THE PERCEPTION OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN THE ERA OF SOCIETY 5.0

Siti Salwa Md Sawari^{1*}, Ahmad Muflihin², Warsiyah³, & Muna Yastuti Madrah⁴

¹International Islamic University Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

^{2,3,4}Universitas Islam Sultan Agung, Central Java, Indonesia.

*e-mail: salwa_sawari@iium.edu.my

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Abstract

Based on the Digital Civility Index (DCI), Indonesian internet users are ranked at the lowest position within Southeast Asia in terms of their Digital Civility Index. This observable trend is closely associated with the proliferation of fake information, hate speech, cyberbullying, discriminatory behavior, and instances of fraud. Additionally, the process of modernization has significantly increased the consumptive tendencies within people's lifestyles. It is essential to note that Indonesia, with the world's largest Muslim population, is deeply rooted in religious beliefs. The country is ready to face the coming era of what is known as the era of society 5.0. Therefore, this study analyzed the public perception among urban dwellers in Semarang, focusing on the role of religious education as an aspect of curriculum development in the era of Society 5.0. In this context, the qualitative analysis was conducted using a method of phenomenology to obtain data through interviews, observations, and documentation. The results showed that contextualization of the Islamic religious education curriculum was needed to suit the needs of society. Islamic religious education taught students the physical (shari'a) and the spiritual dimensions (essential) to improve spirituality for urban Muslim communities as a basis for values in everyday behavior. In this context, the education instilled the importance of monotheism and ethics in using technology. Even though the era of Society 5.0 placed humans at the center (anthropocentric), the concept of Islamic religious education instilled the notion of God remaining at the centre (theocentric).

Keywords: Curriculum Development; Islamic Religious Education; Public Perception; Society 5.0; Urban Society.

A. Introduction

The evolution of times is transcending humans into the industrial era 4.0, which is known as the era of disruption (Kasali, 2019). In this era, the social order of society has been uprooted due to the replacement of the old system (Fitriani Lubis, 2019) and the main factor is the rapid development of technology to change people's lifestyles. These changes are marked by increased connectivity, interaction, and developments in terms of digital, artificial intelligence, and virtual systems (Lase, 2019). According to a study and data compiled by We Are Social, in 2022, internet users in Indonesia will reach 204.7 million or 73.7% of the total population with an average daily use of 8 hours 36 minutes (Kemp, 2022). Meanwhile, this number increased by 1% from the previous year (Muflihin & Makhshun, 2020). The data indicates that internet use has become part of the life of urban communities in Indonesia.

Studies of internet users show common problems related to digital media literacy, culture shock, and generational gaps (Muna Madrah, 2013; Adnjani & Madrah, 2014; Madrah & Mubarok, 2018). Based on DCI, Indonesian internet users have the lowest Digital Civilization Index in Southeast Asia and show the opposite on social media. The characteristic is evident from the rise of fake news or hoaxes, hate speech, cyberbullying, discrimination, and fraud (Microsoft, 2020). These negative behaviors must become essential for the government to find a solution.

In urban communities, the impact of technological developments is exacerbated by other unresolved problems. According to Gottdiener et al. (2019), 54.5% of the world's population currently lives in urban areas. It is estimated that by 2030, two-thirds of the population will live in urban areas, especially in developing countries within Africa and Asia.

As a country with fast technological developments, Japan initiated the concept of society 5.0 considered the future of the world. The Era of Society 5.0 is a technology-based and human-centered concept of a social order to achieve a quality of life by combining the virtual and natural worlds. This produces quality data used to create new social values and solve various societal problems. (Fukuyama, 2018). The key to realizing Society 5.0 is the combination of virtual and natural worlds to produce quality data. This combination creates new values used to face challenges where humans are the center of the solution.

Due to the numerous challenges confronting the Industrial Era 4.0, Indonesia must proactively prepare to embrace the Era of Society 5.0, widely regarded as the harbinger of the world's future. This era welcomes the notion of a technologically driven and human-centric social order. The fundamental objective is to enable humanity to attain an enhanced quality of life by amalgamating the virtual field with the natural world to generate high-quality data. In this context, this data serves as the bedrock for the development of novel social values and the resolution of societal issues (Fukuyama, 2018).

The notion of Society 5.0, initiated by Japan, marks a significant departure from the prevailing trend of technology distancing humanity, which often results in dehumanization. To understand the intricacies of the model, a fundamental facet of human existence known as the spiritual dimension should be recognized. The process of modernization has fueled a more consumption-oriented lifestyle among individuals. Several factors contribute to this phenomenon, including the relentless pursuit of contemporary lifestyle trends, and social status enhancement (Zaman, 2017). This term impacts a paradigm shift in a materialistic society, which leads to a hedonic lifestyle.

