

Reforming Islamic Education Management from Fazlur Rahman's Perspective: A Contextual Approach to Curriculum and Methods

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ABSTRACT

Reforming Islamic Education Management through Fazlur Rahman's perspective is not only theoretical but also offers practical approaches that can be adapted by Islamic educational institutions. This study aims to examine the thoughts of Fazlur Rahman in the context of reforming Islamic education management, particularly in terms of curriculum and teaching methods. Fazlur Rahman is known as a modern Islamic thinker who emphasized the importance of a contextual approach in understanding Islamic teachings, including in the field of education. Through a qualitative approach with a literature study, this research explores the key concepts offered by Fazlur Rahman, such as double movement, the integration of revelation and reason, and the importance of social ethics in the educational process. The study's findings indicate that the reform of Islamic education management from Fazlur Rahman's perspective is a strategic effort to build a contextual, responsive, and relevant Islamic education system in line with the dynamics of the times. Fazlur Rahman strongly criticized the traditional Islamic education system, which he saw as textual and formalistic, arguing that such an approach has distanced education from its transformative goals. One of Rahman's major contributions is his emphasis on the integration of Islamic values and social reality in curriculum development. By promoting the double movement approach, Rahman offers a methodological framework for developing a curriculum that is not only text-based but also capable of addressing the actual challenges of the community's life. According to Rahman, the ideal curriculum is one that unites the dimensions of revelation and rationality, spirituality and knowledge, as well as the individual and society. Fazlur Rahman advocates for the transformation of the Islamic education curriculum so that it is not merely dogmatic, but capable of responding to the needs of the times and the challenges of modern society. Teaching methods, according to Fazlur Rahman, must be dialogical, critical, and based on a contextual understanding of the Qur'an and social reality. The implications of this thinking point to the need for a dynamic, adaptive, and orientation-focused Islamic education management system that aims to shape individuals who are both religious and rational.

Keywords: *Fazlur Rahman; Islamic education management; curriculum; reform; contextual approach*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education plays a strategic role in shaping the character, spirituality, and intellectuality of the ummah. Since the classical era, Islamic education has given rise to civilizations and prominent figures who have made significant contributions to the advancement of knowledge and social development (Primarni, 2016). "In contemporary reality, however, Islamic education faces major challenges in the form of methodological stagnation, weak curriculum relevance, and the dominance of traditional approaches that are less adaptive to the developments of the times. One of the main problems in the Islamic education system is curriculum management, which is often dogmatic, memorization-oriented, and lacks connection to the practical aspects of life.

Curricula are frequently designed without considering the social context of the students or the evolving needs of the global community. As a result, the educational output often fails to respond effectively to the real challenges faced by the ummah. On the other hand, the teaching methods used in many Islamic educational institutions remain one-directional, authoritarian, and provide limited space for critical thinking and discussion. Yet, the dynamics of the present age demand learners who possess analytical, creative, and solution-oriented thinking skills.

Therefore, a new approach is needed in Islamic education management—one that can bridge the normative values of Islam with the empirical realities of modern society. Fazlur Rahman emerges as one of the contemporary Islamic thinkers who offers a new paradigm for understanding and developing Islamic education. He emphasizes the importance of a contextual approach to Islamic teachings, including in the field of education. Rahman proposes that the Islamic education curriculum should not only focus on the textual aspect (nass), but also be able to extract universal values from the text and apply them within the context of contemporary life (Rachman, 2021). "Fazlur Rahman's thought is highly relevant to be explored in the study of Islamic education management reform, particularly in the aspects of curriculum and teaching methods. The contextual approach he offers can serve as a solution for Islamic education to avoid falling behind in the wave of globalization while still preserving the integrity of authentic Islamic values.

The reform of Islamic education management from Fazlur Rahman's perspective is not merely theoretical, but also offers practical approaches that can be adapted by Islamic educational institutions (Haryanti, 2014). Curriculum adjustment to the needs of the times, the use of dialogical teaching methods, and the integration of religious and scientific knowledge are the core of the reform ideas being offered (Fatmawati & Pd, 2015).

Islamic education, as a value system and a process of knowledge transformation, holds a central role in shaping Islamic civilization (Prof. Dr. Candra Wijaya et al., 2023). "However, in practice, Islamic education still faces various internal problems, particularly in terms of rigid and non-contextual curricula. Many

Islamic educational institutions continue to implement learning systems that emphasize memorization over deep understanding. This has led Islamic education to fall short in producing a generation that is adaptive to scientific developments and global challenges. A curriculum that is not oriented toward the needs of the times will only produce graduates who are disconnected from their social realities. In this context, a dynamic and relevant curriculum reform is urgently needed.

