

Educational Democracy on The Perspective of Islamic Educational Philosophy

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Abstract

This study examined the concept of educational democracy based on perspective of Islamic educational philosophy to see how Islamic values and democracy are correlated in education. This study aimed to increase our understanding of how democracy can be implemented in education system for Islamic principles. This research method involves a thorough examination of the literature and a philosophical analysis of texts related to education. This study shows that combination of democracy and Islam in education creates a balanced foundation of freedom, justice, and moral obligation. This study is expected to develop educational policies be more contextual, relevant and in accordance with Islamic values in the process of building a democratic education system rooted in Islamic values; and can help practitioners to do another study in the future.

Keywords: Democracy; Education; Philosophy.

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji konsep demokrasi pendidikan berdasarkan perspektif filsafat pendidikan Islam untuk melihat bagaimana nilai-nilai Islam dan demokrasi berkorelasi dalam pendidikan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan pemahaman tentang bagaimana demokrasi dapat diterapkan dalam sistem pendidikan berdasarkan prinsip-prinsip Islam. Metode penelitian ini melibatkan pemeriksaan menyeluruh terhadap literatur dan analisis filosofis terhadap teks-teks yang berkaitan dengan pendidikan. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa kombinasi demokrasi dan Islam dalam pendidikan menciptakan landasan yang seimbang antara kebebasan, keadilan, dan kewajiban moral. Kajian ini diharapkan dapat mengembangkan kebijakan pendidikan yang lebih

kontekstual, relevan dan sesuai dengan nilai-nilai Islam dalam proses membangun sistem pendidikan demokratis yang berakar pada nilai-nilai Islam; dan dapat membantu praktisi untuk melakukan penelitian lain di masa depan.

Kata Kunci: Demokrasi; Pendidikan; Filsafat.

A. Introduction

As the main pillar in character formation and social advancement, education has a strategic role in the context of Islamic civilization. Nowadays, the demand for education includes democratic principles is increasingly dominating. Islamic education, as an integral part of Muslim life, is faced with complex dynamics between democratic principles and Islamic teaching values. The relation between Islamic values and democratic dynamics in education raises essential questions about how we can align democratic principles by distinctive Islamic values.

The conceptual tension between democratic principles and Islamic values is a crucial challenge in designing a holistic education system. On the other hand, democracy emphasizes freedom of expression and active participation; and also Islamic values often place unique moral and ethical boundaries. There is a need for a deep understanding of these

two frameworks of thought, as well as identification of common ground in allowing harmonization on educational context.

Islamic educational philosophy, as a conceptual framework rooted in religious teachings, becomes an essential unifier in understanding the relationship between democracy and Islamic education. Understanding the concept of "Educational Democracy" from the view of Islamic educational philosophy can provide a strong basis for designing educational policies; in line with Islamic principles and accommodate democratic aspirations. Considering the important of continuing study, since the development education will continue to face the journey of civilization that has various problems and it cannot be avoided.

Mulkan (2019) stated that various Islamic educational practices are more guided by theoretical frameworks and foundations originating from educational technology based on theories or knowledge that have been labelled

secular. Another reality can be seen from the theory of Islamic education (or what is called science), that should be based on theory at the philosophical level; namely the philosophy of Islamic education or the philosophy of *tarbiyah*.

Also as stated by Abdullah (2009), life in this complex global era actually demands education to be able to enlighten civilization. In particular, the Islamic education that fully structured and systematized is very much needed by Muslims; the wider community, including state administrators and leading figures of religious socio-political movements. The Islamic education is to avoid truth claims or feel being the most correct, deciding something unilaterally and subjectively, so that new concepts are needed in serious learning that can enlighten the wider community to be able to think clearly, politely, ethically, and full of rational and logical considerations.

In this case, it needs to be understood that quality education does not only refer to academic aspects, but also includes the formation of character, morality and active involvement in social life. How the concept of democracy can be properly integrated in

the context of Islamic education, thereby creating a learning environment in accordance with the principles of Islamic teachings, is an essential question that requires in-depth exploration.

Based on the presentation of several main issues and theories, it is hoped this study can make a significant contribution to the enrichment of the discourse regarding the relationship between democracy and education within the framework of Islamic thought as has been widely discussed by previous studies and authors, as well as stimulate further discussion about system education demands of the times. It is hoped that it can become a conceptual and practical basis for the development of an education system that reflects the Islamic values as well as the spirit of democracy that continuously to be discussed today.

B. Research Methodology

This study used the methodology of qualitative paradigm, where the data collection used library research approach; a basic theory that takes data from library, in the form of relevant books or journals and also *Al-Qur'an*, *Al-Hadith* and several books of

interpretation related to this study. In this study, data processing used descriptive steps; the stage that describes something about the studied problem to be a complete figure as expected in this study.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Essence of Democracy and

Islam

Discussions about the definition of democracy specifically and its relationship to Islam have been studied by many experts. The meanings and explanations given have the same substance in terms of language and developed terms.

