

Islamic Education in Nusantara at Mosques (Review of Historical and Contemporary Aspects)

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Abstrak

Sejak zaman para raja Islam, masjid telah menjadi pusat kegiatan Islam di seluruh Nusantara Masjid berfungsi sebagai lembaga pendidikan, pertumbuhan spiritual, dan interaksi sosial dalam komunitas selain sebagai tempat ibadah. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengevaluasi fungsi masjid dalam pendidikan Islam di Nusantara dari perspektif historis dan modern. Metode penelitian yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode sejarah. Temuan studi menunjukkan bahwa masjid telah mengambil peran penting dalam kehidupan umat Muslim sebagai pusat interaksi sosial, pendidikan, dan percakapan selain sebagai tempat ibadah. Masjid saat ini telah berkembang menjadi pusat kegiatan yang lebih komprehensif yang mencakup outreach, sosial, kesehatan, dan pendidikan. Evolusi ini menunjukkan bagaimana masjid dapat fleksibel dan menyesuaikan diri dengan kebutuhan masyarakat dan perubahan zaman.

Kata kunci: masjid, pendidikan islam, islam nusantara.

Abstract

Since the time of the Islamic kings, mosques have become the center of Islamic activities throughout the Archipelago. Mosques function as educational institutions, centers for spiritual growth, and social interaction within the community, in addition to being places of worship. The purpose of this research is to evaluate the role of mosques in Islamic education in the Archipelago from both historical and modern perspectives. The study's findings indicate that mosques have played an important role in the lives of Muslims as centers of social interaction, education, and conversation in addition to being places of worship. Mosques have now evolved into more comprehensive activity centers that encompass outreach, social, health, and educational services. This evolution shows how mosques can be flexible and adapt to the needs of the community and the changes of the times.

Keywords: mosques, islamic education, islam nusantara.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education in the Nusantara mosques has become an important/integral part of Indonesia's history and culture. Since the era of the Islamic kingdoms in the Archipelago, mosques have become centers of education, spiritual development, and social activities. In this regard, mosques not only serve as places of worship but also as educational institutions that shape

the character and personality of Muslims in the archipelago.

Mosques play an important role in the lives of Muslims, functioning as centers of social interaction, education, and spiritual growth in addition to being places of worship (Qanita et al. 2025). Through various activities held in mosques, mosques have actively contributed to community development and education since the time of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Muslims receive

comprehensive education, which impacts their daily lives and helps build a vibrant and competitive Islamic society (Husin et al. 2023). Historically, Islamic places of worship have served as the core for learning and disseminating religious teachings and insights that can shape the religious character of the students, so that in the future they can become role models for society (Asmarika et al. 2022).

In its historical journey, Islamic education in mosques across the archipelago has made significant progress. From time to time, Islamic education in mosques has adapted to changes in social, political, and economic aspects occurring in the archipelago during the colonial era. Islamic education in mosques was one of the methods to preserve Islamic identity and culture amidst the colonial situation. After gaining independence, Islamic education in mosques became a means to build a nation and society based on Islamic values (Nasution 2020).

Although it has undergone changes, Islamic education in the Nusantara mosques still retains the essence and fundamental values that characterize it. Islamic education in mosques continues to focus on the development of character, morals, and the traits of a faithful, knowledgeable, and charitable Muslim. Islamic education in mosques also continues to focus on the balanced development of intellectual, emotional, and spiritual abilities.

In the contemporary context, Nusantara Islamic education in mosques faces complex challenges. Globalization, modernization, and rapid social changes have influenced the way people think, behave, and interact. In this situation, Nusantara Islamic education in mosques must be able to develop and adapt to the changes that occur, in order to remain relevant and effective in shaping the character and personality of Nusantara Muslims.

Therefore, this article aims to conduct a historical and contemporary review of Islamic education in the Nusantara in mosques. This article will discuss the history of the arrival of Islam in the archipelago, study sessions in mosques as the beginning of Islamic education, and study sessions in mosques in the present time.

METHODS

This research is a historical study that processes its data using historical research methods. The sources used in this research are books and journals related to the history and contemporary review of Islamic education in the Nusantara mosques. According to Sulasman (Sulasman and Hum 2014), historical research with source studies involves the researcher seeking, analyzing, identifying related sources, then making interpretations, and connecting them into

facts that will later become a valid research study.

