Islamic Education in the Perspective of Islam Nusantara

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Abstract

Indonesia has many islands, ethnic and cultures. Each culture has a different character, and it looks on the pattern of life measures to any area where they live. In the life of Indonesian society, all most social and religious activities can not be separated from the rituals and culture, in the ceremonies of birth, marriage and death. Religion and culture converge in life. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish whether it is religious rituals or cultural aspects. This is exactly the essence of Islam Nuantara. The number of variants in cultural influence on people's lives, including educational institutions. Islamic education as an institution and the system should be involved in responding to this situation. Moreover, Islamic education it self is in a community that has a lot of culture. Islamic education should not be viewed Islam Nusantara as an emerging concept, developed or even disappear, but Islamic education makes the discourse can help in the formulation of educational system. Many things should be set within the context of Islam Nusantara, for example curriculum, reference, methodology, teacher qualifications and infrastructure. All elements refer to the appreciation of culture in religious education.

Keywords: *Islamic Education, Culture, Curriculum.*

Abstrak

Indonesia adalah negara yang kaya dengan pulau, suku dan budaya. Masing-masing budaya memiliki karakter yang tidak sama, dan hal ini terlihat pada pola tindakan kehidupan di setiap daerah dimana mereka hidup. Dalam kehidupan masyarakat

Indonesia, hampir semua kegiatan sosial dan keagamaan tidak lepas dari warna ritual dan budaya, dari sejak upacara kelahiran, perkawinan hingga kematian. Agama dan budaya menyatu dalam kehidupan. Terkadang sulit membedakan mana ritual agama dan mana aspek budaya. Inilah sebenarnya yang menjadi hakikat Islam Nusantara. Banyaknya varian dalam budaya yang demikian bukan tidak berpengaruh terhadap kehidupan masyarakat di segala bidang, termasuk lembaga pendidikan. Pendidikan Islam sebagai sebuah lembaga dan sistem secara ideal harus telibat dalam merespon keadaan itu. Terlebih lagi, Pendidikan Islam itu sendiri berada di dalam masyarakat yang majemuk tadi. Pendidikan Islam tidak selalu melihat Islam Nusantara sebagai konsep yang lahir, berkembang atau bahkan dapat menghilang, tetapi pendidikan Islam melihatnya sebagai sebuah wacana yang membantu dalam perumusan sistem pendidikan itu sendiri. Banyak hal yang sebaiknya dibenahi dalam konteks Islam Nusantara, misalnya kurikulum, referensi, kualifikasi guru, metodologi hingga sarana dan prasarana yang relevan.Semua unsur mengacu kepada appresiasi budaya dalam pendidikan agama.

Kata Kunci: *Pendidikan Islam, Budaya, Kurikulum.*

Introduction

Islamic education can be interpreted as a concept and applied knowledge which aim to change society from particular condition to better one based on culture and moral values. Surely, that kind of culture refers to Islamic culture and the moral aspect means Islamic values. Cultural value implies a broad meaning because it contains wide range of aspects in which it relates to supreme traditions embedded in society since early period such as sensible behavior, life balance, accommodating, and peacekeeping.Meanwhile, moral value is a concept rooted in Islam religion and rationality.

None of education is separated from the context of society as well as its development because basically the designer of the entire education system is society itself. Likewise, there is no society without culture. Both are integrated to each other. It is difficult to define a society without its culture nuances and vice versa. So, related to education, including islamic education, cultural aspect is an element which needs more to concern in our educational system. Culture here refers to Indonesian culture which meet the particular spaces of Islamic education in national education context.