Teaching methods also require serious attention. Instructional methods that rely heavily on one-way lectures and do not provide space for discussion are still commonly found (Agusta et al., 2021). "As a result, students are not encouraged to think critically, creatively, and contextually in understanding Islamic teachings. The changing times—marked by globalization, the digital revolution, and social complexity—demand that the Islamic education system respond wisely. Education should not merely convey religious doctrines but must also be able to shape students into agents of change who understand Islamic values within the context of modern life.

In this regard, Fazlur Rahman offers a concept of Islamic education reform that emphasizes a contextual approach. He proposes understanding religious texts through the double movement method—first by interpreting the text in its historical context, then by applying its values to contemporary realities. This approach is highly relevant to the needs of educational management reform, particularly in curriculum development and teaching methods (Fazlurrahman, 2018). By applying Fazlur Rahman's thought, the curriculum becomes not only normative but also transformative. Teaching methods are directed toward developing students' critical reasoning and social awareness.

Studies on Islamic education management have been conducted by many scholars, such as (Muhaimin, 2011), (Tilaar, 2003), and (Hopipah et al., 2025). "They agree that Islamic education needs to adopt a systematic managerial approach that is responsive to social dynamics. However, there have been few studies that specifically highlight the relevance of Fazlur Rahman's thought in the reform of curriculum and teaching methods. Fazlur Rahman, in several of his works, such as (F. Rahman, 2017) dan (F. Rahman et al., 1996) He emphasized the importance of understanding Islam in a dynamic and contextual manner. He criticized the literalist approach to religious texts, which he believed caused stagnation within the Muslim community in terms of innovation, including in the field of education.

One of Fazlur Rahman's significant contributions is the double movement method, which is an approach to Qur'anic exegesis that begins with understanding the historical context of the revelation of verses, and then formulates universal values that can be applied to contemporary contexts (F. Rahman, 2009). This method can serve as a philosophical foundation for the development of a relevant and applicable curriculum. In the context of education, Fazlur Rahman proposes that the teaching and learning process should not only be a transfer of knowledge, but also a process of value transformation with social impact. Therefore, teaching methods need to be

directed towards encouraging students to think critically, analyze problems, and develop solutions based on contextual Islamic values. Studies from (Prayitno & Qodat, 2019) Studies show that Fazlur Rahman's thought has great potential to serve as the foundation for the reform of Islamic education, especially because he strikes a balance between tradition and innovation. They argue that Rahman's approach could be an alternative to the epistemological stagnation in Islamic education. Furthermore, studies by (Readi, 2024) The concept of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and the integration of knowledge also align with Fazlur Rahman's ideas, which emphasize the importance of context and moral values in education. This reinforces the notion that the paradigm of future Islamic education must involve a multidisciplinary, value-based approach.

Based on the literature review, it can be concluded that Fazlur Rahman's thought is a valuable reference for the reform of Islamic education management, particularly in the areas of curriculum and teaching methods, which have long been weaknesses in traditional Islamic education systems. Based on the explanation above, this paper aims to deeply examine the contribution of Fazlur Rahman's thought to the reform of Islamic education management, with a primary focus on the contextual approach to curriculum and teaching methods. It is hoped that this study can provide an alternative paradigm for Islamic education management that is more responsive, critical, and transformative. It is crucial to explore further Fazlur Rahman's contributions in the field of Islamic education management. This study will help uncover a management format that not only preserves traditional values but also orients itself towards a progressive and contextual future.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a type of library research (Sugiyono, 2019). This approach was chosen because the main focus of the research is on the exploration, analysis, and interpretation of Fazlur Rahman's thoughts on Islamic education, particularly in the context of curriculum and teaching method management reform. The data analyzed comes from primary literature, including Fazlur Rahman's original works, such as *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, *Major Themes of the Qur'an*, as well as academic articles and lectures related to his ideas. Additionally, secondary literature such as books, scholarly journals, dissertations, and other relevant works on Islamic education management, curriculum theory, and modern Islamic educational thought are used to enrich the analysis.

Data collection is carried out through documentation, which involves tracing, identifying, and organizing data from various written sources. The data collected includes key concepts in Fazlur Rahman's thought, principles of Islamic education management, as well as theories and practices of curriculum and teaching methods relevant to education reform. Data analysis is conducted in a descriptive-analytical and hermeneutical manner, by presenting Fazlur Rahman's ideas, interpreting them, and relating them to the context of contemporary Islamic education management. The

analysis is carried out in two stages: first, describing and categorizing the main ideas of Fazlur Rahman related to education and the methodology of understanding Islam; second, examining their relevance and application to the reform of curriculum and teaching methods in contemporary Islamic education.

