open and progressive. Islamic boarding schools are really used as a place to practice learning about religion and a very wide range of outside life. Studying at a Islamic boarding schools is not only to gain knowledge but also to practice knowledge.

There is a fundamental difference between character education which tends to be formalized and moral education in Islamic boarding schools which on the one hand requires students to practice directly and on the other hand, is based on universal Islamic on

universal Islamic social and cultural morals. Islamic boarding schools uses a holistic approach in their education. All activities carried out in the Islamic boarding schools become a unit to help students to achieve their desired goals. The education time that lasts for 24 hours every day allows Islamic boarding schools to have a wider opportunity to equip their students than the conventional school system which on average only uses 6-7 hours every day. The presence of ustaz and kiai who control the daily life of their students makes the Islamic boarding schools more effective in implementing learning. However, the synergy between character education and socio-cultural moral education in Islamic boarding schools needs to be carried out.

Synergizing with Character Education

Intelligent people often serve people who have ideas. People who have ideas of serving people who have strong character. People who have a strong character serve those who have a big vision, brilliant ideas, and a firm ideology (Munir, 2010: p. 1). That means a person with character is not only intelligent in thinking but also has the strength and ability to make others provide support for the things he does. People with strong character have the potential to make a difference in the world.

The importance of students having strong personalities and characters has been mandated in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 2 of 2003 concerning the National Education System (Sisdiknas Law). The goal of national education is a formulation of the quality of Indonesian human beings that must be developed by every educational unit. Therefore, the formulation of national education goals is the basis for the development of cultural education and the nation's character.

In an individual context, education is a conscious and systematic effort to develop the potential of students (Uhbiyati, 1997: p. 9). In the context of the nation's social and cultural culture, education is an effort to prepare the young generation in continuing their social and national life so that they are better and able to answer future challenges. Sustainability is sought through the inheritance of social and cultural characteristics that have been owned by the nation so that the quality of people's lives in the future will be much better. A number of social and cultural characters are actively lived and developed by students according to the character of their times. Munir (2010: p. 2-3) said that character means "carving". The engraved character will stick strongly. Carvings are not easily worn out and are able to last for a long time. Removing the engraving is the same as removing the carved object. The carving is attached and blends with the object. Carving is a mindset, attitude, and action that is strongly attached to a person/group of people.

In the Islamic boarding schools environment, the character is imbued with morals. The Islamic boarding schools seeks to build the nature and behavior patterns of students based on the spirit of becoming a *kamil* person. Character education in Islamic boarding schools seeks to make students recognize, care and internalize the value of *kamil* people (Khan, 2010: p. 2). "Insan kamil" is formulated in Islamic boarding schools as a system of instilling values, attitudes, and behaviors to students based on the components of knowledge, awareness, willingness, and action to always practice these values, to Allah SWT, self, others, the environment, nature, and the nation. Character education in Islamic boarding schools is directed at the formation of national culture and Islamic boarding schools. The values that underlie the behaviors, traditions, habits, and symbols practiced by all citizens and a united

community prepare the land for the community to always be united (synergistic) to develop the nation's character.

As an educational institution, Islamic boarding schools has two main tasks, namely organizing educational activities that aim to regenerate scholars, smart and knowledgeable, and become a consistent education center. Islamic boarding schools always instills the spirit of independence, entrepreneurship, and independence that does not bother others (Saad, 2003: p. 46). The Islamic boarding schools also seeks to form a patient soul, fear of Allah, generosity, *tawakkal*, *tadabbur*, instilling awareness that life in this world is solely a provision for the hereafter, fostering brotherhood and surrendering to Allah (Al-Balali, 2003: p. 40-80).

In the context of formal education, the education of social character and culture of Islamic boarding schools has mostly been taken over by madrasah education (MI, MTs, and MA) and Islamic religious universities (STAIN, IAIN, and UIN). There are some of these formal Islamic educational institutions that still reflect the tradition of Islamic boarding schools. The tradition of Islamic boarding schools that is not widely practiced by formal Islamic education (non-Islamic boarding schools) is the religious *tabligh* for the community which used to be carried out by kiai interactively traveling from one region to another (Said and Affan, 1987: p. 102). At the university level, religious *tabligh* is replaced by training, seminars, and conferences that are more enjoyed by urban educated. The religious *tabligh* model carried out by Islamic boarding schools is an ideal illustration of the diagram of the connection between the world of education and the community (Barnadib, 1995: p. 86).

Education is a product of society (1) Education has an effect on society, by fostering change for the better (2). The community also affects education (3) This process takes place continuously. Educational institutions that carry out educational activities for 24 hours and directly interact with the community are Islamic boarding schools. Today, the contact between education (higher) and the community is still directly channeled through real work lectures (KKN). However, the substance is different from Islamic boarding schools. The existence of Islamic boarding schools is highly determined by the community, while the existence of KKN does not depend on the community at all.

CONCLUSION

As the oldest and most distinctive educational institution in Indonesia, the contribution of Islamic boarding schools to society and the nation is still relevant and necessary. When morals and socio-cultural characters like today are questioned, Islamic boarding schools seem to be sidelined. This is the negative impact of the terrorism action of the perpetrators with a Islamic boarding schools background. In fact, historically, Islamic boarding schools was the first institution to focus on instilling moral values and socio-cultural character in Indonesia. The Islamic boarding schools was born from intensive social and cultural interaction between the coastal residents of the archipelago and Muslim pilgrims from Gujarat and Arabia. These interactions are not solely economically motivated but also contain religious, social, and cultural missions. Some of the social order of the remnants of Majapahit is maintained and synergized with Islamic law. Some of their cultural heritage was also developed into new architectural and puppet arts. Spectacle (puppetry) turns into guidance (religious). At least, there are three basic characteristics that enable Islamic boarding schools to make a great contribution to developing social and cultural education;

1) Islamic boarding schools is the most integrated Islamic educational institution (tabligh) with the community. Islamic boarding schools have never strictly determined their student admission system. Islamic boarding schools belongs to the community, therefore the community openly and voluntarily entrusts their children to the kiai; 2) the learning system is intensive because students for 24 hours live in the same accommodation. This condition allows kiai and students to interact in an intentional example; 3) The character of learning in Islamic-based Islamic boarding schools can be interpreted universally, including in social and cultural contexts. Islam has three functions at once, namely mythical (monotheism), ontological (thought/science) and functional (building civilization). These three functions, synergistically and strategically, can position Islamic boarding schools as an institution that carries out the mission of educating moral character (moral), social (ummah), cultural ('urf) and religious characters of Indonesian citizens and nation. If only one of the three functions is lost, the Islamic boarding schools will lose its charisma. That is what several Islamic boarding schools (individuals) do in the name of religion, legalizing acts of terror. Terrorism does not reflect a functional Islam that seeks to create a safe and peaceful social order and build an advanced civilization.

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