

## The Relevance of Fazlur Rahman's Concept of Education to the Independent Learning Curriculum

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**ABSTRACT:** Islamic education in developing countries like Indonesia also incorporates elements influenced by Western education. It seems that a large number of educated Muslims rely on Western intellectuals as a foundation to build their understanding of optimal educational design. However, some Muslim scholars have extraordinary and unconventional ideas. One example is Fazlur Rahman, whose writings have received significant attention and analysis among Western academics. This research examines Fazlur Rahman's reformist ideas about the education model, particularly its application in modern Islamic education. This research aims to determine the application of this model to independent learning in the Indonesian national education system. So, it is expected to find relevance in the concept of education offered by Fazlur Rahman with independent learning. With the discovery of this relevance, it can be understood that the idea of independent learning implemented in Indonesia is close to the concept of Islamic education. As understood by a Muslim academic, the idea of education must be paradigmized in the values of Islamic teachings.

**KEYWORDS:** Islamic Education, Independent Learning, Fazlur Rahman

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Today, education largely follows Western principles, even more evident in developing countries like Indonesia. Islamic education also shows similar characteristics when experiencing the Westernization process. Harun Nasution, as quoted by Muhaimin, argues that Islamic education is strongly influenced by Western ideals, which emphasize teaching over moral education (Muhaimin, 2012). Islamic society influenced by Western culture is characterized by the adoption of Western customs, implicit recognition of Western domination in material and political aspects, and ignoring the inherent wealth of Islamic values and thinkers (Akhmad, 2005). Today, contemporary education relies heavily on Western intellectuals' views on formulating an optimal education system. At the same time, many figures have extraordinary thoughts about education, such as Al-Ghazali, Muhammad Abduh, Fazlur Rahman, and so on.

Islamic society's deep admiration for the West has led to the dichotomy and duality of education, namely the segregation of contemporary science from Islamic education or the segregation of Islamic education from secular education. Muhammad Abduh, as quoted by Iqbal, challenged this idea by emphasizing criticism of Muslims who do not uphold Islamic standards in the present, and he aspired for Muslims to embrace Western concepts without sacrificing Islamic values (Iqbal, 2015). In line with that, Mochtar Buchori, as cited by Muahimain, also voiced concern over the focus on cognitive aspects in implementing modern Islamic education, thus neglecting the affective aspects (Muhaimin, 2012). This neglect results in the absence of a solid determination to apply religious values practically and genuinely, resulting in a gap between theoretical knowledge and actual practice of values in life.

In essence, education functions as an effort to shape the nature and character of human beings who are human beings (Masang, 2021). Hal ini selaras dengan ungkapan William MC Gucken sebagaimana dikutip. This is in line with the expression of William MC Gucken, as quoted by Hermawan, which states that education is a process of improving human abilities to achieve intellectual, moral, spiritual, and physical excellence, to benefit both individuals and society (Hermawan, 2012). So education has an essential position in the life of community.

The realization of educational goals is undoubtedly an ideal in the community. However, in reality, the community's expectations of achievement through education are currently facing obstacles due to various problems in education. These problems include violence disguised as education, inadequate quality of education, issues of division, moral decline, and the dichotomous nature of the education system. These educational challenges can be effectively addressed through educational philosophy. Still, their practical implementation requires the cooperation of several sectors, including government, budgeting, industry participation, human resources, mass media, parents, and society. (Nata, 2019).

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The concept of dualism, i.e., the dichotomy or division between Islamic education and general education or the separation of religious science and contemporary science, presents a major challenge to modern Islamic education. From a normative point of view, Islam does not advocate a strict separation between worldly and afterlife affairs. By the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) teachings, anyone who wants to succeed in both areas should actively pursue knowledge. Therefore, Muslims must seek knowledge without discriminating based on its position or source.

Fazlur Rahman, as quoted by Iqbal, asserts that all efforts to improve Islamic education will not succeed if they do not address the fundamental problem of how to broaden the understanding and intellectualism of Muslims while maintaining a solid Islamic devotion (Iqbal, 2015). In his view, the difficulty in achieving both goals arises from the persistence of dichotomy in educational practice. So Fazlur Rahman attempted to propose an integrative educational framework to produce Muslim graduates who are capable and have a combination of scientific, critical, dynamic, innovative, and progressive qualities while realizing the virtues of justice and honesty to form an educated Muslim. (Bimbo, 2019; Rahman, 1982; Usman dkk., 2022).

