



The Shield of Traditionalism: A Critical Analysis of Technological Alienation and the Romanticism of Local Education

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: 2026-02-05 Revised: 2026-03-10 Published: 2026-04-01	The phenomenon of reviving traditional education has emerged as a reaction to the rapid development of science and technology (S&T), which is often perceived as a foreign threat. This study aims to uncover the motives behind the resurgence of traditionalism and analyze its impact on the global competitiveness of local communities. Adopting a qualitative approach with critical discourse analysis, the research examines local wisdom-based education policies and the public narratives of policymakers. Data were collected through a literature study, contrasting the concept of modernity with the theory of alienation to observe shifting value patterns. The discussion reveals that the tendency to worship local romanticism often functions as a sociological defense mechanism. Technologically illiterate communities tend to seek refuge in "authentic" yet static values as a spiritual consolation for lagging behind developed nations. The findings indicate that reviving traditional values without integrating modern technology creates a sense of false satisfaction. This causes communities to become trapped in a romanticism of the past, hindering adaptation to sophisticated foreign technological models. Consequently, this reliance on rigid traditionalism widens the developmental gap and diminishes local competitiveness in the era of globalization.
Keywords: <i>Defensive Traditionalism;</i> <i>Technological Alienation;</i> <i>Educational Romanticism.</i>	

Artikel Info	Abstrak
Sejarah Artikel Diterima: 2026-02-05 Direvisi: 2026-03-10 Dipublikasi: 2026-04-01	Fenomena kebangkitan pendidikan tradisional muncul sebagai reaksi terhadap perkembangan pesat ilmu pengetahuan dan teknologi (IPTEK), yang sering dianggap sebagai ancaman asing. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap motif di balik kebangkitan tradisionalisme dan menganalisis dampaknya terhadap daya saing global komunitas lokal. Dengan pendekatan kualitatif dan analisis wacana kritis, penelitian ini mengkaji kebijakan pendidikan berbasis kebijaksanaan lokal serta narasi publik para pembuat kebijakan. Data dikumpulkan melalui studi literatur, membandingkan konsep modernitas dengan teori alienasi untuk mengamati pola nilai yang berubah. Pembahasan menunjukkan bahwa kecenderungan untuk memuja romantisme lokal sering berfungsi sebagai mekanisme pertahanan sosiologis. Komunitas yang kurang melek teknologi cenderung mencari perlindungan dalam nilai-nilai "otentik" namun statis sebagai hiburan spiritual atas ketertinggalan dari negara-negara maju. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa menghidupkan kembali nilai-nilai tradisional tanpa mengintegrasikan teknologi modern menciptakan rasa kepuasan palsu. Hal ini menyebabkan komunitas terjebak dalam romantisme masa lalu, menghambat adaptasi terhadap model teknologi asing yang canggih. Akibatnya, ketergantungan pada tradisionalisme kaku memperlebar kesenjangan pembangunan dan mengurangi daya saing lokal di era globalisasi.
Kata kunci: <i>Tradisionalisme Defensif;</i> <i>Alienasi Teknologi;</i> <i>Romantisme Pendidikan.</i>	

I. INTRODUCTION

Jurnal The diversity that develops in the world is a manifestation of historical conditions - a substantial scripture, or a form of historical conditions - critical to the development of human life itself. Where the scope of life is dominated by principles and tendencies, includes a mindset and attitude pattern to always be critical of the progress of information and the progress of the era itself (Al-Sihristani 1993). Pesantren with all of its historical aspects maintain the local wisdoms of the education system, especially in

the human aspect. Strengthening faith and the embodiment of socio-cultural knowledge are the main room of the education system.

The inheritance of learning in pesantren has intellectual moral content, which should be the basis for an inclusive attitude pattern towards a variety of religious, social and cultural life diversity. Where the pesantren becomes a forum for shaping human character who also emphasizes humanity while studying divinity. Gus Dur once mentioned in one of his writings that in religious life in particular, "it is still far

away, the distance between the formality of religious life and the depth of religious life, there is still a very wide gap between religion and religiosity, between religious life and a sense of diversity" (Wahid 2019).

