

Fazlur Rahman's Thoughts On Islamic Education And Its Relevance In The Contemporary Era

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ABSTRAK

Pendidikan Islam memiliki posisi penting dalam membentuk manusia yang beriman, berpengetahuan, berakhlak mulia, dan mampu berpikir kritis serta kreatif. Namun, dalam praktiknya, sistem pendidikan Islam masih menghadapi berbagai masalah, seperti pemisahan antara ilmu agama dan ilmu pengetahuan umum, serta lemahnya integrasi antara nilai-nilai Islam dan perkembangan ilmu pengetahuan modern. Dalam konteks ini, pemikiran Fazlur Rahman menawarkan pembaruan yang signifikan. Sebagai seorang intelektual Muslim modern, beliau memelopori konsep pendidikan Islam berdasarkan nilai-nilai Al-Qur'an dan menekankan pentingnya pengembangan akal dan intelektual rasional. Melalui metode gerakan ganda, Fazlur Rahman mengusulkan pendekatan interpretasi kontekstual terhadap Al-Qur'an, yaitu dengan memahami makna wahyu berdasarkan latar belakang sejarah turunnya, kemudian menerapkan nilai-nilainya dalam kehidupan modern. Gagasan-gagasannya berfokus pada penyatuan ilmu agama dan ilmu pengetahuan umum, pembaharuan metode pembelajaran, dan pembentukan karakter siswa yang kritis, inovatif, dan bermoral. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif-deskriptif dengan jenis penelitian literatur, melalui analisis karya-karya Fazlur Rahman dan literatur terkait. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pemikiran pendidikan Fazlur Rahman sangat relevan dengan sistem pendidikan Islam masa kini, terutama dalam menjawab tantangan globalisasi dan modernisasi. Integrasi antara nilai-nilai Al-Qur'an, rasionalitas ilmiah, dan semangat reformasi yang dikembangkan oleh Fazlur Rahman dapat menjadi landasan pembentukan sistem pendidikan Islam yang relevan, progresif, dan kontekstual dengan zaman.

Kata kunci: Fazlur Rahman, Kontemporer, Pendidikan Islam

ABSTRACT

Islamic education has an important position in shaping human beings who have faith, knowledge, morals, and are able to think critically and creatively. However, in practice, the Islamic education system is still faced with various problems, such as the separation between religious and general sciences and the weak integration between Islamic values and the development of modern science. In this context, Fazlur Rahman's thinking offers a significant update. As a modern Muslim intellectual, he initiated the concept of Islamic education based on the values of the Qur'an and emphasized the importance of the development of reason and rational intellect. Through the double movement method, Fazlur Rahman proposes a contextual interpretation approach to the Qur'an, namely by understanding the meaning of revelation based on the historical background of its descent, then implementing its values in modern life. His ideas focus on the unification of religious and general sciences, the renewal of learning methods, and the formation of critical, innovative, and moral character of students. This study uses a qualitative-descriptive approach with the type of literature research, through analysis of Fazlur Rahman's works and relevant literature. The results of the study show that Fazlur Rahman's educational thinking has high relevance to today's Islamic education system, especially in answering the challenges of globalization and modernization. The integration between Qur'anic values, scientific rationality, and the spirit of reform developed by Fazlur Rahman can be the foundation for the formation of an Islamic education system that is relevant, progressive, and contextual with the times.

Keywords: Fazlur Rahman, Contemporary, Islamic education

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic education plays a fundamental role in fostering creativity and critical thinking skills among Muslims. Reality shows that many educational institutions still have various advantages and disadvantages in the development of science, before realizing the importance of exploring and practicing the thoughts of previous Muslim scientists. In the realm of education, the problem of advantages and disadvantages in the field of science is still often found in various institutions. Among the medieval Muslim thinkers, Fazlur Rahman is a figure who strives to make his ideas relevant to the needs and development of education today (Khatami & Dina, 2024). The study of Islamic education continues to be a major concern in various scientific and intellectual discussions. From the 11th century, when great thinkers such as al-Ghazali emerged, until the present day, Islamic education has always found a place in scientific discourse. (Alhaddad, 2016). The development of science and technology has accelerated tremendously today. However, this progress was largely born from the initiative of the western world, not from Muslims themselves. This reality is what drives Fazlur Rahman to make an important contribution to the progress of Islam and world civilization through scientific works, and so on (Hibatullah & Qomarudin, 2021).

