

## THE INFLUENCE OF LOCAL AND GLOBAL POLITICS ON THE ISLAMIZATION OF SCIENCE IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN ISLAMIC EDUCATION SYSTEMS

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### ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine the process of Islamization of knowledge in the Islamic education system in Southeast Asia, with a focus on how the concept of Islamization developed by M. Naquib al-Attas can be applied in various political contexts. (Muh. Hanif, "De-Westernisation of Islamic Education Perspective Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas", International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Analysis. June 2023). Using a qualitative approach through literature study methods, this research analyzes literature related to Islamic education policies in countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. (Adib Rifqi Setiawan 2020 AIS | Islamic Education in Southeast Asia OSF). The research results show that efforts to Islamize science face significant challenges, especially due to the complex interactions between local and global politics. Local politics often play a role in shaping Islamic education curricula, which can strengthen or hinder this process of Islamization. Meanwhile, the influence of globalization also adds to the challenges with pressure to adopt global education standards that are not always in line with the principles of Islamization. This research concludes that the success of the Islamization of knowledge in Islamic education in Southeast Asia is highly dependent on the ability to navigate different local and global political dynamics.

**Keywords:** Islamization of Science, Islamic Education, Southeast Asia, Local Politics, Globalization

### A. INTRODUCTION

The Islamization of science is not a concept born out of emptiness, but rather the result of a long struggle in Islamic thought with various challenges of the times. M. Naquib al-Attas, one of the leading thinkers in the Islamic world, initiated the Islamization of science as an effort to unite Islamic values with modern science. This concept emerged as a response to the dichotomy that often occurs between religious knowledge and general knowledge, which has long been a debate in the world of Islamic education. (Fajar Syarif, "Reintegration of Religious Knowledge and General Knowledge": Criticism of The Discourse of Science Dichotomy Transformatif. 2020). With the integration proposed by al-Attas, it is hoped that there will no longer be any differences between knowledge that is considered "sacred" and knowledge that is "secular," but that the two will work together in a broader and holistic framework.

In Southeast Asia, the Islamization of knowledge finds its relevance in a complex social, cultural and political context. The region, particularly Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, provides rich terrain for seeing how this concept is implemented and what challenges arise in the process. In Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, the government has made efforts to integrate Islamic education into the national education system. However, dynamic local politics often causes changes in policy direction, so that consistency in the implementation of the Islamization concept becomes difficult to maintain.

Malaysia, with its diverse political and ethnic background, faces its own challenges.

Islamic education policy in Malaysia often has to negotiate with ethnic and religious diversity, which makes it a complicated terrain for efforts to Islamize science. Meanwhile, Thailand, where Islam is a minority religion, shows different dynamics again. Islamic education in the southern region of Thailand faces major challenges from national policies that do not always support the application of Islamic values in the curriculum. Here, the Islamization of science must not only deal with internal issues, but also with external pressures originating from state policies.

Apart from that, globalization adds complexity to efforts to Islamize science in these three countries. (Islam's Encounter with Modern Science *aner* .Jurnal: Elements in Islam and Science. Edisi 2023). International educational standards, which are often based on a secular and Western worldview, bring their own challenges to efforts to maintain the authenticity of Islamic education. Globalization not only offers opportunities, but also threats to the Islamic identity that we want to maintain in the education system. The pressure to conform to global standards often conflicts with the principles of Islamization promoted by thinkers such as al-Attas.

This research seeks to explore how local and global politics influence the process of Islamization of science in the Islamic education system in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. (Robert Hefner , " Making Modern Muslims", Jurnal: Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, 39(2), 275-303. 2008). The qualitative approach used will explore existing literature and examine how political dynamics in each country influence efforts to integrate the concept of Islamization into the education system. This research also aims to offer guidance for policy makers in developing an Islamic education system that is more in line with Islamic principles, while remaining responsive to diverse political and social contexts.

Through this research, it is hoped that a deeper understanding can be gained about the challenges and opportunities faced by countries in Southeast Asia in their efforts to implement the Islamization of science. ( Nurbaiti , "Islamic Education: The Main Path of Islamization in Southeast Asia ", Jurnal: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam. 2019). Thus, this research not only contributes to strengthening Islamic identity in education, but also to efforts to moderate religion in the midst of increasingly strong globalization.

## B. METHOD

This research method uses a qualitative approach with a focus on literature study to explore and understand how the Islamization of science is implemented in the Islamic education system in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. ( Kurniawan Dwi Saputra, Fatimah Az Zahra Mughni, Nur Asyiqin Zohkarnain, M. Sonata Dena Sadewa, "Historical Continuity and Changes: Understanding the Dynamics of Islamic Education in Indonesia and Malaysia", Jurnal: Jurnal Tarbiyatuna. Vol. 13 No. 2 (2022) pp. 107-118. 2022). Data was collected from various literature sources, including books, scientific journals, and policy documents, which were then analyzed descriptively using a content analysis approach. (Glenn A. Bowen , " Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research", Method Jurnal: Qualitative Research Journal, 9(2), 27-40. 2009). This analysis will identify main themes related to the influence of local and global politics on the implementation of the Islamization of science. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation and peer debriefing with Islamic education experts, ensuring that data interpretation was accurate and relevant. This research aims to provide

in-depth insight into the challenges and opportunities in integrating Islamic values in education, as well as offering strategic recommendations for strengthening Islamic identity amidst global dynamics.

