Religion and Modernization in The Perspective of Islamic Educational Institutions (A Study on Al-Azhar Karanganyar Islamic Boarding School)

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Volume: 3	This research aims to examine the modernization carried out by Al-Azhar Foundation in terms of Islamic education. Al-Azhar Foundation established Al-Azhar International Islamic Boarding School (IIBS) with international standards for its curriculum, which is also based on modern Islamic boarding schools. The technique used in this research is hermeneutics, in which the author explains the meaning and purpose of the text. This research is significant as Al-Azhar is not only related to the national education system, but also an inseparable entity in the history of Islamic education in Indonesia. Al-Azhar is an Islamic school aligned with the Islamic boarding school (pesantren) and madrasa system, considered national treasures of Islamic education. Based on this purpose, this research analyzes the modernization of al-Azhar in terms of Islamic education from two angles; (1) The subject of Islamic education in al-Azhar and its curriculum structure. This part is necessary to reveal the ideology inherited through the curriculum; and (2) Internationalizing al-Azhar. This angle is useful as an explanation of the educational values embraced by al-Azhar.
KEYWORD	
Modernization; Islamic Education, Pesantren	

1. Introduction

Umar in his research states that Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are the oldest Islamic educational institutions (Bukhory, 2013). This is reinforced by Salman in his research that Indonesia is the largest Muslim population country and has so many Islamic educational institutions from elementary to university levels (Harun, 2014). Because the existence of educational institutions in society is a process of diffusion of elements, values and religious culture of society (Hefner, 2017), and pesantren is one of the characteristics of popular education, there is a close relationship between educational institutions and society (Schugurensky, 2017). Florian in his research also states that pesantren as Islamic educational institutions accommodate the interests of the community and contribute to community empowerment even on a modern scale (Pohl, 2016). Furthermore, the reformists established pesantren as an answer to the challenges of colonialism and Christianization (Solichin, 2011).

Based on data from the Directorate of Early Childhood Education and Pesantren from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, there are 39,271 pesantren located throughout Indonesia in 2024 (Kementrian Agama, 2024). This shows that pesantren is currently growing rapidly throughout Indonesia. Recently, Islamic boarding schools have opened up by organizing a classical system in their education system. The emergence of new programs with modern and formal approaches such as madrasas, schools, and even universities is the impact of modernity in the changing era (Setyawan, 2019). On the other hand, this

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modernity abandons some of the traditions of pesantren, such as simple lifestyle (Arifin, 2012). However, according to Basri, the modernization of pesantren provides a new picture that pesantren is not always considered traditional with simplicity (Basri, 2017), not only strengthening religion which is only a matter of the afterlife but also has an interest in this world (Khoiruddin, 2018).

The emergence of new programs with modern and formal approaches such as integrated madrasas, integrated schools, and even universities is the impact of the emergence of modernity in today's development. On the other hand, this modernity leaves some of the traditions of pesantren, such as simple lifestyle (Arifin, 2012). According to Alwi, the development of Islamic boarding schools is a manifestation of the community's need for an alternative education system. The existence of pesantren is not only as an educational institution, but also as an Islamic propagation and social religious institution (Alwi, 2013). This flexibility makes pesantren a unique institution because it is able to follow continuity and change as a manifestation of the needs of society and globalization (Nashrullah et al., 2023). The development of pesantren in responding to the demands of globalization resulted in changes in its format, form of orientation and educational methods (Astuti, 2019). Although the change is significant, it is still conducted only on the outer side, while aspects of tradition, ideology and religious values are still preserved (Astuti, 2019). But on the other hand, the actualization of modernism in pesantren education institutions is a necessity that needs to be considered in order to answer a global challenge (Setyawan, 2019).

The renewal in the form of learning systems and luxurious facilities provided (Nisak, 2023) is a necessity that needs to be implemented. The model of pesantren with luxurious facilities that are far from the impression of slums, shows a new face or even a new typology in the world of pesantren that needs to be studied further, for the Muslim middle class, it is a representative place to leave their children in pesantren and also in this case the parents' understanding and views regarding the form of good educational services become an indicator in choosing schools as an educational environment for children (Hasanah et al., 2022). In which pesantren plays a new role to be able to answer the challenges of modernization by transforming Islamic education while still holding strong to the principles, characteristics and fundamental values of pesantren, so as not to change the original goals of establishing pesantren in Indonesia (Pasi et al., 2020).

