

Indonesia Education Today: Dating Back Its History of Islam and Imparting European Education System

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Abstract

History of education in Indonesia dates back with its multicultural notion and acculturation since many years ago from Hindu Empire till the Islamic ruler. Later on in the colonial era, European education system gave much influence in Indonesia modern education. It was as if two sides of coin, the coming of European countries, such as Portugal and Dutch in Indonesia carried out lot of miseries on the other hands it also contributed to foster of modern education system in Indonesia. This paper is aimed to examine the influence of Islam and Europe influences to Indonesia Education. Modern Islamic Boarding Schools and Muhammadiyah (name of the biggest Modern Islamic Organization in Indonesia) Schools are the typical of the combination between European and Islamic education system synergy. The ethnography method with the participant –observation is used to get the dept observation and identification of the two different cultural contexts. Although, Many Modern Islamic Boarding Schools or Modern Pesantren and Muhammadiyah Schools have been risen up in Indonesia today, otherwise Pesantren with its traditional system are still existed in Indonesia.

Keywords: education system, education history, education reformation

1. Introduction

Education as a part of human and social life has become the salient pillar of society since the first of human history otherwise in the past time the education has the different system depending on its aims and trends from the different time. For example, in the pre – historic era, the people would bring up their children how to farming and how to hunting. Then, the human civilization was growth and the need of education was also at the coincidence time. The activity like the trade needed of communication between one and others and it was the education should be employed. The trade among the nation in the world was definitely contributed to the development of education in the society because the people needed to understand other languages and also required to write the manuscript for the trade documents as well. Thus the competence of reading and writing is very important to catch up. Probably the system of education could be different with the modern education today but the spirit to bring up the children for their better future was similar from one generation to the next generation.

Further social, political and religious aspects also profoundly contributed to the growth of education in the world, mainly in modern education. For an instance, the policy from the leader like the king and others would bring the significant changing in education, such as when Pericles reined the Greek, he contributed to the democracy and education for his country. Pericles led the Athenian Greeks between 460 – 430 B.C. during the so called Golden Age when democracy was at its height (Butts in Hessong, 1987). Education also evolved and was the most vital and rewarding during this period. The next was also happened in Persia, during of the war with the kingdoms around it their education was stressed on martial arts hence they could defense themselves from their enemies' attack. While the religion definitely contributed to the education through its teaching of each religious doctrines. For the Christianity, they need the education to teach their bible to the people and to plant the seed of religious values to the children. Or for the Muslim the reciting Qur'an is as the way to understand the religion teaching and makes it as their way of life. Such method of the teaching for the children can be carried out by the society in the prayer places such as the church, the mosque, and the temple or by the parents at home. Because the notion of education refers to the continuous process that was begun from the birth of human being and will be ended till they are passed away, it called long life education.

2. Research Method: Ethnography

As the identification of history of modern education in Indonesia, it dates back in colonial era and dealt with the European education history, the ethnography research is appropriately applied due to its way of the data collection that refers to the culture. In associated with the research, it remarked that doing ethnography as the collection of data that describe a culture (Bernard, 2004, p. 16). Then, the data collection uses the participant – observation method to record the data and to obtain the adequate information. On account of its comparison of the two different histories between European and Indonesia Education, the ethic perspective enables to observe the multi – cultural views from the different context. Because ethic perspective is associated with the comparison of differing cultures and populations enables researchers to develop broader cross cultural themes and concepts (Morris et al., 1999).

3. The Outgrowth of Modern Education: European Overview

The enlightenment of modern education in Europe began in Renaissance era and it was between fourteenth to seventeenth centuries. The term of “enlightenment” was come up due to their era had been faded by the dark of middle age era, when the church doctrines were very dominant in all aspects in human life including the education. In the previous era, the education was only aimed to learn the church doctrines as well as neglected the scientific knowledge. But, when the Renaissance out broke in Europe the scholars could think more independent without a lot of restrictions from the Church. The Renaissance tried to redefine the Greek victorious period in human thought and science or it could be called as the rediscovery of classical civilization. Further, the Renaissance focused on the human development of thought, thus every aspects like architecture, arts, trade, and education were increased. By contrast, the church power was declined and altered.