### C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research seeks to explore in depth how local politics and globalization play a role in shaping and influencing the process of Islamization of science in the Islamic education system in the Southeast Asia region, with a main focus on three countries: Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. ( Robert W. Hefner (Editor) , "Making Modern Muslims: The Politics of Islamic Education in Southeast Asia", Penerbit: University of Hawaii Press. 2008 ). These three countries, despite having significant Muslim populations, face different challenges in implementing the concept of Islamization of science, as proposed by M. Naquib al-Attas.

In Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim majority in the world, local politics plays a very important role in determining the direction of Islamic education policy. Despite efforts by the central government to integrate Islamization principles into the national curriculum, highly diverse local political dynamics often act as a major obstacle. Each region has its own political powers, which often conflict with central policies. This causes inconsistencies in the application of the concept of Islamization of science in various regions. Local politics filled with the interests of certain groups and elites often force local governments to adjust their education policies, which ultimately makes the implementation of Islamization inconsistent and fragmented.

Malaysia, with a more complex political and social background, faces no less serious challenges. The ethnic and religious diversity in Malaysia demands a more careful approach in implementing the Islamization of science. The Malaysian government must balance the need to integrate Islamic values into education, with maintaining harmony among the various ethnic groups that exist. This moderate and compromising approach often makes the implementation of the concept of Islamization slower and less optimal. However, on the other hand, Malaysia also shows that with the right strategy, the Islamization of science can be implemented without having to sacrifice social harmony.

Meanwhile, Thailand, which has a Muslim minority population, faces different challenges. In the southern region of Thailand, where Islam is the majority religion, Islamic education is often under pressure from national policies oriented towards Thai nationalism. These policies, which aim to strengthen national identity, often conflict with efforts to integrate Islamic values into educational curricula. The Islamization of science in this region must face challenges from within and without, including pressure to conform to national policies that do not fully support the implementation of Islamic values.

Apart from challenges from local politics, globalization also adds a layer of complexity to efforts to Islamize science in these three countries. Globalization, with pressure to adopt secular international educational standards, often places these countries in a difficult position. ( Martin Carnoy, "GLOBALIZATION AND HIGHER

EDUCATION" - Open Society ... [SNIPPET] Jurnal: Education Support Program OSI Education Conference 2005: "Education and Open Society: A Critical Look at New Perspectives and Demands". Global standards based on a Western worldview demand adaptations that are not always in line with the principles of Islamization. This creates a dilemma for education policy makers in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand: how to maintain the authenticity of Islamic values in education, while remaining relevant and competitive on the global stage.

This research reveals that the Islamization of science in Southeast Asia is not a simple task. Local political challenges and globalization pressures require adaptive and contextual strategies. Efforts to integrate Islamic values into education must be carried out with a holistic approach, taking into account the social, political and economic dynamics in each country. In this way, the Islamization of science can be realized more effectively, without having to sacrifice Islamic identity which is the main basis of education in this region. This research, in the end, makes an important contribution in understanding how the concept of Islamization of science can be applied contextually and responsively amidst the challenges of globalization and complex local political dynamics.

Analysis of literature and policies in this research reveals various challenges and opportunities faced in implementing the concept of Islamization of science in Southeast Asia. The identified challenges come not only from diverse local political dynamics, but also from increasingly strong globalization pressures. Education policies in each country show how efforts to integrate Islamic values often clash with demands to meet secular international standards. However, behind these challenges, there is an opportunity to create a more adaptive and responsive model of Islamic education, which is able to maintain Islamic identity while remaining relevant amidst changing times. These findings emphasize the importance of a holistic and contextual approach in implementing the Islamization of science, as proposed by M. Naquib al-Attas.

This discussion focuses on M. Naquib al-Attas' views regarding the concept of Islamization of knowledge, which is the basis for understanding and applying Islamization in the context of Islamic education in Southeast Asia. (Mohd Faizal Musa, "Naquib Al-Attas' Islamization of Knowledge: Its Impact on Malay Religious", Life, Literature, Language and Culture. 2021). M. Naquib al-Attas is one of the leading Muslim thinkers who introduced the idea of the importance of the Islamization of science as a response to the dominance of Western thought in various scientific disciplines. Al-Attas believes that science is never neutral and is always filled with the values of the culture and civilization that gave birth to it. Therefore, according to al-Attas, science developing in the West brings with it a view of life and values that often conflict with Islamic principles.