One of the historical and growing religious institutions is the Al-Azhar Islamic Boarding School Foundation, which continues to play an important role in strengthening religious understanding and Islamic education in Indonesia (LI, 2023). This educational foundation was established more than half a century ago and continues to evolve with the times (Islam, 2024). During that time, the Foundation did not have an International Boarding School in Indonesia, and then in early 2021, Al Azhar International Islamic Boarding School was launched, a modern boarding school with international standards at the junior and senior high school levels was born in Indonesia to provide solutions for parents in finding the best education for their children (Al-Azhar, 2024).

The Al-Azhar International Islamic Boarding School (IIBS) located in Karanganyar has luxurious facilities such as hotels, for its classes Al Azhar International Islamic Boarding School implements learning with gadgets. This aims to optimize the use of modern technology-based curriculum and learning media (Meidinata, n.d.). The presence of such pesantren provides an example of how pesantren, as Islamic educational institutions, have changed their management practices in response to the rise of the Muslim middle class in Indonesia. The rise of this segment of society has resulted in changes in people's Islamic education preferences, and triggered the development of new forms of Islamic education (Azizah & Machali, 2018).

2. Literature Review

The discourse on religion and modernization (Bruce, 1996, p. 9) in Sociology has been conducted since the 18th century as first practiced by Augus Comte. Afterwards, Durkheim, Weber, Marx and so on followed. The discussion of religion in the social context has again emerged as a discourse of interest in the last two decades before the 21st century millennium. In fact, spirituality as part of the religious aspect shows a positive trend. This fact in turn encourages sociologists to revisit the conclusions of previous generations in analyzing the relationship between the existence of religion and modernization.

The work of classic modern sociologists as a sample is Weber's. He argues that religion is a source of ideas and practices that transcend the immanent societal world so that it can have an effect on the societal world independently and cannot be predicted. However, he also believes that religion will gradually lose social significance as a consequence of the rationalization of modern social and economic organizations (Weber, 1971, p. 22). In the author's opinion, one of the social

organizations is educational institutions. The truth of Weber's thesis in the context of educational institutions, for example, has not included the subject of religion in the curriculum structure. Thus, the values that replace religion in the social context are the findings in the field of Sociology.

The next sample is Marx. He considers religion as a social product and agent of social order in premodern society. Marx's critical analysis of religion can be studied in David Mc. Clellan's book entitled *Marxism and Religion* (Clellan, 1987, p. 80). Through such literature, it is known that Marx believes that the main function of religion in producing order is not born from a commitment to shared social ideals, but rather a justification for the rule of injustice and violence that is extremely evil from the feudal against the peasants, or from the capitalists against the working class. Religion becomes a means of obscuring the social inequalities that occur in society and uses the name of God's rules to legitimize these conditions. As a result, religion becomes addictive that anesthetizes the people in an atmosphere of oppression with promises of rewards, happiness in the afterlife, and provides joyful compensation for the poor fate they experience through religious rites (Northcott, 1999, p. 198). Marx's analysis is understandable because he viewed religion as a socio-cultural phenomenon.

The above sociologists represent the thesis of the declining significance of religion in the transformation of society from traditional to modern. There are still a number of other contemporary modern sociologists who also support them such as Bryan Wilson, Peter Berger, David Martin and Steve Bruce. Their views are collected in a work entitled *Religion and Modernization: Sociologists and Historians Debate the Secularization Thesis* (Bruce, 1996). A number of the names above have shown extraordinary sincerity of work, to the extent that the thesis seems to have obtained an empirical foundation that is undeniable and universally applicable.

Not all contemporary sociology of religion researchers agree with the foregoing thesis. The first researcher to suggest the return of religion to the stage of human history is Danil Bell (Bell, 1980). A group that rejects the above thesis puts forward a counterthesis stating that modernization has not caused the death of religion but rather given rise to new, more individualized or mystical forms of religion that still provide meaning and identity information in individual and group consciousness. After Bell, Jose Casanova supports Bell's opinion by presenting his research that religion has experienced a revival in various parts of the world over the past 30 years (Cassanova, 1994, pp. 28, 65–66).