The validity of the data in this study is maintained through source triangulation, by comparing Fazlur Rahman's views with those of other Islamic education thinkers and considering the opinions of contemporary experts in the secondary literature. This aims to obtain an objective and contextual understanding.

The results of the analysis are expected to form a conceptual framework for the reform of Islamic education management based on Fazlur Rahman's thought, grounded in a contextual approach. This framework will not only contribute academically but also serve as a practical reflection and reference for education policymakers in Islamic institutions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Islamic education management encompasses the planning, organization, implementation, and evaluation of the educational process based on Islamic values. Several experts, such as (Hopipah et al., 2025) and (Muhaimin, 2011) Emphasizing the need for a systemic and adaptive approach in managing Islamic education, the ideas of Fazlur Rahman can be positioned as a philosophical framework underlying the reform of curriculum and teaching methods to make them more contextual and relevant. Fazlur Rahman was a modern Islamic thinker from Pakistan who emphasized the importance of contextualization in understanding religious texts (A. B. D. K. F. Rahman, n.d.). In his works, such as *Islam and Modernity* and *Major Themes of the Qur'an*, he criticizes the traditional approach to Islamic education, which is literal and ahistorical. Rahman argues that Islamic education must develop critical thinking and establish a connection between revelation and social reality.

Islamic education has undergone significant development throughout its history, both in terms of institutions, curriculum, and teaching methods. However, modern challenges such as globalization, secularization, and the rapid advancement of science demand reform in the management system of Islamic education. One of the crucial issues is the lack of relevance between the Islamic education curriculum and social realities and the needs of the times, resulting in a gap between the ideal values of Islam and the practices of modern life. In this context, Fazlur Rahman's thought offers an interesting and relevant proposal. He emphasizes the importance of a contextual approach to understanding Islam, particularly in actualizing the teachings of the Qur'an to address contemporary issues. The double movement concept he introduced becomes a methodological foundation for understanding texts both historically and applicably. Fazlur Rahman also criticizes the traditional Islamic education system for being overly textual and not encouraging critical thinking or a contextual understanding of Islamic teachings.

The reform of Islamic education that Fazlur Rahman proposes requires fundamental changes in educational management aspects, including policy formulation, curriculum management, teaching methods, and improving the capacity of educators. Islamic education must become a space for developing the *insan kamil* (the ideal human being) who is faithful, forward-thinking, and socially responsible

Fazlur Rahman's Critique of the Traditional Islamic Education System

Fazlur Rahman delivered a profound critique of the traditional Islamic education system, which he viewed as trapped in a literalistic and non-contextual pattern. This system places greater emphasis on memorization and formalism, while lacking in exploring the substantive meaning of Islamic teachings in addressing the challenges of the times (F. Rahman, 1994). He pointed out that Islamic education has experienced stagnation for centuries due to its excessive emphasis on repeating traditions without methodological innovation. As a result, students tend to be passive and lack the critical thinking skills needed to engage with an ever-changing social reality.

One of the fundamental failures in Islamic education, according to Rahman, is the loss of the spirit of *ijtihad* in the learning process. Education has ceased to be a space for the development of intellectual and social consciousness, becoming instead a mere transmission of texts that are not interpreted in light of the present context. Rahman criticized the classical *madrasah* system as being overly textual and exclusive. He lamented that an excessive focus on classical texts has alienated Islamic education from contemporary issues, rendering it incapable of contributing to the development of a progressive and dynamic society.

The dichotomy between religious sciences and secular sciences was also a major concern for Rahman. He rejected this separation and asserted that Islam does not recognize a division between worldly and spiritual knowledge. Education, he argued, should integrate spiritual values and scientific rationality within a unified system. The failure of traditional Islamic education to respond to modernity has marginalized the Muslim community from the mainstream of global development (F. Rahman, 1970). Rahman viewed this as a managerial failure in education—not merely a flaw in curriculum or methodology, but also a lack of vision in the overall management of education.

Fazlur Rahman emphasized that Islamic education must serve as a means of transforming society, not merely reproducing old cultural patterns (Sadewo, 2023). Therefore, a renewal is needed in all aspects of education, starting from the curriculum, teaching methods, to the management system. Rahman's critique serves as a conceptual foundation for the idea of Islamic education reform based on a contextual approach. He opens space for the integration of Islamic values with modern social dynamics in a creative and responsible manner.