Linguistically, the word democracy comes from Greek; from the words *demos* (people) and *kratos* (power/government). The term democracy has been known since the fifth century BC, as a response to the bad experience of the monarchy and dictator system in Athens (Ancient Greece). At that time, democracy was applied as a system where all citizens formed a legislative. This was possible by the fact that the population of the country was approximately ten thousand; while the

women, children and slaves had no political rights. There was no separation of powers and all officials were fully responsible to the People's Assembly that was qualified to control various executive, judicial and legislative matters. (Abdillah, 1999). The term of democracy was first introduced by Herodotus around 3000 years ago in Ancient Egypt, then developed by Ancient Greek thinkers during the classical period. (Nafis)

Hornby (1962 : 261) in the English dictionary entitled "The *advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*" that he compiled, stated that the definitions of democracy are: (1) a life concept in a state and society where every adult citizen can participate actively in government through their representatives who are elected in general elections, (2) the government guarantees the freedom of people to speak, express opinions, religion, assemble and associate, upholding supremacy law, and a majority government that respects the rights of minority, and (3) a society whose citizens give each other equal treatment.

The term of democracy is now accepted by mostly governments in the

world, even authoritarian accept the term "democracy" to characterize their regimes and aspirations. Democracy is also a slogan of contemporary political discourse. The consequence is the expansion of the definition of democracy itself; such as Liberal Democracy, Guided Democracy, Popular Democracy, Socialist Democracy, and others. (Idris, 2014). Practically, the term of democracy is often associated with aspects in various areas of life; connected with various religious concepts that have sacred values and bind their adherents, including Islam.

If associated with Islam, the relationship between democracy and Islam is a complex topic and often debated in various community. There are various ideas and interpretations regarding the relationship between democratic systems, that emphasize government by the people, and Islamic principles; include religious teachings, *sharia* law, and moral values. In this case, Islam does not talk only about the concept of state life, but also covers all other aspects of life. Where Islamic values must be underlies every movement and step in actions and interactions.

Indeed, Islam does not recognize the term of democracy. If studied more deeply, the values contained in democracy are actually found in Islamic teaching. In this case, Madaniy (2010: 50) stated that values on Islamic teachings regarding life values must be used as a reference; in accordance with the principles by democracy, namely:

- a. *Al-Musawaha* or know the equality of humanity before Allah SWT. In the Islamic conception, all humans are equal in dignity and position, there is no difference before Allah except on their *taqwa*. Stated in Surah al-Hujurat (49) verse 13.
- b. *Al-Hurriyah*, independence or freedom based on moral and legal responsibility, both in this world and afterlife. This principle is based on a concept that respects human values mean views humans as honourable creatures who are given the freedom to choose by God. In Islam, this principle is the verse of agreement when humans justify the *rububiyah* of Allah; stated in Surah al-A'raf (7) verse 172.

- c. *Al-Ukhuwwah*, the brotherhood of fellow humans as one species created from the same raw material. Stated in Surah al-Baqarah (2) verse 213.
- d. *Al-'adalah*, justice about the fulfilment of human rights as individuals and as citizens of society. Stated in Surah al-Ma'idah (5) verse 8.
- e. *Al-Shura*, deliberation; every citizen has the right to participate in public affairs that concern the common interest. In this case, prioritizing the principle of deliberation as stated by Allah in Surah al-Shura (42) verse 38.
- f. *Al-Mas'uliyah/responsibility*, the principle of responsibility by every power holder. It needs to be understood that power is a trust that must be guarded against and not a blessing that must be grateful for. Particularly for the rulers, the definition of trust means a dual function; as the mandate of God and people.

Since Islam is a universal religion that must be implemented in every aspect of life; the values mentioned above must be a reference in every

activity carried out to realize the ideal Islamic life, or in other words, it must be attempted to be applied or practiced. For every time, an ideology or concept of life emerges that arises from the development of civilization; it will always receive attention and its suitability or validity needs to be studied according to Islamic teachings. It was done, in order to ensure that every journey of human life (especially Muslims) continues on the right path according to Islam; including the term of democracy appears with all the understanding and effects.

However, (Kamil, 2002: 48) stated that not all Islamic scientists agree to accept the concept of democracy as explained above. There are those who consistently do not accept the concept of democracy in the context of society and the state. One of them is *Mutawali al-Sya'rawi*, a great cleric from Egypt who said that Islam and democracy are incompatible, and *syura* itself is not a majority democracy. Usri (2019) also explained that the rejection of this concept can be seen in a theological and epistemological context. Islam provides God as the source of sovereignty, while democracy is in the hands of people. In

another aspect, Islam views that there are limits to deliberation while democracy depends on mutual consensus.

