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Research Article

Spiritual Emptiness: A Critical Analysis of the South Korean Education System From the Perspective of Islamic Education

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Abstract. The good quality of education in South Korea still leaves many problems to be solved. The high suicide rate among students, rampant cases of bullying, the differences in quality between private school and public school and high family demands for school achievement are known as education fever. This research is a type of descriptive analysis research, comparing two variables of the education system, namely the South Korean education system and the Islamic education system. Qualitative research method, with data collection from literature that is related to the issues discussed. The problem that occurs in the world of Korean education when viewed from the perspective of Islamic education is the purpose of education itself. Islamic education emphasizes usefulness and human beings who believe and have good morals, while South Korean education aims to change the social

strata of families in society. Education is not just a ladder to change social status, but to develop human potential so that they can become caliphs on earth. Not only building intellectual capacity but also spiritual capacity, to provide strength and encouragement in dealing with every failure in life.

Keywords: Korean Education, Education Fever, Private School, Islamic Education

Abstrak. Kualitas pendidikan di Korea Selatan yang baik masih meninggalkan banyak permasalahan yang harus diselesaikan. Tingginya tingkat bunuh diri, maraknya kasus bullying perbedaan kualitas antara private school dan sekolah negeri dan tuntutan berat keluarga pada anak untuk berprestasi di sekolah yang dikenal dengan education fever. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat pendidikan Korea Selatan dari sudut pandang pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini adalah jenis penelitian deskriptif analisis, dengan membandingkan dua variabel sistem pendidikan, yaitu sistem pendidikan Korea Selatan dan sistem pendidikan Islam. Metode penelitian kualitatif, dengan pengumpulan data dari literatur kepustakaan yang memiliki kaitan dengan permasalahan yang dibahas. Permasalahan yang terjadi dalam dunia pendidikan Korea jika dilihat dari sudut pandang pendidikan Islam adalah dari tujuan pendidikan itu sendiri. Pendidikan Islam menekankan pada kebermanfaatannya dan manusia yang beriman dan berakhlak sedangkan pendidikan Korea Selatan bertujuan untuk merubah strata sosial keluarga di masyarakat. Pendidikan bukan hanya sebagai tangga untuk merubah status sosial saja tetapi untuk mengembangkan potensi manusia agar bisa menjadi khalifah di bumi. Bukan hanya membina intelektual saja tapi spiritual sehingga memberikan kekuatan dan dorongan dalam menyikapi setiap kegagalan dalam hidup

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Korea, Education Fever, Private School, Pendidikan Islam

INTRODUCTION.

Several Asian countries such as China, South Korea, and Japan have achieved high-quality education on a global scale. For instance, South Korea, which gained independence in 1948, rapidly transformed from a colonized nation into a respected country in the Asian region. By the year 2000, the literacy rate in South Korea had nearly reached one hundred percent, making Korean citizens among the most educated civilian in the world. The surging industrial productivity, globally renowned innovative technology, and touted economic models for developing countries all contribute to South Korea's remarkable success (Borthwick 2007; Lim 1999; Me Kim 1998; Williams 2009). The improvement in the quality of its people has resulted in extraordinary economic growth, making South Korea's economy the 11th largest in the world (J. Seth 2005).

The results of research conducted by PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) ranked South Korea 9th with an average score of 519 in reading, literacy, math, and science. Good quality education is created because of a supportive educational environment¹ Suparlan Suhartono, *Wawasan pendidikan: Sebuah pengantar pendidikan* (Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media, 2008).. Covering the family, school, and community environment and supporting the creation of a good atmosphere.² In addition, the characteristics of South Korean people are spirit and

¹ Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA) Results in Focus, *OECD*, 2015, 5.

² Kusuma Amir Reza, "Konsep Hulul Menurut Al-Hallaj Dan Penempatan Posisi Tasawuf," *Jurnal Penelitian Medan Agama* 12, no. 1 (2022): 45-55.

passion for education. This is because the cultural roots of Confucian philosophy which have great respect for knowledge and the desire to continue to grow in society are very strong J. Seth, "Korean Education: A Philosophical and Historical Perspective.". Other than that, only with education, the social status of the family in society can change and can get better proper welfare Kaeunghun Yoon, "The Change and Structure of Korean Education Policy in History," *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education* 6, no. 2 (2014): 173–200..

