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نظر

**Islamic Higher Education in the Asean Region:
Opportunities and Challenges**

Frank Dhont

**Private Islamic Higher Education in Asean Economic
Community (Aec) Era**

Mulyawan Safwandy N., Dadang S., Aeni Latifah

تطوير نموذج العلوم الاسلامية فى التعليم العالى الإسلامى بإندونيسيا

(دراسة نقدية فى جامعة أمبون الإسلامية الحكومية)

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Editorial:

Islamic Education's Challenges in Asean Economic Community (AEC) Era

ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) has started to be implemented at the end of 2015 in the region of Southeast Asian Countries including Indonesia. It serves as free trade realization in the ASEAN region. For Indonesia, AEC is one way of attracting foreign investors to infuse their investment in the nation's development covering infrastructure, economic, industry and job vacancies affected to lifted-up opportunities as much as possible and reduce the number of unemployment. Therefore, AEC has opened up opportunities for skilfull employees with special skills to work both in their own countries and other member countries of ASEAN.

By offering open access, AES has increased the countries' competitiveness in the Southeast Asia region in various fields and professions. Every country in the region should have to prepare to competition one to another country including education institutions in Indonesia. In response to this, education insitutions in Indonesia ranging from elementary to college and university should uphold and cultivate vision of competitiveness since they are responsible for preparing students in the future to be able to have competitive skills and gain advantages in national, bilateral, regional, multilateral, and global levels. In the same vein, Frank Dhont made it clear that the Islamic colleges and universities in Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia has been exhibiting a good tradition and they are the most likely to grow rapidly. The main reason is that because these three countries are predominantly Muslims and they have one thing in common; it is the history of the Islamic university development serving as the nation's cultural identity and heritage. The cooperation among the three countries is very likely to produce better human resources that can compete globally while at the same time they maintain their noble characters. In line with this Karman argues that Islamic Higher Education graduates should not only be able to cope with multilateral country challenges they face by mastering sciences, technology, but also religion.

At the national level, Islamic higher education institutions both state and private in Indonesia should be strengthened maximally in order to create better competitiveness characters in the Southeast Asia level. Private Islamic Higher Education (PTKIS) which in many aspects are lag far behind the State Islamic Higher Education (PTKIN) colleges and universities, must work harder to keep improving their performance. According to Mulyawan et al. One of the key factors in strengthening PTKIS is the management of the college playing the most important role for institutional reinforcement. Higher education management includes leadership vision, qualified lecturers,

as well as curriculum which is responsive to changing times and infrastructure.

However, ASEAN countries in addition to reaping the benefits that AEC offer, they should also consider morality issues concerning their future generation. It goes without saying that a completed open access of AEC will have both negative and positive impacts. Therefore, the Governments should prioritize the agenda of strengthening noble characters of students. In line with this, Santi Lisnawati in her research conducted in SDIT Insantama Bogor found that character pattern development can be used as a model of positive character formation of students in order to cope with the challenges and negative impacts of current technological advances. The research also found that Methods of Habituation provided positive attitudes towards oneself, God, others, and the surrounding environment that continued to be cultivated in many forms of attitude including sincerity, honesty, confidence, empathy, forgiveness, and tolerance. This character pattern development program were run under supervision of the school principal, teachers and staffs of the school. Thus, the students' progress in learning sciences and technology is simultaneously empowered by positive moral conducts.

Andewi Suhartini outlines her research concerning the activities' cultivation for students in depth which at the end was considered to affect students' positive behaviors. List of cultivative activities found mostly in *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) covering five times prayer congregation, *duba* prayer, Monday and Thursday fasting, al-Quran recitation; those can be implemented in school. These activities are likely to contribute significantly to students' characters that are crucial for future generation in coping with the challenges of AEC. Similarly, Edi Kurnanto who conducted a study on forms of guidance and counseling development is inspired by Islamic thought called Model of al-Fātihah-Based Guidance and Counseling (FBGC). His study reviews literatures and concludes that the FBGC can be used as a complementary service in the implementation of guidance and counseling at Islamic schools to support the embodiment of the golden generation after one hundred years of Indonesian independence in 2045.

Finally Andang Saehu, Riswanto and Hanura Febriani concern their study on future generation in terms of English communication competence to deal with the AEC challenges. They found that English foreign language teaching should also be taken into consideration of Islamic values to be incorporated in learning materials. Reading and listening skills may employ Islamic teachings that serve as its materials. This effort may contribute to both students' English communication skills and their improvement of cultivated moral conducts that they need to cope with AEC opportunities and challenges.

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