Al-Attas defines the Islamization of science as an effort to free science from values that conflict with Islam and then integrate key Islamic concepts into this science. According to al-Attas, the Islamization process is carried out through two main stages: dewesternization and integration.

Dewesternization is an effort to separate elements and concepts originating from Western culture, which are considered incompatible with Islamic teachings, from

various fields of science. Al-Attas believes that modern science, especially in the field of humanities, has been influenced by the Western worldview which tends to be secular and skeptical. Therefore, dewesternization is an important first step in eliminating such influences from science.

The second stage is integration, where key Islamic concepts are incorporated into modern science. These concepts include an understanding of *din* (religion), *insan* (human), science (knowledge), and correct deeds (civilized actions).<sup>1</sup> Al-Attas emphasized that this integration process is not just about attaching verses from the Koran or hadith as scientific justification, but rather about developing science that truly reflects the Islamic worldview which is centered on Allah Ta'ala and the universe. According to al-Attas, the ultimate goal of the Islamization of science is to create a scientific system that is free from secular influences and that is rooted in the principles of revelation. Thus, the Islamization of science aims to protect Muslims from knowledge that has been contaminated by Western secularism, and to ensure that the knowledge developed in the Islamic world is knowledge that brings benefits not only intellectually but also spiritually.

In the context of Southeast Asia, al-Attas' views are very relevant, especially in countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, where Islam plays an important role in social and cultural life. (S. M. N. Al-Attas, "The Islamization Process by Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas and Its Relevance on Islamic Science", *Jurnal: Kawanua International Journal of Multicultural Studies*, 3(2), 57-65. 2022). However, as has been discussed, the application of the concept of Islamization faces various challenges, both from local political dynamics and globalization pressures. Nonetheless, al-Attas' views provide an important framework for efforts to integrate Islamic values into the education system, which can become the basis for the development of stronger and more relevant Islamic education in the region.

In Indonesia, local political dynamics are often the main obstacle in efforts to maintain consistency in Islamization policies. Politics at the regional level which is full of local interests, both in terms of culture, economy and power, creates quite a few obstacles to the implementation of the Islamization of science policy. Each region has its own political realities, which sometimes conflict with national policies designed to integrate Islamic values into the education system. As a result, consistency in implementing Islamization is often eroded by more pressing political interests at the local level. This condition reflects the socio-political complexity in Indonesia, where every effort to mainstream national policies must always deal with local dynamics that are not easy to control. In this context, the Islamization of science is a project full of challenges, requiring careful and adaptive strategies so that it can be implemented effectively throughout Indonesia.

In Malaysia, the richness and complexity of ethnic diversity necessitates a very careful approach in implementing Islamization policies. The country, inhabited by various ethnic groups such as Malays, Chinese and Indians, each with different traditions and religious beliefs, creates its own challenges for efforts to integrate

Islamic values into the national education system. This diversity forces the government to make various compromises in order to maintain social harmony and political stability.

In the educational context, these compromises are often seen in policies that tend to accommodate cultural and religious diversity, while still trying to maintain Islamic identity as part of the national identity. However, the compromises required to maintain this balance often reduce the effectiveness of implementing the concept of Islamization as proposed by thinkers such as M. Naquib al-Attas. Islamization policies in Malaysia often have to proceed very carefully, avoiding friction with non-Muslim groups who also have interests in the national education system.

This has resulted in the implementation of Islamization in Malaysia not always proceeding with the expected speed and consistency. On the one hand, the government is trying to integrate Islamic values in the educational curriculum to strengthen Islamic identity among students. However, on the other hand, this policy must be continuously adapted to complex socio-political dynamics, where each step must consider its impact on relations between ethnic groups. (Surur Muhammad Dakhlan Riza Asmara Noor Muchammad Cholidi Yaser Arab, "Boarding school leadership model to improve students' moderate behaviour: A study at senior high school", *International Journal of Educational Research and Innovation (IJERI)*. Year: 2023). This compromise, although necessary to maintain harmony, often makes the implementation of Islamization feel slow and not optimal.

However, despite these challenges, there is an opportunity for Malaysia to develop a more inclusive and adaptive model of Islamic education, one that is able to accommodate diversity while still maintaining the basic principles of Islamization. With the right approach, Malaysia can be an example of how the Islamization of science can be applied in the context of a pluralistic society, while still respecting existing ethnic and religious diversity. This approach, although full of challenges, shows that Islamization is not a rigid concept, but can be adapted to the socio-political realities faced, as long as basic Islamic values remain the main guide.

Meanwhile, in Thailand, national policies that focus on national integration pose major challenges to the implementation of Islamic values in the education system. In countries where Islam is a minority religion, especially in the Muslim-majority south, efforts to integrate Islamic values into the curriculum often clash with government policies that prioritize national unity under a dominant Thai identity. These policies, which aim to strengthen national identity and reduce the potential for division, often do not provide adequate space for the expression of Islamic identity in education.