Aside from education policies in terms of curriculum and good characteristics of South Koreans, the government is also supportive in terms of the education budget. Funding is taken from the state budget which is large enough for education improvement with 19.7% of the state budget and 86.2% of the budget for primary and secondary schools, the rest for universities Wulandari, Destri, dan Dwi Noviani, "Sistem Pendidikan Korea Selatan Dan Indonesia," *Jurnal Studi Islam Indonesia (JSII)* 1, no. 1 (2023): 17–32.. The policy of compulsory 9-year schooling for all people is the responsibility of the government to finance up to the secondary level. As for the tuition fees charged to the people.

Improving the quality of education in South Korea is indeed very good and has even become a benchmark for developing countries in Asia. But this rapid development still leaves many problems. Most noticeable is the pressure and demands felt by South Korean teenagers to do well in school from parents who are ambitious about education. So the parenting style applied to children tends to be authoritarian³. This kind of parenting is the cause of many suicides among adolescents Mikhael Yudhistira Prananjaya dan Pratiwi Wahyu Widiarti, "Pesan Kritik Sosial Terhadap Lingkungan Pendidikan Di Korea Selatan (Analisis Isi Pada Drama Sky Castle)," *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta* 3, no. 1 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.21831/lektur.v3i1.16825>.. In addition, the difference in quality between public and private schools adds to the list of problems in education.

A high parental dependence on education is known as "Education Fever" or in Korean "*kyoyungnyol*" (R. Ellinger and M. Beckham 1997) describes Korean people's obsession with education and social status. Education is only seen as a competition, not a process to develop individual abilities. So it is not difficult to find how the process of cheating in exams, and bribes to the principal or teachers by parents of students have become common to make their children excel in school both in academics and non-academics. Josh M. Beach, *Children Dying Inside: A Critical Analysis of Education in South Korea*, 2011, 4.

Not to mention the case of bullying in schools which is very concerning. 19.5% of bullying is in the form of gangs, stalking 10.6%, cyberbullying 8.2%, physical assault 7.7%, and sexual violence 5.7% although with the above presentation, South Korea is not the country with the highest number of bullying cases Nabila Jayanti, "Bukan Korsel, Kasus Bullying Terbanyak Justru di Filipina dan Indonesia," News,

³Authoritarian parenting style according to Baumrind (1996) is a parenting style characterized by many demands on children but not accompanied by warmth from parents. This parenting style puts children at risk of depression, even to aggressive behavior such as: damaging objects around them, unruly and revenge. Diana Baumrind, "Effects of Authoritative Parental Control on Child Behavior," *Child Development* 37, no. 4 (1966): 887–907, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1126611>.

Kumparan News (blog), 18 Maret 2023, <https://kumparan.com/kumparannews/bukan-korsel-kasus-bullying-terbanyak-justru-di-filipina-dan-indonesia-202M2nZq7mD/full..> One case that has attracted quite a lot of attention is the bullying case that occurred in 2017. A photo of a girl covered in blood on her knees was spread on Facebook by 5 female high school students in Busan. Within 1 hour and 40 minutes, the victim was tortured with pipes, chairs, cigarettes, and soju bottles to near death events above illustrate the gap between the purpose of education to form superior human resources and human reality that is far from human values.⁴

J.M. Beach in his journal entitled *Children Dying Inside A Critical Analysis of Education in South Korea* in 2011 criticized South Korea's education pattern that was considered too harsh on its students, resulting in many suicides. In addition, the education system that memorizes a lot to pass exams with a lot of material makes students not understand the information contained in the lesson (Beach 2011) . Mikhael Yudhistira in the journal *Message of Social Criticism of the Educational Environment in South Korea (Content Analysis on the Drama Sky Castle)* wrote how social criticism of education in South Korea analyzed from the Korean drama *Sky Castle*, about how the social system of Korean society is ambitious in education which creates an unhealthy atmosphere for children. Starting from an unhealthy family environment, it grew into a community environment Yudhistira Prananjaya dan Wahyu Widiarti, "Pesan Kritik Sosial Terhadap Lingkungan Pendidikan Di Korea Selatan (Analisis Isi Pada Drama Sky Castle)." .