Recently, it occurs an idea about Islam Nusantara. It is not difficult to understand what is the meaning of Islam Nusantara especially for moslems who born and raised in Indonesia with full of tradition and culture. Indonesia itself

has many cultures and thousands of islands as Anthony H. John said "Indonesia is an archipelago nation. It consists of over 1,000 islands and any more that are uninhabited Indonesia. Of these, the most widely known are Sumatra, Java, Bali, Borneo, and the celebes."[1]

Islam Nusantara which becomes the major topic in NU Conference 33th at Jombang 1-5 August 2015 has led to a heated political debate. For circles of NU, Islam Nusantara is not a religious sect or new doctrine and it is not intended to replace Islam doctrine. They interpret Islam Nusantara as "Islam" which is tolerant, peacekeeping, and accomodating toward Nusantara(Indonesian) culture. That kind of character partially is built due to its history in which Islamic da'wah in Indonesia is never propagated by eliminating localtradition but embracing and making it as a means of spreading and developing Islam. Meanwhile, for those who are cons, Islam Nusantara is considered having primordial content, compartmentalizing or categorizing Islam, anti-Arabism, even accused as a new strategy of JIL (Jaringan Islam Liberal), Westernism, Zionism, and etcetera. Islam is merely "islam" as the opposites said.[2]

Islam is not only about theological aspect (aqidah) and religious rites (ritual obligations/fikih) merely but also it interrelates to broad aspects of social humanities which are dynamic such as different religion communities, religious institutions, government agencies, morality system, education, politics, tradition, and complicated cultures. Indeed, it is an easy point to receive if only the religion is occupied and learnt for self-interest which is apart from the so-called social context discussed above. But, it feels different even more difficult when that religious education will be taught to another one. In this case, it is absolutely not self-interest anymore since it involves other people. In this context, islamic education as an institution and a system to transform values should work harder and solve the problem seriously on how to interconnect between what is already believed to be true and what always changes dynamically in society, how to implant universal values into people which are full of dynamics, particularities, and cultures.

Islam Nusantara : Relation between Religion and Culture

Edward B. Taylor in his book, Primitive Culture, said human cognition is filled with religious mentality and it is proved by that the material topic people discussed is about the origins of religious beliefs, interrelation between history and

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[1]   Anthony H. Johns, *Indonesia: Islam and Cultural Pluralism", Islam in Asia, Religion, Politics&Society, Ed., John L. Esposito* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 202.

[2]   Akhmad Sahal and Munawir Aziz (ed.), *Islam Nusantara Dari Ushul Fiqh Hingga Paham Kebangsaan* (Bandung: Mizan, 2015), 16.

myth, cosmos and community rites.[3] In similar, Clifford Geertz said a religion is not merely talking about spiritual aspect but it intensely interrelates between religion as the value sources and religion as the knowledge sources. In this case, the religion comes as a model for human actions in whichreligion serves as a guide that directs human behaviors and also as a pattern from human actions—— religion as a result of human knowledge and experience which in a long time can be institutionalized and has mythic powers. Here, the religion is often interpreted as a part of cultural system whose doctrines may resemble formal religious doctrine[4] even frequently be prioritized.

Indonesia is a country which has many cultures. Culture itself is an earliest aspect believed as a way of behaving byIndonesian people. Moreover, it becomes a part of their daily life. Through cultural facilities indonesian people could live well. Religion and religious attitudes come later. Generally, Islam existing in Indonesia is the religion wrapped up with culture. Recently moderate group such as Muhammadiyah tries to separate explicitly between religion and culture. Muhammadiyah is well known as a moderate Islam group in Indonesia. However, it reacts softly when intersecting to different foreign cultures. Seen from theological aspect (*aqidah*), Muhammadiyah is moderate group that makes improvements revolutionarily while Nahdatul Ulama makes improvement in a more evolutionary manner.

Culture is an art as well as a value, norm, and symbolic object of daily life. Eventhough culturegives more concern to tradition and social reproduction, it also pays attention to creativity and change. Chris Barker stated that such a concept of culture is precisely defined as antropology concept since it focuses on the meaning of daily life, value (abstract ideas), norm (principle or limited rules) and material symbolic objects. The meaning is not constructed by the individual so that the notion of culture refers to the meaning shared collectively in society.[5] Also, two people froma similar culture will interpret the world more or less in a similar way so that when they express the ideas, sense of the world, it is understandable by each other. Eventually, the culture itself depends on the participant's meaningfull interpretation of what happened around them and how they understand this world mostly in a same way.[6]

Burrhus Frederic Skinner, as quoted by Hall on Theories of Personality, stated, environment including culture has big influence to establish the individual's

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[3]   EB Taylor, *Primitive Culture* (London: J. Murray, 1891), 135.