The steps in historical research include four stages, namely:

1. Heuristic, this is the step for researchers to find traces of Islamic education in the archipelago in mosques from both historical and contemporary perspectives by examining reading sources that consist of reference books and scientific journals.
2. Source Criticism In historical research, sources must be analyzed first before being used, both externally and internally related to the content of the source. In the source criticism, there are two types, namely external criticism and internal criticism. In external criticism, the researcher attempts to determine whether the source is suitable for use in the research. Meanwhile, in internal research, the sources within the research are evaluated to determine whether they meet the criteria to be used as research references.
3. Interpretation, in this case, the researcher strives to examine the sources clearly to avoid plagiarism. Nevertheless, the researcher strives to arrange the words meticulously to obtain data in the form of historical facts (Herlina 2020).

Historiography is the final step in writing this historical research. In the sense that in this historiographical step, the researcher attempts to determine the cause-and-effect relationship of Nusantara Islamic education in mosques from both historical and contemporary perspectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Arrival of Islam in the Archipelago

One of the important historical events that continues to influence the spiritual and cultural identity of Indonesian society is the arrival of Islam in the Archipelago. Trade contacts, the spread of missionary activities, and the blending of civilizations with local customs all contributed to the long journey that led to the arrival of Islam in this archipelagic region. The strategic maritime trade routes connecting China, Southeast Asia, and Central India are one of the main factors contributing to the spread of Islam (Susmihara 2017).

The teachings of Islam were able to spread in the archipelago through several methods employed at that time, making Islamic teachings more readily accepted compared to other religions. The methods or strategies used were very varied and did not involve any coercion. The strategies or methods used for the spread of Islam are (Syafrizal 2015):

1. Trade. Islam began as a small group that seemed insignificant. Continuous interactions between Muslim traders from various regions, such as the

Malay Archipelago, the Indian subcontinent, Persia, and China, enhanced the image of the Islamic community, which eventually formed a stronger Muslim society. In addition to conducting trade, they also spread Islam from those regions and disseminated their beliefs using maritime means.

From the seventh to the thirteenth century, the archipelago region was recognized as an area with crucial trade routes, especially because it had authentic spices such as cloves, pepper, and nutmeg that were highly sought after in the global or international market (Rambe, Simatupang, and Nasution 2024).

The global maritime routes that connect traders from various parts of the world, such as Muslim traders from Gujarat in India, Arabia, and Persia. These traders brought the Islamic principles they adhered to along with their commodities. Muslim entrepreneurs play an important role in educating the local community about Islam.

Opportunities for trust, cultural exchange, and the dissemination of Islamic values have been made possible by long-established commercial partnerships. The ability of Islamic teachings to adapt to local cultures without causing significant rejection from the

local community is one of the reasons why these teachings have been widely accepted.

2. Dakwah Bi Al hal refers to the preaching carried out by missionaries who also work as traders. Initially, this form of da'wah was carried out individually, where they fulfilled Islamic sharia obligations by maintaining cleanliness and demonstrating simplicity in their social interactions (Karim 2014).

According to historical and archaeological data, Muslims began to have a significant impact on the coastal regions of the archipelago in the 13th century, especially in northern Sumatra, where Samudra Pasai is located. This kingdom, which is considered the first Islamic monarchy in Indonesia, developed into an important center for trade and the spread of Islam (Rambe, Simatupang, and Nasution 2024).

3. The marriage, which began with the knowledge and healing abilities obtained from the teachings of Prophet Muhammad Shallallahu Alaihi Wasallam, is a union between a Muslim merchant, a preacher, and a noblewoman from the archipelago. With the assurance that whoever could heal his daughter would become his sister if she was a woman and his son-in-law if he was a man, some Muslims dared to accept the king's

challenge. Islam became stronger and more recognized during that period through the marriage with the King's Daughter.

4. Next is education. After the position of the traders became stable, they gained control over the economic power in cities like Gresik. The economic center developed into a place of education and the spread of Islamic teachings. The center of education and preaching in the Samudra Pasai Kingdom served as the first missionary location visited by students and sent local preachers, including sending Maulana Malik Ibrahim to the island of Java.
5. Cultural. In the beginning, the process of Islamization always faced the Javanese tradition, which was heavily influenced by the teachings of Hindu-Buddhist religions. After the fall of the Majapahit kingdom, the Islamic kingdom replaced it. In Java, Islam adapted to local cultures, whereas in Sumatra, customs adapted to Islamic values (Klasik and Tengah 2007).