In this journal, researchers discuss criticism of South Korean education from the point of view of Islamic education which has not been discussed before. This study aims to find out whether Islamic education can answer the problems faced by Korean society today.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a type of descriptive research analysis, comparing two variables of the education system, namely the South Korean education system and the Islam education system. Qualitative research method, with data collection from literature that has a relationship with the problem discussed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Education System of the Republic of Korea

History of Education South Korea

Education in South Korea has a long history. The influence of Confucianism in prehistoric times and royal times became a guide and teaching for the people of South Korea in viewing the importance of education. Because in traditional South Korean society education is highly valued as an effort and means to develop self-quality and also a way to achieve social status in society and power J. Seth, "Korean Education: A

⁴ Muhammad Ari Firdausi Abdul Rohman, Amir Reza Kusuma, "The Essence of 'Aql as Kamāl Al-Awwal in the view of Ibnu Sīnā and its Relation to Education," *Jurnal Dialogia* 20, no. 1 (2022): 176-205, <https://doi.org/DOI: 10.21154/dialogia.v20i1.3533>.

Philosophical and Historical Perspective.”. In addition, during the colonial period of Japan, the education system implemented by Japan provided a pattern in the education system.⁵

This educational journey can be traced since South Korea was divided into 3 major Kingdoms which lasted from 57 BC to 668 A.D “Koguryō; Ancient Kingdom, Korea,” Geograhly and travel, *Britannica* (blog), 10 November 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Koguryo..> In this case, the kingdoms can be categorized by three periods of empire, namely: the *Silla* period, the *Goguryeo* period, and the *Paekche* period. In the *Silla* period, the educational curriculum focused on martial arts. This is because during the invasion of the empire. So it demands for everyone to have martial arts skills. In the *Goguryeo* period, there was already a teaching of writing, and the famous school at that time was known as *Taehak* or *Daehak*. Confucianism became a school of philosophy in Buddhist education and teaching has been included in the curriculum as well. In the *Paekche* period, there was a recorded cultural exchange between South Korea and Japan which is reflected in the books *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*.⁶

Apart from the influence of Confucianism and Buddhism in terms of the importance of education, Japan also has a hand in it. During the 4 decades Japan occupied South Korea gradually the Japanese government developed a modern education system at that time. The focus is mainly on primary education and is growing slowly to the upper and lower levels. Even though the Japanese government only provided great opportunities at the low level and only slightly to the upper level, because the goal was to create a system that followed the level of development of Korea at that time. Policymakers at the time considered that Korea was a backward society and they only filled the lower levels of government J. Seth, “Korean Education: A Philosophical and Historical Perspective.”.

The year 1945 was a historic moment for Koreans. Because Japan was expelled from Korea after its defeat in World War 2. To resolve disputes in each place, the Korean peninsula is divided into two parts. North Korea was occupied by the Soviet Union and South Korea was occupied by America. The government of South Korea was held by the General Headquarters for 3 years. Regulate all government policies in terms of education that focus on the democratization of education, equality of opportunity, compulsory education, and education plans for adults Yoon, “The Change and Structure of Korean Education Policy in History.”.

Education policy from time to time has changed. It began after Japan departed from Korea. All textbooks in Japanese are prohibited, all must use Korean in the practice and educational process. Due to the Japanese government's policy during the colonial period to require Koreans to use Japanese, about 80% of Koreans at that time

⁵ Nirhamna Hanif Fadillah, Amir Reza Kusuma, dan Rofiqul Anwar Anwar, “Comparative Study of Ijtihad Methods Between Ahlussunnah and Syiah,” *Tasfiah: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 1 (9 Februari 2022): 83, <https://doi.org/10.21111/tasfiah.v6i1.6837>.

⁶ Nirhamna Hanif Fadillah, Amir Reza Kusuma, dan Najib Rahman Rajab al-Lakhm, “The Concept of Science in Islamic Tradition: Analytical Studies of Syed Naquib Al-Attas on Knowledge,” *Tasfiah: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 7, no. 1 (27 Februari 2023): 25-62, <https://doi.org/10.21111/tasfiah.v7i1.8456>.

were still illiterate Koreans O Chunsuk, *The History of Education of Korea* (Seoul: Kwangmyong-Publishing Company, 1975)..

The next step taken by the South Korean government to improve education was to completely overhaul the entire curriculum in 1954. The main focus of the new curriculum is to emphasize independence, productivity, and practicality in education. This policy was implemented by President Park to answer the needs of technology-oriented human resources to ensure the needs of industrialization. And during Park's presidency, the passion for education in society became more competitive with a percentage change from 35.1% to 40.8% in 1966 Yoon, "The Change and Structure of Korean Education Policy in History."