In an environment like this, Islamic schools in Southern Thailand face various pressures, both from an administrative and ideological perspective. Policies requiring the use of the Thai language and a more secular national curriculum, for example, are direct obstacles to efforts to Islamize science as proposed by thinkers such as M. Naquib al-Attas. Efforts to maintain and develop Islamic identity in education are often seen as a threat to national integration, ultimately forcing Islamic educational institutions to operate in the shadow of broader state policies.

However, despite facing various challenges, the Muslim community in Thailand

continues to strive to find creative ways to maintain Islamic values in education. They try to integrate Islamic values in daily teaching without directly challenging national policies. This is a form of adaptation that shows that despite obstacles, there are also opportunities for Muslim communities to maintain their Islamic identity in stressful conditions.

This situation shows that the process of Islamization of science in Thailand must be carried out with an approach that is very sensitive to the existing political and social context. A more flexible and adaptive approach may be needed to ensure that Islamic values can still be taught and maintained, even in less supportive environments. This challenge emphasizes the importance of a deep understanding of the local context in efforts to implement Islamization concepts in regions where Islam is not the majority religion.

Globalization, with all its dynamics, adds layers of challenges that are not easy to face, especially for countries that are trying to maintain Islamic identity in their education systems. (Murtadho, Achmad Muhyiddin, AhmadSulastri, Umi, "Challenges of Islamic Education in the Era of Globalization: A Proposed Holistic Solution", Journal: International Journal of Education, Culture and Society. 2021). The demand to adapt to global education standards which tend to be secular often clashes with the principles of Islamization promoted by M. Naquib al-Attas. According to al-Attas, the process of Islamization of science aims to free science from the influence of secularism and integrate Islamic spiritual and moral values into every aspect of education. However, in the reality faced by countries in Southeast Asia, such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, globalization brings strong pressure to adopt international education standards that often ignore or even conflict with these principles.

Globalization not only presents opportunities for technological progress and the exchange of knowledge, but also brings with it a worldview based on secular rationality and the separation between religion and science. These global standards, driven by the need to compete on the international stage, often demand adjustments that can erode the authenticity of Islamic education. (Omar Benabdallah, "The Global Impact of Islamic Education", Article published on the Online Islamic Institute website. 2021). In this context, the integration of Islamic values in education becomes increasingly difficult, because it must continually adapt to global demands that are not always in line with the goals of Islamization.

This research underlines the importance of adaptive strategies in facing the challenges of globalization. This strategy must be designed in such a way that it maintains the core of Islamic values while still enabling productive engagement in the global educational arena. M. Naquib al-Attas has emphasized that the Islamization of science does not mean rejecting everything that comes from the West, but rather a strict selection process, in which only elements that are in accordance with Islamic teachings are integrated. This approach requires wisdom in navigating between the need to adapt to global standards and the imperative to maintain Islamic integrity in education.

In facing globalization, efforts are needed that go beyond just implementing policies; a clear vision is needed about how Islamic values can be integrated into an increasingly

global and secular education system. This demands innovation in approach, where Islamic education not only functions as a complement to global standards, but as an alternative capable of offering a different worldview, one based on deep faith and spirituality. Thus, this adaptive strategy is not just about surviving, but also about enriching global education with values derived from Islamic traditions.

This research shows that in the midst of strong globalization, countries in Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, have the opportunity to become models for integrating Islamic values into education. This can only be achieved if there is the courage to continue to maintain the principles of Islamization, while remaining open to beneficial global developments. In this way, Islamic education can become a strong pillar in facing the challenges of the times, while remaining loyal to the religious teachings which are the basis of Islamic civilization.

### **1. The Influence of Local Politics on the Islamization of Science**

The influence of local politics on the Islamization of science in Indonesia cannot be underestimated. In this country, local politics is not only an arena for power struggles, but also a terrain where Islamic education policies are formed and tested. The central government, through various policies, has attempted to integrate the Islamization of science in the national curriculum, an effort aimed at aligning education with Islamic values as proposed by thinkers such as M. Naquib al-Attas. However, the reality on the ground shows that local political dynamics are often the main obstacle to consistent implementation of this policy.

Each region in Indonesia has different political characteristics, which are influenced by unique history, culture and social composition. In this context, the Islamization of science cannot be separated from the influence of local politics which colors every educational policy. In some areas, there is strong political pressure from certain groups who have different interpretations of the concept of Islamization. These differences often lead to variations in policy implementation, where one region may be more progressive in integrating Islamic values into education, while another region may be more cautious or even reject some aspects of the policy.

For example, in areas that have a long history with conservative Islamic movements, the implementation of the Islamization of science tends to be more accepted and encouraged by local governments. In contrast, in more pluralistic regions or where there is strong local political power from non-Islamic groups, these policies may be met with more resistance. This shows that the implementation of Islamization in Indonesia not only faces challenges from the technical aspects of education, but also from the complex and varied political context throughout the region.