One of the education reformists in this period was Dutch educator, Desiderius Erasmus. He dedicated his life fostering the education. He wrote two famous books in acquainted with the education reform in Europe, there were the *Praise of Folly* and *Colloquies*. The first book was criticized the corruption of the church, and it would be referred as the important book in spiritual rebellion in Renaissance era or well known as the reformation period. While the other of his work was *Colloquies*, it discussed the guidance for the children connecting with the Christian way of life. Associated with the Erasmus idea in reformation, it was much inspired by Martin Luther, the German educator, was the advocate of the reformation for the church. In 1517 he nailed his reformation theses idea in the door of Wittenberg church. It consisted of ninety – five of his idea of reformation and later on this movement was famous as the Protestant reformation. This Reformation bore fruit to the development in education as well. It stated that Martin Luther suggested every prince should provide primary schools for both boys and girls, and he translated the Bible into peasant German for them to understand (Hessong, 1987). Martin Luther also wrote the book, *Catechism*, this prominent book was about the religious instruction for the children. This movement was spreading out in many countries in Europe and United States. On the other hand, the Catholics reacted with this reformation and also gave the counter by starting to build the order called Society of Jesus or “Jesuits”.

In Renaissance, the education still could not be separated from the church and religious values, even though the domination of the church was slightly declined. Such problem gave the idea to some educators in Europe to take away the education from the church or secularize the education. It was happened after Reformation period. The secular education notion in Europe, it could not be neglected from John Amos Comenius. He was the advocate of secular education from Moravia. His idea was brightly as the entering gate to the education enlightenment. He was the Moravian bishop who believed that children were not born human but became humanize through being educated in society (Hessong, 1987). His idea of education was the education for all people within all levels, every people had their right in education both rich and poor people as well as boys and girls. He suggested that the education should be less religious and focused on the development of science and knowledge. He wrote the first illustrated schoolbook, the *Visible World*. This book was used to teach the children using some pictures. Comenius principle in teaching was to make the students happy by using pictures in their learning process.

Another of his famous book was *The School of Infancy*, it was the guide book for the mother dealing with the nursery of their children at home. He argued that the basic education at home carried out by the mother was an essential problem for the basic education for the children. Comenius was the advocate of the learning by practice. It meant that if someone wanted to learn painting for example, he should practice how to paint, for the carving, he must practice the carving, for dancing he/she must practice dancing, for playing guitar he must practice to play the guitar and so on. Or, in other perspective, if somebody wanted to learn anything, he must experience in it. He stated that the sense of experiences can be used to stimulate the students’ intellect (Hessong, 1987).

The next great educator who was devoted his life for the development of education in Europe in the secular

education period was Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi. He was inspired by Rousseau, the French philosopher who wrote, *Emily*, the book telling the ideas of natural development of the child. According to Pestalozzi, the education and learning process for the children should be carried out step by step based on their level of competence. Like Comenius, Pestalozzi also suggested that the experience was the salient things in the learning process of the children. The students/the children must give the learning by emphasizing on the practical activities, thus the experience could precede his learning process for the next level, but at the first level the learning process will accompany them. The aim of education, for Pestalozzi was not only the result in the school activities but it was much deeper aim and it was to prepare the students had their independence in their daily activities.

Pestalozzi idea of education such as giving experienced activities and an independent action for the student gave inspiration a lot to his greatest student, Friedrich Wilhelm Froebel. He established the first kindergarten, the place for children with the joyful learning. Also, He created the child own world, it was land for song, story, and play. The children world took away from the adult world, due to its different characteristics. The students played and learnt in their own garden of learning. Furthermore, he suggested the principle “joy, freedom, contentment of inner and outer rest, peace with the world” (Froebel in Hessong, 1826, 1987). Several games like building cardboard block, playing in an outdoor garden in the baby pools were a kind of open – ended activities to empower the children creativity. Froebel truly combined the Rousseau’s naturalism and Pestalozzi’s practicality in the children learning process. His contribution in children learning within his idea of kindergarten had changed the world of education, not only in Europe but in all over the world also.

4. History of Indonesia Education: Modern Outlook

The modern education in Indonesia has a unique notion to discuss due to its combination of culture, religion, and society. Islamic culture absolutely affected Indonesia education many years ago through the practice of Traditional Islamic boarding School system, called *Pesantren*, it was the education that centered in the mosque or in the Muslim leader (ulema) house. Otherwise Western culture gave its influence through their colonialism and imperialism in Indonesia. At least, these were two European countries contributed in Indonesia development of education, they were Portugal and Dutch or Netherlands. All of such influences from the different countries, culture, and religion formed the national system of education in Indonesia. Thus, in Indonesia today, the heritage of the two different system of education is still found. *Pesantren* is under admission of Indonesia Ministry of Religion, and the common schools are under control and managed by Indonesia Ministry of education.