The explanation on this matter is also expected to realize the nature of *tawazun* in the paradigm of a Muslim in understanding life. This is as Allah SWT says in the Qur'an Surah Al-Qashah Verse 77: "And, seek in what Allah has bestowed upon you (the reward) of the hereafter, but do not forget your part in the world. And do unto others as Allah has done unto you, and do not cause corruption in the earth; for Allah loves not those who cause corruption." (Al-Qur'an, 2020). The verse emphasizes the need for Muslims to strive for rewards in the hereafter while ensuring that they do not neglect or ignore the fulfillment of life in today's world. Islam advocates comprehensive governance and encourages good behavior towards fellow humans while discouraging harmful behavior.

Indonesia also faces the intellectual problem of education. As the results of PISA (Program For International Student Assessment) as quoted by BPS (Central Bureau of Statistics), show a decrease in the average value of Indonesian education in reading, mathematics, and science in 2018 (Agustina, 2020). Education standards in Indonesia have yet to reach a level that cannot encourage higher-order cognitive skills. Therefore, the government initiated an independent learning program to address this issue.

Independent learning, which is expected to improve the level of Indonesian education, has turned out to cause pros and cons and has received strong opposition from various groups. The Education and Instructors Association (P2G) believes that autonomous learning objectives are not suitable for addressing the actual problems faced by schools, instructors, and the overall quality of education. The first issue that requires attention is the quality of the primary education infrastructure.

During the 2019-2020 school year, more than 70 percent of classrooms were in mild, moderate, or severe disrepair. Disapproval was also expressed because self-directed learning was not implemented systematically and was considered a pilot program. Although ranked first among other programs, the evaluation aspect, which is the final stage of the learning process, ignores essential issues. Based on BPS statistics in 2023, classrooms in primary school education were moderately damaged at 44.74% and severely injured at 8.70%. Meanwhile, 1.73% need more water. In addition, 18.6% did not have toilet facilities (Rakyat, 2023).

The data above shows that the current state of education is still quite far from the expected level. The obstacles faced by education in Indonesia are also faced by Islamic education. Exploring the application of Fazlur Rahman's educational paradigm and the Indonesian government's autonomous learning policy is an exciting attempt to overcome the challenges facing Islamic education.

I was referring to research conducted by Lakhaqul Huda in 2019 titled "The Concept of Islamic Education Renewal (Study of Fazlur Rahman's Thought)". The research undertaken by Huda explains the concepts of Fazlur Rahman's renewal in Islamic education, which are then analyzed to solve the problem of Islamic education (Huda, 2019) Devfy also added that Fazlur Rahman's concept of education is more about the correlation of thoughts offered by Fazlur Rahman in the world of Islamic education in the modern era (Kartikasari, 2019) Meanwhile, Ummu Mawaddah has also analyzed the relevance of Fazlur Rahman's Thought to Modern Education in Indonesia. Fazlur Rahman's thought is closely related to the concept of education implemented in the modern era, especially in Indonesia (Mawaddah, 2018)

In addition, Irfan Zidni 2014 raised the theme of the concept of human freedom in Fazlur Rahman's education, getting the result that the idea of Fazlur Rahman's thought in the world of education about the nature of individual freedom in Islamic education (Zidni, 2014). However, research related to Fazlur Rohman associated with the relevance of the independent curriculum in Indonesia does not yet exist, so raising the research question "how is the form of relevance of Fazlur Rahman's thinking in the application of an independent curriculum in Indonesia?", can complement previous research, especially the figure of Fazlur Rahman, can also provide contributions to the world of education, especially in Indonesia.

## **II. METHODS**

This research is a type of library research. This means this research is based on literature reviews, including books, journals, documents, etc. (Amir Hamzah, 2019). The primary sources in the study include books by Fazlur Rahman, namely *Revival And Reform Of Islam*, *Opening the Door to Ijtihad and Islam*. In addition, the data is supported by various books and journals related to the concept of Fazlur Rahman's thought.