It is important to note that human values can be rearranged through education to achieve humanity. In this context, Islam offers a concept of human beings, namely

prototypes who carry out their duties as a leader (*khalifatullah fi ardh*). Humans are known to possess intellectual (IQ), spiritual (SQ), and emotional intelligence (EQ) (Muflihin & Madrah, 2019).

At the end of 2021, the Department of Civil Registration under the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Indonesia noted that Indonesia's population reached 273.87 million people, with 86.93% or 238.09 million Muslims. These numbers make the country the world's largest Muslim population (Kusnandar, 2022). The Pew Research Center, in its study entitled "The Global God Divide," shows that most people are religious and consider religion necessary. Approximately 96% maintain the belief that there exists a strong correlation between faith in God and the cultivation of virtuous morals (Christine Tamir, Aidan Connaughton, 2022).

This condition is a capital and a challenge for Indonesia in welcoming the era of society 5.0. This country with a high level of religiosity must be able to find solutions to various "failures" experienced in the industrial era 4.0. Islam teaches good values (akhlakul karimah) and should be a guideline in behavior for its followers. In this context, the world of education, especially Islamic Religious Education, must always instill good values. Therefore, this study shows the various views or perceptions of the Muslim community regarding the role of Islamic religious education. These perceptions are considered in compiling a curriculum in line with the era of Society 5.0.

This study questions the perception of urban society concerning PAI in the challenging era. The perceptions can be used as material for developing the Islamic Religious Education curriculum. The public's perception of the Islamic religion helps policymakers in curriculum development in society 5.0. The formulation of educational policies must be based on the aspirations, demands, and interests pushed by the community. Education policy is a guide in action, directing activities in organizations or schools with the community and government to achieve different goals.

B. Methods

This qualitative research was conducted with a phenomenological approach to educational sociology. The sociology of religion approach is used to view and analyze the perceptions of urban society toward Islamic religious education. In this context, phenomenology analyzes a person's life experiences with reflections and meanings.

The experiences of urban communities can be determined in Islamic religious education through their perceptions of education. The founder of phenomenology, Husserl (2014), seeks to focus on the perception of things to people. In this context, phenomenologists are primarily concerned with their subjects' authenticity and experiences. Given the importance of subjective experience in the meaning-making process of religion, a similar perspective is shared on the need to view the world (Langdridge, 2007). The aspects of the study were the perspectives and individual experiences of the informants as the designated topics to be analyzed as sources of knowledge (Creswell, 1999).

In this study, the primary data source or informant was the Muslim urban community living in Semarang. A total of twenty parents were purposefully selected for inclusion. The primary inquiry centered around discerning whether the school was affiliated with a specific religious denomination and falls under public or private institutions. The choice to include parents as informants was grounded in their important roles and influential positions within the family and the surrounding community. To facilitate a more systematic analysis, the informants have been categorized according to economic and educational criteria, as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Categorization of informants

| Category 1 | Category 2 | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Parents with high income | Parents with high income | |
| (Upper IDR. 5.0000.000,) | (Upper IDR. 5.0000.000,) | |
| Parents with high education level | Parents with high education level | |
| (University graduate) | (Maximum High school graduate) | |
| Category 3 | Category 4 | |
| Parents with low income | Parents with low income | |
| (Under IDR. 5.0000.000,) | (Under IDR. 5.0000.000,) | |
| Parents with high education level | Parents with low education level | |
| (University graduate) | (High school graduate) | |

Semarang City was selected as the research location as the capital of the province of Central Java. Data was collected through interviews, observation, and documentation, and triangulation was carried out to obtain valid and reliable data.

The community's characteristics were analyzed before conducting studies related to their perception and the data analysis was carried out qualitatively to answer the questions. Data collection and analysis activities were also carried out simultaneously (Creswell, 1999). The analysis commenced at the inception of the study process to exercise observation, creativity, and sensitivity in the discernment and curation of data. This is approached from a perceptual perspective, where the application of the theory extends beyond the confines of conventional psychology to include broader social dimensions, such as sensory, conative, and cognitive facets (Werner & Wapner, 1952).