Facing various things that trigger the emergence of humanitarian problems that are often linked to culture, religion and customs, pesantren is expected to become a filter and solution to the problems that occur. There are countless data on social problems related to culture, religion and race. In the context of religious freedom, which should be the right of every human being, there have been 15 cases recorded since 2018. Surely to this day this figure has exceeded the number in the last few years.

There are around 25,938 pesantren in Indonesia, and the number of santri recorded is around 3,962,700 (this data is summarized in the old Islamic boarding school database for the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia) while the number of unregistered Islamic boarding schools or santri is still there and a lot of them. In other words, when the pesantren curriculum was formulated with the existence of interfaith tolerance material, the contextualization of religious teachings with local culture (this was represented by Wali Songo) then a critical attitude towards issues of human divisions for religious reasons, in other words there was a curriculum that emphasized humanism as a form of social contract of human life, especially in Indonesia which is very diverse.

One of the treasures of Indonesian Islam is santri. In the book *Sarong Civilization*, it is referred to as "Kaum sarungan" (Zuhri 2018). Santri also play an active role in religious education and character building, preserving culture and traditions, working in the agricultural sector, livestock, micro, small and medium-sized economies, even in the most vital sectors, namely maintaining religious harmony and the sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia (Zuhri 2018). So that the pesantren really becomes a commodity for the regeneration of the previous scholars to maintain the harmony of the people, both from different religions and within Islam itself. So humanity is an intellectual moral that must be guarded and preserved by every educational institution, especially pesantren.

Wali Songo and all its important roles in spreading Islam in Java are not only on religious matters that are straight and seem rigid. Islam is brought to blend with the local community. Even social contacts in the economic field are not closed only among Muslims. But with merchants

from various countries, where religion is not the basis for this cooperation. This is evidenced by the cooperation between the guardians of Songo and the kings at that time. Because since the era of Wali Songo, Islamic boarding schools and kingdoms have indeed become dual forces (Adib 2018). It is not only a matter of spreading Islam, but also about fighting against the invaders, forming a socio-cultural order.

Science and religious teachings that are elaborated in the context of society will become a filtering space for humanitarian problems related to religious rights, or cultural and racial differences. When the Mataran palace family lodged the princes to Ponorogo, namely to Kyai Kasan Besari, it became common at that time, even with the reason to maintain a balance of socio-cultural and socio-political interaction patterns. So do not be surprised when Ronggowarsito or Den Bagus Burhan who once studied there also has a filter to maintain religious harmony. This is evidenced by his various literary works which contain philosophy, monotheism and Sufism. As; wirid hidayat teak, suluk saloka soul, suluk supanalaya, and paramayoga fiber (Simuh 1995).

Riclefs noted that pesantren were a transmission channel for the tradition of wali songo thinking, and even then it was only published by the Dutch colonial government in the 19th century, after the Java war. The Netherlands records around 10,800 Islamic schools (Pesantren) in Java and Madura with more than 272,000 students(santri) (Ricklefs 2013). In other words, when the struggle is based on peace and harmony, it is not religion that becomes the benchmark for this struggle. But Humanism or humanity itself.

When practical politics becomes an excuse that in order to hold the peak of power it is necessary to have social dynamics, then religion or differences which are vital in nature are then used as a form of social dynamics. We know that the politicization of religion is not only happening today, but since long ago. Then religious education, which has always been very important for Muslims, is then continued by the next generation, then the dynamics of conflicts of opinion, different schools of thought, different imams, different cultures and so on are formed. whereas why religious knowledge is very important is because Islam has played a major role in cultural and social development, this was initiated from the attitude of the Prophet Muhammad who taught religious and cultural tolerance in the Medina charter (Sjalaby 1973).

II. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with critical discourse analysis. Data was collected through a literature review of local wisdom-based education policies and public narratives of policy makers. The analysis was conducted by contrasting the concept of modernity with the theory of alienation to identify patterns of value shifts. The findings reveal that efforts to revive traditional values without integrating modern technology actually create false satisfaction (self-satisfaction). This causes society to become trapped in romanticism of the past, which hinders adaptation to more sophisticated foreign technology models, thereby widening the gap with developed countries (Moleong 2000).

