

## RELIGION AS PRACTICE: THE MAKING OF AN ALMS (*ZAKAT*) FOUNDATION

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### Abstract

The purpose of the research was to offer a learning strategy that make Islamic education can be implemented in a real life, because many scholars, like Budhy Munawar Rachman, Komarudin Hidayat, and also Anies Baswedan said that there were facts of declining of values and the increasing of humanity crisis. To overcome those problems, Budi Mulya Dua Senior High School proposed a paradigm of *religion as practice*. Religion as a practice is delivered to the student not only as a cognitive side, but also as an affective side by practicing the lesson to the real life. In this research, the teacher used student-centered approach to build active learning, in which students actively formulate questions, answer questions, and solve problems by themselves. To stimulate students thought, Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approach gave the students adequate information on what happen to their society. The effort to connect the lesson with real life was framed in a project. Students of grade 10 were asked to make an alms (*zakat*) foundation starting from deciding the name of organization to distributing to the right people. To create this program interesting, the students didn't make a report based-paper but they made a web blog as a place to write and share all the activities. The result of the research showed that the students did very good achievement in understanding the meaning and also the massage of zakat. The project gave awareness to the learners on how important doing good thing is and presented unforgettable moments that giving something are wonderful experience. At the end, this project inspired the students and also the school to make another social movement. Moreover, this project became an example of how to build humanism, togetherness, and empathy to the others.

Keywords: student, teacher, students-centered, CTL, zakat foundation

### Introduction

More than 2400 years ago,  
Confucius said<sup>1</sup>:

What I hear, I forget  
What I see, I remember  
What I do, I understand

The purpose of the research is to offer a learning strategy that implement Islamic in a real life. In Islam the highest standard of quality or morality to be a good Muslim is *taqwa*. *Taqwa* is representation of a consciousness to commit become a Muslim by doing goodness and try the best to avoid doing bad thing that was abandoned by God. According to Budhy Munawar Rachman, book editor of Pendidikan Karakter, in this modern era there are facts of the declining of life values and the development of intolerance and discrimination in the society, including in schools.<sup>2</sup> Komarudin Hidayat said that one of the most important agenda for education system in Indonesia is overcoming the crisis of humanity, including the problem of the meaning of life.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, Anies Baswedan concluded that education is an important process to fulfil the promise of Indonesia's independent. The

quality of education will create a great new generation in the future.<sup>4</sup>

Morality is a major concern of education. It can be seen from Socrates and Meno puzzled questions: whether virtue can be taught or not? Is virtue born from practice? Does virtue come from natural gift or instinct? These are fundamental questions for society and also for individual, because without the existence of virtue and morality a society will devastate. This destruction is marked by the emergence of Hobbesian society, the "man who destroys another human being".<sup>5</sup> The irony is that the inclination appears quite strong when the phenomenon of violence against people, groups, and even other religions became stronger. What quite worrying is the emerging understanding that violence in this global era is done by terrorist or certain group of people that has relation to Islam.

The anxiety that had emerged from teachers is that education is basically designed and built with a very noble purpose that is to form human beings who uphold human values. There is no education that encourages the students to harm others or to do violence. Unfortunately, this world is never quiet of such people. Adolf, the *Fuhrer*, used to be diligent student and student who was never cheating and skipping class. At the time when he became a student, everything looked normal,

<sup>1</sup> Silberman, Mel, 2002, Active Learning, Yogyakarta: YAPPENDIS, page. 1

<sup>2</sup> Rachman, Budhy Munawar (ed.), 2015, Pendidikan Karakter Pendidikan Menghidupkan Nilai untuk Pesantren, Madrasah, dan Sekolah, Jakarta: The Asia Foundation dan Yayasan Paramadina, Page. xiv

<sup>3</sup> Hidayat, Komarudin (forward), 2002, Active Knowledge, Yogyakarta: YAPPENDIS, page. xii