5. *Pesantren* (Islamic Boarding School)

Pesantren was the oldest education system in Indonesia nevertheless this education system is still survived till today together with the modern education system. *Pesantren* is the Traditional Islamic boarding school education system and its uniqueness makes it different from others. This traditional school system does not have the curriculum, clearly level or grade, examination system and learn only the Islamic religion doctrines in Qur’an and other books written by the Arabic scientists. The male and female students usually are separated; they have each distinctive boarding house. Further, the *kyai* or the Islamic teacher/*ulema* is central figure in *pesantren*, he is suggested as the holy people, and hereby the students/*santris* must obey him. The learning process in *pesantren* is according to verbalism. It means that *santris* (students) follow all of their teacher instructions, advices, suggestions, and lessons. There are two types of learning process, the first is individual learning, and the second is classical learning. For an individual learning, the student will learn face to face with the *kyai* (the teacher/Muslim leader). While in the classical learning, the students/*santris* will sit around their teacher, and the teacher will be as the center of learning, it likes the inquiry method. The learning process is not only in the class but it sometimes is also held in the mosque. The materials that are transferred mostly are the Islamic knowledge. In line with the level it follows the level in reciting holy Qur’an, then the *kyai* will judge he/she can go to the further level or not. Today in Indonesia, many *pesantrens* have changed their paradigm. They have combined the modern system of education and Traditional Islamic system of education, it is called Modern *Pesantren*, for example *Darussalam* in Gontor Village, Ponorogo, East Java, Indonesia. Here the students are not only learning religious books but also learning Mathematics, sciences, and other knowledges.

6. Portugal and Dutch Influences

The next phase of education system that was really affected Indonesia was European education system that brought under the Portugal and Dutch Imperialism and Colonialism. Portugal came first in Indonesia for the trade, and occupied some areas in eastern part of Indonesia such as Molluca. During Portugal colonialism in the eastern part of Indonesia, it also had another mission to introduce the Christianity to the native people through the establishment of the Seminary School. In 1536 the first seminary school was opened in Ternate (One of the

city in Molluca isles). The founder was Antonio Galvao from Jesuit order. This school taught the Bible, writing, reading, Mathematics and also Latin language. But, Portugal reigned was not too long, then it was substituted by another European country, Dutch.

The impacts of Dutch education was much stronger due to its longer colonialism and imperialism in the whole of Java, part of Sumatera, part of Borneo, and part of Celebes. The Dutch influence in education began in 17th century. Like most of other countries, it was extremely hard in the connection between the native people and the Imperialist or between colonialist and the colonialized. Surely, such problems were also happened in education. The system of education applied by the colonialist was fully discriminated and racist. The school for the Dutch/the Netherland East Indies Government would be different in curriculum, system, and certainly the facilities, it was definitely better than the school for the Indonesian. While the education for the Indonesian also distinguished between the upper class, like the son of municipal regent and other high – rank officer and the lower class. Even, the low class people did not have an opportunity to get the better education. The school for European, Indonesian, and other East Asia countries such as Chinese were also different. Thus they separated each other according to their own race and the social status.

The best school for children or equal with Primary/Elementary school in Netherland East Indies Government or during colonialism in Indonesia was ELS, it stands for *Europeesche Lagere School* it was set up in 1808. This school was for the European children who lived in Indonesia. Certainly, this school had the best facilities, the best teacher, and the colonial government gave a lot of attention such as giving the big donation to ELS. For indigenous children, the Colonial government made two kinds of schools, they were *Hollandsch Inlandsche School* (HIS) and *the Inlandsche School* (IS). The HIS was the school for the children who were coming from the aristocrat family, while the IS was the school for ordinary people. Then, for the Chinese and other East Asia decent, the Colonialist built *Hollandsch Chinesesche School* (HCS). Based on such category, it was obviously practiced the discrimination according to the race and the social class status in Indonesia education during the colonization. The colonialist attempted to keep their control through education by not allowing the indigenous people got the better education for example the High school at the same level as Junior High School was only opened many years after the first elementary school opened up.