In the context of Indonesia, research results and articles on the issue of religious education and modernization can refer to the work of Azyumardi Azra. In one of the articles he writes that today an increasing number of people are interested in looking again at religions and spiritual teachings. Many people feel that they need something strongly to hold on to. This is in response to something deviant that occurs in modern society. It is a side effect of the rapid changes in all aspects of life. Thus, it is not surprising that all religious and spiritual teachings are reviving in various ways (Azra, 2008, p. 85). He further suggests that Islamic Higher Education Institutions (*Pendidikan Tinggi Islam* / PTI) should not be too worried about their future. For this reason, PTI needs to improve the system and content of Islamic education and develop certain aspects to fulfill the needs of the modern world and be able to make a better contribution to humanity. Thus, Azyumardi Azra's observations above indirectly contradict the thesis of some early generation sociologists.

The findings of sociologists as explained above have simply illustrated two views and attitudes of the world community about religious life in the modern era. Both use data that reinforces the theoretical framework of the thesis being built. Both also have ideological bias tendencies that cannot be avoided. The first group of researchers, who support the theory; religion lost its controlling role in all areas of life in the modern era, tend to maintain the idea of separating the role of religion from the state because of negative experiences that befell European scholars before the renaissance and the victory of rationalism and matrialism. The second group of researchers, who support the idea of the revival of religion in the modern era, tend to be nostalgic for the romanticism of the classical era which is considered a peaceful, orderly era compared to the negative effects of the modern world which is overly dominant (matrialism, hedonism, and free sex). So it can be simply concluded that the two views above represent a "struggle" between anti-religious and anti-secularization ideologies that have occurred until now or to borrow Marsden's opinion, there has been a story of the reassignment of the religious and the secular in the emerging modern society (Soetadi, 1996, pp. 8–9).

The above tendency indicates that the process of secularization and religious tradition in a society is not an evolutionary linear process as described by Comte and Durkheim. This is because in an anthropological perspective, it is often said that new elements (modernization) when entering a society are not in a cultural vacuum. Therefore, the dynamic that appears is an interaction which continues to process, attract and influence each other. Thus, the resulting model of society will be

determined by the creative efforts of the community and its ability to manage and produce policies that are most appropriate to the cultural context and its kind.

3. Methodology

This research is qualitative, so the researchers are the key instruments, both in data collection and data analysis (Aminuddin, 1990, pp. 15–16). In the process of data collection, this research is mostly based on the review of documentation (K.D, 1982; Soehartono, 2008, p. 71), which consists of primary and secondary sources. The technique used in this research is the hermeneutic technique (Ricoeur & Blamey, 2008, p. 51; Sumaryono, 1999, p. 107; Wijaya, 2009, p. 87) developed by Hans-Goerg Gadamer (1900-2002). Gadamer explains that if someone aims to understand a text, then that person must have a prejudice first. The prejudice comes from the knowledge possessed by the person who wants to understand the text. When the person understands the text, there is a dialogue between the author's intention and the reader's prejudice in the context they live in (Gadamer, 2004, p. 278). This dialectic is what Gadamer describes as producing *a fusion of horizons* (Heitink & Hartono, 1999, p. 139; Lubis, 2004, pp. 134–135). For him, human beings have the ability to do so because we have traditions. While tradition is an integral part of human experience, so there will be no meaningful experience without reference to a tradition (Gadamer, 2004, p. 251).

4. Results and Discussion
4.1 Al-Azhar IIBS and Its Curriculum Structure

Mastuhu states that there has been a tendency in East Java for some Islamic boarding schools to only provide pesantren complete with dormitories and kiaiKiyai, while the students study formally in madrasas, public schools, and universities outside the pesantren (Mastuhu, 1994, p. 142). This change, which seems to be antithetical to the development of pesantren in general, can be viewed from two perspectives; the change can mean passive and conventional or secretly establishing relationships with surrounding general education institutions in an effort to improve both general and religious knowledge. In summary, pesantren institutions have undergone changes in their forms ranging from surau (langgar) or mosques, dormitories (pondok), madrasas, public schools, universities, and institutions that develop internal potential and serve the community. However, the change in the form of the new institution does not erase the old institutional form, so that this renewal is only an addition or development, not a total change (deconstruction).

