

BADIUZZAMAN SAID NURSI AND KH AHMAD DAHLAN'S THOUGHTS ON EDUCATION REFORM: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

In order to control the movement of globalization throughout this modern era, one of its key aspects is through deconstruction throughout the education sector. Undoubtedly, high quality education management was produced by integrating disciplines in practice with fundamental Islamic values within the learning process. Besides that, this approach had also been continuously used among reformist leaders to weaken the dangerous Western ideology that influenced significantly the global government system through colonialism mostly by poisoning the generation of youth through sole reference to materialism philosophy and rationalism. Based on that issue, numerous powerful leaders in Indonesia have intervened to rectify the problem among Muslims by reconstruction of the education systems rather than through political as well as other aggressive physical interaction. KH Ahmad Dahlan was the trustworthy figure in endorsing the concept of educational reform through the "Muhammadiyah" mass organization, which was formed in Yogyakarta in 1912. The conducted a study to examine the similarities amongst KH Ahmad Dahlan and Badiuzzaman Said Nursi in applying the Islamic Education Reform System in the region. In this research, the researcher uses full qualitative method and documentation related to the topic of this research, which then will be analyze descriptively.

Keywords: Badiuzzaman Said Nursi, KH Ahmad Dahlan, Education Reform, Indonesia, Turkey

INTRODUCTION

As per historical witness, education has an important role in civilizing each community of human being. A concept of civilization is normally involved with social, political and economic characters (Alia et al., 2020; LeVine & White, 2017). Even so, the main basis of civilization was strongly supported by the intellectual achievement of its people and the efforts to advance the educational function by its ruler. By so doing, many ideas would inspire mankind which was sourced by the various disciplines and it will create a great masterpiece. Source of civilization is not solely dependent on material elements but more than that its quality is determined of the internal ethical aspect. Albert Schweitzer (1987) stated "world crisis was from humanity losing the ethical idea of civilization". In short, the core source of civilization should be analogous with a great ethics and morality encompassed of various aspects of life, so that the harmony and welfare of mankind will be realized.

During colonialism era, the impact of imperialism had always been leaving a negative impression of backwardness, poverty, ignorance, conflict and immorality towards colonized people. Moreover, the dichotomy of science and religion as interrelated sources of knowledge was extremely executed by European people via introducing secularism dogma. Secularism attempts to interpret life on principles gained from the material elements without reference to religion. Therefore, Said Nursi asserted that

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Islamic civilization is more valuable due to is based on divine revelation, while western civilization only rely on the principle of Greek and Roman philosophy (Marazi, 2015).

Other than that, he diagnosed the primary cause of the Ottoman Empire's decline due to lack of confidence in Islam and the assumption that Islam contradicted in the science and progress. To straighten out such error, he dedicated himself to author a great masterwork of Quran interpretation with a serious emphasis on contemplation to the natural creation and science. As it was cited in Qazi Mohd Jamshed's journal, Said Nursi in his educational system was earnestly applying the combination between religious knowledge and general studies as he expressed "*the religious sciences are the light of the conscience and the modern sciences are the light of the reason*" (Jamshed, 2016).

In his view, the struggle in this modern age was not more potent with physical contact. However, it must be embodied thru positive action or in other words familiarly called as "manevi-cihad". According to Kharis Ma'ruf as Indonesian students who deepen in educational reform, Said Nursi aimed to make "*tauhid*" as the main vision of education so as the people will not be misguided amidst the globalization era. Concisely, through his incredible work "*Resale I Nur*", he introduced the great formulation of educational reform in order to tackle off the moral and spiritual destruction of materialism. As long as the sphere of issue rooted in the destruction of foreign clout and was of morality and mentality, religion should be made its principle to revive moral and spiritual prestige (Vahide, 1999).

In another realm, the notion of Islamic revival by way of reconstructing educational system started to be introduced by local reformist who which qualified in the matter of religious capability, one of them is KH Ahmad Dahlan. Similarly to Said Nursi's concept in re-Islamizing the general disciplines of knowledge, he established a mass organization "*Muhammadiyah*" as a medium to revive an Islamic spirit in reference to the Quran and Hadith. This mass organization was over contributing in educational field rather than other sectors in the community by establishing Islamic educational institutions. As per data record in 2012, there are 10314 educational institutions of "*Muhammadiyah*" including 172 Universities scattered throughout the regions of Indonesia has been existed (Huda & Kartanegara, 2015).