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The method in this research is to collect various information related to the research locus (Amir Hamzah, 2019; Cohen dkk., 2018). In this case, the author conducts a literature survey to find, categorize, and analyze the results of the data that has been found to reveal the issues raised.

### **III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **A. Education**

Education includes the primary term "didik," which refers to instilling moral values and intellectual development. Meanwhile, what is meant by "education" in the Big Indonesian Dictionary is a deliberate effort to nurture the cultivation, teaching, and guidance of moral values and intellectual development of the mind (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, 2023).

According to William MC Gucken, as Hermawan cited, education is a process of human growth and development that aims to achieve intellectual, spiritual, physical, and moral excellence (Hermawan, 2012) This can have individual or community goals and ultimately leads to achieving creativity or creating as the ultimate goal. In line with this statement, as quoted by Hidayat, Abdurrahman Saleh argued that education is basically a social effort to enable future generations to achieve the highest possible progress in life (Hidayat, 2019).

#### **B. Education Objectives**

The learning process in education aims to achieve specific goals. Although education and teaching are two different entities, they are essentially interconnected and cannot be separated. Education includes the act of teaching, and in acquiring knowledge, there are certain noble principles that teachers want to instill in students. Education and learning are deliberately structured and implemented through appropriate methods to improve the welfare and fulfillment of human existence, ensuring safety and happiness.

The purpose of education is in line with the goal of human life. Syahidin outlines three main objectives of education: transmission of knowledge, transmission of culture, and transmission of values (Syahidin, 2005). Meanwhile, Ki Hajar Dewantara, as cited by Hidayat, said that the purpose of education is to improve intelligence and moral fiber, as well as physical and spiritual aspects, to achieve a condition of complete fulfillment of life, which is characterized by a harmonious relationship between individuals and individuals, both nature and society (Dewantara, 1977; Hidayat, 2016). Based on the analysis of several figures, it can be understood that the ultimate goal of education is to maximize the child's self by fostering the growth and development of various potentials and characteristics in a balanced and harmonious manner, in line with individual and community life.

#### **C. Education Component**

Components are subordinate systems that contribute to the whole process's coherence. In the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), it is also referred to as an element, which is the main elements that together form a complete unit (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, 2023).

From the above explanation, the educational component plays a vital role in the educational process and significantly influences its growth. As cited by Purwaningsih, PH Combs identified 12 essential elements that must be included in education. These components include main objectives, educators, learners, management, time allocation, teaching materials and curriculum, costs, implementation, research and development, learning resources, facilities, supervision, and technology (Ika Purwaningsih, Oktariani, Linda Hernawati, 2022).

Meanwhile, Noeng Muhadjir only focuses on the fundamental elements of education, which include goals, educational programs (representing values, social expectations, and specific requirements), students, instructors, methodologies, and learning environments (Mutohar, 2013).

#### **D. Independent Learning Curriculum**

The concept of independent learning can be broken down into two fundamental components: independence and learning. In the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), the term "merdeka" means a state of being accessible and unrestricted (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, 2023). Meanwhile, learning refers to a cognitive process in which individual behavior is altered under certain circumstances due to repeated encounters. Dorothy Law Nolte, as cited by Roqib, emphasizes that children acquire knowledge and understanding through their experiences, which shows that they learn from the reality of life (Roqib, 2016).

Based on the above definition, it can be understood that learning freedom refers to educational efforts to create optimal conditions for learning and an environment that allows students to feel free from pressure, comfort, happiness, and enjoyment. This conducive atmosphere facilitates the achievement of learning objectives.

Nadiem Makarim, as quoted by Mulyasa, often refers to Indonesia's education reform as independent learning and emphasizes the importance of giving individuals the freedom to study (Mulyasa, 2022). Education is aligned with the purpose and needs of human existence, including tangible and intangible needs. Paulo Freire argues that humans require autonomy in creative construction and critical inquiry. Such a degree of freedom requires humans to demonstrate the right to choice and accountability (Freire, 2008). Therefore, freedom is an innate and fundamental human need that must be recognized and experienced inside and outside educational institutions.

