

THE HISTORY OF THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION DURING THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

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Abstract

The history of the growth and development of Islamic education during the Ottoman Empire, an important period that marked the advancement of scientific institutions in the Islamic world. Education during this period was understood as an integrated system that combined religious teachings, science, and moral development. The purpose of this study is to explain how educational institutions, such as madrasas, mosques, and special institutions such as Enderun, developed, as well as the role of the state in supporting the dissemination of knowledge. This article was written using the literature study method, which involves collecting and analyzing historical sources, official documents, and writings by historians to understand the dynamics of education during that period. This discussion shows that the development of Islamic education under the Ottoman Empire was greatly influenced by the political support of the sultan, the existence of a structured curriculum system, and the role of the ulama in maintaining the quality of learning. In addition, the emergence of elite institutions indicates that there was differentiation in education according to the needs of the state and society. In conclusion, Islamic education during the Ottoman Empire developed significantly and became one of the main factors that strengthened the social, cultural, and governmental structures of the empire.

Keywords: History of Education, Ottoman Turkey, Islamic Education.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education has played a significant role in the development of Islamic civilization and culture in various countries. One of the important periods in the history of Islamic education was during the Ottoman Empire, which lasted from the 13th century to the early 20th century. The Ottoman Empire was also known as the Ottoman Empire, becoming one of the largest and most influential empires in the history of Islam.

The Ottoman Empire was not only known for its military strength, but also for its contributions to science, art, and education. During its heyday, Islamic education under this dynasty experienced rapid and widespread development. This can be seen from the establishment of various educational institutions such as madrasas, mosques, and libraries spread throughout their territory.

Education at this time played a key role in preserving and spreading Islamic teachings. These educational institutions were not only centers for religious learning, but also places for studying general sciences such as mathematics, astronomy, and medicine. The

influence of Islamic education at this time was not limited to the empire, but also reached Europe and other regions through trade and diplomatic interactions¹.

Research on Islamic education at this time is important to understand how the education system was built, developed, and adapted to the changing times. By understanding the history of Islamic education during this period, we can appreciate the great contributions made by the Ottoman dynasty in the fields of Islamic education and culture.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with library research. This method was chosen because the study focuses on examining the growth and development of Islamic education during the Ottoman Empire through the exploration of written sources. Data was obtained from primary sources in the form of books on Islamic history and Ottoman Turkish history, as well as secondary sources in the form of scientific journal articles, theses, dissertations, and other relevant academic publications.

Data collection was carried out through documentary studies by reading, examining, and recording important information related to educational institutions, learning systems, curricula, and the role of the government and scholars during the Ottoman Turkish period. The collected data was then analysed using descriptive-qualitative analysis techniques through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing to obtain a complete and in-depth picture of the dynamics of Islamic education during that period.

DISCUSSION

1. History of the Establishment of the Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Empire, also known as the Ottoman dynasty, was one of the largest and most influential empires in world history. This empire existed for more than six centuries, from around 1299 to 1922. The establishment of the Ottoman Empire cannot be separated from various historical, social, and political factors that led to it².

The Ottoman Empire began as a small tribe led by Osman I, after whom the dynasty was named. Osman I came from the Qayigh tribe, one of the branches of the Oghuz Turkish confederation that settled in Anatolia. In the 13th century, this region was in a state of chaos due to Mongol attacks and the collapse of the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum.

¹ Syalabi Ahmad, *Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Islam: Imperium Turki Usmani*, (Jakarta: Kalam Mulia, 1988), 123.

² Yatim Badri, *Sejarah Peradaban Islam "Dirasah Islamiyah II"*, (Bandung: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 2000), 185.

This power vacuum provided an opportunity for Turkish tribes to expand their influence and territory.

Osman I began expanding his territory at the end of the 13th century by capturing several important cities in Anatolia. Osman I's success in expanding his territory was inseparable from his strong military support and clever political strategies. He took advantage of his enemies' weaknesses and built alliances with other Turkish tribes.

In 1299, Osman I declared independence from the Seljuk Sultanate and established his own state, which became the forerunner of the Ottoman Empire. Under the leadership of Osman I and his successors, the empire continued to expand by conquering important territories in Anatolia and its surroundings³.