Based on the data above, democracy is still a controversial issue in Islam, both theoretically and practically. It could be caused by differences in ontological and epistemological views of the definition and scope of democracy.

2. Democracy and Education

One of the studies that always associated with democracy today is connecting or looking for a connection between democracy and education. Since the education process cannot be separated with the process of national life, where currently many countries adhere to the ideology of democracy as explained in the previous discussion.

In line with the statement above, Ma'arif (2001: vi) said that democracy is not a discourse, pattern of thought or political behaviour that built once. Democracy is a process in the society and it plays role in building a culture and life system in order to create prosperity, uphold justice, socially, economically and politically. In other words, talking about democracy means the same as talking about the mentality of nation. Through education, the process of

creating a democratic mentality and culture in a society that can be carried out. The boundaries or separation between education, politics, let alone mentality or culture; of course, the form of an object cannot be separated from its contents.

Therefore, if the term of democracy is connected to the world of education, it means that democratic education provides equal opportunities; namely equal obligations, rights and treatment – for every student in achieving the level of education – whether formal, informal or informal – to the best of his ability. This statement is in line with Vebrianto's opinion quoted by Ramayulis (2002)

The relationship between democracy and education was initiated by Dewey (1964: 60-63) who defined democracy as something that takes place within social groups. According to him, education cannot be separated from social life. In this case, there are two main criteria indicated the meaning of democracy in social life. First, the element of mutualistic common interest as well as a form of social control. Second, the interaction between social groups that not only for free interaction,

but interaction that results in changes in social habits. According to Dewey, democracy is not only a concept in government. Democracy is a form of associated life expressed in the form of experience.

Hasbullah (2012) explained that democracy in education is demonstrated by focused on the attention and effort of students in a state of common sense and socio-economics. The educational management and a continuous educational process between tutor and students appear as two areas where educational democracy is seen as a way of life that respects equal treatment and rights for all individuals.

Understanding about democracy is not only related to issues of state life, but has developed in other life issues, including to education. It can also be linked to religious education that will be focused on the next study.

3. Islamic Education Democracy

Islamic Educational Democracy refers to the concept of educational management combines democratic principles with Islamic values and teachings. It includes the various aspects of the education system, from decision

making to teaching methods; with the aim of creating an educational environment that is fair, participatory and in accordance with Islamic principles. The following are several aspects and ways that can be implemented in the context of Islamic education as explained by experts and figures in Islamic education philosophy in providing explanations about the democracy of Islamic education, both in the study of ontology, epistemology and axiology.

According to Al-Syaibani and Langgung (1979), the understanding of democracy and educational democracy in Islamic teachings refers to *Al-Quran* and *Al-Hadith*. The main and highest principle that as the foundation for its implementation is *Al-Qur'an*. One of them is *Surah Asy-Syuura* [42] verse 38 concerning to deliberation as one of the principles of democratic values. It is realized that every human is given their own characteristics in certain things as well as in the way they view, think, and evaluate things; by the deliberation the results of thinking will become one and it will be chosen for the best implemented. In other letters and verses, Allah stated in *Surah An-Nahl* [16] verse

43. This verse indicates that if a person does not understand something, he should not necessarily continue to try to understand it, but he should consult someone who is an expert in his field since without knowledge it will lead to destruction; thus democracy is very important to develop the knowledge for the common good. (Turham AG, 2021)

It is emphasized that the democratic principles of Islamic education are inspired by the principles of democracy in Islam; in other words, Islamic educational democracy is the implementation of the principles of Islamic democracy in Islamic education. Ramayulis (2013) stated that Islamic education can be divided as follows: First, freedom for educators and students; includes freedom to work, to develop potential and opinion. Second, equality for students in Islamic education; since Islam provides equal rights and opportunities for all students to obtain education.

Regarding for freedom of work, Al-Abrasyi (1996) stated that an educator in carrying out the education and learning process must accustom his students to adhere on their own abilities and to think without being fixated on

other people's opinions; then they can determine their own future based on their respective abilities.

While regarding for freedom to develop potential, Nurcholis Madjid (1991: 8) divided *fitrah* into two dimensions, (1) *fitrah al-gharizah*; means the potential within humans since they are born, including reason, passion and conscience. (2) *fitrah al-munazalah* is the external potential that guides and directs *fitrah al-gharizah* to develop her nature through educational potential.

In terms of freedom of opinion, an educator must respect opinions expressed by students. Likewise, in front of an educator, the students should listen and pay attention to what the educator says. In essence, educators and students must respect each other and be able to position themselves within the scope of education. Respecting opinions is one of the requirements in implementing education. Educators who provide guidance and direction to students in expressing their feelings in a natural way, has good morals and praiseworthy and approved by Allah SWT in accordance with the stages of development of their souls. In the process of teaching, educators will not

emphasize freedom of opinion in students, that can impact their souls being restrained, anxiety, restlessness and disappointment.