[4]   Roibin, *Relation between Religion&Culture of Contemporary Society* (Malang: UIN Malang Press, 2009), 75.

[5]   Chris Barker, *Cultural StudiesTheory and Practice* (London: Sage Publications, 2000), 40.

[6]   S Hall, (ed.), *The Work of Representation, Representation* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 2.

character .[7] Then, personality is a consistent pattern of people behaviour which reinforces what they experienced. The culture gives complexion on each individual's experience in the group. It has instilled an attitude model steering the individual to act against a wide range of issues including the way to practize a religion.

Commonly, the scientists from west believed that Islam is widespread in Indonesia firstly brought by moslem traders. It means Islam spreads in particular areas through trading activities.[8] An elaborated theory declared that those moslem traders get mixed marriage with the natives. These mixed-marriage moslem families who are nucleus of Moslem community then have a significant role to spread Islam. Arabic, India, and Persian cultures brought in the early period when Islam coming to Indonesia interact with the local culture (Javanese). Due to its flexibility,Indonesian culture rooted in anymistic-dynamistic beliefs finally could survive among modern Islam culture invasion.

Islam then gives impact onnew dynamics of social-religious life of people in Nusantara as well as their cultural treasureand science. Cultural assimilation takes place where it in the beginning triggers conflicts but then delivers any kinds of Islam called local "Islam" that is far different from Islam in its great tradition. Many researchers positively give appreciation by regarding that all forms of Islam articulation in a certain area should be different from another one. Therefore, this symptom is considered as a creative way in order to understand and interpret Islam in accordance with their own culture and enriches or contributes on Islamic cultural treasure as well.

Ruth Benedict, as Daniel L. Pals quoted, explains that culture is the most important aspect to understand individual's character. When conducting field research, Benedict observed the differences between Indian Pueblo's characters which were described calm and graceful and other wilder tribes such as Pima and Kwakiutl tribal groups. He found that such a difference lied on fundamental cultural character of Pueblo tribe emphasizing on harmony while another tribal groups did not. Benedict views culture as the pattern, a kind of group personality in which each member regard it.[9]

In Indonesia, keep harmony is character of the majority moslems. They are able to adapt with the environment and culture as well as the nature. Geertz views that Islam in Indonesia is different from Islam in Maroko which is characterized more extreme. That moslems in Indonesia live from farming while Moslems

[7]   Calvin S. Hall and Gardner Lindzey, *Theories of Personality* (New York: Santa Barbara, 1978), 326.
[8]   Bryan S. Turner, *Religion* , p. 277.
[9]   Daniel L. Pals, *Seven Theories of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 237.

in Maroko live from shepherding since their land dominated by dessert leads them to be more agressive and strong-willed to survive may become the factors which distinguish between both. Commonly, farming as livelihood for moslems in Indonesia is inherited by Hindu and Buddhist doctrines that emphasizeon meditation, inwardness, and spirituality. In the late 1300s, Islam began to reach slowly the islands through commerce in a form of tolerant India culture which was still mixed with the values of Hindu, Buddhist, and mythism. Therefore, Islam grows in Indonesia in a flexible manner in which it is characterized as adaptive, absorbed, pragmatical, and gradualistic. These are extremely different from fundamental doctrines of Islam growing in Maroko. The first transforms to be gradual, liberal, and accomodative while the other takes it for granted—be Puritans and uncompromised.

Islamic Culture in Indonesia

Different from other religions, Islam expands in Indonesia in a flexible way. First mosques built in Indonesia are adopted from local architecture inherited from Hindu. In contrast, the Christians build their churches with western architecture. At the same time, Buddhist brings stupa so does the Hindu. Meanwhile, Islam does not adopt Islamic cultural symbols applied in the middle east. Indeed, it recently adopts the shape of mosque dome. In this case, Islam is more tolerant with the local culture. it shows the fact that Islam is not resistant to culture. all elements of culture could be adopted in Islam. For instance, the influence of India architecture seems clearly adopted on many mosques so does Mediterranean architecture. Thus, Islam has a wide range of variant cultures.[10]