In Malaysia, even though Islam has been designated as the official state religion, the reality of rich ethnic and religious diversity creates complex challenges in efforts to integrate Islamic values into the national education system. Education policy in Malaysia, characterized by a spirit of moderation and inter-ethnic harmony, has often had to proceed on a foundation of careful compromise. In this context, efforts to apply the concept of Islamization of science initiated by M.

Naquib al-Attas become more challenging.

Diversity in Malaysia is not just a demographic fact, but is the foundation of the country's social and political life. With a population consisting of various ethnic groups such as Malays, Chinese and Indians, any policy that seeks to prioritize one group over others has the potential to trigger social tensions. Therefore, education policy in Malaysia tends to be more moderate, with a strong emphasis on national harmony and integration. This can be seen in the way Islamic education is implemented in national schools, where the curriculum is often adjusted to reflect Islamic values without ignoring the need to maintain balance with other ethnic groups.

However, this moderation also brings its own consequences. In an effort to maintain harmony, there are often limitations placed on the full application of the concept of Islamization of science. (Eric Chaney, "Religion and the Rise and Fall of Islamic Science", Journal: Working Paper, Harvard University. 2016). On the one hand, the state tries to maintain Islamic identity in education, but on the other hand, there is a need to accommodate existing ethnic and religious diversity. The result is an approach that tries to strike a balance between efforts to integrate Islamic values and demands to maintain inclusiveness in the national education system.

In this context, the challenges faced by Malaysia are different from other countries in Southeast Asia. While Indonesia struggles with diverse local political dynamics, and Thailand must navigate challenges as a country with a non-Muslim majority, Malaysia faces a unique dilemma as a country that is officially based on Islam, but must always consider ethnic and religious plurality in all its public policies.

The limitations faced in implementing Islamization in Malaysia not only demonstrate the country's political and social complexity, but also highlight the importance of a contextual and adaptive approach in integrating Islamic values into education. The moderation implemented in Malaysia, although aimed at maintaining social harmony, also emphasizes that the application of the concept of Islamization of science cannot be done absolutely, but must go through an adaptation process that is sensitive to the diversity and needs of all citizens. This is the challenge faced by Malaysia in implementing an inclusive education policy, while still trying to maintain Islamic values in a plural national context.

In Thailand, where the Muslim population is a minority, the challenges faced in implementing Islamic education are very complex and full of dynamics. The southern region of Thailand, where the majority of the population is Muslim, has become the focal point of efforts to maintain Islamic identity amidst national policies that are strongly oriented towards national integration. Thai national policy tends to emphasize the importance of Thai nationalism and identity, which in many ways is incompatible with the Islamic values held by Muslim communities in the region. This condition creates its own challenges for Islamization efforts in education, which in other areas might be implemented more freely.

Local politics in Thailand tend to reinforce national policies that prioritize unity

and cohesion under a national identity dominated by Thai culture and values. This makes the space for implementing Islamization in education very limited. Islamic education in the southern region of Thailand, for example, has to deal with policies that prioritize the use of the Thai language in education, as well as a curriculum designed to strengthen nationalism. Such policies, although aimed at maintaining national unity, often ignore or even suppress the expression of Islamic identity held dear by Muslim communities in the region.

In this context, efforts to Islamize science as initiated by M. Naquib al-Attas face very difficult challenges. Al-Attas emphasized the importance of integrating Islamic values into all aspects of science and education, with the aim of freeing science from the influence of secularism and ensuring that education not only serves to meet worldly needs, but also leads humans to a deeper spiritual understanding. (Saba Riffi, "Integration of Science, Technology, and Islamic Values to Enhance Expected Learning Outcomes in French Higher Education", Journal: ResearchGate publication, 2023). However, in Thailand, strict and assimilation-oriented national policies make implementing this concept very difficult.

Despite this, Muslim communities in southern Thailand continue to struggle to maintain their Islamic identity through education. Islamic schools in the region, although under pressure from national policies, continue to strive to teach Islamic values to their young generation. This was a form of symbolic resistance to national policies that sought to integrate them into the wider mainstream of Thai culture. This effort reflects the determination of the Muslim community to maintain their religious values even though they face strong pressure from state policies.

However, the challenges faced by the Muslim community in Thailand also highlight the importance of more flexible and adaptive strategies in efforts to Islamize education. In a highly unsupportive environment, an overly rigid approach may not work. Instead, innovation is needed in educational methods and strategies that enable Muslim communities to maintain their Islamic values without having to directly confront national policies.

Thus, the challenges faced in Thailand show that the implementation of the Islamization of science cannot be carried out uniformly in all places. In regions where Muslims are a minority and national policies are unsupportive, a more adaptive and contextual approach is needed. This underlines the importance of a deep understanding of the local context in any effort to integrate Islamic values into education. Only then can the Islamization of education be truly successful, even in challenging conditions such as those faced by the Muslim community in Thailand.