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The concept of independent learning is rooted in the philosophy of Ki Hajar Dewantara, who advocated that schools function as educational environments where students can freely explore and acquire knowledge (Mulyasa, 2022). Therefore, Ki Hajar Dewantara founded Taman Siswa. Taman Siswa is an emancipatory educational framework designed to facilitate the exchange of challenges experienced by instructors and students, focusing on students. Taman Siswa originated from workshops held on Tuesday Kliwon, with a focus on critiquing colonial education, which was characterized by racial discrimination against indigenous people and lacked a humanistic approach. Taman Siswa aimed to change the colonial approach to education, moving away from the authoritative and punitive school system to a more civic-oriented education.

On the other hand, the teacher's treatment as a second parent of students is the primary concern and significant capital in educating, so Ki Hajar Dewantara formulated the following terms, namely: *Ing ngarsa sung tulada, Ing madya mangun karsa, Tut wuri handayani* (Wiryopranoto, 2017).

### E. Main Principles of Independent Learning Policy

The idea of incorporating independent learning into education policy in Indonesia is well defined and developed and can be applied at both the administrative and operational levels of education. The four policy elements serve as guidelines for teachers and education personnel to effectively organize school independent learning programs. Here are the four new autonomous learning policies:

1. School-based assessments are used instead of national standardized tests, giving teachers more flexibility in evaluating students.
2. The minimum competitive assessment that includes surveys (character, numeracy, and literacy) is replaced by the National Exam.
3. The simplification of the lesson plan system allows teachers to concentrate more on students.
4. The zoning system and new student admissions (PPDB) are enlarged to equalize access to education.

### F. Fazlur Rahman's Education Model

The education model is essential in guiding Muslims towards a new approach to advancing modern Islamic education. This approach addresses the challenges facing Muslims today and the issues in Islamic education. Fazlur Rahman is a visionary thinker offering insightful ideas that have significant value in achieving actual development in Islamic education. The birth of Fazlur Rahman's educational paradigm arises from his profound thoughts about the dichotomy of education and the importance of rejuvenating Islam through education. Fazlur Rahman asserts that all efforts to change Islamic education will always fail because of the contradiction in the education system, namely the separation between Islamic teaching and secular education or the separation of religious knowledge from worldly information (Iqbal, 2015; Usman dkk., 2022).

Fazlur Rahman is concerned about the dichotomous condition of contemporary Islamic education. The issue of dualism has led to a significant gap between religious activity and everyday life, giving rise to the perception that religion is only relevant for the hereafter and irrelevant for worldly affairs. Expanding on the previous explanation, Fazlur Rahman expressed the following:

"The phenomenon of dualism in the education system has an impact on students, namely the emergence of graduates with a split personality, which on the one hand does not have the intellectual skills of modern science and does not have a strong commitment to Islam."

The explanation above underlines Fazlur Rahman's concern about the current state of education, especially in his own country, Pakistan. On the contrary, Fazlur Rahman argues that the changes made by the intellectuals of the past will only produce satisfactory results if there are still divisions in the education system. Therefore, Fazlur Rahman conducted a thorough historical search, resulting in a division of its own, namely a retrospective historical examination to understand intellectualism's origins better. Fazlur Rahman believes that orthodoxy, which focuses on maintaining traditional values, has led to a distorted perception of progressive knowledge. Although this approach was practical, it caused great harm. In other words, the substance of orthodox education and thought is essentially extinct (Bimbo, 2019; Rahman, 1995; Usman dkk., 2022; Zidni, 2014).

The educational reforms discussed earlier were motivated by the complex challenges faced in Islam that hindered intellectual progress, particularly the issue of the dichotomy. This refers to the division between reason and dogma, where reason is often subordinated to doctrine while the teachings of kalam and hadith overshadow philosophy and the rational sciences. Fazlur Rahman identified four factors that led to Islamic philosophy's need for clarity in distinguishing between religious sciences (ulum Syariah), traditional sciences (ulum naqliyah), and rational sciences (ulum aqliyah) (Ikhtono, 2014; Rahman, 1985; Sibawaihi, 2021).