Historians note that the Ottoman Empire was founded in 1281 AD in the region of Asia Minor. Its founder was Ustman bin Ethogral. Its territory included: Asia Minor and the Trace region (1354 AD), then it controlled the Dardanelles Strait (1361 AD), Casablanca (1389 AD), and subsequently the Turkish Empire conquered the Roman empires (1453 AD). The name Osman was taken from the name of their first grandfather and founder of this empire, namely Osman bin Erthogral bin Sulaeman Shah from the Qayigh clan⁴.

After the death of Osman I in 1326, his son Orhan I continued the expansion of the empire by conquering Bursa, which later became the first capital of the Ottoman Empire. Under the leadership of Orhan I, the empire began to enter European territory by conquering most of the Balkans. Orhan I also strengthened the empire's government and military structure by forming the first regular army known as the Janissaries⁵.

The Ottoman Empire reached its peak in the 16th century under the leadership of Sultan Suleiman I, known as Suleiman the Magnificent. During this period, the Ottoman Empire ruled over a vast territory covering Anatolia, the Middle East, North Africa, and most of Eastern and Southern Europe. In addition to its military strength, the empire was also known for its achievements in the arts, architecture, and science.

The establishment of the Ottoman Dynasty was the result of a combination of complex military, political, and social factors. From a small tribe led by Osman I, the empire grew into one of the largest empires in world history. This success was not only

³ Yunus Mahmud, *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam, Cet. ke 7*, (Jakarta: PT. Hidakarya Agung, 1992, 1992), 62.

⁴ Philip K. Hitti, *History of Arab*, Terj. R Cecep Lukman Yasin dan Dedi Slamet Riyadi, (Jakarta: Serambi Ilmu Semesta, 2006), 714.

⁵ Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The History of the Ottoman Empire 1300–1923*, (London: John Murray, 2005), 9–22.

based on military expansion, but also on the ability of Ottoman leaders to consolidate power and build an effective government structure.

2. The Development of Islamic Education During the Ottoman Empire

During the Ottoman Empire, the Islamic education system underwent significant development with the establishment of various educational institutions spread throughout the empire. This education system covered various levels, from elementary to higher education, which served to educate children and adults in various disciplines⁶.

a. Elementary School (Mekteb)

Basic education begins at the mekteb (elementary school), which is usually located in a mosque or special building. Here, children learn to read and write, as well as the basics of Islam, such as the Quran, hadith, and daily prayers. This basic education is very important in shaping the character and basic religious knowledge of Muslim children.

Mekteb-i Ma'arif School (general knowledge school) includes in its curriculum, in addition to religious knowledge, general knowledge such as earth science, measurement, history, and political science. The curriculum also educates children to become administrative employees. The Mekteb-i Ulum-u Edebiye School (Literature School) curriculum includes religious knowledge and Arabic language, similar to Mekteb-i Ma'arif, but also provides translators for government purposes⁷.

b. Madrasah

After completing their basic education, students can continue on to madrasah, which functions as a secondary school and college. Madrasahs teach various disciplines, including religious sciences such as fiqh, tafsir, hadith, as well as general sciences such as mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and philosophy. Some well-known madrasahs during the Ottoman Empire included Madrasah Iznik, Madrasah Sahn-Isman in Istanbul, and Madrasah Suleymaniye.⁸

The curriculum in madrasahs during the Ottoman period was very diverse and covered various disciplines. Religious education remained at the core of the curriculum, but general knowledge was also taught in depth.

⁶ Yatim Badri, *Sejarah Perdaban Islam "Dirasah Islamiyah II"*, (Bandung: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 2000), 187.

⁷ Joseph S. Szyliowies, *Education and Modernization in Middle East*, Terj. Ahmad Djainuri, (Surabaya: Al ikhlas, 2001), 169.

⁸ George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981), 27–35.

Teaching methods were usually traditional, with teachers giving lectures and students taking notes and memorizing lessons. Discussion and debate were also an important part of the teaching method, encouraging students to think critically and delve deeper into the material being taught⁹.

