

# Mainstreaming Religious Values in Islamic Studies Curriculum Development for Multicultural Society

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**Abstract**— Curriculum development is a continuous process in improving and adjusting the quality and goals of studying and teaching. One challenging process is, however, to prepare a transformed curriculum for different students. This study aims at illustrating curriculum development process of general religious study subject for university students. The curriculum has been adjusted to be delivered for specific Muslim students into multi-religious-background students. Therefore, this process involves mainstreaming of values of religions instead of description of formal rituals. This is a qualitative study that utilizes library research, participant observation, as well as interviews as main source of data collections. The observation has been focused in Tanri Abeng University. The university shares unique characteristics in terms of religious studies and therefore important and functional for kind of comparison. Data was collected during May to July 2018. This study discovers that mainstreaming of religious values has been accepted by students of religious studies with multicultural backgrounds in religion. This mainstreaming of religious values has made the connection between the students closer and stronger. This unique approach has enabled the students with different backgrounds of religion to find a common ground among them without harming their own belief.

**Keywords**— Islamic studies, Curriculum development, Religious values, Multicultural society

## I. INTRODUCTION

The background of this study is the existence of different religious education models that are applied at Indonesian universities. Generally, in the majority of universities in Indonesia, religion is delivered exclusively. In a sense, Islamic religious material is taught to Muslims, while the teachings of other religions are taught to their respective adherents. This has been long enough, and the country is present in the form of providing support. For example, Belmawa provide teaching module Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism written by professors from respected Indonesian universities.[1] The book can then be downloaded for free to support the learning process and become a standard that can be used by all groups. Despite the academic freedom of the material can be adjusted as necessary.

However, there are practices which are not all the same. By following the pattern of academic freedom, there

are universities that carry out religious learning with students who have diverse backgrounds (multicultural). Tanri Abeng University is one of them. University founded by Tantri Abeng is an Indonesian businessman. He served as the State Minister of State-Owned Enterprises in the VII Development Cabinet and the Development Reform Cabinet was located in the South Jakarta Region. The University has a very diverse student. And while giving religious education, the model adopted is an integrative model in which a lecturer teaching about religion and values that are sometimes in it to students who have different backgrounds.

In these conditions, the teaching pattern must be adjusted. One vehicle to adjust is known as curriculum development. [2] As mandated by the national education law, that a college Institute cloned partitions do development curriculum in a manner and periodically to adopt their rapidly developing existing ones.

So, the purpose of this paper is to explain how a curriculum development process is carried out in the field of study or religious studies. This study also considers how students are used as important references in curriculum development. One very significant finding from this study is that changes in curricular development can be carried out in a structured and massive manner by considering existing needs. Curriculum development also implies deep acceptance from students. Acceptance that allows for a better teaching and learning process. This study shows that the curriculum development process may take place in a different way. This study therefore is important to act as the evidence.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Religious Education and Multiculturalism

One study that explains the study of religious education in a global context is Religious Education: A Creative Time and Space for Spiritual Development. Ann Casson describes religious education in schools as an Education that emphasizes rigorous academic discipline and part of students' spiritual development. Often the perspective used in this study is the curriculum. It is therefore interesting to say that this study is part of a study of curriculum development for religious education.[3]

In the local context in Indonesia, especially in religious education in the most classic Islamic Education Institution,

pesantren, it seems that Professor Raihani's study is one that can be called pioneer. Raihani in the Curriculum Construction in the Indonesian Islamic Boarding School: A Study of Curriculum Development in Two Different Islamic Boarding Schools in South Kalimantan explained how the religious education curriculum was constructed as part of curriculum development. [4]

However, studies of curriculum development from religious curricula are emphasized theology and rituals leading to studies that instill value, it seems that there have not been many studies in Indonesia. Therefore, this paper is the first step in documenting that this kind of research can be done.

### *B. Mainstreaming Values on Religious Education*

Religious values have been studied Robabeh, Mahboobeh, & Mahsa for example study two Turkish groups, namely the Azeri and the Kurdish in relation to their religiosity. The study which also connects the religious values with the gender, education, as well as age has concluded that the Azeri are more religious compared to the other group of Turkish.[5]

Another study that conducted by number of lecturers of Islamic studies department at Universitas Negeri Jakarta to investigate lecturer's perspective and understanding about the Islam Nusantara values such as *tawazun*, *tasamuh*, *itidal* and *tawasuth* in relation. This study is significant to understand perspective and view of the lecturers in which they could transfer to their students during the process of learning at the university level.[6]

A study by Ciarrochi & Heaven also investigate the religious values and its connection to the establishment of self esteem. It seeks to understand the relationship between religious values and self-esteem among students of grade 11 and 12.[7]

In addition to the above, Baidhawiy also study the religious values in relation with the multicultural issues in the Indonesian context. The study identify the content of religious texts used by Muslim preachers and its relationship with multicultural understanding.[8]

The above studies show that mainstreaming religious values for social and educational studies is possible and number of authors have published numeral publication in the field. My work is another example of employing religious values, particularly the Islamic values, in the development of curriculum at the Tanri Abeng University.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This paper seeks to answer the question of how a curriculum development changes the direction of the curriculum that emphasizes formal ritual into a curriculum that emphasizes value and community integration within the framework of the NKRI. This is a gradual change from the curriculum of Islamic religious courses that is more like a school to a curriculum that emphasizes essence that is considered more suitable at the college level. Moreover, this religious course is given to students from among students.