In conjunction with the method applied by both reformists above, the author has a concise inference in observing the issues that triggered the birth of the idea of educational reform in the respective spots. For instance, the emergence of materialism, atheism, and secularism on behalf of development, modernization and progress, the separation between divine revelation and human reason, the concept of Sufism which strongly rooted in Turkish Muslims' soul and many others (Vahide, 1999).

Besides, in Indonesia the serious matter that truly invited the attention of KH Ahmad Dahlan to contribute in reforming the educational system was caused by some points such as Javanese Muslims who still glorify sacred objects and mysticism due to cultural inheritance of Hinduism, the decline of moral quality which truly affected to the ignorance and backwardness, Dutch colonialism which has exploited the natural sources of homeland causing a severe poverty (Ni'mah, 2014), traditionalist clerics/*kyai* that installed classical curriculum in *pesantren* it would result in nothing progress to modern period (Azra & Afrianty, 2005). Although there are many research themes regarding reformation of Islamic education, no one has yet taken a point of view on the vision and mission of the two figures who are the focus of this research, where according to researchers the vision and mission they carry is one of the best visions and missions in the development of religious education reform Islam in the future.

So, in this paper, the author wishes to spell out in detail on educational reform as an appropriate means to actualize an Islamic reform vision led by these two prominent figures in the twentieth century to awaken *ummah* in respect of the importance for returning moral and intellectual improvement through a spirit of Islam.

METHODOLOGY

The authors use a qualitative method which is frequently employed as the basis of research assumptions in the fields of Shari'a, social sciences, and humanities. Qualitative research is aimed at knowledge construction through discovery and understanding of situations, both textually and contextually. Qualitative research seeks to investigate a social phenomenon arising from the cause of a case, including values and norms of society, and even problems that arise within human life. Using the qualitative method, the authors try to make a constructive, complex, detailed report, analyzing the word from the perspective of several respondents and exploratory studies on natural situations (Sugiyono, 2015).

Scientific research categorized as library research plays a crucial rule in the entire set of research methodologies. Literature research has several objectives, such as: linking research with various existing literature that fits the research theme, informing the audience about the results of the other research conducted at the same time with similar topics, and filling the gaps of previous studies (Creswell, 2014). The literature review is intended to summarize and interpret theories and concepts which is related to ongoing research (Cohen et al., 2017).

In relation to the ongoing research "Badiuzzaman Said Nursi And Kh Ahmad Dahlan's Thoughts On Education Reform: A Comparative Study", The Writer Uses Literature Method, And This discussion is expected to become a more constructive discipline study than previous study or research. To strengthen the theory and analysis in this study, researchers used literature from scientific books and journals, including books written by Azra, journal articles written by Abdullah and Nafilah and Dahlan, Muh and various other primary literatures that are closely related to this research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Brief of Historical Life of Badiuzzaman Said Nursi

Said Nursî, later known as Bediüzzaman Said Nursî, was born in 1876 in Nurs, a small village in the province of Bitlis in eastern Turkey. He was born in a family of theologians, belonged to Shafi'ite school of Islamic law and traced his ancestry to the family of Prophet Muhammad. In the agricultural setting, Nursî lived in close harmony with nature, aware and curious about his natural surroundings. Considered an exceptionally child bright, he memorized the manuals of the classical Islamic fields of knowledge in a short time. His remarkable academic accomplishments earned him the title "Bediüzzaman," which means "the wonder of the time" (Mohammad, 2018).

First, one has to remember that he was a very well-known scholar in the era of the Ottoman Empire. Secondly, he was imprisoned by the government of his time and was beleaguered throughout his life. Bediüzzaman himself divided his life into two periods: Old Said (Eski Said), from 1876 to 1920; and New Said (Yeni Said), from 1920 to 1949. Some of his biographers study the period of 1949 until his death as a third period in his life, due to his restricted involvement in politics, at least at the level of voting. Each Said corresponded to different orientations and approaches that he employed at different times to raise Muslim consciousness. The Old period (1876 to 1920) takes him from birth to the founding of the Republic. The Old Said period was one of political involvement. New Said (1920 to 1949) entered a world where influencing modernity had destabilized and undermined old equilibrium. And, finally the Third Said (1949-1960) emerged as "The Master" teacher of Risale-i Nur (Mohammad, 2018).

