

Ineffectiveness of Religious Education as Character Education in Islamic Higher Education

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Abstract

Character development in higher education is carried out, among others, through lectures on Islamic Education. This Islamic Education course, based on the characteristics of the material, is a subject that is full of value and has the potential to be the spearhead of character education. The implication of this assumption is that the learning paradigm in the lectures of Islamic Education should reflect the application of the principles and models of character education that emphasize aspects of value education and affective education. Private Islamic universities basically have more opportunities to develop the Islamic Education curriculum, both as a realization of higher education autonomy and as a result of the curriculum construction by the university itself. The implication is that the learning of Islamic Education will get the expected achievements, especially the formation of student characters in harmony with the religious values that have been taught to them. In fact, lectures on Islamic Education often use approaches that emphasize the transfer of knowledge. The Islamic Religious Education learning model needs to be developed and articulated based on constructivism models and centered on students as active learners, while lecturers play a role as mediators, dynamists, catalysts and inspirer of learning. The implementation of the development of the learning model is that Islamic Education lecturers need to develop pedagogical competencies in a sustainable manner. With these dynamics lectures on Islamic Education can be expected to be an effective educational and learning tool for the formation and strengthening of religious character.

Keywords: religious character, higher education, religious education

1. INTRODUCTION

There is a study conducted at three public universities, which concluded that Islamic Education in higher education has not received serious attention from policy makers in higher education. Islamic education is still perceived dichotomously; instead it is used as a medium that bridges general knowledge with religious knowledge. This can have implications for the lack of meaning of religion as an element that is integrated with self-development and science, which is cultivated by students (Anshari, 2012).

The results of the study also concluded that the implementation of learning Islamic education in higher education tended to be not optimal. This is mainly due to the religious learning that is still too concerned with the cognitive domain, while the affective domain and its contextualization with concrete life have not been well managed. This shows that religious education is still oriented towards the transfer of knowledge. The implication is that religious education has

less impact on the formation of religious character (Hidayatullah, 2015).

In public universities, there are a number of obstacles in religious education, including: religious education is considered as a continuation of teaching from previous levels of education, so the learning material delivered is relatively the same as the national curriculum, the amount of teaching material is not proportional to the available time allocation, methods and the learning model implemented is less varied, students are less involved and enthusiastic in learning activities (Budianto, 2016).

Higher education has a strategic position and role in the development of characterized human resources (Mulyana, 2008). The development of human resources is becoming increasingly urgent in situations and conditions of social life that are full of clash of values and various problems: deterioration, escalation of social conflict, moral crisis and decreased pride in the identity of the nation itself (Tholhah, 2006; Fadjar, 2003). In this context, the process of education and religious learning can function as a process of developing human resources with religious characteristics, which religious values are internalized into a unified conception,

mental attitude, and behavior (Muhaimin, 2005) so that it becomes one of the resolutions of the crisis of values in society.

Based on this, religious education and learning in higher education needs to include an outline of knowledge about religion and its relationship with various scientific fields, cultures, and various aspects of human life; development of tolerance for differences in interpretation of religious teachings; the development of an attitude of tolerance between people of different religions; and strengthen emotional bonds with the homeland, nation and society and their interests (Nasution, 1996).

The implication is that the implementation of religious education and learning needs to be carried out through an approach to value education and character education. This will provide a valuable contribution to the formation of life views, life attitudes and life skills based on values that are believed and upheld as life guidelines. In this context a number of things that need to be explored are: how is the position of religious education courses in the curriculum in higher education, how the policy in higher education about character education through Religious Education, and how the implementation of religious learning can be used as a character education instrument.

2. METHOD

This research was conducted through a study of documentation, interviews, and observations to obtain a comprehensive picture of the object. Methods of analyzing data using content analysis and interpretation. Whereas to obtain conclusions used a combination of inductive and deductive methods.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Islamic Education Learning Management

The university, which is the object of this research, has religious science groups (*dirasah islamiyah*) and non-religious groups (non *dirasah islamiyah*). Management of religious science groups managed by faculties and study programs that are typically religious (*sharia, da'wah* and *tarbiyah*). As an Islamic university that works on various scientific groups, both historically and in projections and orientations, this tertiary institution is based on a system of Islamic teaching values as its spirit. In this context, the values of Islamic teachings are formulated into the vision and mission of education as the starting point of program development and the implementation of the duties and functions of universities. This vision and mission is then translated into the vision and mission of various faculties and study programs. With the same starting point, the values of Islamic teachings are expected to become spirit in organizing

various higher education programs and activities carried out by all sections.