The problem of Islamic intellectual decline stems from the absence of rational science (ulum aqliyah) in Islamic history, as indicated by the four factors above. Muhammad Arkoun argues that the dynamic aspects of the history of Islamic development diminished with the development of dogmatic reasoning (Arkoun, 1996). This was characterized by the widespread belief that the ideas of the early classical scholars were unquestionable and unchallengeable. Hasan Hanafi determined that rational knowledge had not penetrated the collective consciousness of society as profoundly as traditional knowledge and that a combination of conventional and sensible wisdom was needed (Arkoun, 1996). From the lecture, it can be seen that Rahman wants to reveal the

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root causes of the current decline of Islamic thought by examining the origins of Muslim intellectual growth through retrospective analysis. Rahman seeks to restore the importance of rationality by Islamic doctrine, aiming to achieve a harmonious integration between academic knowledge and scripture in the lives of religious believers. He also criticizes the dominance of rigid beliefs that marginalize the function of reason.

Rahman's aim in revitalizing Islamic education is to redefine the authentic concept of Islamic intellectualism, which represents the fundamental essence of Islamic teaching. This is important because adherence to tradition in Islamic history has led to new developments that have hindered the progress of Islam rather than advancing it. Three critical aspects of this view need to be emphasized.

First, Fazlur Rahman's primary emphasis is on something other than technical instruction. However, it should be noted that he recognized the importance of teaching. Fazlur Rahman is very concerned with the core of Islamic education, namely Islamic intellectualism, which initiates a concept for developing authentic Islamic ideas (pure Islam). In line with this, Harun Nasution argues that Islamic education has been swayed by Western trends that emphasize teaching over moral education, even though the fundamental basis of religious education lies in value-based teaching (Muhaimin, 2012).

Meanwhile, Hasan Langgulung argues that studying Islamic education only through the lens of educational institutions, curriculum, and teaching methods, without considering the underlying Islamic ideology, would be a significant oversight (Langgulung, 1992). Islam has its ideology that distinguishes it from other educational ideologies. One must truly understand Islamic education with a deep understanding of this ideology.

He was second, prioritizing an accurate Qur'anic interpretation approach as the focal point of developing authentic Islamic intellectualism. Fazlur Rahman emphasizes that the main focus of Islamic Intellectualism is to read the Quran accurately. Fazlur Rahman noted that the Qur'an in the Islamic faith is a divine revelation revealed directly to the prophet and is considered a comprehensive life guide that answers contemporary challenges (Rahman, 1985). Fazlur Rahman concludes that the Qur'an has a practical and political purpose in addressing real-world difficulties and is not simply a text about divinity, the history of the prophet, and other forms of praise.

On the other hand, Fazlur Rahman also asserts that the Qur'an is a revelation channeled through the thoughts and memories of the prophet as a direct response to the state of society that existed in Arabia at that time, especially the challenges faced by the people of Mecca (Rahman, 1985). The Qur'an has a cohesive essence and requires a comprehensive understanding rather than fragmented or isolated interpretations. Thus, an atomistic approach to the Qur'an gives rise to multiple variations and reinforces and solidifies pre-existing ideas. This phenomenon in the historical tradition represents a new interpretation rather than aiding the understanding of the original text, although the text can provide insightful perspectives.

Third, consider the progress of authentic Islamic intellectualism as a measure of the effectiveness of the Islamic education system. The success of an educational system can be measured by its ability to foster Islamic intellectualism among Muslim graduates. This entails their ability to accurately interpret the Qur'an, extract its meaning, and apply it effectively in their daily lives. If an education system achieves these results, it can be successful according to the standards set by Islam (Qur'an and As-Sunnah). Fazlur Rahman's perspective highlights the development of an authentic Islamic ideology. Related to this issue, Ahmad Syafi'i Maarif emphasized that the Islam being discussed is original Islam, not the version influenced by the history of conflict between sects (Rahman, 1985).

Fazlur Rahman proposed a series of measures to modernize Islamic education, focusing on its key components:

### **1. Reformulating the Objectives of Islamic Education**

The initiation of revitalizing Islamic education can begin with a redefinition of the authentic purpose of Islamic teaching. The current goals of education need to be revised as they only focus on protecting educated individuals from the adverse effects of Western influences. According to Fazlur Rahman, Muslims must formulate strategies that integrate contemporary subjects with traditional Islamic teachings to produce issues that facilitate the advantages of modern technology while eliminating the perceived negative aspects of Western society (Rahman, 1985).