Furthermore, Said was finding the effective method to deliver subjects to his students by synergizing religious element and science due to the traditional form of Islamic curricula lacked the

capacity to answer the questions thrown by science and modern advance in knowledge (Vahide, 1999). In order to actualize is by participated in political action (Vahide, 1999). He believed that the effective manner to serve religion was thru politics. After the world-war I he had confronted a dramatic conversion of his contribution in correcting Islamic condition by renouncing social and political engagement. He lived in full contemplation of the science and Quran exegesis rather than the bustle of writing or teaching. This period also assigned the transition period of Said's life to be the New Said. Indeed, with the assistance of *Futuh al-Ghayb* and *Maktubat* by Imam Rabbani, and Said came to the awareness that he should carry out the Quran as a principal medium to be a sole guideline (Çoruh, 2019).

Said Nursi's Problems to Actualize Educational Reform in Turkey

There are several efforts and problem for Said Nursi in order to actualize educational reform in Turkey such as below:

Secularism

More than that, during the *Tanzimat* period, Secularism tried to intervene in the educational system to be reconstructed, as its visible signs, new schools were erected out of the traditional *mekteb* and *medrese*. As an outcome for that policy, the *ulema* were lost much of their traditional popularity and the dichotomy between religious and secular education which led to the emergence of other deviant reliance like materialism and anti-religious ideology (Özdalga, 2012).

In dealing with the threat of secularism, Nursi was mindful in selecting the decision. Solving this problem required teamwork cooperation which might be actualized by encouraging people to reach the spiritual and material knowledge concurrently that sourced by Quran. From that source, he discovered the great contrivances through establishing the *Medresetu-Zehra* in Eastern Turkey as a container loaded people to straighten up their perspective in understanding science and religion through his phenomenal Quran interpretation "*Resale-I Nur*". In his view, the Quran and science cannot be comprehended separately. Moreover, Nursi showed that Quran perceives the world and any creature in the name of God and the manifestation of his divine names, while the materialist philosophy looks at the world on the favour of itself (Çoruh, 2020).

War and Imprisonment

The gradation of his life was passing with tragic severe wars and destruction. Moreover, as Vahide mentioned Nursi was living in the main periods of modern Turkish history including the final decades of the Ottoman Empire following by the first twenty-seven years of the Turkish Republic proclaimed in 1923. Therefore, the approach of his perspective to remedy the people condition was unstable. The contribution of his effort to the political action was devoted when first appointed to be a commander of the militia forces in the eastern provinces. He was captured by the Russian in March 1916 after the fall of Bitlis and spent two years in captivity in Russia before he successfully escaped. The scariest thing for him was the threat to the Qur'an by the person of British commander Gladstone. As a response of its threat, he rekindled the role of Quran as a principal remedy to cure the moral and spiritual weakness. Other Nursi's goal was the revitalization of the Empire and the Islamic World (Vahide, 2003).

Apart from that, the harshness of the political situation eventually ended the Ottoman Empires throne to become a republican system under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The persecution to the *ulema* and those who play a significant role in the things related to the religion was executed. Nursi was considered as the most influential reformist which could be a worrisome threat to the policy of secularist republican

system. At last, he was taken to Antalya and sent to exile in Burdur a small town in South-Western Anatolia and this was the beginning of thirty years of imprisonment (Mohammad, 2018).

Nevertheless, amid of these difficult times, he had utilized the chance to complete the parts of a collection of *Resale-INur* and solely being positively minded to this hard situation by calling this detention as medrese yusufiye and the prison is the place of training and education.

Brief of Historical Life of KH Ahmad Dahlan

Ahmad Dahlan was born with the name of Muhammad Darwis in 1868 M in the village of Kauman, Yogyakarta. His father was a Muslim figure in his area named Kyai Haji Abu Bakr ibn Sulayman, serving as preacher and leader of the *Masjid Besar* of the Yogyakarta Sultanate. His mother was Siti Aminah binti KH Ibrahim, a priest of the Sultanate of Yogyakarta (Huda & Kartanegara, 2015). He achieved Islamic knowledge and any areas of knowledge from various muslim scholars. Further In 1912 he established *Muhammadiyah* as an organization which focused on social activities and education. In terms of the application of Islamic law, he had his own characteristic principle which is referring to all the issues to the Quran and Sunnah as the main clue by legalizing *ijtihad* (Siddiq & Salama, 2018).

Furthermore, while of social development, however, it was formed by Ahmad Dahlan as a modern way to reform the learning system by facilitating the study with appliances that previously had not been allowed such as tables, chair, board and the like (Siddiq & Salama, 2018). The principal action he did as a response to the fundamental issues namely, *First*, Correcting *qibla* direction of Masjid Gede Yogyakarta with an accurate measure; *Second*, Re-cleaning religious rituals and celebrations that have been mixed up with Hindu syncretism culture; *Third*, Rejecting *bid'ah* and *khurafat*; and *Fourth*, Supporting education and social movement (Dahlan, 2014).