Mosque as the Beginning of Islamic Education

Mosque or masjid has been an important and significant place for the lives of Muslims since the early days of Islam. Mosques are not only places for worship but also places for learning, speaking, and participating in social activities.

(Fathurrahman 2015) At that time, the mosque was used for meetings or what is known as study sessions or religious gatherings. Mosques offer easily accessible locations for the community to study religion during religious study sessions. Religious lectures are open to all age groups, genders, and social classes, allowing the teaching of Islam to reach all layers of society.

Unlike now, at that time there was no such thing as formal schools. As a result, one of the best ways to spread Islamic teachings was through study sessions held in mosques (study circles). In general, the curriculum includes monotheism, ethics, teaching the basic rules of Islam (fiqh), and how to read the Qur'an (Badriah 2016). In addition to that, mosques are often used for spiritual gatherings and to provide community members with answers to questions about daily life based on Islamic law.

Muslims highly value education; the process of Islamization encourages Muslims to practice Islamic teachings, even in basic systems where instruction is provided through halaqah systems held in mosques, prayer rooms, and even in the homes of Kyai or scholars. The Muslim community in Indonesia is driven by the need for education to accept and transform existing religious and social institutions, known as customary religious and social institutions, into Islamic educational institutions (Susmihara 2017).

Initially, the learning plan at the mosque was quite simple. A teacher, kyai, or scholar sits with their students on the mosque's porch or in the mosque's courtyard. The main techniques used in the oral learning process include memorization, lectures, and question-and-answer sessions. (Rambe, Simatupang, and Nasution 2024) The material is often delivered using the local language to make it easier for the community or students to understand.

In study sessions, the yellow book is a religious text or book that is usually brought by the students. The teacher translates and explains canonical Islamic texts in Arabic found in these books so that the students can understand them. This gave rise to the tradition of kitab studies, which later became a hallmark of traditional Islamic education in the Indonesian Archipelago. The capacity to memorize was one of the main features of learning at that time. Many mudarris, or hadith scholars, were able to recount hadiths accurately and flawlessly after hearing them just once at that time. (Fathurrahman 2015) This encouraged the emergence of a new method, where memorization was the largest part of spiritual training and character formation for students at that time.

The teaching strategy at that time was for a teacher to present the material one by one using phrases or sentences, and then a teaching assistant would loudly

repeat what the ustad or Sheikh had said so that the students could hear it and take notes carefully and clearly. After that, the teacher initiates a conversation with the class that develops further. Sometimes, the ustad follows behind the students and joins by observing and listening to the ongoing conversation. A teacher, ustd, or Sheikh can evaluate the students' proficiency level using this method.

Initially, students are often taught to become proficient readers and memorizers of the Qur'an. Adults and children work together to recognize and read Arabic letters. The stories of the Prophets, daily prayers, and the fundamentals of worship such as ablution, prayer, and fasting are then taught to them. Lessons on Sufism, Hadith, and Quranic exegesis were added to the study sessions at the mosque over time, especially for individuals who wanted to learn more about Islamic teachings.

The role of the ulama or sheikhs is very important for the mosque's ability to continue holding majelis taklim. The community respects them as spiritual leaders and educators (Anita et al. 2022). The knowledge and charisma of a religious teacher are special attributes that often serve as the main attraction for the community to attend religious lectures.

These academics usually study from a broader network of researchers both within and outside the archipelago. Most of them have studied directly under

the guidance of prominent Middle Eastern professors or are graduates of pesantren (Inayah 2021). Because of these academics, mosques function as centers for the dissemination of global knowledge in addition to being places for religious study.

Study groups have an important contribution to the spread of Islam in strengthening its dissemination in the Archipelago (Daulay and Amini 2022). The community can avoid erroneous or misguided teachings and learn the true principles of Islam through religious study. Religious education also serves as a powerful instrument for shaping the moral fiber of society in accordance with Islamic principles, including integrity, self-control, and social responsibility. Study sessions (lectures) at the mosque often serve as a place for the development of a strong and pious Muslim community. The community can gather, converse, and exchange experiences in applying Islamic principles through these activities. This habit fosters strong social bonds in addition to religious ties, which have become a hallmark of the Muslim community in Indonesia.