In addition to these two schools, Sultan Mehmed II also established a military school, a technical school, a medical school, and a surgical school, which were combined under one name *Dar-ul Ulum-u Hikemiye Ve Mekteb-i Tibbiy-e Sahane*¹⁰.

In addition to madrasahs, there are also more specific higher education institutions, such as:

1. Darul Funun

It was the forerunner of modern universities that taught higher and more specific sciences. This institution was founded in the 19th century as part of the educational reforms carried out by Sultan Mahmud II.

2. Darulkurra dan Darulhadis

Darulkurra specializes in teaching Qira'at (recitation of the Qur'an) and related sciences, while Darulhadis focuses on the study of hadith. Both institutions play an important role in preserving and developing the study of the Qur'an and hadith.

Waqf (endowment) also played an important role in the development of Islamic education during the Ottoman Empire. Many madrasahs and educational institutions were funded through waqf, which is the donation of property or assets allocated for religious and social purposes. Waqf ensured the financial sustainability of educational institutions and enabled them to operate independently of the government. Islamic education during the Ottoman Empire made a significant contribution to various fields of science and culture. Many famous scientists and scholars were born from this education system.

For example:

- a. Ibn Kemal (Kemal Pasha-Zade)

He was a prominent scholar, historian and intellectual who made a significant contribution to the fields of education and science. As a Shaykh al-Islam (the highest religious position in the empire), he played an important role

⁹ Yatim Badri, *Sejarah Peradaban Islam "Dirasah Islamiyah II"*, (Bandung: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 2000), 188.

¹⁰ Harun Nasution, *Pembaharuan Dalam Islam, Sejarah Pemikiran dan Gerakan*, Cet. ke 6, (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1991), 95.

in Islamic educational reform and the writing of scientific works¹¹. He are some of his important works:

- 1) *Tevarih-I Al-I Osman*: One of the most comprehensive historical works on the Ottoman dynasty, covering the history of the empire from its founding to the present day.
- 2) *Risalah fi al-Qada wa al-Qadar*: A theological work discussing the issue of destiny in Islam.

b. Piri Ries

He was a cartographer, navigator and naval admiral. He was renowned for his contributions to geography and cartography, which had a major influence on navigation and geographical knowledge of his time. Here are some of his important works¹²:

- 1) *Kitab-l Bahriye*: An important work containing detailed maps and navigational information about the coasts and ports of the Mediterranean Sea and surrounding areas. This book was invaluable to sailors and navigators of that era.
- 2) *Piri Reis World Map (1513)*: One of the most famous world maps of the period, demonstrating remarkable geographical knowledge and covering Europe, Africa and America.

c. Matrakci Nasuh

He was a polymath who mastered various fields of knowledge such as mathematics, history, art and military science. He is known for his contributions to cartography and illustration. Here are some of his important works:

- 1) *Beyan-l Menazil-I Sefer-I Irakeyn*: A work depicting Sultan Suleiman's journey during his military campaign to Iraq. The book is accompanied by illustrations of maps and views of the cities he passed through.
- 2) *Tarih-i Sultan Bayezid*: A historical work chronicling important events during the reign of Sultan Bayezid II¹³.

d. Ali Kuscü

¹¹ Mughni A. Syafiq, *Sejarah Kebudayaan di Turki*, (Jakarta: Logos, 1997), 143.

¹² Alfred J. Andrea dan James H. Overfield, *Sejarah Pengetahuan Geografi, Terj.* (Jakarta: Erlangga, 2009), 200–205.

¹³ Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu (ed.), *Sejarah Negara, Masyarakat, dan Peradaban Turki Usmani, Jilid. I Terj.* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2012), 432–436.

He was an astronomer, mathematician and scholar who made a significant contribution to the development of astronomy and mathematics. He also made a significant contribution to teaching and spreading knowledge in various madrasahs¹⁴. Here are some of his important works:

- 1) Risalah fi'l-Hey'a: An important work in the field of astronomy containing explanations about the structure of the universe and the movements of celestial bodies.
- 2) Sarh al-Mulakhkhas: : A commentary on the work of Qut'b al-Din al-Shirozi in the field of astronomy.