Islamic Education, both as a subject and as a soul in campus life, is positioned as the main spirit of education in this college. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Islamic religious education curriculum is compulsory and binding for all students in all faculties and study programs. For this purpose, a special bureau that is directly under the direction of the rector carries out the management of Islamic religious education courses.

Islamic Education (PAI) as a typical curriculum of the institution consists of seven courses, namely: PAI-1 in the form of the *Akidah* study, PAI-2 in the form of worship study, PAI-3 in the form of *Muamalah* study, PAI-4 in the form of Moral study, PAI-5 in the form of the study of Islamic Civilization, PAI-6 in the form of a study of Islamic Thought, and PAI-7 in the form of Islamic Studies in the field of Science. Especially for PAI-7 lecture material, the scope of the study is adjusted to the clump or field of study in each faculty or study program.

Based on the PAI curriculum roadmap, it appears that Islamic Education begins with the most fundamental thing in a person's diversity, namely the faith in all its basic conceptions. Furthermore, Islamic Education strengthens the understanding and practice of worship, which are the main rituals in the teachings of Islam. The next Islamic Education is to examine various aspects of interaction and relations in social symbiosis (*muamalah*). Islamic Education targets aspects of Muslim personality by planting Islamic moral values or characters that aim to make a Muslim have a commendable personality (*akhlaq al-karimah*). The subsequent study of Islamic Education is the history of the *Ummah* or the Muslims since the beginning of its journey in Mecca to the modern period in various parts of the earth. Thus the dimensions of the contents of Islamic teachings are seen in their implementation in each period of space and time of the adherents. The dynamics of intellectuality in Islamic Education appears in lectures on Islamic Thought. This study presents schools of thought that developed as a feature that Islam is a dynamic, dialectical and growing religion in the context of times and events. Furthermore, in the context of scientific specialization into scientific clusters, Islamic studies were developed into Islamic topics for scientific disciplines. This lecture, in addition to giving islamization to scholarship that has developed, at the same time explores the values of Islamic teachings to be developed into scientific concepts.

3.2 PAI Learning Process

The PAI learning process generally takes place in accordance with the schedule made by the faculty or study program, known by the PAI management bureau and supported by the lecturer. In each semester, the PAI lecture schedule will always be available with a large number of credits, which involve quite a lot of lecturers. Academic and scientific competencies of PAI lecturers are linear and have very significant relevance to the courses they provide. Similarly, based on the comparison of the number of study groups (classes) with the number of lecturers, PAI lectures can be carried out quite adequately.

The learning process in PAI lectures is generally described as follows:

a. Early Learning Activities.

In accordance with the appeal of the rector that lectures begin with reading the Qur'an (*tadarus*). Normally, lecturers and students open the Quran application contained in each smartphone or some bring the book of the Qur'an. Furthermore, lecturers condition students by presenting learning objectives and materials that need to be mastered by students. The lecturer checks the attendance of students at the beginning or at the end of the lecture session to ascertain who is absent and the reason for his absence. In this lecture activity the lecturer performs apperception by reviewing the previous material, or asking students about their understanding of the previous material. In this apperception the lecturer associates the previous material with the material to be discussed.

b. Core Learning Activities.

In this core activity, PAI lectures are generally exploratory, elaborative and confirmatory. When lectures take the form of verbal delivery by lecturers, asking a number of questions to students about the material to be delivered carries out exploratory activities. When lectures are in the form of task groups, exploration is done by identifying problems that will be presented by each group. While the elaborative activities, the lecturer delivered a comprehensive presentation of material topics to students. In this case the lecturer uses a whiteboard aids or power point slideshows. Sometimes lecturers ask questions to be responded by students in order to explore students' knowledge; sometimes lecturers also invite students to ask questions. The responses can be given by other students or directly answered by the lecturer. However, when learning is done with student group presentations, student listeners carry out elaboration activities by submitting responses or questions to the presenter group. The presenter group then responds to the question or response. Sometimes presenter groups need time to discuss answers by extracting information from sources, usually they access internet resources, then give feedback to questioners / responders. Core learning activities end with confirmation. Confirmation can be in the form of summarizing the discussion of lecture material, or reaffirming important matters, whether lecturers or students do this.

c. Final Learning Activities.