Fazlur Rahman also argues that Muslims will always lack scientific inventiveness until they actively incorporate the teachings of the Qur'an into their lives. In addition, it is necessary to assess the cultural customs and practices of the East and West. These two factors represent the first stage in the search for new knowledge, which is the ultimate goal of Islamic education.

### **2. Reforming the Education System**

Fazlur Rahman criticized the orthodox and Sufi education systems, arguing that they tended to alienate the individual from society. Fazlur Rahman, as quoted by Iqbal, believes that ancient and contemporary education systems need improvement. Although the old school system limited the intelligence of the modern education system, despite offering materialistic teaching, it failed to develop better human qualities. According to him, the primary purpose of education is to mold the individual (Rahman, 1985).

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### **3. Building an Integrative Curriculum**

Fazlur Rahman argues that revitalizing Islam's legacy of intellectual excellence in contemporary society requires an increase in philosophical and scientific subjects in the Islamic education curriculum (Rahman, 1985). The curriculum should be improved by including the disciplines of science, technology, and philosophy under the guidance of Muslim students. According to Abuddin Nata, educational institutions should not only focus on teaching *ulum ad-din* but also include teaching science and technology to answer today's problems (Nata, 2019). To realize this, a curriculum overhaul is needed. It is well understood that the curriculum plays a vital role in improving education, just as schooling in Indonesia often modifies the curriculum.

### **4. Revolutionizing Education Methods**

Fazlur Rahman argues that Islamic education must undergo a paradigm shift from a passive to an active approach, specifically transitioning from memorization to higher levels of understanding and analysis. This revolution would transform teaching structures and processes by emphasizing student engagement in learning and facilitating the development of research-oriented Islamic education. Fazlur Rahman also suggested using learning techniques that alter Qur'anic understanding from a bare reading exercise to a valuable resource that offers practical solutions to contemporary challenges in everyday life (Iqbal, 2015).

### **5. Educator**

An educator's career requires significant accountability, especially in developing a desired group of graduates or outcomes. Educators, as an essential element in education, must be treated very seriously and well-equipped to achieve high-quality educational products. Fazlur Rahman has a unique perspective on educators, believing that finding individuals who have the qualities of being capable, versatile, and innovative Muslims, who can reinterpret traditional concepts within a contemporary linguistic framework to produce practical results, is a challenging task in the present (Masykur, 2019).

### **6. Learners**

The dichotomy of education has significantly impacted students' academic prowess and personal lives, leading Fazlur Rahman to call it a manifestation of split personality. (Iqbal, 2015). Split personality refers to the problem of students needing more sincerity and responsibility in their academic and spiritual dedication to Islam. Such a phenomenon cannot advance Islam. In this case, Fazlur Rahman offers many solutions to overcome this, one of which is to incorporate Western science and intellectualism into the education syllabus so that students can gain proficiency in it (Nata, 2019).

### **7. Advice and Infrastructure**

Fazlur Rahman emphasizes the importance of libraries, as he views them as a fundamental component of education. Fazlur Rahman highlights the construction of Baitul Hikmah, a vital library created by the Abbasid daulah in Bagdad. This library had many manuscripts and books covering a wide range of valuable information. The presence of facilities such as libraries in educational institutions is undeniably essential in increasing the likelihood of academic success (Kartikasari, 2019).

Based on the above explanation, there are several models of education. The first model is the critical education model, which is based on Fazlur Rahman's point of view that emphasizes the need for Muslims, especially those who are educated, to critically evaluate the progress that has occurred in the Islamic community, as well as critically assess the adverse impacts and possible adverse effects of the consequences originating from the Western world.

The second model is the creative education model, which involves extracting and applying ancient teachings from Islamic reference sources such as the Qur'ān and Hadith and other intellectual institutions such as *jihad* and *ijtihad* to adapt to contemporary life creatively. The Qur'ān has significant relevance for the advancement of life.

The third model of education is a model of moral education, especially an Islamic education system based on Islamic ethics derived from the Qur'an. Fazlur Rahman argues that intellectual skills alone are insufficient to develop Islamic culture. Just relying on philosophical thought and creativity without a moral foundation is not enough.