C. Findings and Discussion

1. Findings

Urban Community Perceptions of Islamic Religious Education

Semarang is a prominent urban center within Central Java, distinguished for its economic and industrial significance. Moreover, the city is known for its rich tapestry of multicultural and multiethnic diversity. This diversity significantly shapes the perspectives of the residents regarding making educational choices for their children. In the urban landscape, the environment offers enhanced opportunities for rapid development compared to their rural counterparts. In addition, urban communities show a propensity for a more analytical and rational approach to decision-making (Gottdiener et al., 2019). Urban society is a society aware of the important role of technology in everyday life. Technology is a crucial part that influences the views of urban society, including religious attitudes and reflections. This circumstance tends to instill a pragmatic outlook on religion among urban dwellers. An apathetic stance is often adopted when faith appears incapable of offering solutions to the challenges (Aziz, 2018). Werner & Wapner (1952) explained that the study of perception is complex in analyzing projective nature of psychology facts. The perception is essentially "projective" in nature, consisting of cognitive organisms and conative states. Furthermore, it is a process taken to organize and interpret the impressions obtained from the senses surrounding environment (Judge & Robbins, 2017). The results can be good or bad and differ from one individual to another since perception is influenced by experience. Perception is considered a transaction in which environment and observer are interdependent (Sutrisman, 2019). Furthermore, it is a process taken to organize and interpret the impressions obtained from the senses surrounding the environment (Judge & Robbins, 2017).

The position, function, and role of the Islamic religion in everyday life influence the perception of the education. In primary, secondary, senior to tertiary education, the material is mandatory in religious, public, and state schools to cultivate student piety (Warsiyah, 2018).

Based on the interviews with informants from Category One, there are high expectations for Islamic religious education materials to increase children's religious understanding (Wawancara , 2022). The results of observations show that in urban communities, many parents send children to Islamic-based educational institutions rather than public/public schools. This phenomenon is supported by the interviews conducted with the Secretary of the Semarang City Education Office, where the PPDB SD quota remained up to thousands. In this context, parents are more interested in sending children to Islamic-based private schools (*Wawancara Dengan Sekretaris Dinas Pendidikan Kota Semarang*, 2022). This is supported by economic conditions to support education costs.

In several interviews, the choice of a religion-based (Islamic) school was due to high concerns of children having a strong foundation during the fast-paced development. According to this condition, the perception of parents is that Islamic education is essential for children.

In the previous decade, the quality of educational institutions was considered based on comparisons between public and private. Many parents enroll their children in public schools due to the perceived combination of quality education and affordability when compared to private institutions. Public schools were regarded as more prestigious, a sentiment largely grounded in the funding and comprehensive program support received from the government. Conversely, private schools heavily rely on foundations, donors, and specific student populations to finance educational and operational expenses.

In this context, parental focus has shifted towards analyzing the curriculum offered by private and public schools, including the presence of religious elements. This evolution in parental concern has blurred the distinction between the two types of schools since insufficient religious knowledge might lead to undesirable traits. Additionally, one of the prevailing motives for parents is a desire for strong Islamic religious education, emphasizing the need to be nurtured in an exceptional educational environment. In this context, parents residing in Semarang express concerns regarding the pervasive influence of the Internet on their children's education and upbringing, concerning professional careers. Meanwhile, parents feel a sense of powerlessness in monitoring children's activities while being occupied. The demands of work leave parents fatigued and yearning for more quality time to engage their children when using electronic devices.

The parents in this study were also aware of the generational gap in dealing with technological developments. It is believed that children are more intelligent and quicker to catch and adapt to technological developments. This is because of the inability to limit their access and competence in using technology.

The results of interviews with informants in Category Two show a positive perception of Islamic religious education. Parents feel more at ease when their children attend Islamic-based schools to obtain religious knowledge. This enhances their ability to conduct ritual worship activities in Islam. However, children are sent to public schools with minimal religious subjects compared to private Islamic study environments.

Concerns regarding promiscuity serve as a good reason for parents to place significant importance on Islamic religious education to protect measures against undesirable actions. Parents increasingly find the technological landscape challenging to control their children's internet usage. Consequently, improving self-awareness based on religious guidance becomes an important necessity.

Interviews with parents categorized as group 3 analyze the perspective that schools show similar results in providing children with the means to secure respectable employment. In public schools, religious education can be obtained from the guidance provided at home. Therefore, schools are perceived as instrumental in delivering religious instruction, with the family playing a secondary role. In practice, children are enrolled in public schools, pursuing vocational education to obtain practical skills for the job market. This choice is facilitated by a stable financial situation to bear the expenses associated with vocational education. Additionally, interviews with parents categorized under group 4 show a positive perception of Islamic religious education, particularly among working parents. The primary aim is for their children to proficiently engage in Islamic religious activities, such as prayer, Quran recitation, and an understanding of Islamic Sharia laws.