Therefore, this study uses a qualitative approach [9] to answer the problems posed. The data collection was

carried out mostly with literature studies. The collection of data coupled with the distribution of survey to find out what the opinions of students who get religious learning with the focus and approach to religious values and the implementation of more tolerant religious learning for students who have different religious backgrounds.

In simple terms, the population of this study was students of Universitas Indonesia and Students of Tanri Abeng University. However, this study only focuses on a sample consisting of three classes of religious studies consisting of about five twenty students of Tanri Abeng University in 2018. However, the sample involved only three classes of Islamic Education students. The research instruments used in this study were observation on the class participation and also questionnaires asking about their feeling and understanding. The observation has been carried out during the class as well as the distribution of the questionnaire by the lecturer. The data then later analyzed with social scientific approach.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research attempts to explain how the development process curriculum religious studies at college high. How can Value mainstreaming is done in the development of religious curriculum. This will show the role of religion in the education of multiculturalism in Indonesian context. Data collection is done in several ways: observation and literature review. For the second literature review and teaching experience in two universities, Tanri Abeng University and the University of Indonesia.

#### *A. About Tanri Abeng University*

Tanri Abeng University or Tanri Abeng University (Acronym: TAU) is a private university founded by businessmen and former State Minister of State-Owned Enterprises in the VII Development Cabinet and the Development Reform Cabinet, Tanri Abeng University covering 1 hectare, located in Ulujami, Pesanggrahan, Jakarta South.

TAU itself is a Boutique University equipped with lecture rooms with varied models, including libraries, theater, auditorium, research & publication center, counseling and career center, language center, executive center for global leadership (ecgl), student club, dining hall, basement carpark, and clinic. To support outdoor activities and activities and maintain health, there are also various sports facilities, such as rooftop swimming pools, gymnasiums, tennis courts, futsal, basketball, badminton, mini golf, table tennis and chess park, surrounded by parks and beautiful surroundings and smoke free. Several national figures became the TAU Senate Council, such as: Dr. Abdulgani, MA; Prof. Dr. Anwar Nasution; Prof. Dr. OC Kaligis; Prof. Dr. Ryaas Rasyid, and others.

Tanri Abeng University provides high academic standards with a customized curriculum equivalent to universities in the United States and the United Kingdom. The campus administration regulation system is certified by the United Registration of System (URS) for ISO 9001-2008 and is moving towards certification of the National Accreditation Agency (BAN). Students must pass the entrance test to be accepted at TAU. This test will also help

students choose the one that best suits their talents and interests.

The vision of Tanri Abeng University is to become a world university that produces superior professional leaders and managers and can improve people's welfare in 2027. While the mission of the university consists of:

1. Educating the next generation of future leaders, who teach and transform management and leadership skills.
2. Promoting management as a profession through in-depth studies with research and publications to meet the needs of companies, industries and government.
3. Preparing the nation's future leaders with the best talent qualifications

#### *B. Religious Studies at Tanri Abeng University*

Religious studies at Tanri Abeng University can be described into these following meeting and topics:

Meeting 1 World Religions. Which covers the introduction to the course with some understanding on the world religions definition and development.

Meeting 2 Beliefs and Basic Teachings. Introduction to the course, instructor's lecture, questions and answer sessions. Assigned Readings include some articles and/or books about world major religions, finding some similarities and differences between the religions as well as some commonalities in them as a moral resource in the tradition of many societies. Film screening 'The Ultimate Reality' and discussion. Readings can be found in folder Meeting 1-2.

Meeting 3 Finding Universal Values. Meeting 4 Human and Spirituality. Continued discussion of the previous meetings but with specific purpose to draw some common values existing in each tradition about achieving good in human life. Spirituality, beyond religion and tradition. This will discuss some of the lines written by some well-known scholars such as Jalaluddin Rumi and other poets.

Meeting 5 Harmony with Nature. Meeting 6 Midterm Test. Reading and discussing some of the issues with the focus on the relationship between men and nature which include environment and animals and other contemporary issues locally and globally. Documentary film screening. 'Think about other people', 'Ministry of Education', and 'Inspired by Muhammad Series about Environment', to be discussed in class, students' presentations, and class discussion.