Various reform movements emerged in the Islamic world, especially in the Middle East, spearheaded by figures such as Jamaluddin al-Afghani (1839-1897 AD), Muhammad Abduh in Egypt (1845-1905 AD), Sayyid Ahmad Khan in India (1817-1898 AD), and Rashid Ridha (1865-1935 AD). The emergence of these figures marked the awakening of Muslims from a period of intellectual and spiritual decline, as well as a new awareness of the importance of reopening the horizons of knowledge. In this current of reform, Fazlur Rahman appears as one of the important figures who played a major role in reviving the thought of Islamic civilization. He is known as a philosopher, scholar of education, as well as a mufasir who made a significant contribution to the development of modern Islamic thought (Hibatullah & Qomarudin, 2021). Seeing the deterioration situation experienced by Muslims, Fazlur Rahman was encouraged to carry out a reform movement, especially in the aspect of Islamic education. As a modern thinker and prolific writer, he sought to revive the intellectual spirit of the people through his ideas. Through the double movement method he developed, Fazlur Rahman wants to form a generation of Muslims who are competitive, have the ability in general science as well as deepen the teachings of Islam and are able to implement it in real life (Ummu Mawaddah, n.d.).

Fazlur Rahman is one of the figures who pays great attention to Islamic reform through education. He offers the idea of education based on the values of the Qur'an, with the belief that education can be the main means in realizing the process of renewal of the ummah. The concept of Islamic education that he initiated was based on the fundamental values of Islam which resulted from a comprehensive and in-depth interpretation of the Qur'an. Through this approach, the elements of modern education that are secular can be harmoniously integrated into the whole Islamic culture. For Fazlur Rahman, Islamic

education is not only oriented to providing facilities and improving the quality of teaching, but further aims to produce true Muslim intellectuals. Education is seen as a means to form a generation that thinks rationally, critically, and has a deep awareness of Islam. From this ideal educational process, it is hoped that scholars and scholars with honest, disciplined, and humble character will emerge who are highly anticipated and expected by Muslims (Khatami & Dina, 2024).

Islamic education has an important role in shaping people who have faith, knowledge, and noble character. One of the important figures who made a major contribution in this field was Fazlur Rahman, a modern Muslim thinker who emphasized the importance of integration between religious and rational science. Through the double movement approach, Fazlur Rahman seeks to present a new perspective on Islamic education in order to be able to adapt to the development of the times without abandoning the basic values of Islam. The novelty of this research lies in the effort to relate Fazlur Rahman's thinking to the context of today's Islamic education, especially in facing the challenges of globalization and modernization. This study not only discusses the theoretical framework of Fazlur Rahman's Islamic education, but also examines its relevance to the contemporary Islamic education system, including the application of integrative concepts between religious science and general science in modern educational institutions. Thus, this study also describes the application of Qur'anic values and the double movement method in building an adaptive, dynamic, and contextual Islamic education model to the times.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative-descriptive approach with the type of **library research**. This approach was chosen because this study focuses on a conceptual analysis of Fazlur Rahman's thoughts on Islamic education and its relevance to today's educational challenges. Its sources include the works of Fazlur Rahman as well as articles and journals that discuss his thoughts. The analysis is carried out through thematic interpretation (*maudhu'i*), which is by examining the verses of the Qur'an related to morality, then analyzing them according to the framework of Fazlur Rahman's double movement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Fazlur Rahman's Biography