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Philosophical - Subjective Studies of Islamic boarding schools

Santri is composed of five hijaiyah letters, namely; *Sin*, *Nun*, *Ta'*, *Ra'* and *Ya'*. All of them have a philosophical basis. *Sin* means *Salik ilal-Akhirah*, which means taking a spiritual path to the hereafter. *Nun* means *Na-ib 'anil-Masayikh* which means the successor of the teachers. *Ta'* means *Tarik 'anil-Ma'ashi*, which means leaving immorality or doing spiritual purification by living a simple life and keeping away from sins. *Ra'* is an acronym for *Raghib ilal-Khayr*, which means to always desire kindness. *Ya'* means *Yarjus-Salamah*, which means optimistic about safety, with the philosophy that students are optimistic about living and hoping for salvation in the world, especially in the hereafter (Zuhri 2018).

From the above philosophy, a little picture reveals that pesantren make an educational principle from the elaboration of the three moral pillars - intellectual, namely; Philosophy as a means of wise thinking, Knowledge of the form of being which are full of deficiencies but work hard to know God more and truly love Allah, this is a reciprocal attitude from God's words which reads "*wa karamna bani adam*" that I have glorified the offspring of Adam, then Sufism is the key to purifying oneself from the sparkling glamor of the world, then helping reason to make it more important to intellectual morality rather than feeling the truest and best of each other (Al-Bustomi 2004).

So that this elaboration has the hope that students will prioritize aspects of morality in human interactions, even between religions, cultures and races. So as not to tend to be

awkward in reasoning, lack of knowledge deficits, moral deficits and short axes, in seeing the social life of society. Because the most important thing is when you become a student you have to be relaxed and reasonable, why? Because being fair is characteristic of educated people and reckless is the behavior of losers (Zuhri 2010).

2. Knowledge Elaboration

Elaboration of knowledge is a deep focus on knowledge that is part of the educational curriculum, in this case at the pesantren. If the goal of national education in article 3 No. 20 of 2003 Law that national education functions to develop capabilities and shape the character and civilization of the nation with dignity in order to educate the nation's life and develop the potential of students to become human beings who believe and fear God Almighty, have noble character, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and be a democratic and responsible citizen (Arifin 2012).

According to Kyai Achmad Dlofier Zuhry:

"Philosophy is the mother of all knowledge, fiqh is a product of philosophy. Istinbath or legal determination using philosophy. Likewise science and technology, as well as the development of art and architecture are products of philosophy. Because philosophy is a process of forging common sense. " Then he continued, "if you reject philosophy, you reject common sense" (Zuhri 2010).

Meanwhile, Sufism and kalam science are the souls of the perennial philosophical process, where the message is that philosophia perennis is centered on the doctrine of oneness (tauhid), which then has an essential message or the center of all religions (Sabri 1999). So that the curriculum built is the planting of the concept of awareness of common sense which is represented by the word of God in Qs. Attin. "That really We have created humans with extraordinary potential." Then it is compared with the knowledge of the various attributes of God that must be known, as well as His impossible attributes and life. Then the process of planting a simple life is more concerned with the process of inner riyadah, so that the application is morality vertically or horizontally, or *hablum minallah* and *habblumminannas* (Yusran 1999).

As Kyai Wahid's message:

"The effort to improve higher education for Indonesian Muslims as the largest group of the Indonesian nation (needs to be hastened) so that a danger that is now threatening is prevented, namely the danger of splitting the next generation of our nation into two. All the possibilities whose description is not as pleasant as that described earlier, will someday occur if Indonesian thinkers do not pay attention to it and try to prevent it. It's true it hasn't appeared yet" (Bakar 1957).

This basic concept of elaboration is like perennial philosophy, which in the context of Taoism is known as tao which means path. It is nothing but the principle of human life that must be followed if he is to be natural as a human being (Bakar 1957). In short, a human who understands another human being. It is simply called mutual respect or intellectual morals.

Religion and philosophy are processes towards sacred knowledge, in addition to being divine-oriented, they are also human-oriented. Therefore, since the beginning of the history of human life, the process of expression of truth has been based on the moralistic tradition, through intellectual intuition and "philosophical" contemplation (Madjid 1995).

With various conflicts of humanity, religion and customs, it is necessary to have awareness built by philosophical knowledge, simple, and - without seeing other human being differ in a moral or intellectual context. In other words, there is a process of wisdom that needs to be built. Such is the moral crisis that has been an interesting discussion in various educational journals in the last few years.