In the current industrial era 5.0, the mastery of science and technology is very important. People are required to be competitive, able to have excellent quality in services, goods and capital investment, the ability to master communication channels, language skills, business skills and digital literacy (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam Kementerian Agama, 2021, p. 5). Fadhilla in his research even states that the era of the industrial revolution 5.0 will require people to be able to solve various problems or social dynamics by utilizing technology (Fadhilla, 2023).

These demands must be prepared by improving the quality of the nation so that it can make various changes and innovations. This is the responsibility of education (Astuti, 2019). Pesantren has a new role to be able to answer the challenges of modernization by transforming Islamic education while still holding strong principles, characteristics and fundamental values of pesantren (Pasi et al., 2020), so as not to change the strong purpose of establishing pesantren in Indonesia. Pesantren Al-Azhar International Islamic Boarding School (AAIIBS) Karanganyar is under the supervision of the Al Azhar Islamic Boarding School Foundation which is a modern and leading Islamic education and da'wah institution in educating the nation's life in order to form an Indonesian society that has morality, knowledge, faith, and piety. This school has junior and senior high school levels and is located at Jl. Raya Solo-Tawangmangu, Salam, Karangpandan, Karanganyar (Wiyatasari et al., 2022, pp. 4215–4230). The school has a mission "to become an international standard educational institution that integrates the Qur'an, manners, and science and technology". As well as having a mission to create *hufazh* and instill *adab* values towards comprehensive Islam, to raise Muslim scholars who have *kaffah* personalities, have the soul of leaders and are globally competitive, and embody the information technology-based pesantren education system (*Visi Dan Misi AAIIBS*, n.d.).

The dormitory facilities at al-Azhar IIBS are quite fancy as a hotel. This can be seen from the modern hotel-like interior. One room in the dormitory is occupied by a maximum of six children with one bathroom. Although filled with six children, each child will get their own exclusive and modern bed and study table (Meidinata, n.d.). In addition, this school has health support facilities in the form of a School Health Unit (*Unit Kesehatan Sekolah* / UKS) which is

accompanied by doctors and nurses on a regular basis. There is also a nutritionist who can supervise the food intake of the students and ensure the food intake is *halalan thayyiban* (*Fasilitas AAIIBS*, 2023).

In addition to the above facilities, there are several other adequate and quite luxurious facilities such as Al-Fatih mosque, parents corner, Islamic extracurricular activities such as horse riding, archery and swimming, and learning to use gadget technology. The registration fee for the high school level as quoted from Haniya for the 2022-2023 academic year is IDR 63 million for construction and development *infaq* (including the first year free annual fee); then for the second year's annual fee of IDR 13.5 million/year. Tuition fees (SPP) are IDR 3.5 million/month and boarding fees are IDR 4.5 million/month (Haniya, 2021). This boarding fee is used for food and snacks for the students, laundry, *halaqah tahfizh*, *musrif* and *musrifah* assistants, security, cleanliness, and Super *QC Activity Boarding* (Biayapesantren, 2023).

According to the Governor of Central Java, Ganjar Pranowo, during his visit, he expressed his admiration for the al-Azhar IIBS school. He stated that the school with students from all over Indonesia and even from abroad, namely Malaysia and India, is modernly packaged and utilizes excellent ICT, so it is expected that it can raise great generations (Official, 2021). Millennial Ustadz Felix Siauw and Irfan Hakim who are famous Indonesian celebrities as well as parents of students also argue that in this school children are taught good manners and are also able to get closer to Allah and bring children closer to obeying Allah (Official, 2022).

The curriculum used by al-Azhar IIBS school uses the Cambridge/IB curriculum which can lead graduates to higher international education. The Cambridge curriculum consists of various subjects and provides flexibility to schools in how to implement it. It supports schools in developing a curriculum that fits their context, culture and ethos, and that is adaptable to the needs of their students (Assessment Internatinal Education, 2023).