At the end of the lecture the lecturer concluded the discussion material for the day. Next, as the next pre-learning, students are assigned to study the material that will be discussed in the following week or reminded of the agenda of the group presentation that will discuss the next material.

3.3 Increasing Effectiveness of PAI Learning

The curriculum of a college will follow the dynamics of social components. A number of components that influence the curriculum include: the academic community, the interests that exist in higher education, developing ideas, changes in values in people's lives, professional organizations and

educated communities, as well as internal and external evaluations (Hamka, 2009). In this research, the PAI curriculum in higher education has accommodated the ideals, vision and mission of education that have been previously set. Likewise, as an Islamic university, the curriculum has adopted scientific fields that exist in religious teachings.

This university has established the structure and content of the Islamic Education curriculum comprehensively, but the awareness that religious education is very important, as a character education instrument still needs to be improved. In terms of content, the learning of religious education is mostly theological, normative and doctrinal. As for the ways in learning, even though it has involved student participation, it still relies on lectures and the dominant role of the lecturer. In this case, there are not many lecturers in the field of Islamic Education who seriously develop the transfer of religious values in more constructive ways, which are centered on student participation, and which are oriented towards the formation and strengthening of character (Hanafi, 2011).

Thus, the challenge of learning Islamic Education in higher education is how to package a curriculum that is comprehensive, structured, systematic, and sustainable has an impact on character building. Another challenge is policy support that strengthens the position and function of Islamic Education as an instrument to strengthen character education in campus. In addition, learning interactions where students as subjects of education must eliminate the impression that Islamic Education is the same as other common subjects. Likewise, the spirit and enthusiasm of students to be involved in Islamic Education needs to be raised through learning models that fit their characteristics.

The learning process of Islamic religious education in higher education, as well as learning other fields of science, is expected to apply learning that is interactive, holistic, integrative, scientific, contextual, thematic, effective, collaborative and student-centered. Through the approach, model and method of learning, learning Islamic education will show a number of the following performance: prioritizing the process of two-way interaction between students and lecturers; encourage the formation of a comprehensive and broad mindset by internalizing the values and factors of excellence and local and national wisdom; integrating interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches; prioritizing a scientific approach to create an academic environment based on a system of values, norms and rules of science and upholding religious and national values; foster the ability to solve problems according to their expertise; work on themes that are in accordance with science and real problems through a trans-disciplinary approach; prioritizing the internalization of teaching material properly and correctly in the optimum period of time; involves interaction between individual students to produce a capitalization of attitudes, knowledge, and skills; prioritizing the development of creativity, capacity, personality, and needs of students, as well as developing independence in seeking and finding knowledge (Kementerian Riset, Teknologi dan Pendidikan Tinggi, 2015).

Based on these matters, the learning process of Islamic religious education in higher education needs to be managed in a systematic, structured and measurable manner, using effective learning methods in accordance with the

characteristics of Islamic religious education, student characteristics, goals and targets of value education and character education, and in accordance with the problems and social changes around it. The usual learning methods and biases can be used include: group discussions, simulations, case studies, collaborative learning, cooperative learning, project-based learning, problem-based learning, or other learning methods, which can effectively facilitate the fulfillment of the expected learning outcomes of Islamic religious education. Each learning session can use one or several learning methods as learning models for Islamic religious education.

4. CONCLUSION

Behind the implementation of learning in Islamic religious education, there are lecturers who are one of the determinants of the success of the process of religious education. In this context, PAI lecturers are learning agents who transfer knowledge and religious values to become part of the personality and character of students. Regarding these matters, the competence of PAI lecturers must include knowledge of Islamic religion, skills, and values reflected in the habit of thinking and acting when providing education, teaching, guidance, and training to students. In the context of implementing religious education learning, PAI lecturers are required to have the ability to use learning strategies and methods (pedagogical competence), master the material and teaching materials (professional competence), have good attitudes and personality (personality competencies), and have good interactions with the problems and development of society (social competence). To increase capacity and competence continuously, PAI lecturers can continue their education to a higher level, attend seminars and training education, utilize journals and various publications of universities, and are active in scientific research. PAI lecturers also need to improve literacy in technology and information. By increasing the effectiveness of learning Islamic education as a value education and student character education, it is expected that it can have implications for the betterment of community members and the diminishing value crisis and character crisis.

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