

The Impact of Globalization on Current Islamic Education

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Abstract: Globalization has a huge impact on the world, including Islamic education. The objective of this article is to study the effect of globalization on Islamic education. This study uses the qualitative method, through literature review and document analysis. Research outcome shows three identifiable major effects which are: curriculum transformation, teaching style and method as well as the digital practice of Islamic Education. In conclusion, globalization has a great impact on the world, particularly with the rapid growth and development of information communication technology (ICT). This advancement opens the space and opportunity for Islamic Education to adapt itself to various beneficial mediums in order to achieve the purpose of implementing teaching and learning Islamic Education more effectively.

Key words: Globalization, Islamic education, Teaching and learning, Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Education is one of the core subjects in the educational system of Malaysia. This was clearly stipulated in the National Education Policy underlying the Education Act 1966, which provides for moral and Islamic teachings, among other matters (Syed Othman & Hasnan, 2001). In line with the National Education Philosophy (Falsafah Pendidikan Kebangsaan or FPK) which emphasizes the building of a balanced and harmonious character intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically, based on belief and submission to God, the subject of Islamic Education is an important medium to achieve this objective (Ahmad, 1997; Farid *et al.* 2012; Tengku Sarina Aini & Faridah, 2008; Zahrah, 2005). In addition, the Islamic Education Philosophy (Falsafah Pendidikan Islam or FPI) also emphasizes on the formation of attitude, skills, personality and worldview which are consistent with the knowledge, skills and appreciation of al-Qur'an and al-Sunnah (Ministry of Education, 2004). The process of producing balanced individuals as a result of synergy between FPK and FPI, encompasses various aspects of human life, one of which is the implementation of proper education of the self in order to build the character and worldview of a *khalifat Allah*. This holistic application of learning will help to produce an individual responsible and trustworthy towards himself as well as make him eschew various bad elements. This conforms with the education bestowed by Allah swt on the Prophet (pbuh) as in the hadith: "My Lord who educates me, He provides me with the best of education" (in al-Sam'ani, 1981). From the statement given, it can be preliminarily deduced that Islamic Education is a subject designed with the clear purpose of forming a balanced student character with religious skills sufficient for a practising Muslim. Hamidah (2005) in her discussion on the influence of Islamic Education and modern-day environment on character building, stresses that in facing modern-day challenges and changes, it is vital to provide sound religious knowledge. This is appropriate as Islam itself is complete and universal.

Effect of Globalization on the World:

Globalization is a process which enables an activity, such as economic or cultural activity, to be spread on an international scale, particularly through the facilities of communication systems, open-door policy and so on (Kamus Dewan, 2007). It occurs with movements of humans, physical things or ideas between countries (Orozco & Hilliard, 2004). Thus, globalization can be defined as a transition which places the world under a common unit unconfined by borders or regardless of a country's geographical location.

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According to O'Rourke dan Williamson (1999), the presence of globalization in the world has a positive impact in the field of education. This can be seen in the years 1870 until 1913, whereby the society in Scandinavia then had little knowledge and was forced to accept educational development brought in from America and Britain. Both these countries, being more advanced in education, had expertise, experience and high skills. Through this global transfer of education, the Scandinavian society had to accept the educational system in order to develop. Finally, the Scandinavian society progressed from this globalization.

Malaysia is part of the global community. Thus, in reality, Malaysia is also receiving the spillover effects of the globalization surge. Other than the positive effects of information influx and a world without borders, there are also adverse effects on the society in Malaysia such as easy access to the world of entertainment and pornographic materials, which makes dominant negative symptoms contradicting the morals of the local society, difficult to intercept and filter. This is a huge challenge to the world of Islamic Education in educating society, particularly adolescents who are vulnerable to the influence of the yellow culture. This phenomenon has caused anxiety over the new generation which is just beginning to know the world. This development has also driven curriculum planners in most countries to review the effectiveness of their school curriculum in trying to cope with various changes consequent to globalization (Habib & Megat A. Kamaluddin, 2001). This scenario is also an indicator for changes to be made in Islamic Education in Malaysia. Efforts to develop the overall human aspects, encompassing physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual aspects such as contained in the FPK, become more challenging in this globalization era in comparison to previous times.