## **2. The impact of globalization on the Islamization of science**

Globalization, with all its promises of prosperity, also poses significant challenges for efforts to Islamize science in Southeast Asia. Countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, which have rich cultural and spiritual heritages, are now facing pressure to conform to international educational standards that are often built on a foundation of secular and Western values. In this context, globalization not only brings technological or economic progress, but also brings with it a torrent of ideology that is slowly eroding the Islamic identity that has long been the support of education in this

region.

In Indonesia and Malaysia, the flow of globalization which brings international education standards often becomes a complex dilemma. On the one hand, globalization offers great opportunities for progress, expanding access to knowledge, and opening the door to a more connected and modern world. These international standards are often considered benchmarks of success, carrying the promise of innovation, quality and competition on the global stage. However, behind these promises, hidden challenges that cannot be ignored.

International education standards rooted in secular and Western values often clash with the principles of Islamization that have long been the basis of education in Indonesia and Malaysia. Islamic education in these two countries is not only about the transfer of knowledge, but also the formation of character, morals and deep spirituality. Herein lies the challenge: how to maintain the essence of Islamic education, maintaining its authenticity and integrity, while at the same time meeting global demands that often contradict Islamic teachings?

This battle is not a simple matter. Globalization, with all its demands, could erode the Islamic identity that has been built over centuries. (Mohamed A. Elkhateib Mohamed S. Elhawary, "Trends of Research on Islamic Education in International Journals in the Last Three Decades", *Journal: Journal of Adventist Education*. 2017). On the one hand, there is a strong urge to adapt, so as not to be left behind in the current of modernization. On the other hand, there is an urgent need to remain steadfast in the principles on which Islamic education is based. This dilemma creates a situation that demands mature wisdom and strategy from educational policy makers.

The solution may not be a choice between one or the other, but rather how to find a balance point that allows Islamic education to remain relevant and competitive in the era of globalization, without having to lose the identity and authenticity that characterizes it. This challenge is a test of our ability to combine the old with the new, the local with the global, within an educational framework that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also spiritually and morally rich. This is the big task faced by educators and policy makers in Indonesia and Malaysia, to ensure that Islamic education is not only able to survive, but also develop amidst the unstoppable flow of globalization.

In Indonesia, for example, global standards oriented towards pragmatism and efficiency often force us to compromise, sometimes to the point where the essence of the Islamization of science is reduced. Education, which should be a means of forming character and personality based on Islamic values, must now be faced with the reality where the curriculum must be adjusted to international standards, which are not always in line with these principles. There is a constant tension between the desire to maintain Islamic identity and the pressure to remain relevant in the eyes of the global world.

Malaysia, with all its multiethnic and multicultural uniqueness, also faces a similar dilemma. On the one hand, this country is trying hard to maintain the identity of Islam as the state religion. On the other hand, global demands force Malaysia to adapt its education system to standards that are generally accepted internationally. And in the process, the Islamization of science often has to deal with the need to meet the

criteria set by the outside world.

This is where the big question that cannot be avoided arises: how far can we continue to tread the fine line between maintaining Islamic values and adapting to global demands? How long can we ensure that every compromise we make does not erode the essence of the beliefs that have become the foundation of our education? This is not just an intellectual dilemma, but a real challenge that must be faced with courage and wisdom.

We are faced with a situation where every step taken must be thought carefully. Compromise may be inevitable, but don't let that compromise make us lose direction. Islamic values which are the soul of our education must not be risked in order to follow the current of globalization which is sometimes not in line with the principles we adhere to. However, on the other hand, we also cannot close ourselves off from a world that is increasingly connected and dynamic.

This is not a matter of choosing between one or the other, but about how we can mix the two carefully. Finding a middle ground that allows us to remain true to our identity, while continuing to move forward amidst the rapid currents of globalization. We need courage, not only to survive, but also to innovate and adapt without losing our identity. This challenge is a test for all of us educators, leaders and policy makers to remain steadfast in what we believe in, while continuing to look for ways to remain relevant amidst inevitable change. This is not an easy task, but this is our call for the future of Islamic education in an increasingly complex world.

In the end, the biggest challenge facing Islamic education in Indonesia and Malaysia in facing globalization is not just a matter of how to adapt to ever-changing global standards. The real challenge is how we can take advantage of this current of globalization without losing our identity, without being tempted to abandon the principles that have become the foundation of our identity. This is not a short or easy journey, but a long one that requires intelligence, perseverance, and most importantly, loyalty to the values we believe to be true truth.