These figures, along with other scholars, made significant contributions to the development of education and science during the Ottoman Empire. Their works not only enriched the knowledge of their time, but also laid the foundations for knowledge and education in the Islamic world to this day.

The challenges in implementing Islamic education during the Ottoman Empire¹⁵:

1. Limited Human Resources

- a) Human resources, shortages of qualified teachers and teaching staff are often problematic. Although there are many madrasahs, not all of them have competent teaching staff, which has an impact on the quality of education received by students.
- b) Physical Resources, Limited Educational Facilities such as school facilities, classrooms and libraries also pose challenges. Many Madrasahs and mektebs operating with minimal facilities, which can hinder the teaching and learning process.

2. Politics and Social Stability

- a) War and Conflict: The Ottoman Empire was often involved in conflicts and wars, both internal and external. These conditions could disrupt social and economic stability, which in turn could affect educational activities. Many madrasahs had to close or experience a decline in activity during times of conflict
- b) Policy Changes: Educational policy was often influenced by political changes and changes in leadership. Each new Sultan or leader may have different

¹⁴ Mughni A. Syafiq, *Sejarah Kebudayaan di Turki*, (Jakarta: Logos, 1997), 145.

¹⁵ Mubarak, dkk, *Sejarah Peradaban Islam*, (Bandung: Pustaka Bani Quraisy, 2004), 173.

priorities and visions for education, which can lead to instability in the implementation of educational programmes¹⁶.

3. Limited Access and Distribution of Education¹⁷

- a) Geography and Infrastructure: The vastness of the Ottoman Empire, which covered a wide range of geographical terrain, made the distribution of education a challenge. Rural and remote areas often had more limited access to educational institutions than urban areas.
- b) Social inequality means that access to education is often uneven. Children from wealthy and influential families have more opportunities to obtain an education than children from poor families.

4. Religious and Cultural Differences and Tensions

- a) Ethnic and religious diversity, the Ottoman Empire was a multi-ethnic and multi-religious entity. Although the government sought to maintain tolerance, tensions between different ethnic and religious groups sometimes arose, which could affect the educational environment.
- b) Assimilation and education, the challenge of balancing religious education with secular education and science often arose. There is a need to maintain Islamic identity while also adopting knowledge and practices from the outside world¹⁸.

5. Development of Science and Technology

- a) Curriculum adaptation, rapid developments in science and technology require adaptation in the education curriculum. Challenges arise in harmonising traditional knowledge with new discoveries and innovations, as well as in integrating more modern teaching methods.
- b) Educational innovation, the need to continuously develop teaching and learning methods to remain relevant and effective. This includes the application of new technologies in education and the use of more advanced pedagogical methods.

6. Education Financing

¹⁶ Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 210–225.

¹⁷ Nata, dkk, *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam, Cet. ke 2*, (Jakarta: PT. Raja Grafindo Persada, 2010), 48–49.

¹⁸ Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State, and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 45–65.

- a) Dependence on Waqf: Many educational institutions depend on waqf for funding. When economic conditions weaken or there are problems in waqf management, funding for educational institutions can be disrupted.
- b) Government support. Despite government support, budget constraints and other priorities in state spending can affect the amount of funds allocated to education.

Faced with these challenges, the Ottoman Empire sought to maintain and develop a strong and sustainable Islamic education system. Despite various obstacles, efforts continued to improve access, quality and relevance of Islamic education throughout the empire¹⁹.

3. The Fall of the Ottoman Empire

The fall of the Ottoman Empire was a long process and did not happen suddenly. Historically, over the course of five centuries (from the late 13th century to the early 19th century), the Ottoman Empire experienced ups and downs. There were two factors that led to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire:

a. Internal Factors

1) Weak Leadership of the Sultan

It seems that historians agree that the weakness of the sultans and the bureaucratic system of the Ottoman Empire led to its downfall. A weak sultan was enough to cause the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Conversely, could a capable sultan have slowed down the process of decline in the empire's political system²⁰.