The rise of Islamic-based educational institutions also supports the wishes of the urban community. Many religious-based institutions offer an integrative curriculum between vocational-based general and religious education. This institution does not only have a religious vision but states the importance of the role of humans in achieving success. However, limited people can afford an education at these institutions because the costs are relatively expensive compared to public schools.

Following the development of technology and communication, the world demands proficient outputs in religion and must be able to apply the acquired knowledge in facing work challenges. Religion can serve as a guiding force in transitioning into the real world and encountering circumstances to test their faith and devotion. Furthermore, teachers have a distinct task, which includes providing a thorough education on Islam. This comprises normative dimensions and substantive teachings to instill a profound understanding of influencing the behavior of every student.

According to parents in urban areas, Islamic religious education is based on worship learning, such as cleanness (*thaharah*), prayer, fasting, and reading or writing the Quran. In this context, this education is broadly related to faith (*aqidah*), worship, and social relations (*muamalah*). *Aqidah* is the foundation of all Muslim activities, crucial in building a pure Islam. Muslim activities framed by the Islamic faith are worship, while *muamalah* focuses on the social aspect of religion. The concept of *muamalah* provides a framework for building social life is built and the realization of human relations with the environment.

Islamic religious education consists of knowledge about Islam and its values through a long process of internalization. In this context, the education faces two challenges. The first is related to learning strategies and methods adapted to the characteristics of millennial students. The second is the challenges encountered in intersecting with technology. The demarcation between religious and worldly sciences, including technology, needs to be reviewed. Meanwhile, individuals who are engaged in religious knowledge do not feel allergic to technology (Madrah, 2022).

The interviews and observations indicate that many urban people think Islamic religious education only teaches rituality. According to the community, education that develops habituation of worship rituals automatically builds good habits for children. However, students need to integrate religious values, such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility, into their daily lives (Habibie et al., 2021).

2. Discussion

Spiritualism as the Foundation for Curriculum Development for Islamic Religious Education in Society Era 5.0

The current era of Society 5.0 presents opportunities and challenges in the development of the Islamic education curriculum. It is stated that students will possess the competency to impart the importance of religious values as an integral part of daily life. In this context, marked by rapid technological advancements, quality of life should be enhanced to address increasingly intricate real-world and cyberspace challenges. Therefore, the evolution of the curriculum should consider the cultivation of skills relevant to Society 5.0, such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and creative thinking in accordance with Islamic principles. Furthermore, Society 5.0 is a concept conceived by Japan, characterizing a society that is human-centric and technology-driven. This concept is developed from the fourth industrial revolution and is recognized for the potential to redefine the role of humanity. In Society 5.0, artificial intelligence obtains a large amount of data gathered through the Internet of Things, transforming into newfound knowledge, dedicated to enhancing human capabilities and expanding opportunities for mankind (Fukuyama, 2018).

The era of Society 5.0 is marked by the characterization as an exceptionally advanced society. It is known as a human-centered society that harmoniously combines economic development and the resolution of societal challenges, providing individuals with a high quality of life characterized by activity and comfort. According to the Japanese Cabinet Office, Society 5.0 achieves economic progress and the resolution of social problems through a system that integrates cyberspace to maintain a human-centered focus. This is different from the previous 4.0 era, which is predominantly technology-driven and often lacks the human values necessary for a balanced and comfortable life. Therefore, it presents an opportunity for Islamic religious education to instill more humane values in line with the demands of a digital lifestyle.

The role of Islamic religious education in the 5.0 era can be observed through the formulation of competencies. The curriculum's development should be consistent with the requirements of the 5.0 era. It is essential to consider the possibility of grounding the curriculum in Islamic teachings derived from the Al-Quran and Hadith. Therefore, the competencies defined should include Islamic religious education equipping individuals to navigate the challenges of the 5.0 era effectively. At a minimum, students should acquire three core competencies, namely problem-solving skills, critical thinking abilities, and creativity (Umro, 2020).

In the era of Society 5.0, a symbiotic coexistence of humanity and technology is reported to enhance the quality of human life. This necessitates the establishment of a fundamental paradigm for setting the main goals. In this context, Islamic religious education assumes an important role in shaping policy directions by emphasizing spirituality as the foremost objective, as shown in the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad SAW (Zamhari & Mustofa, 2020). Therefore, the focus should transcend normative learning, with its emphasis on quantifiable religious knowledge. This should evolve towards a more substantial and forward-looking educational approach. This education is indispensable in equipping students with the foundations required to confront the multifaceted physical and psychological challenges posed by modern and dynamic reality. As a result, religion is anticipated to serve as a guiding principle in everyday life (Majid et al., 2018).