Transformation of Islamic Education Curriculum:

Islamic Education curriculum experienced changes several times with the last change or review of the Primary School integrated Curriculum or Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah (KBSR) in the year 2003 and was followed by the implementation of the Secondary School Integrated Curriculum or Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah (KBSM). Consistent with the growth of information network in this era of globalization, the Malaysian Ministry of Education or Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia (KPM) attempts to adapt to current developmental needs by formulating a new curriculum for the primary school, that is, Primary School Standard Curriculum or Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah (KSSR). Moreover, in reference to the general objectives of implementation, KSSR is an educational transformation. This transformation is a process of holistic changes in the existing school curriculum involving form, organisation, content, pedagogy, time allocation, assessment methods, material and curriculum management in school (Curriculum Development Division, 2011).

KSSR, the transformed curriculum, is based on two main standards: (a) content standards which refer to specific statements on matters students need to know and may be able to do during school time encompassing aspects of knowledge, skills and values; (b) learning standards which stipulate the criteria or indicators of learning quality and the measurable achievement for each content standard. As such, the implementation of KSSR reforms the existing curriculum and ensures its relevancy to current educational requirements. It is essential in producing global citizens who are able to deal with current and future challenges (Curriculum Development Division, 2011). Briefly, development in implementing Islamic Education Curriculum in Malaysia since the year 1960 until 2011 may be observed in the table as follows:

Table 1: Implementation of Islamic Education Curriculum in Malaysia

Year	Population
1960	Formal beginning (Islamic religion subject introduced into the school schedule)
1974	Committee studied the subject Islamic Education (Islamic Religion subject changed to Islamic Education)
1979	Cabinet Report studied the Education Policy
1982	Primary School new Curriculum or Kurikulum Baru Sekolah Rendah (KBSR)
1988	Secondary School Integrated Curriculum or Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah (KBSM)
1994	Primary School Integrated Curriculum or Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah (KBSR)
2004	KBSR (Revision) and Curriculum j-QAF
2011	Primary School Standard Curriculum or Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah (KSSR)

Source: Ahmad Fauzi, 2010

Educational curriculum has to be dynamic, thus no curriculum is permanent. It has always to be reviewed and revised according to current developments and society's needs. The purpose is to optimally apply aspects of knowledge and skills to a student in the school environment so that he or she will not drift and drown in the wave of globalization.

Style and Method of Teaching:

Globalization on education also affects the pattern of teaching and learning in Islamic Education. Among the aspects which help to improve the quality of education is the form and implementation of teaching and learning methods in school. Various approaches have been adapted and practised among teachers in order that the purpose of Islamic Education may be achieved. As such, teachers have to change their ways of teaching to suit current developments.

There are studies which show that Islamic Education fares poorly in using various methods to attract student interest. A study by Ab. Halim *et al.* (2004; 2010) shows that teachers of Islamic Education frequently use the lecture and class method. This method is the choice of teachers of Islamic Education because it is easier, does not involve cost and was their past experience during their own school days. Meanwhile, the technique of teaching and learning based on ICT has been proven to increase students' level of understanding (Azwan *et al.*, 2005; Chong *et al.*, 2005; Samuel & Zaintun, 2006). This method not only helps a teacher in teaching but also attracts the interest of students to understand the subject. Unfortunately, however, the study shows that use of ICT in the subject of Islamic Education is still poor and at an unsatisfactory level (Ab. Halim *et al.*, 2004; Khadijah & Zaid 2002; Mohd Aderi & Rohani, 2009).

A teacher is not limited to use only ICT materials but may also use various other teaching materials such as al-Qur'an, supplementary workbooks, worksheets, mahjung paper, roll boards, flash cards, manila cards, handouts, daily newspaper, magazines, pictures, live materials, OHP transparencies, cassettes, power point and websites (Ab. Halim & Nik Mohd Rahimi, 2010). All these teaching aids are extremely helpful to student learning in the classroom if properly used. In addition, the development of globalization has also changed the teaching system from conventional to a new system. The use of distance learning (d-learning) and electronic learning (e-learning) has created a new dimension in the world of education resulting in mobile learning (m-learning) (Brown, 2005; Keegan, 2005). The method of m-learning is more of self-learning which requires mobile equipment such as handphones, personal data assistants (PDA) and also Palm Talk as learning tools (Wagner, 2008). Survey shows that the field of Islamic Education has a good potential to use m-learning through mobile technology (Mohd Aliff *et al.*, 2011; Muhammad Ridhuan & Saedah, 2010).