Al-Azhar IIBS has four core competencies and two optional competencies. Four competencies are compulsory while the other two are optional according to students' interests and talents. The four mandatory competencies are: (1). *Qur'anic* Learning which includes *Tahsin, Tafsir and Tahfizh*; (2). Professional Program, a professional introduction program that aims to provide direction and future life orientation for students, this program is accompanied by successful Muslims in their fields; (3). Ulama' Program, a program to produce scholars supported by active and passive Arabic. Studying popular books on *aqidah, fiqh, sirah, tsaqofah Islamiyah*, and so on. This program is directly mentored by *masyaikhs* from the Middle East, (4). Courtesy Oriented, a lesson developed from Islamic manners and made in a programmed and sustainable manner in the form of an *adab* curriculum, including: learning, practice, and reflection on the results of *adab* practice. The implementation of the program is accompanied by *ustadz* in the form of *halaqah*. This program is designed by Professors in the field of Islamic Psychology, (5). Scientist Program, a program to produce professional Muslim scientists who are equipped with a good understanding of Islam, uphold the *Qur'an* and adab both in the exact and social fields. This program is assisted by Muslim Scientists (Professors, Doctors, and Masters) both in the field of exact sciences and social sciences, and (6). Entrepreneur Program, which is a program to produce professional Muslim entrepreneurs supported by a good understanding of Islam, underlying their business with the laws of the Qur'an and managing it with noble *adab*. The program will be assisted by energetic and inspiring millennial Muslim entrepreneurs (*Program Unggulan AAIIBS*, n.d.).

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that al-Azhar IIBS is able to accommodate the demands these days. With the utilization of technology in its learning, it is relevant to the current industrial era 5.0, where mastery of technology is needed in society. In addition, education that goes international can be reached with pesantren-based education. The international curriculum applied does not eliminate the pesantren curriculum. Parents no longer need to worry about sending their children to pesantren-based schools because in pesantren all the desires and needs of the era can be fulfilled. Children are not only civilized, pious but also professional in their respective fields.

4.2 Al-Azhar and International School Orientation

The discussion of educational orientation in an international school environment in Zamroni's view refers to four components. First, how the school views the status of students; second, how the role of teachers in the education and learning process; third, what teaching materials are provided; and fourth, how education management is carried out. Zamroni states that the orientation of a nation's education will determine how educational practices take place and can be used as material in predicting the quality of their graduates (Zamroni, 2000, p. 35). In line with that statement, the description in this sub-chapter will compare the educational orientation of al-Azhar IIBS with international schools. The

international schools referred to in this research are Jakarta International School (JIS) and British International School (BIS) - The various information obtained from the two schools came from their web site services. Both have met international standards as evidenced by the use of international curriculum and accreditation obtained (JIS & BIS using IB curriculum standards). Starting from the orientation of each, the characteristics of the students who are born, personal leaders or followers, will be obtained.

The four indicators mentioned above can be conceptually broken down into two poles. In the learner component, there are two poles between the learner's status as an object and the status as a learning subject. In the teacher component, there are two poles between the teacher as the center of information and as a learning facilitator. In the material component, there are two poles between content-based and problem-solving-based materials. In the management component, there are two poles of the model between centralization and decentralization of management. The range of each pole becomes the author's analytical tool to reveal the educational orientation of Al-Azhar and related international schools.

JIS and BIS are relatively similar in how they view their learners in providing education. For JIS, their learners are treated as adults. Therefore, the four treatments that are expected to emerge in learners are; firstly, educated to work independently, explore (inquiry) knowledge and develop skills to reach their full potential and practice a respectful learning attitude. Second, to acquire an international outlook based on commitment as a global citizen, having a sensitivity that leads to appreciation of cultures in the world including Indonesia. Third, having respect for self, others, school and the environment. Fourth, having a personality with a desire to serve others, the ability to act and accept responsibility for personal choices and commit to maintaining a balance between physical and emotional health.

JIS's educational system creates a multicultural environment that fosters a tradition that goes beyond being tolerant of others. Starting from the tradition of being open to other people and their thoughts, JIS students learn to recognize, respect, and celebrate differences. These descriptions strongly emphasize JIS's image as a democratic educational institution, where learners are seen as assets in the world that must be prioritized so that they can view the world and life democratically and optimistically. These views present learners as more subject-oriented learners.