Fazlur Rahman is known as a modern Muslim intellectual who has made great contributions in the field of Islamic educational thought. He was born on September 21, 1919 in the Hazara region, a subcontinent of India that now includes northwestern Pakistan and died in Chicago on July 26, 1988. Her full name is Fazlur Rahman Malik. His father Raining Sahab ad-Din, is a prominent scholar of the Hanafi school as well as a leading alumnus of a well-known Islamic educational institution, Deoband. Since childhood, Rahman received religious education directly from his father non-formally,

accompanied by formal education that was pursued systematically. He completed his primary education in his home area, then earned a degree Master's in Arabic Literature at the University of Punjab in 1942. After that, he continued his doctoral studies at University of Oxford in 1946 and successfully completed it with a degree Doctor in 1950 (Islam et al., 2025). Fazlur Rahman decided to continue his studies in the Western world because he was dissatisfied with the quality of Islamic education in India, which he felt was still in-depth and not critical enough. He assessed that the approach to Islamic studies in his region was not comparable to the scientific tradition that developed in the West. This decision was considered bold and unusual at the time, considering that it was rare for Indian Muslim scholars to choose to study Islam abroad, especially in the West. His academic achievements demonstrate a broad mastery of various disciplines and languages, reflecting his capacity as a brilliant Muslim intellectual. For this reason, Fazlur Rahman then chose to settle in the West for a few years to continue his scientific activities and intellectual development (Hibatullah & Qomarudin, 2021). The experience of studying in the UK made Fazlur Rahman feel comfortable and chose to stay longer in the country. This can be seen from his involvement as a **lecturer** in Persian Language and Islamic Philosophy at Durham University, UK, during the period 1950–1958. After that, he continued his academic career at McGill University, Canada, with the position as Associate Professor in Islamic Studies. However, despite being well established in Western academia, the drive for nationalism and a sense of responsibility for his country's progress led Rahman to decide to return to Pakistan after three years of service in Canada (Alhaddad, 2016). Education in the family environment has a great influence on the formation of Fazlur Rahman's character and personality in living life. He considers that his spiritual depth and religious strength were born from the upbringing he received since childhood. The values of honesty, compassion, and sincerity instilled by his mother became an important foundation in his life.

Meanwhile, his father's disciplined guidance in teaching religious science at home helped forge Rahman into a tough person, able to adapt, and ready to face the challenges of modern civilization (Alhaddad, 2016). In 1960, Fazlur Rahman returned to Pakistan and was trusted to lead the **Islamic Research Institute** As a director, after previously being a staff at the institution. During his leadership, he played an active role in the publication of two academic journals, namely Islamic Studies and Fikr-u-Nazr (in Urdu). Four years later, in 1964, Rahman was also appointed as the **member of the Islamic Ideology Advisory Council** under the Government of Pakistan. After completing his assignment in his home country, he decided to return to the international academic world and emigrate to the West. Rahman then joined as a lecturer at **University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)**, before finally in 1969 he was appointed as **Professor of Islamic Studies** at **Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago**, he lived there for approximately 18 years (Hadi Prayitno, 2019). During his eighteen years of service in Chicago, Fazlur Rahman continued to actively disseminate his ideas through various papers and scientific lectures. During this time, he produced a variety of

monumental works, both books and articles, which were published in various well-known academic journals in the United States, Europe, and Asia. After a long journey in his intellectual work, this great figure who often caused controversy finally passed away into the divine presence on July 26, 1988, coinciding with the year 1408 Hijri, leaving behind a legacy of thought that had a great influence on the development of modern Islamic studies (Khatami & Dina, 2024).

Methods and Examples of Interpretive Thinking

The interpretive method developed by Fazlur Rahman was born as an effort to answer the challenge of Muslims in understanding the Qur'an so that it remains relevant to the context of modern life. He considers that many classical interpretations are too tied to the text alone and pay little attention to the moral meaning and social message of revelation (Rahman & Qur, 2021). For this reason, Rahman proposes an approach known as Double Movement (double movement). That is, by first understanding the verses of the Qur'an according to the historical context of their descent, then applying the values contained in them to the current situation.