Contextual Reconstruction of the Islamic Education Curriculum

In Fazlur Rahman's view, the Islamic education curriculum must undergo a comprehensive reconstruction. He proposed that the curriculum should not rely solely on classical scholarly traditions, but must also address the demands of the modern era through a contextual approach. Rahman introduced the double movement method in interpreting Islamic texts as the foundational basis for curriculum development (Sadewo, 2023). This method encourages educators to understand the Qur'anic texts within their historical context, then interpret their universal values to be applied in the contemporary setting.

The ideal curriculum, according to Rahman, is one that integrates religious sciences with social, natural, and human sciences. Islamic education should not be trapped in the artificial separation between what is considered “*shar'i*” and “*secular*,” as both domains play a vital role in building a balanced society. He advocates for an Islamic education that equips students with critical thinking skills, social ethics, and sensitivity to global issues such as justice, human rights, the environment, and technology. An open and reflective curriculum makes such goals achievable (Fahmi, 2014).

In curriculum reform, Fazlur Rahman also emphasized the importance of incorporating contemporary themes that are relevant to the lives of Muslims today. These include education on democracy, contemporary Islamic economics, science and technology, as well as gender issues from an Islamic perspective. Rahman stressed that curriculum development should not rely solely on textual sources, but must also involve reflection on the ongoing social realities. This means that the curriculum must be dynamic, flexible, and open to revision in response to the changing times and life's emerging challenges. (Hidayat et al., 2024).

In educational management, the development of a contextual-based curriculum requires the active involvement of all stakeholders: teachers, school principals, education administrators, and the local community (Ainissyifa et al., 2024). With this involvement, the curriculum becomes a collective and functional product, ensuring its relevance. Thus, the reconstruction of Islamic education curriculum from Fazlur Rahman's perspective is not only about updating the content of lessons, but also about transforming the paradigm of how knowledge is understood, taught, and interpreted within the framework of Islamic values that are both humanistic and progressive

Pembaruan Metode Pembelajaran Berbasis Kontekstual

In addition to the curriculum, teaching methods are also a focal point in Fazlur Rahman's ideas for reforming Islamic education. He proposes that teaching methods should no longer be dogmatic or focused solely on memorization, but instead should be participatory, reflective, and contextual. According to him, a good learning process is one that activates the role of students as active learners, not passive objects. Teachers should no longer be the sole source of knowledge, but rather facilitators who guide the process of intellectual exploration. Rahman emphasizes that teaching should develop

analytical skills and deep understanding of Islamic values, encouraging students to engage critically with the material and apply it to contemporary issues (Mawaddah & Karomah, 2018). Therefore, the methods used must open space for discussion, open dialogue, case studies, and real problem-solving.

One of the approaches relevant to Rahman's ideas is problem-based learning, where students face real-world problems in society and attempt to interpret solutions based on Islamic principles. Rahman also emphasizes the need for a connection between the subject matter and social realities. For example, teaching about zakat should not be limited to theory but should be linked to the problem of structural poverty and the role of zakat in contemporary economics. This method update requires ongoing teacher training. Teachers must be equipped with adaptive pedagogical skills and interdisciplinary knowledge in order to connect Islamic values with the dynamics of today's global society (F. Rahman, 2019).

In the context of educational management, the reform of teaching methods must be part of the strategy for improving school quality. Regular evaluation of methods and teacher participation in designing learning approaches are crucial. Ultimately, according to Fazlur Rahman, contextual teaching methods are a strategic tool for shaping a generation of Muslims who think critically, have noble character, and are prepared to face real-world challenges without losing their identity as faithful individuals.

CONCLUSION

The study's findings indicate that the reform of Islamic education management from Fazlur Rahman's perspective is a strategic effort to build a contextual, responsive, and relevant Islamic education system in line with the dynamics of the times. Fazlur Rahman strongly criticized the traditional Islamic education system, which he saw as textual and formalistic, arguing that such an approach has distanced education from its transformative goals. One of Rahman's major contributions is his emphasis on the integration of Islamic values and social reality in curriculum development. By promoting the double movement approach, Rahman offers a methodological framework for developing a curriculum that is not only text-based but also capable of addressing the actual challenges of the community's life. According to Rahman, the ideal curriculum is one that unites the dimensions of revelation and rationality, spirituality and knowledge, as well as the individual and society. Fazlur Rahman advocates for the transformation of the Islamic education curriculum so that it is not merely dogmatic, but capable of responding to the needs of the times and the challenges of modern society. Teaching methods, according to Fazlur Rahman, must be dialogical, critical, and based on a contextual understanding of the Qur'an and social reality. The implications of this thinking point to the need for a dynamic, adaptive, and orientation-focused Islamic education management system that aims to shape individuals who are both religious and rational.

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