

Internalisation of Salafism Ideology in Al Muqit Junior High School Bontomarannu

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ABSTRACT

This research examined how Salafism ideology was instilled in Al Muqit Junior High School in Bontomarannu, Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi. The main focus was on the pattern of internalisation of Salafism values in the formal learning process, non-formal religious activities, and school culture, as well as how students responded to these values. This study employed a qualitative method that included data collection techniques such as direct observation, in-depth interviews, and document review. The findings showed that internalisation was carried out in a structured manner through tawhid-based teaching, manhaj salaf, halaqah activities, and book studies, as well as the establishment of an exclusive school culture. Students' responses to these values varied, ranging from complete acceptance and limited adjustment to non-confrontational resistance. The study concluded that, although the internalisation of ideology had been effective, there was room for value negotiation due to the diversity of students' social backgrounds. Therefore, it was considered important to develop a more dialogical and inclusive approach to religious education in order to maintain harmonious diversity in the school environment.

Keywords: Internalisation, salafisme, education

1 Introduction

The phenomenon of the development of certain religious views in educational institutions has become a crucial issue in the context of diversity and nationality in Indonesia. One of the most prominent religious ideologies is Salafism, which is an Islamic ideology orientated towards purifying Islamic teachings in accordance with the practices of the early generations of Islam (salaf as-shalih). This ideology has its appeal for some Muslims, especially because it is considered to be able to offer doctrinal certainty and adherence to textual sharia [1]. Salafism is basically not a monolithic entity. Modern development has divided Salafism into several variants, including Purist Salafism, Jihadist Salafism, and Political Salafism. These variants have different implications for religious perspectives, relations with the state, and acceptance of diversity [2]. In the context of education, the influx of Salafi ideology can shape students' way of thinking and religious behaviour. Such internalisation is expected to shape students' social interactions and religious dispositions in the wider societal context.

Education is a strategic space for transforming ideological values. Value internalisation does not only occur through the formal curriculum, but also through daily religious practices, school culture, and relationships between teachers and students [3]. Therefore, when educational institutions are administered by individuals or networks affiliated with specific ideologies such as Salafism, the potential for the internalisation of these ideological values becomes both substantial and influential. The dissemination of Salafism ideology in Indonesia occurs not only through conventional da'wah and social media platforms but also through educational institutions, including Islamic-based secondary schools. These schools serve as strategic sites for the transmission of specific values, ideologies, and belief systems, facilitated through mechanisms such as hidden curriculum, religious practices, and the role modelling of teachers [4]. Thus, investigating the mechanisms by which religious ideologies, like Salafism, are

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instilled and internalised by students in such schools is of critical importance for understanding their broader sociocultural impact.

Al Muqit Junior High School in Bontomarannu represents one of the Islamic educational institutions that is generally recognised for its inclination toward Salafi teachings. The learning process at this school integrates the national curriculum with an intensified focus on religious instruction, particularly through halaqah sessions, tawhid studies, and the habituation of religious practices aligned with Salafi interpretations. Within this framework, it becomes imperative to critically analyse the internalisation of Salafism ideology—both as a systemic educational process and as a cultural dynamic—along with an examination of how students engage with, respond to, and internalise these ideological values.

Drawing upon the preceding discussion, the central question addressed in this study was: How did the internalisation process of Salafism ideology occur at Al Muqit Junior High School in Bontomarannu? This research was considered significant in developing a critical understanding of the dynamics of religious ideology within Islamic educational institutions and its influence on the mindset and religiosity of the younger generation. This research will also contribute to the discourse of contemporary Islamic education, especially in understanding how a religious ideology can shape students' education patterns and characters. Therefore, the findings in this study are expected to contribute as an evaluation reference as well as a dialogue between Islamic values, nationality, and the principle of religious moderation.

2 Literature Review

Salafism is a form of religious ideology that emphasizes the purification of Islamic teachings based on the understanding of the Salaf generation (the first three generations of Islam). The main characteristics of this ideology include the rejection of heresy, the prioritization of textual evidence, and the spirit of exclusivity in religious practice. In various countries, including Indonesia, Salafism has developed through informal and formal education, with schools as one of the agents of its dissemination [11]. Research by Wahid and Nuryanti shows that Islamic schools that adhere to Salafi beliefs tend to develop exclusive doctrines in religious learning, with an impact on the formation of rigid religious identities [12]. On the other hand, a study by Fadli highlights the importance of monitoring ideological narratives in the hidden curriculum in religious-based schools [13].

In the context of education, schools play a role as the main agent in the process of socialization and internalization of values. According to Tilaar, schools are not only a means of transferring knowledge but also reproducing ideology [14]. The curriculum, teachers, and school culture play an active role in instilling certain values in students. Recent research by Rahma and Kusuma underlines the importance of the influence of teachers as authoritative figures in shaping students' ideological orientations, especially in religious subjects [15]. This shows that the process of internalizing values takes place intensively in the classroom and school environment.

Milton Rokeach developed the theory of internalizing values as a psychological and social process that transforms external values into part of an individual's belief system. According to him, values are stable beliefs that form the basis for assessing actions, events, and oneself [6]. Internalization occurs when these values are no longer simply followed because of external pressure, but are consciously accepted and become part of an individual's identity.

In educational practice, Rokeach divides values into two categories: terminal (the ultimate goal of life, such as safety, freedom) and instrumental (ways or means of achieving terminal values, such as honesty, responsibility). Educators who are aware of this value structure can design learning that encourages profound value transformation [16].