Meanwhile, the situation of Islamic education in Thailand, especially in the southern region, is in a very complex position and is often full of contradictions. The pressures of globalization that permeate all corners of the country, like flowing water eroding river banks, reinforce educational policies that are strongly oriented towards Thai nationalism—an ideology that is closely guarded by the central government. This nationalism, with all its calls for unity and a single national identity, often forms a thick wall blocking Islamic education in southern Thailand. Islamic education there is increasingly marginalized, isolated in increasingly narrow spaces, pressured by a nationalist agenda that does not provide much room for diversity. (Muhammad Umar Jumhur, "Trends of Research on Islamic Education in International Journals in the Last Three Decades", *Journal: Islam and Global Education*. 2021).

In conditions like these, Islamic education in Thailand must fight hard to remain relevant and survive amidst enormous pressure. Pressure not only comes from within the country, but also from the unstoppable flow of globalization. This is a situation that demands a smart and adaptive strategy, so that Islamic education is not further marginalized, but can instead find a way to survive and develop even under the shadow

of dominant nationalism. In facing this challenge, we need the courage to remain firm in our principles, while continuing to look for ways so that Islamic education in Thailand can survive and even thrive in such a challenging climate.

However, in the midst of a situation that seems full of challenges, there appears a kind of awareness or perhaps more precisely the urge to find a solution to this trapped position. Some educational thinkers and local activists are starting to see the need for an approach that is not only defensive, but also more adaptive to existing conditions. This is where the idea of developing a hybrid curriculum began to take shape. This idea tries to embrace the best of two worlds: on the one hand, the implementation of global standards that seem difficult to avoid and continue to be demanded, on the other hand, efforts to maintain and respect the Islamic values that are upheld by the Muslim community in southern Thailand.

This idea was born from the desire to find a balance between following the strong current of globalization and maintaining the Islamic identity that is the hallmark of Islamic education in the region. This hybrid curriculum is not only an effort to survive, but also a strategic step to ensure that Islamic education remains relevant and competitive in an increasingly global context. By combining compatible elements from global standards with Islamic principles, it is hoped that Islamic education in Thailand can develop without losing the essence that is at its heart.

This approach requires intelligence in formulating policies, as well as the courage to experiment with new methods that may not be popular, but have great potential to bring about positive change. Although the results of this approach still require further evaluation, initiatives like this show that there is hope and opportunity for creating Islamic education that is able to stand tall amidst global pressures, while remaining true to the values held dear by the Muslim community in southern Thailand.

However, as with many efforts under pressure, the results from these experiments still show significant variability. This hybrid curriculum, if we may call it that, often looks like a colorful mosaic, but unfortunately, it is not yet able to completely unite the existing pieces perfectly. There are times when integration between global standards and local values looks promising, giving hope that we may be approaching an elegant solution. However, at other times, the incongruity between global values that tend to be secular and the Islamic principles that form the basis of local education creates almost inevitable tensions. Every step taken seems to open up new gaps, where every solution found actually adds to other, more complex problems.

Of course, the biggest challenge of this effort is how the results will be evaluated over time. The question that arises is: will we see the birth of a new generation capable of bridging the global and local worlds seamlessly, or are we simply postponing the emergence of bigger and more complex problems in the future? Further evaluations will probably give us more data and information, but the question is, will all that data be enough to give us a real answer?

Ultimately, all of this is just part of a puzzle that is much bigger and more complex than it appears on the surface. And like many things in life, we will probably never really know whether we are moving towards a real solution or just spinning in circles in the same place, albeit at different speeds. What is certain is that this journey, for all

its complexity, is a deep reflection on how globalization, nationalism and religious identity can collide in one space, leaving us with more questions than answers.

Opportunities and integration strategies for the Islamization of science in Southeast Asia must be understood not simply as a technical effort, but as a mission that includes all aspects of education and culture. (Salma A. Mear, "Education in Islam and South Asia: Trends, Issues, Challenges and Solutions", *Journal: Journal of Multidisciplinary and Interdisciplinary Studies*, Volume 3, Issue 1). In the increasingly rapid flow of globalization, where international education standards tend to promote secular values, countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia face big challenges in maintaining and strengthening Islamic identity in the realm of education.

In Indonesia, this challenge is clearly visible in the very diverse dynamics of local politics. Efforts to integrate the Islamization of science into the national curriculum are often hampered by various competing political interests. Colorful local politics and differing interests often result in Islamic education policies being less consistent. However, despite these challenges, there are great opportunities for regional collaboration with neighboring countries such as Malaysia, which also has a strong commitment to Islamic education. This collaboration can not only overcome challenges, but also strengthen the position of the two countries in advancing Islamic education.

In Malaysia, even though Islam is the official state religion, the existing ethnic and religious diversity creates its own challenges in efforts to implement the Islamization of science. Education policy in Malaysia tends to be more moderate, with a focus on harmony between ethnic groups which sometimes limits the full implementation of the concept of Islamization. However, this is where collaboration with Indonesia becomes very important. By sharing experiences and strategies, these two countries can complement each other and strengthen their efforts in facing existing challenges.