Ahmad Dahlan's Problems to Actualize Educational Reform in Indonesia

The challenges to actualize educational reform particularly bases on Islamic principle were difficult and here the examples:

Colonialism

Colonialism is one of the key sources of adversity in Indonesia (Jones, 2015). It was because of its geographical location contains many fertile soils which invited many invaders to make trading and monopoly of its produce. Most of the abundant marine and agrarian products will be supplied to the Dutch trading companies at very cheap prices. As its consequence, many labors did not taste their harvest enough even, they must be willing to become workers of the occupiers with very minimal wages so that they are unable to meet basic household needs. Even bad, plantation owners were required to pay agricultural taxes to colonial officials so that their land would not be plundered. In accordance with Anne Booth argumentation, before the independence of Indonesia, the Dutch have renounced the economic development which was low income in Indonesia and backward human growth (Booth, 2009).

Moreover, during the Japanese occupation in 1944, there was widespread famine and the death rate began to increase. The Japanese invaders seemed to be crueller in employing the natives than the Dutch army. The longstanding fight for Indonesian independence against the subjection resulted in the decline in per capita GDP. As a negative impact of its imperialism to the Indonesian legacy, the new government had to take over the debt of the colonial government, amounting to be more than one billion dollars (Booth, 2009).

Based on that social issue, Ahmad Dahlan was more attention to the needs of the poor and tramps whose did not have permanent dwelling, together with his followers providing meals, sympathizing orphans and decrepit people. They oriented this action based on Quran al-Maun which later led to the establishment social facility like hospital, orphanage and so on [Siddiq, & Salama, 2018].

Traditionalist Figure

The existence of traditionalist figures in amid of the society has a high-respected position. All aspects related to the ritual activities should be agreed by their recommendation otherwise it could be considered as disobedience to the religious code. Pertaining to the Islamic figure, Howard classified the two major Islamic groups has existed in Indonesia which are traditionalist and reformist. Traditionalist figures were described those who insist embracing classical approach and take a decision of Islamic affairs without looking to the modern period such as *Nahdlatul Ulama*, *Perti*, and *al-Washliyah* groups. While reformist figures has been defined as the groups who performed the Islamic reform accord with current development like *Muhammadiyah*, *al-Irsyad*, and *Persatuan Islam* institutions (Nakamura, 2012).

Aside from that, the notions which were brought by reformist to repair the Muslims society condition had given rise to the hatred of traditionalist figures. In 1920, after the formation of *Muhammadiyah*, Ahmad Dahlan was damned by traditionalist figures as heretic and apostate due to encouragement to what they regarded as false doctrine such as the assumption of the *qibla* direction of Masjid Agung Kauman is not straight facing the *Ka'ba*. In addition to that, the traditionalist leaders presumed that the method of Ahmad Dahlan in teaching Islam to the society was contrary due to the adoption of the modern educational system which was produced by Western Christians. They claimed that Islam and modernism could not be appropriate also western teaching models should be blocked (Kim, 2010).

However, in order to realize his model of reform, Dahlan try to convince to traditionalist *ulema* that Islam and modern civilization could be parallel. He contributed in the Budi Utomo as a nationalist movement to apply religious study and it has been taught along with secular subjects in Dutch schools. Finally, he made his own school which integrated science and religious courses and this was the forerunner to the other *Muhammadiyah* educational institutions throughout Indonesia at the national level (Azra & Afrianty, 2005).

Said Nursi and Ahmad Dahlan's Method on Educational Reform

Here, the author attempts to elaborate the method used by Said Nursi in order to actualize educational reform in his respective nation as follows (Jamshed, 2016):

1. The educational reform that Said Nursi brought was covering the science, religion and morality.
2. Educational philosophy is principally based on faith and not solely relating to the concrete materialism.
3. The Interrelationship between knowledge, love and belief is the basic view of education.
4. Knowledge *ilm* and faith *iman* forms are the core component of Nursi's educational system.
5. Education is not only to enlarge the knowledge but also to create a good character.
6. Knowledge and faith should be fused and integrated to bring real happiness and spiritual pleasure.
7. The highest aim of the human innate character and the most sublime result of the human inborn disposition is to have faith in God.