Digital Islamic Education:

The emergence of computer technology, internet and digital has a big impact on the Muslim ummah. The 'iMuslim' society brought by Bunt (2009) is a contemporary dakwah approach of the 21st Century. This approach connects Muslims to discuss and share information amongst themselves through internet networking. This latest approach is seen as an innovation for continuous implementation of Islamic Education, based on the concept of combining conventional delivery of Islam and information technology, suitable with current development. Based on this approach, the Muslim society in Malaysia is able to communicate with Muslims overseas unconstrained by time and location. This situation has created an environment called Cyber Islam (Bunt, 2009; Zulkiple, 2009; Zulkiple, 2010).

The dissemination of Islamic teachings since the time of the Prophet (pbuh) has always used various strategies, including the oral method, warfare and marriage (Izzati & Ezzati, 2002; Harun, 2007). Beginning with the era of information communication technology, the Muslim society has realised the importance of utilising this change for *da'wah* (preaching) purposes. This awareness peaked after the September 11 2001 event and many internet users, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, have searched for information on Islam (Chawki, 2010; Zulkiple, 2010). As an extension of this incident which shook the world, the term *Islamophobia* was coined from the prejudice towards Islamic teaching which is said to advocate violence, warfare and cruelty (Zin, 2010). Since that incident, many internet users, particularly Muslims, have used websites by posting information on Islamic teachings, fatwa (edicts), lectures and religious classes, videos on Islam as well as podcasting, whether on YouTube, social websites and blogs (Chawki, 2010). The information posted in various media channels have been able to clarify the truth about Islamic teachings and Muslims.

Malaysia is also not spared from changes to the Cyber Islam environment. The outcome of a general survey on Islamic Education websites and materials in the internet are found to be educationally informal and initiated by individuals, private parties and NGOs. Among the favourite websites of internet users in Malaysia based on information from Alexa (www.alexa.com) are YouTube, Blogger, Wikipedia, Wordpress and MediaFire. These websites which offer free service are frequently visited by Malaysian users because they are easy to use for dakwah purposes such as uploading audio materials, video, text and that which indirectly contain an element of the application of Islamic values.

In addition, websites with full Islamic features serve as reference for internet users in Malaysia. Among the favourite websites are al-ahkam.net (question and answer on Islam and fatwa collection), mymaktabat.com (collection of local religious videos and audios), halaqah.net (Islamic forum), www.iluvislam.com (Islamic forum, news, question and answer) and infad.usim.edu.my (global collection of fatwa). Even though most of the Islamic websites belong to certain individuals and groups, the government has taken the initiative to collect questions on legal issues in Islam by creating websites such as e-Fatwa (www.e-fatwa.gov.my) which can serve as reference for Muslims all over the world. However, there are several shortcomings such as aspects of user-friendliness, access efficiency to fatwa portal and lack of clarity in explaining issues (Mohd Nor *et al.*, 2008). However, these problems may be rectified by improving fatwa management towards a more effective information delivery.

Conclusion:

The changes which happen in the world today teach us to be more concerned about education. Despite the many positive effects of globalization, it is undeniable that these come together with negative effects. The practice of using ICT in Islamic Education cannot be underestimated by the Muslim society in Malaysia because this modern approach serves the purpose of a quick and easy form of delivering messages in line with globalization. Although many changes have been carried out to achieve the objectives of FPK and FPI in Malaysia, there are still many aspects which need to be looked into such as changes in curriculum, method and style of teaching and the optimum use of current technology. This is in accordance with Islamic teaching which has never prevented its ummah from using whatever methods or materials so long as they do not contradict Islamic Shariah. Therefore, the capacity of Islam as a leading discipline must be upheld because the calibre of a Muslim depends on the quality of education he or she has acquired. The application of Islamic values within the Muslim person needs to be practised from school-going age. Through this early step, sustained guidance and education will holistically give birth to the kind of Muslim who lives up to Islamic requirements.

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