Later, Islam develops more and more. Islamic culture itself then is classified into several classes such asmerchant class and middle class with high mobility (cultures emerging in the city). Then, Islam which spreads in villages is being static while Islam of middle class is not mobile anymore. It means Islam in Indonesia is being "village". In other word, Islam in Indonesia processes to be "Indonesia". We can see the evidence through its works of art. The characteristic of Middle East art reflects the active spirit of mobility and forcefull. Take look at calligraphy. It seems full details, rousing and glory. All these reflect the positive spirit which fills in the blank. Coming in Indonesia, the expression of Islam art is no longer similar. We can make comparison between Arabic music (if we can call it "the music of Islam") and Sekaten gamelan orchestra which is special orchestra to commemorate the birth of the Prophet according to Sunan Kalijaga version. Arabic music sounds energetic and forcefull with up and down tone and dynamic beat rhythm. However, we could

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[10]   Kuntowijoyo, *Dinamika Sejarah Umat Islam Indonesia (Historical Dynamics of Indonesian Moslems),* (Yogyakarta: Shalahuddin Press& Pustaka Pelajar, 1994), 13–14.

not find the similar rhythm on Sekaten gamelan orchestra which is more quiet and sounds contemplative. Sekaten gamelan orchestra refers to quietness—not always voice— and less noise. Thus, the energetic music from middle east transforms to be more quiet, myth, and contemplative in Indonesia. In conclusion, in Indonesia Islam culturally transforms from cultures identified as in city — merchant class, middle class with high mobility—to the cultures identified as in villages — static and agrarian. However, seen from its doctrines, Islam is not fully being "Javanesse". Moslems in Indonesia are identified more calm, peacekeeping, and less aggressive.

The Educational Basic Principles of Islam Nusantara

Formally,Islamic education is connoted to subject matters such as *fiqih* (a study of laws pertaining to ritual obligations), *aqidah-akhlak* (moral theology), *Qur'an-hadist* and *tarikh* (history of Islam) as well as each learning process of theirs. During the birth of the concepts of Islam Nusantara, many forums and writings discuss the topics around*fiqih* merely. Of course, it can be understood since Islam Nusantara relatively is a new issue as if it concentrates on problems in the scope of *Fiqih* only. Moreover,mindset that grows among moslems in which *fiqih* and *tauhid* are considered as most important subjects to concern since both hinge on religion more aggravates this condition. Seemingly, these two subjects are positioned more urgent than the others (*Qur'an-hadist, akhlak, and tarikh*).

Based on integrated learning, such a way of thinking is not relevant anymore because each discipline can not understood comprehensively without another. Therefore, dichotomy of any disciplines especially in learning curriculum structure should be abandoned. Individual and instution having concerns on them, should review the content of each discipline, correlate them in one another, and find out how to correlate with Indonesian people with different cultures and traditions. Deconstructing and reformulating the understanding and explanation of each subject matter referring to the plurality of culture in society should be the first thing to do. In our learning system, the curriculum should firstly be concerned. The curriculum itself is as important as the teacher. One of many aspects set on curriculum is a structure of subject matter as well as its learning process.[11] In conclusion, social-cultural aspects are extremely important for curriculum development. It departs from the premise that education is born from, by, and for society and culture. Here, it shows a reciprocal relationship among education, society, and culture.[12]

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[11] S Nasution, *Asas-Asas Kurikulum (The Principles of Curriculum)* (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 2003), 9.
[12] Sukiman, *Pengembangan Kurikulum, Teori Dan Praktek Pada Perguruan Tinggi(Curriculum Development, Theory and Practiceat College)* (Yogyakarta: FITK UIN SUKA, 2013), 39.