2) Weaknesses in the economic sphere and the culture of corruption among the sultans

The Ottoman Empire's ability to meet domestic needs began to weaken, while at the same time European nations developed economic and financial structures for their own interests. The emergence of new economic and financial powers in Europe was the result of economic development. European expansion into the Americas and Africa was driven by hopes of increase prosperity and the tools needed to expand trade in the eastern hemisphere. This trade route broke

¹⁹ Nata, dkk, *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam, Cet, ke 2*, (Jakarta: PT. Raja Grafindo Persada, 2010), 50.

²⁰ Sulasman Suparman, *Sejarah Islam di Asia dan Eropa*, (Bandung, CV Pustaka Setia, 2003), 193.

with the traditions and regulations imposed by the powers that controlled the Middle East.²¹

In general, the morals of state officials in the Ottoman Empire were poor, with manipulation and collusion being commonplace and frequently practised. This led to the buying and selling of positions within the Ottoman government. To occupy the seat of Shadrul al-A'zam, a candidate had to give a large number of gifts as bribes to the sultan and his family²².

3) Military Decline

The lack of development in the arms industry greatly affected the Ottoman Empire, which relied heavily on the military as the backbone of the empire. Meanwhile, the Europeans succeeded in creating new weapons. They also modernised their armed forces and strengthened their organisation, enabling their troops to launch an attack on the Ottoman Empire in 1774²³.

b. External Factors

1) The European Renaissance

During the decline of the Ottoman Empire in the middle period of Islamic history, Western European countries were experiencing rapid progress. This was in contrast to the classical period of Islam. When Islam was at its peak, Europe was still in a state of ignorance and backwardness.

The 16th to 17th centuries AD were important centuries in history. During this period, Europe rose with all its might to catch up with its backwardness in the classical era. Europeans rose with all their might to investigate the secrets of the universe, conquer the oceans and explore continents that were previously shrouded in darkness. They produced new discoveries in all fields of science and art, as well as in all areas of life. Thus, brilliant figures emerged from various fields of knowledge, such as Galileo, Newton, etc²⁴.

Since the 15th century, the above factors had contributed to the weakening of the Ottoman Empire. One by one, its territories fell away, and eventually the Ottoman Empire collapsed²⁵.

²¹ Mughni A. Syafiq, *Sejarah Kebudayaan di Turki*, (Jakarta: Logos, 1997), 104.

²² Ahmad Syalabi, *Imperium Turki Usmani*, (Jakarta: Kalam Mulia, 1988), 51.

²³ Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. I, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 254–270.

²⁴ Firdaus, "Negara Adikuasa Islam", (Padang: IAIN IB Press, 2000), 50.

²⁵ John Henry, *The Scientific Revolution and the Origins of Modern Science*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 80–105.

2) Attacks from Outside

The military war between the Ottoman Turks and the Europeans turned into a religious war. When a holy alliance (Haf Miqadd) was formed between Austria, Poland and Bundukia to jointly attack the Ottoman Turks, it had a profound effect on the defeat of the Ottoman Turks and greatly weakened their power. In the name of Christianity, Russia also joined other Christian countries in declaring war on the Ottoman Empire.

As a result of these attacks by Christian countries, the Ottoman Empire suffered a severe blow and incurred heavy losses²⁶. The emergence of new politics on the European mainland can be considered one of the factors that accelerated the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

Direct confrontation with European powers began in the 17th century, when each economic power sought to regulate the world economy. While the Ottoman Empire was busy reforming the state and society, European nations were strengthening their military, economy and technology and taking advantage of the Ottoman Empire's weaknesses²⁷.

CONCLUSION

During the Ottoman Empire, education underwent significant development with an emphasis on religious instruction, science, and practical skills. The Ottoman government established various educational institutions, ranging from primary schools (mekteb) to universities, which played an important role in the dissemination of knowledge throughout the empire. The educational curriculum covered various disciplines, including theology, Islamic law, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and literature.

The Ottoman Empire had been a great power for centuries with a fairly high level of civilisation. Ottoman civilisation was a blend of the great cultures of Persia, Europe and Arabia. Over time, the Ottoman Empire declined from the 16th century onwards. Its territories were gradually conquered and fell into the hands of other nations.

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²⁶ *Ibid.*

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