<sup>4</sup> Baswedan, Anies, 2013, Kualitas Guru adalah Kunci Utama Kemajuan Bangsa in Gurunya Manusia, Munif Chatib, Bandung: Mizan, page. xiii

<sup>5</sup> Palmer, Joy A., 50 Pemikir Pendidikan, Yogyakarta: Jendela, 2003, page. 337

reasonable, and there was no concern that he had a strange inclination. Only one that he dreamed and that was not a rarity, what he wanted was to be a soldier. At the end, history recorded him in the astonishing event; Adolf Hitler adult is the main actor genocide of the Jews.<sup>6</sup>

School never taught Adolf Hitler to become a killer especially actors of massacre of Jews people, but that was recorded by the history. Then, where his education, dignity, compassion, and kindness are. The same thing happened to ISIS that killed hundreds of people in Iraq and Syria. Teachers or *asatidz* taught them to be an individual who care and love others, but the adherents of ISIS did the opposite. As an example, Indonesian Police noted that during 2012 every 91 seconds a crime occurred in Indonesia. Deputy Head of the Police Criminal Investigation, Police General Inspector Saud Usman (Reuters, December 26, 2012) stated that the number of crimes in 2012, precisely until November 2012, had reached 316 500 cases. Saud Usman asserted: "So, every 1 minute 31 seconds of the crime occurred." By showing those facts, what is wrong with the education system in Indonesia? Why the world is never short of people who transformed into a source of anxiety and restlessness of human beings. By doing this research it is expected that the transformation of religious education can solve those problem; create the Indonesian character that pious to God and also the other human beings.

### SMA Budi Mulia Dua: Religion as Practice

Seeing those sad phenomena makes researcher pensive and wonder; then how religion should be taught, especially related to the goal of educational system that's made by the government? It was mentioned in Laws No. 20 year 2003 Chapter II Pasal 3:

*"Pendidikan nasional berfungsi mengembangkan kemampuan dan membentuk watak serta peradaban bangsa yang bermartabat, bertujuan untuk berkembangnya potensi peserta didik agar menjadi manusia yang beriman dan bertakwa kepada Tuhan Yang Maha Esa, berakhlak mulia, sehat, berilmu, sehat, kreatif, mandiri, dan menjadi warga negara yang demokratis serta bertanggung jawab".*

The statement above confirms that national education should be able to create a human figure that has character of a positive personality. He must be tempered with a noble and civilized foundation of faith and devotion to God. Therefore a **key** for the success of national education is how many students emit a positive attitude; compassion, empathy, respect for others, and so forth.

National education should not be stuck only on the development of cognitive side only, otherwise education shall be directed to be applied and

practiced in daily life. Addressing this, SMA Budi Mulia Dua<sup>7</sup> designed learning environment which focuses on religion as a practice. Religious education should be out of the realm of cognitive and exclusive doctrinal *un sich*; i.e. the area of memorizing, accepting without any exploration, and avoiding active communication, to the development of active understanding and practice. This approach believed as a solution to build a great civilization, a civilization that emerge from active, creative, honest, compassion, empathy, and religious individual.

To make these make this approaches successful, Budi Mulia Dua has 8 learning basics as guidance for the teachers as follows:

1. Every individual is a unique one, meaning that every individual has several ways and ability to develop self-learning-process.
2. Appreciation for every achievement
3. Living values-based education
4. Orientation on directness thinking and acting
5. Learning is an open and participatory process
6. Appreciation and tolerance on the difference
7. Religion, art and sport as a practice
8. Positive discipline<sup>8</sup>

Based on those learning basics, Budi Mulia Dua is following the current education development that believed by scholars that school is the area of finding the self. School is not factory that produce thing with the same shape, colour, and style but education is a place of making a leader with strong innovative character and strong social commitment.<sup>9</sup> That's why religious teaching in school presents in front of the students in the form of shady, cool, and beautiful. Islam as values teaches virtue and virtue embodied in knowledge –

<sup>7</sup> SMA Budi Mulia Dua as a part of Budi Mulia Dua Foundation was built in 2007 as a continuation of education that starts from kindergarten, primary school, and junior high school. The motto of this school is "Bersekolah dengan Senang dan Senang di Sekolah". This motto is a representation of spirit to deconstruct a common understanding that school is insecure place from any kind of oppression whether it comes from students, teachers, also staff. And also students can learn the subjects in a comfort environment and enjoyable. Budi Mulia Dua also accommodates the diversity of student by giving their right as a unique person; every student is a distinctive individual. This believe system bring the teacher to be active and creative dealing with delivering the materials.