Mosques in Modern Times

Mosques today have different purposes compared to when Prophet Muhammad was alive, especially in the millennial era. However, there is still a connection between the actions of Prophet

Muhammad and his followers in the historic mosque. However, the role of the mosque as a place of worship and religious activities has evolved to encompass themes of regeneration at a time when there are no longer concerns about war or other challenges.

Although it has undergone several modifications over time, the practice of holding study sessions in mosques has persisted to this day. Religious lectures, or what can be called religious sermons, are now delivered not only in person but also online and through digital media including radio, television, and websites. As a result, sermons at mosques have become more accessible and inclusive. As before, the sermons themselves can take place anywhere, including in hotel ballrooms or in the areas around the mosque (Rambe, Simatupang, and Nasution 2024).

The functions of the mosque in the present time are as follows (Gazalba 1989):

- 1) Filling the nights of Ramadan with i'tikaf and commemorating Islamic holidays (PHBI), the Islamic New Year, the Prophet's birthday, and communal dhikr.
- 2) Used as a venue for competitions such as qasidah, marawis, rabana, and early morning education for children.
- 3) A place for communal eating and drinking organized by the mosque congregation.

And then, mosques are filled with Islam-based educational activities in the contemporary millennial era. Currently, most mosques have Islamic kindergartens, mosque libraries, Ramadan boarding schools, Islamic elementary schools, Quranic education parks (TPA), and some even have Islamic colleges (Putra and Rumondor 2019)

In addition, some mosques have donation collection units and general donation boxes. Remember that mosques often provide knowledge enhancement events such as study sessions, religious teachings, mosque youth programs (Risma) (Cempaka, Pusat, and Muslim 2004). It is not uncommon for us to often witness many ustadz giving lectures or sermons to their congregations, such as Ustaz Adi Hidayat, Ustad Solmet, Ustad Yahya, and other ustadz. This illustrates that mosques in the current millennial era still serve as places for preaching to Muslims and as venues for discussions among peers.

Mosques are a very interesting topic and have garnered attention among millennial Muslims today. Compared to older or senior individuals, it is clear that a significant number of them are committed to learning more about religion and strengthening their beliefs. (Jahroni 2019) Especially in big cities, many

studies are held that provide knowledge and means of communication. Thus, many Muslims in this millennial era are present to enliven various religious activities held in mosques.

"The Mosque Management Guidelines" is one of the books that explains several functions of the mosque that are very relevant to the millennial era, such as the present time, including:

1. The mosque functions as a place of worship, a location for religious education, as demonstrated by programs for parents and children, a forum for social concern and the search for solutions for the common good, as well as the mosque as a business and health organization.
2. Besides being a wedding venue, the mosque also serves as a forum for teenagers to learn and discuss Islamic issues.
3. Zakat and other donations are collected at the mosque.

All these functions certainly make the mosque a comfortable place for various highly beneficial activities (Cempaka, Pusat, and Muslim 2004). In the current millennial era, changes and advancements in the components of a mosque, such as the beauty and comfort of the prayer hall, the appeal and charm of the pulpit, a clear qibla direction, the cleanliness and comfort of the ablution

area, the function of the minaret to call the congregation to prayer, and decorations that inspire admiration for the charm of mosque architecture, are what make mosques attractive (Hadriyant 2010).

CONCLUSION

From the discussion of Islamic education in the archipelago regarding mosques, it can be concluded that mosques in the past and present have the same role as places of worship and centers of Muslim activities. However, there are significant differences in terms of function, architecture, and activities conducted. Nowadays, mosques have evolved into broader centers of activity, encompassing education, health, social services, and outreach. This development shows the flexibility and ability of mosques to adapt to the changing times and the needs of the community. Nevertheless, the main purpose of the mosque as a place of worship and center of Islamic activities remains the same and unchanged. The mosque remains a symbol of the strength and unity of Muslims, as well as a place to strengthen faith, knowledge, and good deeds. Therefore, the role of the mosque in the lives of Muslims remains very important and strategic.

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