Fazlur Rahman interpreted the Qur'an with the double movement method. The first movement is to understand the meaning of the verse by examining the historical and social context in which revelation was revealed. Before interpreting the verse specifically, it is necessary to understand the condition of Arab society at the time of the Prophet, including its culture, religion, and political situation. This stage includes two steps. The first is to understand the Qur'an thoroughly, both general teachings and verses that are a response to certain events. The second draws universal moral and social principles from these verses, so that it appears that the Qur'an has a complete and coherent view of life. The second movement is to apply the general values of the Qur'an in the context of modern life so that the teachings of Islam remain relevant and live in every era. The first movement is more historical and is the task of historians, while the second movement requires the analysis of social scientists. If the application of these values fails in the present, it means that there is a mistake in understanding the historical context or current conditions (Rosa, 2015).

The method of interpretation developed by Fazlur Rahman offers a new approach to understanding the Qur'an in a more contextual and dynamic way. With the concept Double Movement, Rahman emphasized that the message of the Qur'an needs to be understood based on the historical situation when revelation was revealed, then applied to the conditions of today's life. This approach makes the Qur'an not just a legal text, but a source of moral values that is always alive and relevant at all times (Irawan, 2019).

Examples of thoughts Tafsir fazlur Rahman Thoughts about God, nature, and humans in the Qur'an are oriented towards deeds, which is to guide humans to continue to behave correctly in accordance with morals and noble goals. Therefore, the concept of divinity in the Qur'an is functional: God is not only transcendent (beyond the reach of man), but also immanent (present in human life and

nature). God gives meaning to every reality, connecting man and nature in an order, so that meaning, order, and purpose become the main characteristics of divine nature. The order of the universe, the obedience of the entire universe to its laws, and the organic unity of the cosmos are clear evidence of the oneness of God (see Q.S. al-Anbiyâ' [21]: 22–23 and Q.S. al-Isrâ' [17]: 42). The universe serves as a symbol that shows God's existence and greatness, while the laws of nature are a manifestation of His will and actions.

As for human behavior, the Qur'an emphasizes that every time a person commits an evil deed, the tendency to repeat the evil will increase, while the opportunity to do good will decrease proportionately. If evil is committed continuously, a person will reach a condition where his heart is closed and his ear is deaf to the truth. However, this did not mean that he had completely lost the opportunity to repent. The phenomenon occurs in accordance with God's laws, yet remains within the scope of His compassion and mercy (Rosa, 2015).

Fazlur Rahman's Thoughts on Islamic Education

Education is a form of long-term investment that has an important role in developing the potential of every person and improving the quality of people's lives. Therefore, education is the main foundation for the realization of a developed and prosperous nation. In the era of modernization, religious education functions as a direction and guideline to form individuals with noble character and clear life goals, so as to be able to make a constructive contribution to their social environment. Islamic religious education itself is a construction process that aims to cultivate human beings who have faith, piety, and commendable character. Through the integration of various aspects of life, Islamic education seeks to produce a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also moral and beneficial to society. In addition to deepening understanding of religious teachings, religious education also equips students with relevant life skills to face the challenges of the times (Islam et al., 2025).

Fazlur Rahman's educational thinking departed from his anxiety about the fact that Islamic education was far behind the Western world. Rahman believes that efforts to reform Islam to catch up must begin through the education sector. According to him, education is the only strategic approach to solve the problems that Muslims are facing in the long term. He affirmed this view in his statement: "Every form of Islamic reform today must begin with the improvement of education. Although Islamic orientation needs to be instilled at the level of basic education, at the higher education level the integration between Islam and modern intellectualism must be realized to give birth to an authentic and modern Islamic Weltanschauung" (Fazlur Rahman, 2000:384).

The statement shows that Rahman sees education as the most fundamental aspect in solving various problems faced by Muslims. However, according to Abdul Munir Mulkan's quote, he highlighted that the direction of Islamic education today is more defensive than moving forward. The focus of education is more directed towards efforts to protect the ummah from the influence of Western thought

which is considered to have a negative impact on Islamic morality through various branches of science. Rahman emphasized that if the attitude of absolute rejection of the West is maintained, Muslims will continue to be underdeveloped and unable to make significant progress (Alhaddad, 2016). Through an in-depth study of various classical works, Fazlur Rahman offers the idea of renewal in the Islamic education system. He argued that Islamic education reform can be realized by accepting the modern-secular education system, then integrating it with Islamic values. These efforts can be carried out through several steps. First, rebuilding the ideological awareness of Muslims regarding the importance of seeking knowledge and developing knowledge. Second, removing the dualism of the education system that separates traditional religion-based education and modern education that is secular, and seeking the unification of the two. Third, realizing the urgency of language as the main instrument in the educational process and as a means of expression of thought, even Rahman considers Muslims as a community that has lost the power of language. Fourth, updating learning methods in Islamic education.