## **G. The Relevance of Fazlur Rahman's Education Concept to the Independent Learning Curriculum**

Fazlur Rahman's educational model includes three basic principles: critical education fosters true Islamic intellectualism by empowering reason. Secondly, creative education seeks to reframe existing knowledge in a contemporary context, making it relevant to current issues. Finally, moral education is aligned with Islamic ethical principles. As Fazlur Rahman's comprehensive perspective on Islamic education shows, all three components are essential and interconnected.

Although rooted in Fazlur Rahman's long-standing educational views, these three learning models retain their basic concepts. In particular, students need to receive training or instruction to become fully developed human beings rather than individuals with fragmented personalities (Iqbal, 2015). It is widely recognized that people have many needs and interests outside of religion, and their pursuit of knowledge and cognitive competence is wider than formal schooling. Instead, society needs to foster an appreciation of all aspects of life and cultivate an awareness that recognizes the inherent appeal of acquiring knowledge. This mindset will facilitate interdisciplinary studies, including the harmonious integration of religion and contemporary science.

Integrative efforts in education do not always have to imitate European or Western education models because the Indonesian education system itself has its educational philosophy by Ki Hajar Dewantara, which can be an exemplary guide and motivation.

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According to Ki Hajar Dewantara, education encompasses a person's thinking, emotions, and will. According to his point of view, the challenge is to find a way to unify the three fundamental aspects of thought, emotion, and intention, which are the most important things (Dewantara, 1977; Ferary, 2021; Wiryopranoto, 2017). These remarks show that Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy firmly upholds holistic individual development, which aligns with Fazlur Rahman's views.

The expectations of Fazlur Rahman's educational concept align with the idea of academic freedom. Fazlur Rahman hopes to realize true Islamic intellectualism, namely Muslim individuals who have intellectual acumen, emotional intelligence, and high awareness of the problems in their environment, all of which are rooted in Islamic teachings. To achieve this goal, Fazlur Rahman tries to convince the general public of the importance of acquiring knowledge and using cognitive abilities to the fullest. This is very relevant to academic freedom, which Minister of Education and Culture Nadiem Makarim describes as freedom of critical thinking and gaining knowledge (Mulyasa, 2022).

Educators must foster a supportive learning environment to cultivate students' curiosity by promoting independent learning. In this paradigm, independent learning should be tailored to students' interests and characteristics. It is essential to transition from a teacher-centered approach to a student-centered one. (Mulyasa, 2022). In this regard, Fazlur Rahman pioneered introducing a new direction in Islamic education, moving away from rote memorization to a more comprehensive system that emphasizes understanding and analysis (Ikhtono, 2014)

The critical education approach allows the intellect to investigate the rational and suprarational aspects comprehensively. In situations where logical reasoning is insufficient, a Muslim should cling to the teachings of the Qur'an and hadith, as demonstrated by the companions of the Prophet. In very exceptional cases, a knowledgeable Muslim can discern the image of Allah SWT in nature and has a deep understanding and relationship with Allah, often known as ma'rifatullah. Endang Saifuddin Anshari, as quoted by Priatna, argues that humans have the cognitive capacity to engage in complex thinking processes that distinguish them as living beings. Thinking is the act of asking questions. Inquiry involves searching for solutions. Seeking answers is synonymous with seeking the truth about God, nature, humans, or the world (Priatna, 2004).

However, the fundamental purpose of Rahman's educational model is to restructure the framework of Islamic education by restoring intellectuality as the primary means of understanding all aspects of knowledge, including exploring the ethical substance of the Qur'an. In this aspect, Rahman's double movement will be effective. One must use intellect to understand the divine intent conveyed through relevant verses and contemporary issues. They must then delve into the historical context of the Qur'an's revelation to see the underlying essence being sought. Finally, they must bring this essence back to the present and juxtapose it with the realities of everyday life. For example, the verse prohibits alcohol because it has the potential to impair cognitive abilities. Upon closer examination of the historical circumstances surrounding the revelation of this verse, it becomes clear that the essence of the Qur'an is to emphasize the need for rationality and logical thinking among its followers. Therefore, any action detrimental to reason in this day and age cannot be justified.