In the journal Miskat Vol.03 in 2018, Ummah Karimah discusses pesantren and the relevance of national education goals to discuss the relationship between the attitude patterns and intellectual patterns of pesantren that are built with the aim of national education (Karimah 2018), but the facts that occur below are very different in practice. There are many pesantren that are "lacking" that they are given much attention and even don't pay attention to their social intellectual performance. Various "less" construction ideas are in great demand. Whereas Islamic boarding schools have competitiveness in human development, both mentally, intellectually, morally and religiosity.

So that the elaboration of philosophy, kalam and Sufism seeks to build awareness to respect and respect each other, in the context of cultural, religious and racial differences. First, building the mentality of the students to always think clearly and objectively. Second, building intellectuals so that they are able to adapt to the progress of life. Third, criticize morals that are motivated by an attitude of religiosity, so that religious life does not seem doctrinal but rather a life that is *rahmatan lil alamin*.

3. Religious Harmony As The Mission Of The Pesantren Education Curriculum

There are various kinds of friendship discussed by Aristotle in his masterpiece "Nichomachean ethic." One of them is the different types of friendship between them, friendship is based on a sense of reciprocity between one another, not just involving equality. Understanding the meaning of "equal" does not have the same meaning, equality is primarily proportional to good. In other words, friendship is built on the basis of being human (Crisp 2014).

To find, we must seek. Likewise regarding the meeting point of one difference, in the context of various religions. So that the subject, namely humans, needs to look at the scope or structure of the human tradition itself. because as far as the current view is, only on the understanding or justification that tradition is sacred knowledge (sacred knowledge) (Fahrurrosi and Husni 2024).

The human tradition covers multiple levels which are not single. What should be noted is when this humanitarian tradition exists in a religious context on spiritual and intellectual needs. The goal is to seek God or a straight path to the hereafter (Sabri 1999). Where to understand the messages of the sky as a regulator of human life and its realm is social life.

Religious harmony in Indonesia can be seen from the socio-cultural and socio-historical aspects. Where the environment formed by culture and historical aspects forms the character of religious communication. This was alluded by Nurcholis Majid that, "Discussing Indonesian culture, we will meet the complexity of the problem." This complexity is not only seen from the exoteric and esoteric understanding of religion. But the environmental aspects that make it up. Because the problem is, is it possible for the

theological conception to answer the complexity of the problem of the religious community? Because the challenge that has been from the past and even now is how to formulate construction steps to reconcile various forms of religious exotericism between humans in the name of divine truth (*Ilahi*) (Sabri 1999).

Religion turns out to have a number of faces, where religion is currently not only understood as an issue related to divinity, belief, faith, creed, life guidelines and so on. However, Religion is also closely related to cultural historical issues which are also human necessities (Abdullah 2016). Various aspects of the interests of society that are built in the name of religion tend to complicate social affairs. When the foundation of humanity is the building block of life, religion is a personal creed.

Therefore philosophy is a discursive space that forms wise thought patterns and attitudes. Meanwhile, knowledge of God is a personal process to get to the search for God. Likewise with Sufism which regulates the human mind to always be simple and wise in social communication and religious communication.

The complexity of religious harmony is not only seen from the aspect of the interests of "religion" itself, but also from the personal aspect of adherents, it can also be in the communal aspect. So that the pesantren is the right space to help build a wise attitude and mindset. So that the wisdom that is formed is an intellectual meta-ethic to build diversity communication, and foster a sense of diversity without questioning the truth of one another. The main focus of Islamic boarding school education is ethics, so the curriculum that is compiled is the design for the formation of these ethics.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

Therefore philosophy is a discursive space that forms wise thought patterns and attitudes. Meanwhile, knowledge of God is a personal process to get to the search for God. Likewise with Sufism which regulates human reasoning to always be simple and wise in social communication and religious communication.

The epistemology of the pesantren departs from strong traditional roots, both culture and cultivated civilization. when morals are the

goal of pesantren education, it is that moral knowledge that is grown and developed in the pesantren education system.

B. Suggestion

The discussion related to this research is still very limited and requires a lot of input, suggestions for future authors are to study it more deeply and comprehensively about The Shield of Traditionalism: A Critical Analysis of Technological Alienation and the Romanticism of Local Education.

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