Fadzlurrahman divides Islamic education into two main forms. First, Islamic education in institutional practice, namely education carried out in Islamic countries or Muslim-majority areas, such as Islamic boarding schools, madrassas (from the ibtidaiah to aliyah levels), and Islamic universities. Second, Islamic education in the form of Islamic intellectualism, which is a process that aims to produce integrative scientists, and have critical, creative, innovative, progressive, dynamic, fair, honest, and other positive behaviors so as to be able to provide solutions to the problems faced by humanity. Fazlur Rahman's thought oriented to the principles of the Qur'an rests on three main ethical concepts, namely faith, Islam, and piety, which reflect faith and total submission to Allah by carrying out His commandments and staying away from His prohibitions (Hadi Prayitno, 2019).

The Concept of Double Movement in the Context of Education

In the study of Islamic education, Fazlur Rahman once wrote an article entitled "The al-Qur'anic Solution of Pakistan's Educational Problem". In the article, he explained the application of the Double Movement in the realm of Islamic education. This dualistic approach is applied through four main stages, namely: (1) identifying the educational conditions of Muslims at that time, (2) revealing the problems being faced, (3) referring to the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith as a normative basis, and (4) formulating alternative solutions sourced from these two foundations. Every educational activity needs a clear foundation as a foothold to achieve the expected goals. According to Fazlur Rahman, the basis of education must be oriented to the interests of this world and the hereafter in a balanced manner. In other words, education does not only emphasize the mastery of religious sciences as a guideline for life (Way of Life), but also includes the general science necessary to build civilization. In his perspective, the main sources of value of Islamic education include the Qur'an, hadith, and ijtihad as intellectual instruments to enrich the understanding and development of educational knowledge (Hibatullah & Qomarudin, 2021).

The Values of Education and the Relevance of Fazlur Rahman's Thought in the Contemporary Era

In the modern era full of change, Islamic education faces the challenge of relevance of values and direction. Fazlur Rahman's thinking offers a solution by balancing tradition and the demands of the times. In the current era of globalization and technological advancement, the world of education is faced with various challenges, such as the separation between religious and general sciences, the emergence of dualism in the education system, and the demand to produce graduates who not only have technical skills, but also morals and are able to adapt to the context of the times. In this situation, Fazlur Rahman's ideas became very relevant. He emphasized the importance of integration between science and religious teachings, as well as the need to understand religious texts contextually through the Double Movement (double motion). This method invites us to understand religious messages based on their historical context, then apply them in the reality of today's life (Yumnah et al., 2019).

Then on the aspect of the Integration of Religious Sciences and General Sciences, one of the important points of Fazlur Rahman's thinking is his view that Islamic education should not be separated from the general sciences or from the dynamics of the development of the times. In several of his writings, he emphasized the need for an Islamic education curriculum that includes mastery of modern sciences and foreign languages, so that graduates are able to actively participate and dialogue with the global community. Fazlur Rahman considers that the integration between religious science and modern science is very important so that Muslims are not left behind in the flow of globalization and scientific development. Practically, in the era of industry 4.0 where technological advances and social changes are taking place very quickly, an educational model that separates religion and science will result in a generation that is not ready to face the complexities of modern life. Therefore, Fazlur Rahman's ideas are relevant to be used as a basis for the reform of the paradigm and design of Islamic education today (National et al., 2023).