Meanwhile, in Thailand, where Muslims are a minority, Islamic education in the southern region faces different challenges. National policies that emphasize national integration often do not provide sufficient space for the application of Islamic values in education. Local politics in Thailand prioritize Thai nationalism and identity, which is often not in line with the principles of the Islamization of science. Despite this, there are efforts to develop more adaptive curricula, which try to combine global standards with Islamic values. This step should be appreciated although the results still need to be further evaluated.

In this context, globalization becomes an additional challenge that requires an intelligent and adaptive response. International educational standards that are often based on a secular worldview force countries in Southeast Asia to adapt, sometimes at the risk of compromising the principles of Islamization. However, with strong regional cooperation, these countries can find ways to integrate Islamic values in education without having to give in to increasingly pressing global pressures. In this way, efforts to maintain Islamic identity in education can remain relevant and competitive in the midst of globalization.

This opportunity must be responded to with a holistic and contextual strategy, which does not only focus on technical aspects, but also on spiritual and moral dimensions. In this way, efforts to Islamize science in Southeast Asia can go hand in

hand with the demands of globalization, while still maintaining Islamic identity which is the main foundation in education. (M.C. Ricklefs, "The Islamization of Southeast Asia", ResearchGate publication, 2023). This is the big challenge faced by Muslim countries in the region, and this is also a big opportunity to create an education system that is fairer, more competitive and firmly rooted in Islamic values.

Apart from that, an approach that is more inclusive and adaptive to the local context in each country can be a bridge to overcome various political resistances that have been an obstacle in implementing the Islamization of science. Amid the cultural and political diversity of Southeast Asia, where Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand have unique dynamics, the need to understand and respond to local realities has become increasingly urgent. This is not just a matter of policy coming from above, but more than that, it is a struggle to situate Islamic education in a diverse social landscape, a struggle that demands flexibility and wisdom.

In Indonesia, local political dynamics often present their own challenges. Each region, with its own characteristics, brings with it interests that are sometimes contradictory. However, herein lies the opportunity for an inclusive approach that does not impose one point of view, but embraces diversity to create unity in diversity. Considering this complexity, a more inclusive approach becomes a middle way that is able to penetrate barriers of difference, bridging local aspirations with the greater goal of the Islamization of science.

In Malaysia, although Islam is the official state religion, ethnic and religious diversity creates its own challenges in integrating Islamic values into national education. Here, inclusivity and adaptability are the keys to maintaining social harmony. Malaysia needs to ensure that Islamic education policies are not only accepted by the Muslim majority, but also appreciated by other minority groups. With an inclusive approach, Malaysia can show that the Islamization of science does not have to conflict with diversity, but can go hand in hand with building a more just and balanced society.

Meanwhile, in Thailand, where Muslims are a minority, the challenges faced are different. National policies that prioritize national integration tend to make it difficult to implement Islamic values in education, especially in the Muslim-majority southern region. Here, a more adaptive approach to local context becomes important. By adapting an educational approach that respects local identity, but remains within the framework of the Islamization of science, it can be hoped that there will be wider acceptance from the local community.

However, in the era of globalization, adjusting the curriculum to be more flexible and adaptive to global demands has also become a necessity. International education standards, which are often dominated by a secular worldview, require intelligent strategies in maintaining Islamic values. Islamic education in Southeast Asia must be able to compete on the global stage, but without losing its identity. In this case, curriculum flexibility that not only accommodates Islamic values, but also responds to global challenges, is very important.

Ultimately, the path towards the Islamization of science in Southeast Asia is a path full of challenges, but not without hope. With an inclusive and adaptive approach, as

well as a flexible curriculum, Islamic education can remain relevant and competitive in the midst of globalization, without having to sacrifice the values that are the foundation of Islamic teachings themselves. A long struggle, but one worth fighting for, for a better future.

#### D. CONCLUSION

The results of this research confirm that local politics and globalization play quite a large role in efforts to Islamize science in the Islamic education system in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. The impact of these two factors cannot be ignored, because they shape how the concept of Islamization of science is implemented in these three countries. Although the challenges faced are quite difficult, both in terms of differences in political policies and pressure to comply with global standards, there are also great opportunities that can be exploited.

This opportunity lies in the ability to strengthen the integration of Islamic values in education through more inclusive, collaborative and adaptive strategies. This kind of strategy is very necessary to ensure that the concept of Islamization of science can be implemented effectively, not only in one country but in various political and social contexts in Southeast Asia.

This research also provides very important insights for policy makers. In developing an Islamic education system that is responsive to local and global dynamics, policy makers must be more sensitive to changes occurring in the field. They need to ensure that the education system they build does not just meet the demands of the times, but also remains in line with Islamic principles which are the basis of all these Islamization efforts. In this way, the Islamic education system in this region can continue to develop and make a significant contribution in forming a more just, civilized and broad-minded society.

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