<sup>8</sup> Profile Budi Mulia Dua Foundation, 2012, available at: [http://budimuliadua.com/jogja/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=4:visi-misi-a-tujuan-budi-mulia-dua&catid=1:profil-budi-mulia-dua&Itemid=6](http://budimuliadua.com/jogja/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4:visi-misi-a-tujuan-budi-mulia-dua&catid=1:profil-budi-mulia-dua&Itemid=6) [accessed: 23 September, 2014]

<sup>9</sup> Hidayat, Komarudin (forehead), 2002, Active Knowledge, Yogyakarta: YAPPENDIS, page. xii

<sup>6</sup> Menggugat Pendidikan, Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2001, page. Vii-viii

friendly and far from dogmatic doctrine of right and wrong.

### The Meaning of Religion

This research focuses on number 7 of 8 bases learning that Budi Mulia Dua have implemented that is *religion as practice*. According to oxford dictionary, religion is the [belief](#) in and [worship](#) of a [superhuman controlling](#) power, especially a [personal God](#) or [gods](#).<sup>10</sup> Related to Islam, Hasan Hanafi, a prominent Muslim Scholar, do not fully agree with that common definition. He said:

*"In almost all dictionaries, the term religion refers to the area of knowledge of the supernatural, magic, rituals, beliefs, dogmas, and institutions. All components in this definition are related to human religions (popular religion) in general, but all that is irrelevant to the essence of Islam."*<sup>11</sup>

Hasan Hanafi continues that the most appropriate term for Islam is ethics, humanity and social science or ideology. Islam is actually a description of a man in the community, primary needs, moral commitment, and social action. This viewpoint is in line with the idea of "*tauhid sosial* (social monotheism)" promoted by Amien Rais, a Muslim scholar and also the founder of Budi Mulia Dua foundation. According to Amien Rais, a more comprehensive understanding of monotheism (*tauhid*) and appropriate demands of the times, should continue to be developed. He remains, now days monotheism (*tauhid*) as if only accepted as the believe system, so there is a tendency to forget the consequences of sociocultural, sociopolitical, and socioeconomic aspects. At the end, he asses that monotheistic creed should be implemented in the social level, for example justice in the society.<sup>12</sup> Then, implementing the values or the massages of religion is one side of the meaning of religion; religion is not merely worship but also doing good thing to other people. The meaning of practice as the [actual application](#) or [use](#) of an [idea](#), [belief](#), or [method](#), [as opposed to theories](#)<sup>13</sup> is relevant to religion.

<sup>10</sup> Religion, 2014, available at:

[www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/religion](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/religion) [accessed: 27 September 2014]

<sup>11</sup> Hasan Hanafi, 2007, *Etika Global dan Solidaritas Kemanusiaan; Sebuah Pendekatan Islam dalam Islam dan Humanism*, Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, page. 1

<sup>12</sup> Rais, Amien, 1995, Amien Rais: *Tauhid Sosial*, available at:

<http://www.library.ohiou.edu/indopubs/1995/11/23/0035.html> [accessed: 27 September 2014]

<sup>13</sup> Practice, 2014, available at:

<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/practice> [accessed: 27 September 2014]