The education system in Indonesia in Colonial era was aimed to fulfill the need of the workers, especially the lower rank officer for colonial government. Therefore, after the students graduated from the HIS and IS they could continue their education to *Pupillen Korps*, *Kweekschool*, STOVIA (*School Tot Opleiding Van Indische Artsen* or Medical School), *Ambachts School* and *Froebel Onderwijs*. All kinds of school were to fulfill the colonial government workers, such as *Pupillen Korps*, it was the school for military, *Kweekschool* was for teacher fulfillment, STOVIA was the medical workers, *Ambachtsschool* was for the carpenter and architecture, and at last, *Froebel Onderwijs* was aimed to educate the teacher in Kindergarten. To enhance the education quality then Dutch in 1914 opened MULO (*Meer Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs*) it was the school to continue the graduated students from elementary school level. While in 1919 for the Senior High school level it was established HBS (*Hogere Burger School*) for the indigenous student, and also AMS (*Algemeen Metdelbare School*). Further, for the higher education, the colonial government started to built some Institutes around 1920's for example THS (*Technische Hoogeschool*) for Technique institute, it was in Bandung, West Java, RHS (*Rechtshoogeschool*) or Institute of Law, GHS (*Geneeskudige Hoogeschool*) or Institute of Medical, both were placed in Batavia or today called Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia.

7. Indonesia Education Reform: Ahmad Dahlan Reformation

Muhammadiyah, one of the biggest Islamic Organization in Indonesia was the pioneer of the modern education in Indonesia. This organization was founded by Ahmad Dahlan in Jogjakarta in November, 18th, 1912. But, *Muhammadiyah* education preceded its organization, because it was established the school in 1911. This first school was founded in Jogjakarta with the equal level with HIS or Primary school. The different of *Muhammadiyah* school was, it was not only taught the scientific knowledge such as Mathematics, Arithmetic, social sciences and etc but it combined with religion subjects like *tarikh* or the history of Islam, reciting Qur'an, and *Hadith* (Muhammad teaching). Ahmad Dahlan reformed the Islamic traditional education that only learning the Islamic doctrines by combining them with the general science. *Muhammadiyah* School also used curriculum and the formal grade like Dutch education system. Unlike the *Pesantren* that the students were only taught by the *kyai* or Muslim leader as their mere teacher, in *Muhammadiyah* School, different subjects will be taught by the different teacher who has specific qualification.

Ahmad Dahlan as the founder of *Muhammadiyah* Organization and Education was an outstanding Muslim leader in Indonesia who got his education in Mecca and shared his idea of the Islamic reformation movement with

Muhammad Rasyid Ridha, Jamaluddin Al Afghani, and Muhammad Abduh in the Middle East. Back home in Indonesia, Dahlan involved with *Jami'at Khairiyah* and *Budi Utomo*. The first organization was the organization of Arab community in Indonesia, while *Budi Utomo* was the youth movement organization founded by the alumni of STOVIA or medical school and alumni of western schools in Indonesia. His involvement with *Budi Utomo* organization gave him awareness that Islamic education must be reformed. Dahlan idea for education was to bring the Muslim dated back to the values in Qur'an as well as to decline the dichotomy between Muslim scholar and Muslim leader. His other education vision was the education should produce the objective thinkers. He criticized the traditionalist Muslim in *Pesantren* who practiced *kyai* centrist (the only one teacher, leader, manager).

Further, his idea and vision in education applied with his establishment of the *Muhammadiyah* School in 1911. Then, to develop his striving and to convince his education reformation, he made the foundation or organization as the Management holding system. Thus in November, 18th, 1912 *Muhammadiyah* was founded by Ahmad Dahlan and his followers. This organization today has been evolved becoming one of the biggest Islamic organization in Indonesia with around 50 million followers. *Muhammadiyah* Schools adopted western system in its curriculum and level, but *Muhammadiyah* Schools were also taught their students with Islamic knowledge too. English and Arab language were the compulsory subjects in *Muhammadiyah* School besides Mathematics, science, social science, physics together with Qur'an and Hadith (Prophet Muhammad teaching). *Muhammadiyah* today as the Non - Government Organization in Indonesia has the biggest and prominent number of education institutions in Indonesia. The recent and the newest database mentions that *Muhammadiyah* has 2,604 elementary schools, 1,772 Junior High School, 1,143 Senior High School, and 172 universities scattered in the whole Indonesia areas.

8. Conclusion

The history of education in Indonesia particularly in modern era is strongly affected two mainstreams of education namely Islamic education from the Middle East and European system that was brought during Portugal and Dutch Colonialism in Indonesia. The education system that practiced in Indonesia by Dutch was fully discriminated because it distinguished the students according to their race and social class. On the other hand, Islamic education was also trapped in religion doctrines carried out by only one central figure called *kyai*, he was the only one that has the authority to teach and determine for everything till Muhammadiyah came with its brighter movement. Hence, the education today in Indonesia cannot neglect its own history. The development of education, the establishment of education system till the design of national curriculum must consider how the education had formed. The history of education is really important aspect to embrace the foundation of national education in the future.

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