Many issues related to how important reformulating Islam law in Indonesia already have been raised. For instance, in *fiqih*, Hasbi Ash-Shiddiqie on his speech at the first anniversary of Stated Islamic Institution of Sunan Kalijaga (IAIN) in 1961 brought up an issue of how important to formulate "Fikih Indonesia" which is appropriate for Indonesian character. According to Hasbi, *Fikih* which growing in Indonesia is orriented to the tradition and culture of Hijaz, Mesir, and India that are far different from Indonesia. Then, it was in the decade of the 80s, when Abdurrahman Wahid came up with the idea of "pribumisasi Islam" (indigenization of Islam). The concept of "Pribumisasi Islam", as Abdurrahman Wahid stated, did not change Islam as well as its doctrines but it only changed the manifestation of islamic religious life. Besides, it then did not necessarily position Islam in the subordination of culture and tradition, nor part of javanism and syncretism.His purposes are how Islam can be understood without ignoring the contextual factors such as sense of justice and law awareness and how to formulate Islam canon law by considering the local requirements without deviating it at all.[13]

Then, in *aqidah* (moral theology of Islam), Indonesia already has a belief system (*aqidah*) called *Ahl Sunnah wa al Jama'ah*, a more moderate religious system. Seen from Islam Nusantara perspective, *Ahl Sunnah wa al Jama'ah* is a school of theology which is relevant for most of Indonesian people. People who follow such a teology admit that *Ahl Sunnah wa al Jama'ah* developing in Indonesia prolongs from theological school found by Imam Asy'ary dan Abu Mansur Maturidy.Then social-religious acts decided by either NU or Muhammadiyah (islamic organizations in Indonesia) are based on itbut in order to distinguish with NU, Muhammadiyah refuses to be referred with such a similar term. Indeed, *Ahl Sunnah wa al Jama'ah* in Indonesia as the result of NU's interpretation[14] is different from the early version developed by *Imam Asy'ari* in which he debated and discussed with his teacher, Al-Jubbai, in Basrah since *Ahl Sunnah wa al Jama'ah* adopted in Indonesiais already much acculturated with the local culture. However, both versions still have simillarities especially on principle values such as *tawasut i'tidal*, *tasamuh*, *tawazun* and *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*.[15]

Seen from Islamic education perspective (then called PAI), *tawasut i'tidal* requires the materials developed in the learning curicullum of PAI should lead learners to uphold the values of law and act straightly or honestly in living together. By following these principles, PAI is expected to be a role model of an instution

13 Sahal and Aziz (ed.), *Islam Nusantara Dari Ushul Fiqh Hingga Paham Kebangsaan*, 17.
14 Nur Khalik Ridwan, *NU and Neoliberalisme, Tantangan Dan Harapan Menjelang Satu Abad (NU and Neoliberalism, Challenge and Expectations ahead of a Century)* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, n.d.), 33.
15 Muchit Muzadi, *NU Dalam Perspektif Sejarah Dan Ajaran: Refleksi 65 Tahun Ikut NU (NU in Historical Perspective and Teachings: A Reflection of 65 Years Participating NU)* (Surabaya: Khalista, 2006), 27.

that holds on Islamic learning methodology which is unextreme (*tatharruf*). From the aspect of *tasamuh,* such a methodological system should be tolerant to social-cultural-religious understanding in society. Besides, *tawazun* is as important as other principles. it is an Arabic word meaning balance. The relationship to God, among humanbeings, and to the nature should be balanced in one another as well as balancing out the interests of the past, the present, and the future.[16]

Finally, in the context of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*, the metodology of PAI should be consistent to follow the good values and prevent the bad one by considering its context andthe condition of society in a moderate way.

In 1978, Harun Nasution came up with a new idea to answer questions about theological aspects among the intelectuals. He completely explained about a lot of theological schools of Islam such as *Mu'tazilah* which was more liberal and the others. According to Nasution, theological school in Indonesia dominated by Asy'ariyah tend to presume among moslems that Asy'ariyah is the only theology in Islam. However, as explicitly said in the introduction of his book, Harun Nasution intended to make moslems in Indonesia more open-minded and tolerant in the perspective of *Aqidah* and Islam canon law.[17]

Then, in Amin Abdullah's view, the challenges of Islamic theological concepts temporarily come from universal humanism issues, religious pluralism, less-structural factor, environmental damage, etc. He does not much talk about theological aspect an sich. According to Abdullah, theological concepts in any religion which only focuses on God concepts (theocentric) and does not associate its discourse with universal humanism issues (anthropocentric) will slowly be left-behind and out of date. *Alquran* and *hadits* frequently discuss about human dimension in almost dicourses of both.[18]