### Learning of Making an Alms (Zakat) Foundation

#### Student-Centered as Paradigm

The current development of learning strategies is the emergence of student-centered as a model that will improve the involvement of student in class. Student-centered teaching methods change the focus of activity from the teacher to the learners. This method includes active learning, in which students actively formulate questions, answer questions, and solve problems of their own. During the class, the students discuss, explain, debate, or brainstorm the learning materials. Working as a group is an important part for this strategy and cooperative learning process will challenge the student. Cooperative learning assists students work in teams on solving the problems and projects under conditions that assure both positive interdependence and individual accountability. Challenging the student by making questions or problems is a kind of inductive teaching and learning that is very important because inductive methods include *inquiry-based learning*, *case-based instruction*, *problem-based learning*, *project-based learning*.<sup>14</sup>

Important characteristic of student-centered approach is that this strategy insists a deep understanding. The words "learning for understanding" it seems paradox because no one teacher who teach the students for not getting the maximum understanding. In fact, in-depth understanding involves processes that require a lot of thought, such as explaining, finding evidence, justify the thinking, give additional example, generalize, and connect the parts to the whole. Students need opportunities to practice these skills during learning new content; student-centered provide these chances to them.<sup>15</sup> Jacobsen, Eggen, and Kauchak emphasize that project based teaching is one of important expertise in developing problem solving and inquiry skills.<sup>16</sup>

To stimulate students thought, Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approach gives the student adequate information what happen to the reality or their society. Elaine B. Jhonson, recipient of awards from University of Chicago for outstanding teaching methods, made an extensive elaboration and exploration of CTL. According Jhonson, by performing CTL in class, students are actively involved in important activities that help them connect academic learning to the context of

<sup>14</sup> Felder, Richard, 2014, *Student-Centered Teaching and Learning*, available at:

<http://www4.ncsu.edu/unity/lockers/users/f/felder/public/Student-Centered.html> [accessed: 26 September, 2014]

<sup>15</sup> Jacobsen, David A. Eggen, Paul. Kauchak, Donald, 2009, *Methods for Teaching*, Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, page. 229

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, page. 242

real-life.<sup>17</sup> In practice, with this approach, students not only learn about the definition of goodness, virtue, and fruitful deeds, but also actively encouraged to practice. This accomplishment encourages the growth of consciousness of doing good things. The effort to connect the lesson with real life can be framed in the form of project. By the time the students are able to see meaning in a project being worked on then this where the real learning process taking place.

#### Making an Alms (*Zakat*) Foundation

Like what Prof. Komrudin Hidayat said that one of the problem in this modern era is the decline of humanism where sense of togetherness and empathy getting weaker, then practicing religious values is a must. Zakat is one of pillars in Islam that should be implemented by Muslim but unfortunately Indonesia has a big problem in the organizing the zakat. Many people tend to give the charity directly to the people but it is not too effective in eradicating poverty.

The subject of zakat is included at grade X Curriculum KTSP as one chapter with *Infaq* (charity) dan *Wakaf* (endowments). Based on that situation, in this chapter, students are asked to make zakat foundation that start from making the name of organization until the process of distribution to the right people. Like a real zakat foundation, researcher ask students to discuss with the group about the name of the organization, its vision and mission, governance structure, division of collecting zakat, program development division, and who will be the goalkeeper of web blog. To make this program interesting the students should not make a report based-paper but they have to make a web blog as a place to write all the activities. A philosopher, John Dewey, said that the theory should eventually manifest into something that is most practical.<sup>18</sup>

The program is a kind of a continuation of Confucius statement at the beginning of this writing that modified by Mel Silberman. According Silberman, active learning consists of:

What I hear, I forget  
 What I hear and see, I remember a little  
 What I hear, see, and ask questions about  
 or discuss with someone else, I begin to  
 understand  
 What I hear, see, and do I acquire  
 knowledge and skill  
 What I teach to another, I master<sup>19</sup>

He assists that the best way for learners in studying the material is by doing. Silberman said, our brains also need to be turned on. When learning process is passive, our brains do not alive. A computer program requires the right software to interpret the data that is entered. The real learning will not occur without any opportunity for discussion, asking questions, practicing, and even teach others<sup>20</sup>

Student's active learning start from the beginning of this project. It takes one semester to finish the program; the target for mid semester is group presentation. This presentation is describing the name of foundation, vision and mission, the distribution program, and also how to get funding. All the data and information about this charity should be in web page or web blog. The process requires good communication and understanding among students that actually very important in real life. In this section, the definition of an alms and all sources related to the obligation should be inserted, whether it is from al-Qur'an or al-Hadits. So, the presentation needs LCD projector, internet access, computer, and also sound system. At the end of semester the presentation talk about the result of the project, including the number of fundraising and the distribution.