Regarding Fazlur Rahman's goal, the Merdeka Belajar curriculum seeks to achieve the same purpose. It effectively advances education in Indonesia by overcoming all obstacles and concentrating only on administration. Educational interventions that improve cognitive functions will empower individuals to develop self-awareness, engage in critical thinking, perceive external stimuli, and show empathy for their environment. In addition, comprehensive education gives us greater autonomy to achieve goals that benefit society.

Merdeka Belajar is a revolutionary concept that fosters an unlimited and fun educational environment for students and educators (Mulyasa, 2022). The idea of happiness here is more than just pleasure. Ibn Miskawaihi argues that the peak of one's enjoyment lies in spiritual satisfaction (Freire, 2008). Humans need the capacity to experience actual physical and mental happiness, both in this life by having sufficient resources to sustain their lives and in the afterlife. Happiness in the world and the hereafter can be achieved with a comprehensive education that equips learners with adequate knowledge of religion and the world. Reflecting on the concept of education, it was found that independent learning and Fazlur Rahman's views on educational approaches about happiness.

Fazlur Rahman's educational reforms include the application of innovative educational methods in the field of Islamic education. This educational paradigm suggests distinctive human characteristics. Intellectual honesty has originality of thought and authenticity of one's thoughts. Educators should refrain from reprimanding students for expressing views that differ from their own. The lack of diversity of ideas and the absence of structured teaching methods in the classroom significantly hinder children's creative development and limit their critical thinking ability.

Rahman's view of the current creative education model emphasizes the need to guide educational stakeholders to prioritize research as an integral component of student learning. This academic research initiative aims to foster students' direct understanding of the world through their cognitive processes. Thus enabling students to generate new ideas based on their knowledge creatively. In addition, encouraging student learning can lead to the development of innovative graduates. The responsibility of educators, in this case in the concept of independent learning, is to facilitate the creation of innovative educational experiences that encourage the development of student creativity.

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The independent learning curriculum allows free learning and independence for students and educators in the classroom to foster an environment that encourages creativity, innovation, and fun learning, often known as independent learning. The purpose of independent learning is to enable humans who can produce innovative and open-minded ideas. This is closely related to the educational framework provided by Fazlur Rahman.

Another concept offered by Fazlur Rahman introduces the idea of moral education. Specifically, this involves elevating the Qur'an to the position of the most authoritative source of guidance for individuals and viewing the Prophet Muhammad as an exemplary human being, leader, and education model. This is in line with the words of Allah SWT in the Qur'an Surah Ali Imran verse 159.

Arkoun argues that establishing an orthodoxy that effectively maintained the separation of education resulted from a partnership between the state and the clerics (Arkoun, 1996). The above principle also applies to Fazlur Rahman's educational framework. Gunawan Ikhtiono assesses that the educational reform in the field of Islamic education carried out by Rahman is still in its early stages and still needs to be completed (Ikhtiono, 2014). Therefore, it is essential for specialists, practitioners, policymakers in education, and all members of society involved in schooling to seek reforms to the system and curriculum actively.

The explanation of the concept of moral education is very relevant to the current context of independent learning, where the government, together with other stakeholders such as educators, school managers, supervisors, parents, and the wider community, share the same responsibility in realizing this form of emancipatory learning (Mulyasa, 2022). The Minister of Education and Culture has given autonomy to schools to design their local education programs, free from constant direction from the central government. One of the tasks is to create a curriculum development framework for use in the classroom (Masykur, 2019). Educators are essential in these four components, especially in the classroom environment. Merdeka Belajar aims to foster strong bonds with teachers and policy leaders while fostering high trust in the school. Merdeka Belajar actively seeks contributions from all stakeholders and applies the idea of *gotong royong* in education to encourage the development of quality education.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Fazlur Rahman's concept of education has three different models: critical education, creative education, and morality education. These three principles can serve as guidelines for the modernization of Islamic education. Doing this will effectively address the ongoing challenges in Islamic education, including setting current and future educational goals. Of course, realizing proper Islamic education that is in line with human potential or *fitrah* as caliphs on earth for achieving *rahmatan lil 'alamin* is not a task that can be completed efficiently and quickly.

Fazlur Rahman's concept of education is relevant to independent learning. The significance of both educational ideas comes from the same basic concepts and goals, namely to truly improve human knowledge through education, realize free education with full responsibility, and realize physical and mental happiness.

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