Education policy in South Korea is changing as the political and economic climate changes. At the beginning of independence focused on alleviating illiteracy, developing efforts to alleviate poverty with good education, and entering the beginning of the 21st century the focus of education was on readiness to answer the challenges of globalization. During the presidency of Roh Moo Hyun, education policy revolved around education welfare. The point is the government's effort to provide education with equal opportunities and quality of education.⁷

The current education policy system follows the centralized South Korean government system. All policies related to education are all centralized. All of them can be decided directly at the center without the current of obtaining approval from the legislature in the regions Ali Muhtadi, "Studi Komparatif Sistem Pendidikan Di Jerman Dan Korea Selatan," *Dinamika Pendidikan* 15, no. 01 (2008)..

South Korea's Educational Destinations

As explained earlier, the pattern of education in Korea is largely influenced by Confucian thinking. So education is considered very important because it has the aim of eliminating ignorance and leading a country to prosperity. The essence of his teaching is about human problems in this world, both in education, morality, and manners ririn Darini, "Pendidikan Dalam Pemikiran Konfusius," *Istoria: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Ilmu Sejarah* 9, no. 1 (2011)..

This is in line with what was decided by the National God of the Republic of Korea in 1948 when drafting the education law. It was decided that the purpose of South Korean education is to instill in everyone a sense of National Identity and respect for National sovereignty; (perfecting the personality of every citizen, espousing the ideal of universal fraternity, developing the ability to live independently and act for a democratic State and the prosperity of all mankind; and inculcating the nature of patriotism Muhtadi, "Studi Komparatif Sistem Pendidikan Di Jerman Dan Korea Selatan.."

Education Level

According to the website of the South Korean Ministry of Education, the division of education levels is divided into 4 categories:

⁷ Agus Budiman, Heru Wahyudi, dan Amir Reza Kusuma, "ADAB SEBAGAI ASAS PENDIDIKAN DI PONDOK MODERN DARUSSALAM GONTOR" 07, no. 02 (2023).

a. Early Childhood Education

This program starts from the age of 3 years and above and is a nursery center for care and development offered by the government. To support equality in terms of education, the government helps ease the burden on parents in terms of funding school fees.

b. Primary Education

Unlike early childhood education, primary education has been compulsory since 1950 gradually over 30 years. Starting from 7 years to 12 years with a duration of 6 years of education.⁸

c. Secondary Education

Junior high school was first compulsory in 1985. Starting from regional small towns, rural then big cities. In 2004, the compulsory secondary school system was running nationally. Elementary and middle schools receive funding from the government to help parents finance education. Most of the schools are public schools.

d. Upper Education

The school policy is compulsory and supported by the government only up to the secondary level. While at the top level, the financing is charged by parents. The government has a national scholarship program to help with costs. College admissions are viewed based on college scholastic ability test scores and record factors from previous schemes. There are several categories: colleges, junior colleges, colleges for aspiring elementary school teachers, and online colleges just to name a few “Education System in Korea,” *Ministry of Education* (blog), diakses 24 Agustus 2023, <https://english.moe.go.kr/sub/infoRenewal.do?m=0301&page=0301&s=english..>

Education Administration of South Korea

Launching from the official website of the South Korean Ministry of Education, it was initially formed in 1948 under the name of the Ministry of Education and Culture with one office, 5 bureaus, and 22 divisions. And now it has 3 offices, 18 bureaus, and 59 divisions. Education administration is divided into 2, central and provincial. The central administration is governed by the President, the prime minister's education ministry, and several affiliated organizations. The education minister in South Korea concurrently serves as vice prime minister as well. As for administration at the provincial level after the enactment of the Education Autonomy Law in 1991, provincial education administration has been decentralized, and most of the administrative decision-making authority and education budget are given to regional education offices.⁹

a. Education Budget

⁸ Nur Hadi Ihsan, Fachri Khoerudin, dan Amir Reza Kusuma, “Konsep Insan Kamil Al-Jilli Dan Tiga Elemen Sekularisme,” *Journal for Islamic Studies* 5, no. 4 (2022): 18, <https://doi.org/DOI:https://doi.org/10.31943/afkarjournal.v5i4.323>.