Like any other subject matters, the materials of *Qur'an-hadits* are based on curriculum compiled and conducted by government. Unfortunately, if we analyze carefully, those materials—structure of subjects, kind of verses taught, chronological and structural sequences of verses—[19]are less relevant to main topics of other fields. The verses of *Alqur'an* or *hadits* found in the curriculum and learning materials seem to run in their own track. Moreover, when we contextually try to corelate all subject matters with social issues among society, it is less relevant. The verses chosen should

16   Ibid., 35.
17   Harun Nasution, *Teologi Islam, Aliran-Aliran , Sejarah, Analisa Perbandingan (Islamic Theology,Schools of Theology, History, Comparative Analysis)* (Jakarta: UI Press, 1972), xii.
18   Amin Abdullah, *Falsafah Kalam Di Era Postmodernisme (Philosophy of Kalam in the Era of Postmodernism)* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1995), 42.
19   Nana Syaodih Sukmadinata, *Pengembangan Kurikulum, Teori Dan Praktek (Curriculum Development, Theory and Practice)* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 1997), 21.

have corelation to the condition and local issues happening in Indonesia. In fact, the themes brought on the Islamic theological discourses themselves are relevant to the challenges of this era and local cultures which are more indigenous.[20]

Discussing about the history of Islam (*Tarikh*) in relation to Islam Nusantara, both also cannot be separated each other. Many things should be improved. Seen from the formal material objects, it needs more to be reviewed. For instance, the factthat the era of Prophet Muhammad is starting point of Islamcontained in the material books should be revised by starting discussing about the tradition in the Prophet Musa and Isa *'Alaihissalam* especially explaining clearly and coherently about the history of three great religions. Therefore, the material objects of SKI (*Tarikh*) do not merely concentrate on the historical development of Islam, Islam kingdoms, the time of wars, the number of people killed and the progress of Islam. How Prophet Muhammad interacts with people from other religious traditions, his social life, his attitudes and behavior much described in the *hadith* are the most significant points to discuss.Then, it urges to make the material subjects of SKI (*Tarikh)* integrated with the *Hadith*. Indeed, the contents of many *hadiths* are associated with the local wisdom of Arabic people at that time and, in Islam Nusantara context, these are interesting to learn in relation to the local wisdom of Indonesian people.

Islamic Education Curriculum and Islam Nusantara

In the context of Islam Nusantara, there are many important points to consider in the relation of Islamic education curriculum. By referring to the experts' opinion,[21] below are some important aspects to consider in order toformulate Islamic learning curriculum;

1. Valid (*Sahih*), means the material subjects outlined have proved their truth and validity. Besides, the materials should be actual and up-to-date so they can contribute to the next understanding later. In fact, many materials of Islamic education in which thevalidity may not be proven yet are then used as teaching materials to reach the expected competencies. Indeed, it is not an easy task to validate these materials as often conducted in natural science which is characterized positivism and surely different from social studies including theological studies. However, an effort to realize it should be started from now. For instance, there is an interesting question about how far the material contents of *Akhlak* studies outlined in the curriculum

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[20] Abdullah, *Falsafah Kalam Di Era Postmodernisme (Philosophy of Kalam in the Era of Postmodernism)*.

[21] Depdiknas, *Drafting Guidelines of KTSP 2006; Oemar Hamalik, Dasar-Dasar Pengembangan Kurikulum (The Principles Pf Curriculum Development)* (Bandung: Remaja Rosda Karya, 2008); Laurie Brady, *Curriculum Development, Fourth Edition* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1992).

and taught at schools can contribute and give impact on students' attitude. Good attitudes of students may be resulted from their interaction with family and the surrounding people and not have relation at all with the materials of *Akhlak*subject they learn at school. If it is true, the curriculum of *Akhlak* subject needs to reformulate and integrate with culture studies in a theoretical and practical manner.