According to Fazlur Rahman, the goal of education is not only limited to the process of transferring knowledge, but also to the formation of a person who is just, moral, and socially responsible. These values are considered important to answer modern challenges such as social inequality and moral crises. Then its relevance in Indonesia and the Modern World, Rahman's idea is very relevant to be applied in Indonesia, which until now still faces the problem of dualism in the education system. The integrative approach he offers can be a solution to harmonize religious and scientific aspects, so that the national education system is able to produce a generation that is faithful and competent to face the development of the times (Fazlurrahman, 2018). Fazlur Rahman presents a rational, integrative, and contextual paradigm of Islamic education. His idea is a solution to build an education system that is able to answer modern challenges without losing Islamic values.

Implications of Fazul Rahman's Thought

Fazlur Rahman's thinking has important implications for today's Islamic education curriculum, because he emphasizes that the education system cannot simply repeat the separation between religious and general knowledge. Rahman invited that in its design, the Islamic education curriculum combines the two harmoniously, the religious aspect becomes a strong focus, but does not close access to science, scientific methodology, language and literacy needed in the global era. Thus, the ideal curriculum according to Fazur Rahman does not only contain memorization of verses or traditional materials, but also the ability to think critically, creatively, analytically, and innovatively (Author et al., 2024).

In practice, the curriculum will include material that invites students to understand the text in practice, the curriculum will include material that invites students to understand religious texts such as the Qur'an in the historical and social context when revelation was revealed, and then apply the universal values contained in the text to today's challenges. For example, environmental issues, social change and global citizenship. With the method that Rahman often calls "double movement", education does not stop at lay or textual understanding, but moves further towards real application in daily life and the development of the times. On the curriculum side, this means that religious subjects must be carried out with material that is relevant to general science. For example, in the biology or physics map, it can be included in the reflection of Islamic ethics about creation, human responsibility for nature, scientific cooperation between nations in the historical map, it can be accompanied by the study of the history of Islamic thought and modernity, in the language map, especially Arabic and other foreign languages, not only for communication skills, but also to open access to the origin literature and global dilogs.(Dardiri & Zaki, 2024)

Islamic educational institutions that want to apply Rahman's thought need to make structural changes. For example, the collaboration between the faculty of religion and the faculty of science then compiles an integrated module that combines Islamic values and general science, provides relevant literature and teaching materials, strengthens the training of educators in interdisciplinary methodologies, and encourages action research that examines how the curriculum changes affect learning outcomes, student character and their readiness to face the challenges of the times. Of course, this change is not without challenges, there is resistance from more conservative parties who are worried that general science erodes Islamic values, there are limitations of teachers/lecturers who master interdisciplinary approaches, there is a lack of local teaching materials that integrate religion with science properly, and national curriculum policies that are sometimes still separate between religion and the public. As for the solution, it is to conduct an open dialogue between stakeholders, improve the competence of educators through training and scholarships, and continue to evaluate and adjust modules based on field feedback.(Yusuf et al., 2024)

In Indonesia in particular, Fazkur Rahman's thinking is relevant. Our country is still facing the dualism of the education system between Islamic boarding schools and public schools, it can take an integrative model so that graduates are not only competent in general science, but also strong in Islamic values. With demikian, Islamic education can be a means of productive social and intellectual transformation in facing Islamic identity.(Mastura et al., n.d.)

CONCLUSION

Fazlur Rahman is known as one of the modern Muslim scholars who had a great influence in the renewal of Islamic thought, especially in the field of education. Based on his learning experience in the Eastern and Western worlds, he realized that Islamic education needed to be updated in order to be able to keep up with the times. According to him, the progress of Muslims can only be achieved if it starts from improving the education system, because education plays an important role in shaping human beings who are knowledgeable, have good morals, and are ready to face modern challenges. Rahman's main idea focuses on the unification of religious science and general science, removing the educational dualism between traditional and modern systems, and interpreting Islamic teachings contextually using the double movement method, which is understanding the verses of the Qur'an according to their historical context, and then applying their values in today's life. Fazlur Rahman's thinking is very relevant to be applied today, including in Indonesia, which is still facing a separation between religious and public education. His view encourages the creation of an education system that is balanced between faith, science, and technological advancement, so as to be able to give birth to a generation that is religious, intelligent, and adaptive to the changing times without abandoning Islamic values.

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