⁹ Mohammad Latief dkk., “Framework Richard Walzer Terhadap Filsafat Islam Dalam Bukunya; Greek Into Arabic Essay On Islamic Philosophy” 7, no. 1 (t.t.): 14, <https://doi.org/DOI:10.15575/jaqfi.v7i1.12095>.

The effect of the nine-year compulsory education rule for citizens is that the government is obliged to cover all public school payments. The government disburses less than 20% (Sussanti and Reza 2022) or around 18.9% state budget to improve the quality of education. Apart from the state budget, there are also funds sourced from the regions, school foundations, and the private sector. The allocation of the education budget is for the education office that oversees primary and secondary schools, the operation of national universities, some for private universities, and educational research organizations.

b. Teacher

In South Korea, education for a teacher is carried out at the level of specialized colleges of education and through degree or certificate programs. For elementary level teachers it is known as academic level and for secondary level there is teacher education for 4 years. All costs during education for public teachers are borne by the government. There are several qualification trainings and trainings for teachers supported by various institutions such as national, regional, and private education training institutions supported by the Ministry of Education. In addition, there is also a teacher evaluation to improve teacher performance. The form of evaluation takes the form of peer review and student and parent satisfaction surveys. After training, the teacher will get a certificate given by the principal.¹⁰

c. Curriculum

The national curriculum has undergone 10 changes from 1954 to 2015, from the first curriculum to the seventh curriculum with several revisions. The picture of Korean education depicted in the K12 school system (the K-12 system includes kindergarten through high school grade 12) shows an interesting blend of different ideologies, blending the values of Confucian philosophy with modern ideas about meritocracy, consumer capitalism, and Western fashion education Clark W. Sorensen, "Success and Education in South Korea," *Comparative Education Review* 38, no. 1 (1994): 10–35, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1189287>.. This done to meet the needs of national economic development is also presented as one of the main objectives of education Jae Hoon Lim, "Class Reproduction and Competing Ideologies In Korean Education: A Critical Discourse Analysis on 'School Collapse,' 1999-2001," *The Sigur Center Asia Papers*, no. 24 (2005): 17–32.. The 2015 revised curriculum used today aims to shape the character of someone who has a positive concept and gets a career life, a person who is creative, culturally literate, and respects pluralism, and a democratic and global person who is willing to share with others based on a sense of community "Education System in Korea.". To achieve the above things some of the things done by a teacher include five steps, namely: planning teaching, diagnosing students, guiding students during learning using various programs, conducting tests, and

¹⁰ Mohamad Latief, Amal Fathullah Zarkasyi, dan Amir Reza Kusuma, "PROBLEM SEKULER HUBUNGAN AGAMA DAN NEGARA MENURUT ALI ABDUL RAZIQ" 7 (2022), <https://doi.org/DOI:https://doi.org/10.25217/jf.v7i2.2542>.

assessing learning outcomes Muhtadi, "Studi Komparatif Sistem Pendidikan Di Jerman Dan Korea Selatan."

Islamic Education System Understanding Islamic Education

Islamic education means a conscious and planned effort to realize learning facilities and learning processes so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control,¹¹ personality, intelligence, noble morals, and skills needed by themselves, society, and the state following Islamic teachings Imam Barnadib, "Sistem Pendidikan Nasional Menurut Konsep Islam dalam "Islam dan Pendidikan Nasional", 1983, 135-36..

This formulation follows the opinion of Endang Saefudin Anshari quoted by Azra that Islamic education is a process of guidance by educators on the physical and psychological development of students with certain material materials with certain methods and with existing equipment towards the creation of certain individuals following Islamic teachings. *Pendidikan Islam Tradisi dan Modernisasi Menuju Melenium Baru* (Jakarta: Logos Wacana Ilmu, 1999), 65.

Objectives of Islamic Education

The purpose of Islamic education has been formulated in international Islamic education conferences that have been carried out several times. The first time was in 1977 in Makkah City with the main focus on fixing and perfecting the Islamic education system organized by Muslims throughout the world. The second was carried out in 1980 in Pakistan to discuss the preparation of the Islamic education curriculum pattern. The third was held in 1981 in Dhaka to discuss the development of textbooks. The fourth in 1982 in Jakarta discussed teaching methodology. Syed Ali Ashraf, *Horison Baru Pendidikan Islam* (Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 1989), xi. These conferences are an attempt to formulate and recommend the importance of improving and perfecting the Islamic education system implemented by Muslims.