Meeting 7 Technology and Responsibility. Meeting 8 Economy and Fairness. The human pursue knowledge and try to master technology with ethical and responsibility issues. The 'Islamic' golden ages and the connection with the Europe and the modern era. Group discussion, students' presentations, and class discussions. Economy and Fairness, searching for ideal economic systems, what is conventional and religious or sharia economy? How they differ? And why they matter? This will be conducted in discussion sessions.

Meeting 9 Social Justice. Meeting 10 Plurality of Cultures. Social issues and the solutions, social freedom, human rights, freedom of speech, freedom of expressions, anti-social behaviors, conflicts, crimes, punishments, courts, rehabilitations. Group discussions, student's presentation, class discussions. Case studies; Muhammad cartoon, Charlie Hebdo's attack, etc.

Diversity of world cultures; the world is not created with one nation, yet with diversity of traditions and cultures. Documentary film screening 'Al-Amanah fi Tokyo' and 'United we stand, divided we fall'. This will be conducted with group work, class presentations and discussions.

Meeting 11 Understanding Others. Meeting 12 Final Exam. Lecturer's presentation; personality types and intercultural communications and question and answer session. Class discussions; Intercultural relations, discussions, simulations and closing the sessions.

The above meeting and topics of the religious studies show that the religious studies subject at the Tanri Abeng University does not necessarily follow the topics suggested by the Belmawa of the Kemenristekdikti. The Tanri Abeng University come up with different topics which allow the students and the instructor to share the religious values such as universal values of religions, harmony with nature, technology and responsibility, as well as social justice which are based on religious teachings of the world religion to be studied and implemented in the classroom where the students come from different background of religions.

The religious studies subject at the Tanri Abeng University allow students with different background to take the subject and study in the same class. According to my observation, at least there were students from Islam, Confucianism, Catholicism, Protestantism, and Buddhism background of faith studying the values of religions.

The use of religious values suits the need better as the Tanri Abeng University makes effort in education the student better understanding of multiculturalism in the Indonesian context. This understanding is seen a crucial element in developing and maintain a harmonious life among the citizen of Indonesia.

#### V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

This paper explains that mainstreaming the values in religious studies can be done by changing the nature of the curriculum exclusive to one religion, become more inclusive curriculum by elaborating and accommodating of religious values in accordance with the religious background of diverse learners. In this case the change is done by denying the formal side of the ritual and putting forward the values and common ground.

Based on the experience of teaching in Tanri Abeng University, the author can say that i pick the students tend to feel a new experience of studying religion. This is still dominant has a positive side. From three years of teaching, only one time and one student made a complaint because he felt he was required to learn about other religions that were different from his religion.

This research is important to address that argument of religious learning in the college level should be different.

Not the same as the school level which can emphasize cognitive aspects and memorization and rituals. But at the college level a steeper should have started to value and common ground. If this research is considered a success, it can be duplicated in other universities. It does not have to be a whole, it can still continue to adopt the old system as a basis, but the emphasis on the value of what religious goals are is important. Moreover, this armpit is associated with multicultural issue is very important and how a religion can maintain social cohesion in Indonesia.

In this paper, the authors propose recommendations that there are two synergistic levels of focus on religious teaching at the school and university level.

First level. Religious education in higher education institutions should be different in the material focus and emphasis on learning outcomes. At the elementary and secondary levels, religious education is needed to become the basis of knowledge and dogma (theology). So that the theme themes that are specific to the teachings of each religion are exclusively important to emphasize. Besides memorization and repetition are things that must be done. This is expected to be the basis for cognitive knowledge of students who will later develop into obedience. Also, demonstrating exemplary is a strategy used in internalizing religious values in students. [10]

If this can be realized, then religious education at the tertiary level should have a different focus and approach. The focus of these approaches should be the development of the first level. Religious studies at the college level should begin to touch on the essence of understanding, understanding values, and multi-application perspective from religion. So, not only rituals that need to be emphasized, but especially what is the meaning of the study of religion. A person with a religious armpit a day also contributes to the completion of a social solution. For example, about diversity and unity of nationalism.

Thus, religious studies at the tertiary level can put more emphasis on the value of the religion. Not only stop at formal rituals. For example, how zakat is the solution to the inequality of justice in economy. For example, how religion has and becomes a strong base in ecological problems. For example, how religion can become a social cohesion and open a nation's divide as understanding the shallow mindset.

Moreover, in the context of when students or students are multicultural in different religious backgrounds, the formal discussion of religious rituals with references to just one religion becomes inappropriate. The curriculum development should be more on finding common ground from the various values of religious values with the spirit to understand and maintain the integrity of this nation and country. This is the importance of mainstreaming values in religious teaching in universities in Indonesia.

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