Al-Azhar IIBS has its own perspective in responding to differences between learners. For differences in the context of religion, Al-Azhar IIBS views it firmly that "for you your religion, for me my religion" (*Interview*, 2023). Therefore, religious education to students emphasizes introducing the depth of Islamic teachings. Even more specifically, it is a Sunni school with a modernist religious ideology. Al-Azhar IIBS understands that students in the context of religious understanding still need guidance and direction. They still need a distinct identity color as a social backing. Learners cannot be left free to choose the source of truth from religion. Al-Azhar IIBS chooses to avoid religious understanding that can trigger polemics (*Interview*, 2023). Some other opinions reinforce that. At al-Azhar IIBS, students are less introduced to the diversity of religious understanding in Islam. In fact, students are still mostly charged with memorization rather than encouraging the ability to understand and analyze in the delivery of religious lessons (*Interview*, 2023). The fragments of information above may not be enough to represent the whole school's view of treating students. However, it is enough to indicate that in the process of starting an international standard school, there are still traces that illustrate Al-Azhar IIBS's understanding of students who are more oriented as learning objects.

On the teacher component, JIS shapes them to provide a variety of learning methods that respect learners' learning styles and emphasize the importance of lifelong learning skills, creating a healthy climate and a balanced environment. The researchers were unable to directly observe how their teachers acted in the classroom. However, the researchers did have the experience of directly observing the learning process at the High School. The class uses a moving class system. One class contains 20 (twenty) students and is facilitated by two teachers. The researchers witnessed that learning was no longer centered on desks. The desks were still there, but they did not fill the classroom. In it, students can freely choose the learning position that best suits their learning style. The teacher's presence at that time seemed more as a facilitator - moderator - learning motivator. At the beginning of the session, they agreed with the learners on the learning activities that they would do for 30 minutes. The lesson was civics. After that session finished, learners went to religious studies. At that time, learners were invited to their respective learning classes according to their religion. The researchers followed the Muslims into the Islamic Corner. When entering the class, they were greeted with music from Raihan by two teachers who were in it using *rebana* instruments (*Observation*, 2023). The learning process was full of excitement.

The appearance of teachers in JIS and High Scope School does not look much different. This assumption can at least be analyzed from their similar learning paradigm that teachers are the learning facilities in schools. Thus, it can be understood that both schools have an orientation that views students as the center of learning, while teachers understand, listen, appreciate and create a learning environment for students rather than lecturing, indoctrinating and dominating learning; students.

Al-Azhar IIBS has a number of teachers who, although not forming a moving class, do not mean that Al-Azhar IIBS does not recognize learning that places the teacher as a learning facilitator. This seems to have been and continues to be cultured in the Al-Azhar IIBS environment. The fact that can be used as the basis of the statement, among others, can refer to the variety of learning methods used by their teachers. Moreover, at this time, al-Azhar IIBS facilitates students with an internet network that can help students explore learning resources. In fact, it is revealed from an interview with a teacher that he once used a learner as a source of knowledge to explain the teachings of other religions in the classroom (*Interview*, 2023). This was conducted due to the learner's experience of attending an institution run by non-Islamic religious adherents and he found that he had to follow the religious teachings of the school system.

The findings in the two paragraphs above make it clear to the author that al-Azhar IIBS has an awarness of the development of the teaching paradigm. This confirms that the orientation of the teacher's attitude is leading to the acculturation of a new figure as a facilitator and motivator, although it can still be traced the existence of old orientation (teacher as the ultimate source of knowledge). Along with the development of schools that have begun to open up to global education, it is very possible that this orientation is getting stronger.

The analysis of orientation covering two dimensions; teachers and students in the paragraphs above shows that students who are born from a humanist-oriented education system will be more likely to create a generation with personality as a leader. The personality as a leader means the growth of independent mental attitudes, creative and critical thinking, responsibility, tolerance and democracy, and openness to cooperation. As a consequence of this orientation, the perspective that views students as objects and teachers as a personal source of truth is starting to be abandoned in the education system.

4.3 Al-Azhar and Middle Class Muslims

The modernization of Islamic education since the early 20th century and up to the period of development is identified as the contribution of middle-class Muslims (Jabali & Jamhari, 2002). They were generally the main actors driving change in Islamic education (Ricklefs, 1993). Their privilege as descendants of aristocrats meant that they had first access to education. They had the opportunity to receive education from elementary, high school to university levels - borrowing Gella's analysis - they were the educated generation who were influenced by the Western ideas and knowledge they absorbed (Gella, 1976, pp. 13–20). The search for an identity or allegiance to the roots of identity had led them to cultural actions to empower Islamic educational institutions.