One of the outcomes of the first conference was the determination of the goals of Islamic education. Results from 150 papers from 40 Islamic countries with 319 scholars. Its objectives are as follows:

Education aims to engender a balanced growth of the total human personality through spiritual, intellectual, rational self-practice, feelings, and sensitivities of the human body, therefore education should fulfill human growth in all its aspects: spiritual, intellectual, imaginative, physical, scientific, linguistic, both individually and collectively and motivate all aspects to achieve goodness and perfection. The final goal of Islamic education is the realization of absolute submission to Allah, both at the level of individuals, society, and humanity in general.

¹¹ Mohamad Latief dkk., "The Problem of Religious Freedom In the Practice of Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar," *Analisis: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 22, no. 1 (30 Juni 2022): 95-110, <https://doi.org/10.24042/ajsk.v22i1.12274>.

It is very clear how the purpose of Islamic education is to form people with high human resources without surrendering to Allah SWT. ¹²Not only oriented to material things (world) but also spiritual things (hereafter). All of which will form a complete Muslim (kaffah) (Darajat and et al. 1983: 27). The character of a Muslim with the natural. That is, as individuals, social, moral beings, and divine beings. This kind of Muslim image is the complete human being (Insan Kamil) a perfect, whole, harmonious, and balanced person (1983: 27). To be able to perform the duties of servitude and be the heir of the prophets. Tatang Hidayat dan Ahmad Syamsu Rizal, "Pendidikan Dalam Perspektif Islam Dan PEeranannya Dalam Membina Kepribadian Islami" 8, no. 2 (Juli 2018): 219, <http://dx.doi.org/10.22373/jm.v8i2.3397>.

Educator in Islamic Education

In Islam, the education of the child is the duty of the parents. The family is the smallest institution in society and also the first school for children. However, due to some limitations possessed by parents, education for the next stage is mandated to ustadz in mosques or mashallah, and teachers in educational institutions such as schools. But that does not mean that parents then adopt and are not responsible for their children's education after being put into school.¹³

The term educator is divided into two, namely educator and teacher, Educator (Murabby) is someone who plays a role in educating educational subjects or who performs educational tasks (tarbiyah). While the teacher is responsible for teaching and focuses on teaching (ta'lim). However, the implementation of the distinction between educators and teachers is not too significant because in Javanese terms a teacher is someone who is admired (heeded) in terms of piwulange (his teachings) and imitated (uswah hasanah). Mohamad Roqib, *Ilmu Pendidikan Islam* (Yogyakarta: LKis Yogyakarta, 2009), 35.

There are several criteria for an educator or teacher that must be mastered to ensure the course of educational activities is good and correct. Because teachers have a positive role in the learning process of students. Education that has high qualifications will be able to create a dynamic and constructive learning atmosphere. The divine mandate brought requires an educator to have competence in professionalism, pedagogical, social, and good personality. According to Zakiyah Daradjat, social and personal competence is important without compromising other competencies. Zakiyah Darajat, *Kepribadian Guru* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1982), 16.

Islamic Education Curriculum

A good Islamic education curriculum must go back and make the Quran and Hadith as the main source, which is integrated and comprehensive Nurmadiyah Nurmadiyah, "Kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam," *Al-Afkar: Jurnal Keislaman & Peradaban* 2, no. 2 (27 Desember 2016), <https://doi.org/10.28944/afkar.v2i2.93..>

¹² Mohammad Muslih, Fachri Khoerudin, dan Amir Reza Kusuma, "TELAAH PROBLEM HADIS PERSPEKTIF SEKULER: SEBUAH PENGANTAR," *Journal for Islamic Studies* 5 (2022): 17, <https://doi.org/10.31943/afkarjournal.v5i1.245>.

¹³ Nur Hadi Ihsan dkk., "WORLDVIEW SEBAGAI LANDASAN SAINS DAN FILSAFAT: PERSPEKTIF BARAT DAN ISLAM," t.t., 31, <https://doi.org/DOI: 10.28944/reflektika.v17i1.445>.

Become a guideline in teaching and education for students. It is relevant and answers the challenges of the times without leaving the essence of monotheism and akhlakul karimah.