8. The basic principle of the Islamic religion, renewing and strengthening of belief through educational reform were the foremost importance and took precedence over every other form of struggle aimed at reconstruction.
9. Faith is one of the main themes of *Resale-I Nur* which Nursi elaborated with numerous metaphor, comparison, and argument.
10. Nursi convinced that the religion did not consist solely of faith matters but due to its comprehensiveness it is also connected with science.
11. Said construed the meaning of Jihad with a broad definition even its action should be implemented by positive measure against the ignorance.
12. Using the allegorical comparisons (*temsil*) between the wisdom of Quran and Philosophy.
13. Using the logical proofs and reasoned argument as a reflective thought to the universe.

And at the same time, the author also attempts to elaborate the method used by Ahmad Dahlan in term of actualizing educational reform in his respective nation as follows:

1. Ahmad Dahlan erected schools that provided instruction in religious studies and general subjects.
2. Ahmad Dahlan focused with the Islamic jurisprudence/fiqh as a branch of Islamic primary, while traditionalists assume that fiqh cannot be tolerated and it is included in the principal of belief and moral (Nakamura, 2012).
3. Defending Islam through an advanced educational system was embodied by *Muhammadiyah* against European influence and Christians attack.
4. Renewal object of Ahmad Dahlan as a reformist in Indonesia concerning in the revamping of the religious sphere particularly in rituals, purification of worship and modernization of religious education (Niyozov & Memon, 2011).
5. The orientation of educational reform which devoted by Ahmad Dahlan was based on the favourable attitude to modern sciences and western civilization that modern scientific development was based on the reason and rationality, both of which are also basic tenets of Islam as inscribed in the concept of *ijtihad* and his desire towards modern education promoted him to establish an Islamic organization (Kim, 2010).
6. Dahlan thought that the educational reform must be one of the primary agenda, along with the idea of Islamic reform (Azra & Afrianty, 2005).
7. Ahmad Dahlan has the assumption that as long as the Western education model does not conflict with the basic principles of Islam, this can be applied in the education system such as learning a foreign language besides Arabic and science taught in Dutch schools (Abdullah, 2017).

Similarity and Difference Approaches in Term of Educational Reform

Here, the author attempts to analyze some similarities and differences method or approach in term of actualizing educational reform between Said Nursi and Ahmad Dahlan such as below:

Similarities

1. Both reformists in facing the globalization and modern age, using a similar strategy in Islamic reform which is thru the educational field.
2. A similar methodological approach to education reform is the alignment between science and revelation (both figures have utilised in a modernist manner rather than traditionalist way).
3. Making the Quran and Hadith as the main reference in applying the concept of education against the modern era challenges (Syafri et al., 2020).

4. Acknowledging the extraordinary role of reason as a gift from God as long as it does not exceed the position of divine revelation in deciding matters and rejecting taqlid to individuals without comprehending sources of reference legibly
5. Actualizing the concept of educational reform thru the tangible edifices in the respective formulation, Said Nursi with *Medresetu Zehra* while Ahmad Dahlan through his *madrrasah ibtidaiyah diniyah*

Differences

1. Said Nursi more contribute in literary work of *Resale-I Nur*, while Ahmad Dahlan more active in Social Charity such as erecting educational institutions, schools, *madrrasah diniyyah* etc.
2. Said Nursi more focus on Quran interpretation against atheism and materialist philosophy, while Ahmad Dahlan more concentration on Islamic jurisprudence/*fiqh* against mysticism and syncretism, and heresy.
3. The struggle of Said Nursi was criticized by secular government officials, while Ahmad Dahlan's effort was excoriated by traditionalist figures.

CONCLUSION

Said Nursi and Ahmad Dahlan as the neoteric reformers have been a success in respond that challenge and straightening up the assumption that science and divinity are inter-correlated. The scientific progress without being accompanied by the belief in the creator led the people to be misguided and unbelief. Conversely, the religious aspect without involving modern science will create the bigotry and underdeveloped mindset. This proves that the integration of these two aspects is a wise solution in responding to the challenges of the modern world.

The way that has been undergone by Ahmad Dahlan and Said Nursi in improving the circumstance of people was diverse depending on the local traditional practice and culture but the essence was the same that is to revive the prestige of Islam so that it could stand upright on earth amid of severe swell and modern challenges. It also indicates that the glory of Muslims has returned since its collapse firstly with the arrival of crusade in between 10th to 12th century and mostly disappearance in the medieval era. Its Islamic renewal eventually is able to rival western culture and progress in this current modern century. Result of this study can contribute to the development of Islamic education in Indonesian context. Or in the study of Educational reform that is still relevant even today.

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