Rokeach's theory can be complemented by Berger and Luckmann's approach to internalization through institutionalization, where values are first communicated (externalization), institutionalized in the social system (objectivation), and finally accepted as part of personal consciousness (internalization) [10]. Contemporary studies such as those conducted by Nurfadilah and colleagues show that the process of internalizing religious values in modern Islamic schools is heavily influenced by the dominant narratives carried by teachers and textbooks [17].

3 Research Methods

This research used a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study strategy to deeply understand the internalisation of Salafism ideology at Al Muqiiit Bontomarannu Junior High School, focusing on contextual factors, key actors, and social dynamics [9]. The study took place at Al Muqiiit Junior High School in Bontomarannu District, Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi. Participants included the principal, religious education teachers, religious activity supervisors, seventh and eighth grade students, and parents as additional informants. Data were gathered through: (1) in-depth interviews with teachers, students, and the principal to explore perceptions and practices of Salafi ideology internalisation; (2) participatory observation of school activities, especially religious events such as halaqah, dzuhur lectures, and worship practices; and (3) document analysis of textbooks, modules, religious activity guides, and school policies. Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's model [10], involving: (1) data reduction—selecting and summarising key information from interviews, observations, and documents; (2) data display—organising findings narratively to reveal internalisation patterns; and (3) conclusion drawing and verification—synthesising and interpreting data to understand the internalisation of Salafi values.

4 Results and Discussion

Internalisation Process

The adoption of Salafism beliefs at Al-Muqiiit Junior High School in Bontomarannu followed the stages proposed by Milton Rokeach—compliance, identification, and internalisation. Each stage exhibited distinct psychosocial dynamics that influenced how students comprehended and embodied the religious values taught.

1. **Compliance Stage** During the compliance stage, students exhibited behaviors aligned with school religious norms, such as wearing Shar'i clothing, regulating interactions, and participating in religious activities. This compliance was primarily external and motivated by school regulations, teacher supervision, and peer pressure. Students used greetings, avoided music, and memorized hadiths to gain acceptance or avoid reprimands. Salafi values had not yet been fully internalized as personal beliefs, but had begun to permeate students' social consciousness.
2. **Identification Stage** Over time, students began to engage emotionally with the values being taught, moving beyond obedience and emulating role models like teachers or ustaz. This emulation was evident in their speech, dress, and religious views. Interview data showed that students identified certain teachers as "knowledgeable and istiqamah," inspiring a desire to emulate these figures. This identification stage, according to Rokeach's theory, is characterized by the aspiration to resemble ideal individuals or groups.
3. **Internalisation Stage** The internalisation stage involves students developing a strong conviction in Salafism's ideological values, which are considered personal truths. They can articulate their views on prohibitions, preservation of tawhid, and criticism of local religious practices. They also construct arguments to justify their actions, indicating that these values are embedded in their belief system, influencing their perceptions, attitudes, and actions, as described by Rokeach.

The results of this study indicated that students at Al-Muqiiit Junior High School in Bontomarannu gradually adopted the ideology of Salafism by progressing through the stages of compliance, identification, and internalisation, as outlined in Milton Rokeach's value internalisation framework. This pattern reflected the complex psychosocial dynamics involved in the formation of religious values among students.

At the compliance stage, students demonstrated conformity to the school's religious norms, such as wearing shar'i clothing, avoiding music, and actively participating in ritual activities. However, as Rokeach explained, this conformity was externally driven and primarily influenced by the desire for social acceptance and the avoidance of sanctions. The evidence suggested that, at this initial stage, Salafi values had not yet become fully integrated into the students' belief systems but had begun to shape a social habitus within the school environment.

The identification stage reflected a more advanced development, in which students began to imitate the behaviours and perspectives of role models—such as teachers or ustaz—who were perceived as knowledgeable and istiqamah. This process indicated an emotional affiliation with the idealised figures. Within Rokeach's framework, this stage was characterised by the acceptance of values as part of

one's self-identity through modelling. These findings reinforced the significant role of teachers as agents of ideological transmission, aligning with Bandura's [9] theory of social learning, which posited that individuals acquire behaviours through the observation and imitation of credible role models. The internalisation stage was characterised by the development of a deep personal conviction in Salafi values. Students at this stage were able to articulate and defend their beliefs through reasoned arguments, particularly in responding to local religious practices they perceived as incompatible with the principle of tawhid. This phase demonstrated that the values had been transformed into an internal belief system that guided behaviour, as emphasised in Rokeach's theory. Additionally, this phenomenon aligned with Berger and Luckmann's [10] concept of the institutionalisation of values in social life, wherein internalisation occurred through processes of habituation and the reinforcement of social legitimacy within a consistent environment.

5 Conclusion

Based on the research findings, the internalisation process of Salafi ideology at Al-Muqtiit Junior High School in Bontomarannu occurred gradually through three main phases, as proposed by Milton Rokeach: compliance, identification, and internalisation. In the compliance stage, students exhibited religious behaviours aligned with Salafi teachings as a result of social pressure and adherence to school regulations. The identification stage emerged when students began to regard teachers or ustaz as role models worthy of emulation, leading to the emotional adoption of values. At the internalisation stage, some students had consciously embraced Salafi values, integrating them into their personal belief systems, which consistently shaped their religious attitudes and behaviours both within and beyond the school environment.

This internalisation process did not occur in isolation but was significantly influenced by external factors, including the exemplary conduct of teachers, the structured and intensive nature of religious activities, and the homogeneity of the school's social environment. Nonetheless, challenges emerged from discrepancies in family values, the impact of external media, and the limited availability of space for critical dialogue within the educational setting. Therefore, although Salafi ideology had been effectively instilled through a structured educational framework, it remained essential for schools to develop approaches that not only emphasised formal compliance but also encouraged reflective understanding, enabling students to internalise religious values in a more mature, tolerant manner that was responsive to the pluralistic social context of society.

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