2. Level of interest, means whether the materials are really required by students. If we analyze, most of materials taught at class are not based on students' need or requirement but based on stakeholder's interest. Islam Nusantara paradigm surely needs kind of human thatis adaptable, moderate, and tolerant since he will finally return to the society. Actually, a student or learner is an individual who serves as a representative of society studying at education institution. Therefore, all activities at school should become an answer of society requirement. Learners in Indonesia at large are people born and raised by moderate religious community. So, it is not difficult to formulate the material contents in accordance with society need if the stakeholder refers to set such type of society. Thus, thesubject matters such as*aqidah, akhlak, fikih, Qur'an-hadits*and the history of Islam are written and compiled based on frame of thinking of society which is genuinely moderate. However, based on a research, it reveals that Islamic fundamentalism is potentially spread through non-mandatorial religious practices (*sunah*). In Islam mandatorial religious practices are limited and have so standard format that people can not manipulate them. In other word, people may not become a fundamentalist due to doing *solat* (ritual prayers and actions performed five times daily), fasting, etc. Fundamentalism potentially appears when people implement non-mandatorial religious practices in which many people are involved (*jama'ah*). *Sunah* in Islam has many kinds. Islamic study session, forum discussion, *halaqoh, daurah, ta'lim, tadbir*, and so on are categorized as non-mandatorial religious practices (*sunah*). The so-called *sunah* is potential to turn someone into a fundamentalist especially if it delivers the contents containing fundamentalism.[22]

3. Usefull, means the material contents chosen should give learners either academic or non-academic benefits. Academic benefits refer to basic knowledge and skills that they will improve further while non-academic benefits are defined as the ability to improve life skills and attitudes required in their daily life. However, non-academic benefits may be more important than the other one since students could completely reach academic benefits

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[22] Jamhari and Jajang (Editors) Jahroni, *Gerakan Salafi Radikal Di Indonesia (Radical Salafi Movement in Indonesia)* (Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 2004), 234.

(cognitive abilities) bystudying hard while, beside mastering the knowledge, they also need other aspects (affection and spiritual quotients when interacting with people) to reach such non-academic benefits.

4. Attractive, means the materials delivered should be interesting and able to motivate students to learn moreand to stimulate them to be so curious that they are encouraged to improve their skills.[23] Many students complain that material contents delivered at school, forum discussion (*majlis ta'lim*), Islamic study session, etcare not or less interesting. If this phenomenon can be justified, the writer— a term Amin Abdullah used—strongly suspects it is because the explanation, literatures, discourses, presentation method teacher, lecturer, or preacher use are not or less touching linguistic aspect, mindset, and contexts. When fundamentalism values are delivered to students regardless of background, mindset, and trending languages of theirs, religious language seems to be outmoded or less attractive.[24] Islam has been taught at school is a formal doctrine. It is not a wrong learning activity but sometimes the material contents delivered aremerely repetitive, not related to students' daily experience, and far from their cultural aspect and habits in society. Therefore, it needs to review that the material contents should be feasible to learn in accordance with their practical purpose and the context.

Islamic Education and Cutural Approach

A religion can be interpreted as a unit consisting of values and basic rules with strong legality power which comes from God's rules. Speaking about Islam in relation with education, we find there that islamic learning activities are aimed to make learners able to understand, behave, and act based on Islamic rules. Indeed, it is rather difficult since there are no clearly-formulated standard indicators to assess. All people think what they did is already in accordance with Islamic norms but, then, many of them claim the others do not or less understand the "real" Islam when meet the differences in one another. Moreover, this condition often leads an individual to look for another legalicy for self-justifying and blames another one.

The ilustration above indicates that people spending time to search formal legality for what they believe is more satisfying than looking for the similarity among the differences. Besides, such a condition may lead one unrealize that what he considers as values of Islam is a mere expression of religious sense characterized as particular, local, and cultural.

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23   Brady, *Curriculum Development, Fourth Edition*, 116.
24   Abdullah, *Falsafah Kalam Di Era Postmodernisme (Philosophy of Kalam in the Era of Postmodernism)*, 262.