In the early 21st century until now, Islamic education is faced with a reality where science and technology are developing rapidly. In addition, the revolution in the field of transportation and information has opened up more intense relationships from various nations and countries because the problem of distance and time has been successfully controlled effectively and efficiently. This development has also opened the awareness of all Islamic education providers that the qualifications of the education system are still far behind the dynamics of education from European and American countries. The results of international surveys confirm that the quality of Indonesian education where Islamic education is also in it, is still in a pitiful position.

At Al-Azhar IIBS, it appears that the modernization carried out is initiated by the Muslim middle class that emerged because of good relations with the bureaucratic state administrators. The middle class Muslims as the motor of the growth of Islamic schools have partly lived and have experience living with Western culture, especially for their studies (Ropi, 2006, p. 252). This fact explains that they are not against the wave of modernity coming from the West, but they remain critical of the tendency of excesses of Western culture that is not in accordance with the spirit of Islam such as consumptive lifestyles, hedonism, promiscuity and secularization.

The abstraction of the existence of middle-class Muslims who are behind the scenes in every emergence of Islamic school modernization represents at least three thoughts as a response or awareness of understanding the reality around

them. First, the middle class Muslims who view that the existence of pesantren and madrassas is not sufficient to produce alumni who master science and technology. Furthermore, awareness of the underdevelopment of Islamic educational institutions in supplying human resources for the modernization / development process in Indonesia. Finally, the awareness to "save" the aqidah of the people. This means that Muslims who want to get quality education do not need to send their children to Christian schools, because Islamic schools are available to provide quality needs.

Second, middle-class Muslims who view the importance of returning to the essence of Islam. Their social status is due to opportunities or scholarships to study at renowned universities in and outside the country in the field of science. There, they gain awareness of the importance of returning to the essence of Islam even though it is due to the process of learning religion by autodidact and instant. Hence, with their mastery of science and technology and Islamic spirit, they believe that Muslims are capable of living a modern life without being affected by the negative access it brings, such as the tendency of a matrealistic and secular lifestyle.

Third, middle-class Muslims who are rooted in the santri tradition. During the New Order era, they also had the opportunity to receive advanced education, especially in the fields of social sciences and humanities. This group presents the view that interaction between cultures and civilizations is a necessity. As a result, this group has grown with views that are inclusive, pluralist, democratic and accommodate multiculturalism.

The portrait of marginalization as mentioned above is understood to be socially and politically unfavorable for the existence of Muslims in Indonesia, which is the majority in quantity. It also indicates that Islamic education products are unable to respond to the current modernization. The challenges of this era have encouraged the middle class Muslims to - in the language of economics - diversify new products of Islamic education called Islamic schools. This new product is not completely separate from the strengths of two previous institutions (pesantren and madrasah).

They still see positively that the two previous product variants have very effective strengths in fostering morals and religious models that can be applied to students. In fact, in their view, these advantages are good capital in counteracting the side excesses brought by the process of modernization such as consumptive, hedonistic, promiscuity and secular lifestyles. However, the trend of modernization that requires mastery of science and technology has yet to be adequately addressed. Finally, Islamic schools are present as a representation of the people specializing in excellence (add value) in terms of mastering science and technology besides good ahlak, morals and religious attitudes. Slowly but surely this innovation is expected to have a social and political influence in society, so that the majority quantity with the characteristics of a religious society still plays a meaningful role and color in the dynamics of the nation's modernization.

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that the middle class Muslims have contributed to the modernization of Islamic education. The modernization of Al-Azhar IIBS as a representation of Islamic schools in Indonesia by pioneering international standard status is useful as a new attraction for Muslim students living in urban areas.

5. Conclusion

The socio-economic context, technological and industrial advances have affected the way Muslims express their religiosity. Islamic educational institutions, in this case Al-Azhar IIBS, also adapts to these changes, especially in readiness to face the industrial era 5.0. The use of gadgets, the curriculum used also combines the national and international curriculum. Yet, it does not forget the pesantren curriculum. Pesantren Al-Azhar IIBS provides an example of how pesantren, as Islamic educational institutions, have changed their management practices in response to the rise of middle-class Muslims in Indonesia. The rise of this societal segment has resulted in changes in people's Islamic education preferences, and triggered the development of new forms of Islamic education. It becomes an option in choosing an Islamic education institution with national and international standard education curriculum coverage that can be used to compete in the professional world while teaching religion to students.

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