Empirical field investigations show that contemporary parents perceive Islamic religious education as a highly significant aspect of children's upbringing. Therefore,

the primary criterion for selecting a school is the extent of the education offered. The development of the curriculum should not rely on pedagogical proficiency but should also include a spiritual dimension. Even though the spiritual aspect appears abstract due to the inherent subjectivity, individual experiences can provide invaluable insights to policymakers to integrate the dimension with Society 5.0. Government policies, characterized by the adoption of an independent learning curriculum, present a comprehensive opportunity to exercise autonomy in designing course materials and defining indicators of learning achievement. This development must be closely consistent with the evolving demands of the labor market. Islamic religious education no longer remains confined to the dissemination of knowledge but assumes a central role in cultivating a work ethic among its recipients. Therefore, the reinforcement of spirituality should be incorporated into every educational objective. This strategic approach is essential to uphold religious values as guiding principles amidst the challenges posed by the era of Society 5.0.

The individual's spirituality identifies, integrates, and tends to change the material from the processes of reason and emotion. Spiritual intelligence relates to the human need and talent to find meaning in experience. Meanwhile, Islamic spiritual intelligence can be developed with spiritual knowledge (*Ilm*) and action (*amal*). There is a positive relationship between spiritual intelligence, spirituality (prayer, memorizing the Qur'an), and mental health. Spirituality significantly influences quality of life (Karimipour et al., 2015), which is an aspect integrated into society 5.0. The Islamic religious education curriculum should provide space for increasing intelligence and spiritual experience.

Spirituality is a meaningful way to fulfill the spiritual existence of an individual. The foundation is used in the entire development of the Islamic religious education curriculum. This initiative is linked to the needs of students and stakeholders within the school's locality, including social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions. Therefore, the spiritual and theological dimensions must be one of the foundations in formulating curriculum ideas and constructing the implementation and evaluation (Farikhah, 2014).

Islamic religious education is a comprehensive and structured educational process, leading to the training and shaping of students' personalities. This provides the readiness for students in religious and other general education to practice the concept in everyday life. Religious education should be more focused on preparing the quality of the participants to obtain noble characters or morals (akhlakul kharimah) (Pihar, 2022).

D. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study was conducted to investigate the perception of urban society in a challenging era regarding the importance of Islamic religious education (PAI). The urban community in the city of Semarang experienced the significance of Islamic religious education as a foundational element in nurturing strong character in children. In this context, the fundamental component required in the education was spirituality. Spiritual capital was important for learning activities, including curriculum design, implementation, and evaluation. This orientation transcended mere preparation for the job market to prepare and condition students to effectively navigate and address the diverse humanitarian challenges encountered. Therefore, the educational outcomes considered both the physical and spiritual dimensions of students. In this context, humans were inherently spiritual beings. Following the

perspective, Islam acknowledged that every individual possessed intrinsic or natural spiritual potential, as stated in QS. Ar-Rum [30]: 30). As a result, Islamic education was inseparable from the spiritual essence inherent in every human being from birth.

These perceptions were considered valuable input for the development of the PAI curriculum. The physical dimension was seen as the vessel through which human spirituality could thrive within the constraints of limited space and time. It was acknowledged that when humans pass away, the physical dimension might be transient, but the spiritual dimension would endure indefinitely. In the development of Islamic religious education, it was important to maintain a balanced description of the mental and physical dimensions of students. Nurturing could be conducted through education with a strong spiritual foundation to create products and provide effective services of cultural value. These contributions offered extensive benefits to society at large, with the expectation of producing highly skilled professionals in respective fields.

In the transition towards the era of Society 5.0, the Islamic religious education curriculum should be integrated with the ever-accelerating advancements in technology and communication. This process comprised a comprehensive review of materials, media, and learning methodologies in adapting to the demands of the contemporary era. The primary objective of education, in accordance with the insights of al-Ghazali, was the cultivation of human spiritual development to attain the perfection of the soul. Similarly, Muhammad 'Athiyyah al-Abrasyi argued that the purpose of Islamic education was to form the noble character of students in thinking spiritually and *insaniyah* by adhering to moral values. Morals and spiritual dimensions could not be separated because of the emanation of noble character from the human spirit.

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F. Author Contributions Statement

All authors have a role and contribution in the preparation of this study. Ahmad Muflihin initiated and designed the study, and Warsiyah analyzed the development of the Islamic religious education curriculum. Muna Yastuti Madrah has analyzed aspects of urban society, and Siti Salwa has provided an analysis of the era of society 5.0. All authors have collaborated in collecting the required data, processing, and pouring into this study.

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