Culture is defined as a work, thought, and will of human being. Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana stated that culture is the whole complex which occurs from different elements such as knowledge, beliefs, art, law, customs, and all other skills one acquires as a member of society.[25] Actually, religious expression is human creation. Basically, Islamic education leads one to be a well-cultured moslem. One who embraces particular religion should not be uprooted from his cultural root. Culture itself is described as a game of religious people and education should not make one lose his game. If the so-called game is omitted, education should be able to replace it as interesting as possible. When there is no replacement, someone who loses his game might look for other game that,in turn, could potentially destroy himself. It is illustrated as a child who likes much playing a knife and then his knife is suddenly taken without being replaced by another game, he gets angry, screams, cries, and even secretly looks for another object sharper than previously.

One of many problems in education is caused by cultural values in society which are not adopted into educational curriculum. Here, culture is not understood as something illegitimate (*haram*), *bid'ah*, *musyrik*, and forbidden but it tends to consider as local wisdom and mindset inherited from previous society of the early period. Supporters of Islam (name themselves as modern society) see decisively the local culture in black and white— a condition which is opposite against formal Islam. Such supporters are less interested in viewing the local culture from socio-anthropological perspective. Rationally spiritual passion leads them to wipe out the local culture in a revolutionary way without tolerance. Allbinding force that has been established in the community now had dissappeared. All this time, the so-called binding force in society is not merely born from religion but comes from customs and cultures of society that are fosteredand inherited from one generation to the next. A lot of traditions and customs of society are omitted on behalf of religion doctrines whereas they are irrelevant or nothing to do with the religion.

Then, what Islamic education could contribute to such an issue of local wisdom extinction. Many things we can do but the most significant thing to understand is that each discipline in a scope of Islamic education is based on the concept of culture. In Islam Nusantara discourse, all systems of Islamic education are understood from culture perspective and culture is functioned as an instrument or media in Islamic education. Therefore, culture itself could be used to understand what seems empirically — formal form of religion which appears symptomatically in society. Then, through such a form of religion, one could put his religious doctrine into practice.

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[25]   Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana, *Antropologi Baru (New Antrophology)* (Jakarta: Dian Rakyat, 1986), 207.

It is interesting enough to make culture as one of approaches to understand religious concept. No wonder since lot of religious studies could only be understood proportionally through cultural approach. Many religious doctrines connected to cultural contex showhow important cultural approach to understand religion. For instance, a *hadit* about Prophet Muhammad saw lengthening his beardis so populer among men that they follow it. It stated "make short your mustache and let your beard long and make yourself be different from majusi". There are other similar hadit with different editorials. People who understand this hadit from theological perspective only dare to state that one who does not let his beard long like them has left *sunah*. However, this hadit should be seen from cultural social perspective where Prophet Muhammad told to shorten mustache and lengthen beard in order to be different from Majusian tradition in which they might like to do the contrary (lengthen mustache and shorten beard or both). The word "different" here could be contextually interpreted as unsimilar in identity and is not related to theological aspect. Therefore, word "different" tends to refer a visible look. The meaning of "beard" could be interpreted as any other symbols which show one's identity we can easily find in our daily life.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Islam Nusantara is a concept of Islam in Indonesia which has its own character and differs from other countries. What makes different is not its teological aspect (*aqidah*) or Islam law but the way to express religion seen from their actions. Islam Nusantara is a concept which apreciates local wisdom as a partner to realize Indonesian people be better in both religion and social aspect.

Then,where Islamic education should be steered according to Islam Nusantara perspective is one important question to answer. Islamic education should not involve in never-ending pros-cons debate of Islam Nusantara. As a rational critical educational institution, Islamic education could instead look for the benefits of the emergence of Islam Nusantara. The intelectuals of Islamic education understand very well that there are particular rules to formulate curriculum and one of which should not ignore the condition of society as well as its cultural context. Islam Nusantara is just like an asset for Islamic education. Finally, the concept of Islam Nusantara should be understood so clearly that educational institution could develop Islamic education system based on the context of Indonesia. Finally, the concept of Islam Nusantara itself might fade or even dissappear someday but the moslem learners and their own cultures will never vanished. Society without cultures is impossible and vice versa.

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