Regarding equality for students, Islam provides equal opportunities for all students to receive education and teaching. Abdurrahman Saleh Abdullah (1990), stated that education is not seen as a process of forcing an educator to determine every step that must be accepted by students, but it must be seen as a need that every individual has the right to receive education.

In this regard, the Prophet Muhammad SAW said: "seeking knowledge is obligatory for both male and female Muslims". The *hadith* narrated by Ibn Majah reflects that in Islam there is educational democracy, where Islam does not differentiate between male and female in terms of obligations and rights to seek knowledge.

Abudin Nata (2000) also stated that students who enter educational institutions have no difference in degree or dignity, since education is carried out in a room with the aim of gaining knowledge from educators. The educators must teach also the disabled

children as well as the good one on the basis of providing equal learning opportunities for all students.

In another part, Hasbullah (2009) stated that in relation to democratic Islamic education, there are several implementation guidelines in democracy aimed at students and educators as follow:

- a. Mutual respect is a manifestation of the feeling that humans are created by God.
- b. The delivery of teaching must use a good language and practices based on goodness and wisdom.
- c. Treat all students fairly.
- d. Feeling the affection between educators and students.
- e. Embedded the souls of educators and students needs of *taufik* and *hidayah* of Allah.

In its implementation, the democracy of Islamic education can be seen in the learning process based on democratic values; namely by respecting students' abilities, implementing equality of opportunity and paying attention to the diversity of students. This process is aimed in developing independent and responsible individuals. It can be seen also, democracy requires three or four

complementary conditions: a sense of responsibility, open-mindedness, willingness to accept defeat in a sporting manner, and not allowing consciousness to freeze (Maarif, 2015).

Based on the explanation above, From the implementation of democracy in Islamic education as explained above, A. Malik Fajar (1999) borrowed the principles of Islamic education used by Hasim Amir who argued that Islamic education is idealistic education; namely education that is integralist, humanistic, pragmatic and rooted on strong culture; believed that it can be used as educational models as a concept for the democratization of Islamic education in deal with the changes in Indonesia.

Romlah (2018), explained the four models offered as follows:

- a. *Integralist education* is an educational model that focuses on the elements of life; includes on *rabbaniyah* (divinity), *insaniyah* (humanity), and *alamiah* (nature), and is considered important for creating a good life and realizing the *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. Moreover, this education considers humans
- b. *Humanistic education* is an educational model that focuses on humans or humanization; since they are created by God with their nature and must have the ability to live, maintain and develop. Therefore, the position of education can help humanization through respect for human rights; the right to fair treatment, to speak the truth, and to live.
- c. *Pragmatic education* is education that views humans as living creatures who always need something to carry out, maintain and develop their lives, both physical and spiritual; such as thinking, feeling, self-actualization, justice and divine spiritual needs.
- d. *Education rooted in culture* is education based on history, namely the history of humanity and culture of a particular nation, ethnic group or society.

Lestari (2022) stated that the four models of Islamic education mentioned

above are proposals and design models for Islamic education that intended to build a more democratic Islamic education paradigm to deal with the changes in the modern era. It is a natural trend in anticipation of changing times. Since the current condition of society is practical-pragmatic in educational aspirations and hopes; education is not static since it responds to the problems faced by modern, post-modern and global society.

Thus, democracy in Islamic education argues that if it implemented wisely according with Islamic values, the democratic principles can enrich and strengthen the Islamic education system to be more responsive and relevant to the needs of society. The implementation of democracy must be carried out by the aim of creating an educational environment; that moral, fair and based on Islamic principles to encourage the formation of humans who are beneficial to society.

The democracy of Islamic education emerged from the awareness of how important it is to align democratic principles with Islamic values in education. This idea emphasizes Islamic education to

maintain democratic principles; such as freedom, justice, and active participation in educational process. Both combination between these components are hoped to produce a high quality educational environment that is in line with Islamic principles; if the implementation run well, wise and fair.

D. Conclusion

Educational Democracy on the Perspective of Islamic Educational Philosophy will enrich and deepen our understanding about democratic values and Islamic teachings can be integrated in educational context. It means that democracy and Islam are not contradictory concepts; they can go hand in hand and complete each other. This perspective also highlights about the democratic principles be integrated with Islamic values to create an inclusive and fair educational environment.

The education within this framework encourages the active participation from all parties, including students, teachers, parents and community. Deliberation, discussion and consultation are the main values in the decision-making process, creating an

educational democratic environment based on Islamic ethics.

This study is not only about adopting democratic principles in education, but also how being rooted in Islamic values and ethics. It creates a solid foundation for the development of education system to create the best generation who has integrity, care, and sensitive to moral and social values by Islamic concept.

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