Tawhid is the main basis of the curriculum from early onwards. Because many verses explain that the teaching of monotheism must be the first material Tri Wahyudi Ramdhan, "DESAIN KURIKULUM PENDIDIKAN ISLAM BERBASIS TAUHID," *Al-Insyiroh: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 5, no. 1 (16 Maret 2019): 118–34, <https://doi.org/10.35309/alinsyiroh.v5i1.3400>.. There is no separation between religious lessons and general studies. After that, only the cultivation of akhlakul karimah in every behavior in order to become a moral student.

South Korean Education Criticism

The quality of South Korean education is indeed one of the best in the world. This is much influenced by the teachings of Confucius that have taken root in society. So it is easy for the government to realize the importance of education for life. According to Confucius, If a country wants to progress and develop it must be supported by good quality education. Correspondingly, the awarding of academic degrees is a major marker of differences in social and economic strata over 2000 years James B. Palais, "Confucianism and the Aristocratic/Bureaucratic Balance in Korea," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 44, no. 2 (1984): 427–68.. The principle of education does emphasize self-development, but in fact, in the current era education is more focused on how to place individuals in the hierarchical structure of society Beach, *Children Dying Inside: A Critical Analysis of Education in South Korea*, 11..

No wonder the term "Education Fever" appears that infects parents. A term that describes the aspirations, support, and strong involvement of parents in education. Lee J., "A Reconceptualization of Education Fever," *Sociological and Cultural Structure of Education Fever*, 2000, 8–54. Although not only because of parental factors but also social factors that are so complex, everyone's collective perspective on education, the structure of the education system, and the economic rewards in every educational test. The concept of "Education fever" also describes the parents' ambition to improve the social strata of the family with higher education (d. 1984).

From research conducted by researchers in the design of Delphi, the process of seeking consensus with four-stage data collection resulted in the desire of parents to help children earn higher academic degrees is the most important component in "education fever", in addition to the need or motivation of parents towards their children's social and financial success. The sad thing is that items that measure parental instinct or psychological satisfaction rank low.

Many things are done by parents to help and even impose the will of parents on their children. Research conducted in 1996 noted that 97 percent of children experience violence committed by parents and teachers, some of them even often, this is to encourage children to excel in school J. Seth, "Korean Education: A Philosophical and Historical Perspective," 9.. In 1987, about 50 high school students committed suicide after failing to enter college. And in an academic study published

in 1990 said that 20 percent of all school students had suicidal thoughts and 5 percent had tried Michael J. Seth, *Education Fever: Society, Politics, and the Pursuit of Schooling in South Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 166.. Over time, the problem worsened in 2000-2003, when more than 1,000 students between the ages of 10 and 19 committed suicide. 43-48 percent of Korean students have contemplated suicide. Not stopping at students even because his son's poor grades made a father depressed and burned himself, his wife, and his daughter outside his son's school because of shame this incident happened in 2005 James Card, "Life and Death Exams in South Korea," News, *Asia Times Online* (blog), 30 November 2005..

On the other hand, since South Korea's independence in 1948, the government has been aggressively promoting educational opportunities for all people equally. Public schools are an expected ladder of change for middle-class families not only but an academic prestige and pride James Robinson, "Social Status and Academic Success in South Korea," *The University of Chicago Press Journals* 38, no. 4 (1994): 506-30, <https://doi.org/10.1086/cer.38.4.1189209>.. But the reality is that public schools have poor quality, lack of funds, lagging curricula behind incompetent teachers, and others. So it is not surprising that parents who are rich and have money, choose to put their children in private lessons. The result is that trust in the education system decreases because teaching in schools alone is not enough to form a mature student human resource J. Seth, "Korean Education: A Philosophical and Historical Perspective.". Equality in educational opportunities cannot be realized, not to mention excessive pressure on students before facing exams, high tuition fees coupled with private tutoring costs, pedagogy that relies on rote memorization alone, educational curricula that cannot meet the needs of companies, and crowded classrooms.

Various tests for students have started as early as the secondary level, and schools are endlessly sorting students by various tests. A student's future is determined by high-stakes tests in elementary school. From this event, it is not surprising that rich people prefer private schools so that their children can get a good education and pass the expected tests. Because in Korea there is still a stigma that high achievement correlates with socioeconomic status. The system has many terms, some call it "Test Hell" or "Test Maniac".