By practicing student-centered approach, teacher gives clear direction for each step and make sure that students understand the instruction. After that students actively discuss and brainstorm in deciding all thing about the program. One important thing about the program is that the student should gather the funding or *muzakki* (the obliged person to do alms) independently and also distribute it to the right person<sup>21</sup>. This process is a apart of the application of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL). Elaine B. Johnson, Ph.D. defines CTL as:

*"...an educational process that aims to help students see meaning in the academic material they are studying by connecting academic subjects with the context of their daily lives, that is, which context of their personal, social, and cultural circumstance. To achieve this aim, the system encompasses the following eight components: making meaningful connections, doing significant work, self-regulated learning, collaborating, critical and creative thinking, nurturing the individual, reaching high standards, using authentic assessment."*<sup>22</sup>

So, students actually already did 8 components in the process of making alms (*zakat*) foundation that are:

1. Students are making meaningful connections
2. Students are doing significant work
3. Students are self-regulated learning
4. Students are doing collaborating learning

<sup>17</sup> Jhonson, Elaine B., 2007, Contextual Teaching and Learning, Bandung: Kaifa, page. 35

<sup>18</sup> Alwasilah, A. Chaedar, Tujuh Ayat Pendidikan Kontekstual in Elaine B. Johnson, Ph. D, Contextual Teaching and Learning, Bandung: MLC, 2007: 17

<sup>19</sup> Silberman, Mel, 2002, Active Learning, Yogyakarta: YAPPENDIS, page. 1

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, page. 4-5

<sup>21</sup> Based on QS. At-Taubah, verse: 60.

<sup>22</sup> Al Wasilah, Chaedar, 2011, Pengantar CTL, Johnson, Eorlaine B, Bandung: Kaifa, page. 19

5. Students are doing critical and creative thinking
6. Students are nurturing the individual
7. Students are reaching high standards
8. Students are monitoring using authentic assessment

This project uses authentic assessment methods. Authentic assessment assess the activities of learners that focus on what should be assessed, both the process and the results of the assessment instruments tailored to the demands of existing competencies. The difference with traditional assessment is the assessment of learners tend to choose response that already available (as an example multiple choice questions), while in authentic assessment of learners show or doing a task or project.<sup>23</sup> Authentic assessment is the most valuable assessment because learning strategy that use is active learning and students are more active.

Munif Chatib said that that student-centered approach produces student who "know what" (tahu apa) and "can what" (bisa apa). The individual will be more knowledgeable and skillful compared to teacher-centered where the students are pushed to "know what" (tahu apa) more. The result of this last approach is that the title of success students is the one who can answer and memorize various information of learning materials but they are lacking on knowing how to apply it in daily life.<sup>24</sup> Based on the activities that Budi Mulia Dua's students have done, it can be concluded that this method is in line with multiple intelligent strategy. Dr. Howard Gardner, the founder of multiple intelligent strategies, gives clear definition about multiple intelligent:

*"Intelligent is the ability to find and solve problems and create product of value in one's own culture."*<sup>25</sup>

According Gardner the intelligent of an individual cannot be measured suddenly from psychological test standard, but it can be seen from the habit of two things. First is the habit of an individual in solving their own problem (problem solving). Second is the habit of individual in producing new things that have cultural value (creativity).<sup>26</sup>

Related to habit, Stephen R. Covey give very interesting definition, he said that Habit is a meeting point of knowledge, skill, and desire. Knowledge is the theoretical paradigm, what to do and why. Skill is how to do it. And desire is the motivation, the desire to perform. In order for something to become a habit in our lives, we have

to have three things.<sup>27</sup> In this project, students are situated with condition that make them create a new habit; habit of discussing, brainstorming, negotiation, critical thinking, creative, sense of belonging, empathy, and so forth.

This charity project is a way to meet the behavior of students with productive actions with full of kindness, good deeds to become a character. the final step of alms (zakat) foundation is presenting the last result of the project; creating a blog, charity fundraising, selecting social organization or people who receive the charity, and also lesson learn from this activities. This is researcher note from the last presentation:

"Well on this occasion I will present the final part of this project," said Lea Mutia. Before the student is continuing presentation I accidentally saw tears flows slowly down on her cheeks. Yes, there is something strange, why Lea Mutia was crying. Before I inquired further, she looked to pull himself together and open the presentation. "Mister, we have collected the money from fundraising program and we use it to buy lunch and distributed to the pedicab drivers along Jl. Mangkubumi. And we were very touched, because the fathers of the pedicab driver looked very happy and very grateful," said Lea Mutia. Before he went on the presentation, I interrupted. "Excuse me, mister was accidentally see Lea Mutia tears?". "Emmmm, sorry mister, I just had remembered fathers face a pedicab drivers receive rice packs that we shared. They looked so happy, just like receive a big happiness. And they pray for us, for our successful"

Yudhishtira Iqbal reiterated the same thing. "I along with the group visited an orphanage and deliver aid," said Iqbal. "O yes, these pictures of us with the board and the students of the orphanage," said Al Nando. "We feel very grateful mister over everything we had," said Iqbal and "we are also very touched when delivering aid that does not amount to much. And before presentation closed Iqbal, Al Nando suddenly interrupted, "mister, after we went back to school we still got a charity fund (zakat) of Rp. 500.000, -."<sup>28</sup>

This program already inspired students and also school in spreading social movement. There is a program that called "Hati Budi Mulia" that periodically gathered money, cloth, or anything that can help others. And in some occasion, for example "Pensi" (arts performing), the students take some money to do charity.

<sup>23</sup> Kunandar, 2013, *Penilaian Autentik*, Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, page. 36-37

<sup>24</sup> Chatib, Munif, 2013, *Gurunya Manusia*, Bandung: Mizan, page. 128-129

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, page. 132

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, page. 132

<sup>27</sup> Covey, Stephen R, 1997, *the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Jakarta: Bina Rupa Aksara, page. 36

<sup>28</sup> Yusuf, Wahyudi Irwan, 2013, *Jangan Ajari Kami Apa Itu Kebajikan in Sekolah yang Menyenangkan*, Yogyakarta: PPSK, page. 159-160

## Conclusion

The anxiety that emerge among scholars is like an alarm for religious education in Indonesia. The best way to solve the problem of decreasing life values and the increasing of humanity crisis is by designing religious education to religion as practice. Religion as practice actually is the heart of religion; religion as an object of study is not only related to cognitive side but also affective. It is not merely understanding and memorizing but also apply the massage to the real life. In class, religious as practice use student-centered as paradigm and Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) as strategy. The subject that uses CTL is Zakat and grade 10 as an object of the research.

Research result showed that by student-centered approach, students are more active and creative in finishing the project. Students are asked to make an alms (zakat) foundation as a project and use web blog as creative media communication. Learners create the name, vision, mission, fundraising program, and distribution program. Authentic assessment is a type of assessment that choose to monitor the progress of students in finishing the project. To create this program interesting, the students didn't make a report based-paper but they make a web blog as a place to write and share all the activities. The result of the research showed that the students did very good achievement in understanding the meaning and also the massage of zakat. The project gives awareness to the learners how important of doing good thing and presented unforgettable moments that giving something are wonderful experience. At the end, this project inspired the students and also the school to make another social movement. It is hoped that this project is an example of how to plant humanism, togetherness, and empathy at school.

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