The benchmark of a person's success is measured by exam results alone. Some people refer to South Korea's education system as "testocracy". Sorensen, "Success and Education in South Korea." If a student graduates and gets into the best university he is already successful, otherwise, he has failed. This was once summarized by an academic:

"The crux of the matter is that this system is too competitive, too exam-oriented with a single preoccupation to prepare students for college entrance exams. Hagen Koo, "The Changing Faces of Inequality in South Korea in the Age of Globalization," *Korean Studies* 31 (2007): 1-18.

An important point that researchers criticize in the South Korean education system is that the purpose of education is limited to changing social status and is material worldly to the exclusion of another, more important thing, namely the spiritual element. In Islam education is an effort to develop the quality, power, and

ability of humans to become kaffah human beings and achieve perfection in life. The process of learning and adapting individuals continuously to cultural values and societal ideals based on Islamic values. Muljono Damopolii, *Pesantren Modern IMMIM Pencetak Muslim Modern*, 1 ed. (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2011), 55. All aspects in the formation of children from the intellectual, spiritual, and physical sides are important and this is formed from cooperation between education at home, mosque, and school. Abdullah Nashih Ulwan, *Pendidikan Anak Dalam Islam* (Jakarta: Pustaka Amani, 1994). If the purpose of education is only to pursue a career, social and economic strata, it is not surprising that many problems arise afterward.

Many suicides in South Korea could be due to the absence of faith in humans. The assumption is that suicide can solve various kinds of problems faced. Not to mention the moral crisis hit by students in South Korea which is reflected in the many cases of bullying. The result of Islamic education is to have a good personality, Shaykh Hasan Al Banna formulated the term muwassafat. That is someone who has: Salīmūl 'Aqīdah (good Aqedah), Saḥīḥul Ibadah (Perfect and flawless worship), Matīnūl Khuluq (Tough and strong in all things), Qawiyyul Jismi (physical strength in question is not only strong body and muscles, but a Muslim must train himself to bring out all hidden potential in himself as a mandate from Allah), Muṣaqqaful Fikri (skill in all work), Qadīrun Alal Kasbi (independence in work), Munazzamun Fī Shu'ūnih (having order in every dealing), Harīṣun Ala Waqtihi (strong will), Nāfi'un Li Ghairihi (one who is beneficial), Mujāhidun Linafsihi (controlling the soul's passions hard, until the soul surrenders its control to the self). M. Husain Isa Ali Manshur, *Syarah 10 Muwashafat ; Penjelasan Lengkap 10 Karakter Muslim Tangguh* (Laweyan: Era Inter Media, 2017), 1.

If depicted in the form of a comparison table between the South Korean education system and the Islamic Education System it would look like this:¹⁴

Aspects	South Korea	Islamic Education
Educational Objectives	Instill in everyone a sense of National Identity and respect for National sovereignty; (perfecting the personality of every citizen, espousing the ideal of universal fraternity; developing the ability to live independently and act for a democratic State and the prosperity of all mankind; and inculcating the nature of patriotism	Forming humans with high human resources without leaving surrender to Allah SWT. Not only oriented to material things (world) but also spiritual things (hereafter).
Teacher Competence	Graduates from Teachers' Universities and pieces of training for Teachers	As uswatun hasanah, it is ethics, manners, and religion.
Curriculum	Curriculum to be revised in 2015	Based on Tawhid, Quran, and Hadith
Religion	-	Islam

¹⁴ Jarman Arroisi, Amir Reza Kusuma, "Menelaah Problem Terapi Yoga Perspektif Ibnu Taimiyah," *Jurnal Penelitian Medan Agama* 12, no. 2 (2022): 90-99.

CONCLUSION

The goal of South Korean education is to instill a sense of National identity and respect for national sovereignty, refinement of personality, universal brotherhood, and patriotism. In addition, education is also an effort to change social and economic strata in society. While the purpose of Islamic education according to Al-Ghazali is to form a perfect human being in world affairs and the hereafter. Provide knowledge and benefits for others and all of that to get pleasure in Allah SWT. Having a good personality in the term of Shaykh Hasan Al Banna is called Muwassafat. Education is not only a ladder to change social status but also to develop human potential to become a caliph on earth. Not only fostering intellectual, but spiritual, to provide strength and encouragement in responding to every failure in life.

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