

The Political Role of Khalifah Al-Ma'mun in Developing Islamic Education

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Keywords: political role; Khalifah al-Ma'mun; Islamic education	Al-Ma'mun was known as a caliph who really loved knowledge. at the time of Al-Ma'mun Islamic education experienced progress in terms of education certainly not It just came, but was the result of the hard work of the caliph and the Muslims at the time. The Caliph took an active role in science. To find out more, the authors use library research methods. The author wants to know Al-Ma'mun's policies regarding education, the development of Islamic education during Al-Ma'mun's time, and the political role of Islamic education in the caliph Al-Ma'mun. This paper needs to be discussed, because it provides the development of knowledge, especially the development of Islamic education. Al-Ma'mun's policy in Islamic education is to advance the movement of translators of foreign language books, writing, providing libraries, establishing educational institutions, conducting scientific research and scientific discussion. During the time of Al-Ma'mun education Islam has progressed covering various fields of knowledge, both general science as well as religious knowledge, as well as the development of Islamic educational institutions, such as madrasas, formal schools, and universities in various Islamic cultural centers. During the Abbasid dynasty, led by Al-Ma'mun, religious ideas also colored it political situation in the Islamic world.
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INTRODUCTION

The beginning of Al-Ma'mun's caliphate marked a new beginning for the Abbasid state, with his establishment in Marw and his upbringing there, followed by his conflict with his brother Al-Amin and his approach towards the Alawi Shii trend. The politically and religiously reflected results had an impact on the institution of the caliphate itself, forming a new turning point and critical stage in the history of the Abbasid state. The policy of seclusion (i'tizal) crystallized as an official doctrine of the state after Al-Ma'mun's ascension to the caliphate in the year 212 AH/827 CE.¹

Caliph Al-Ma'mun is a figure of a leader as well as someone who is intellectual. Caliph Al-Ma'mun was a caliph who was an expert on politics and war strategy. Caliph Al-Ma'mun was a very diligent leader. Study. And often hold discussions to exchange ideas. As well as having great attention to the science of rhetoric as a reflection of the setting behind his study of the Koran, hadith, and kalam. And can push for his great concern for the mindset of rationalism and freedom of thought and religious policy.

Al-Ma'mun during his reign has a great interest in studying various disciplines of knowledge. During his reign, he managed to bring Muslims reached the peak of glory, and Islamic educational institutions began popping up. These institutions play an important role in the growth of arts and in developing scientific activities. All of that can't be released from the famous Academy of Science formation with the designation The House Of Wisdom (Baitul Hikmah), pioneered at the time caliph Harun Ar-Rashid. During the reign of caliph Al-Ma'mun the Baitul Hikmah library began to develop into a university, as translation institutes, and research centers.

Progress in the field of science is progress in the field of education. This means that during the time of Al-Ma'mun Islamic education experienced progress in terms of education, of course, it did not come just like that, but was the result of the hard work of the caliph and the Muslims at that time. The Caliph took an active role in science. The progress of Islamic education during the time of caliph Al-Ma'mun could not be separated from the life of students at that time. Because the progress of a nation and a country is due to the quality of the people who live in that nation and country. Human quality is produced from the quality of the educational process that is carried out.

¹ Hussein Raja Al-shouqirat dkk., "The Trend Of Al-I'tizal Between The Caliphs' Acceptance And The Resistance Of Jurists: The Example Of Al-Ma'mun, Al-Mu'tasim, And Al-Wathiq (198 AH/813 CE-232/847 CE)," *Journal of Namibian Studies : History Politics Culture* 34 (17 Juni 2023): 383–98, <https://doi.org/10.59670/jns.v34i.1524>.

RESEARCH METHOD

The authors use library research methods. library research is a research activity carried out by collecting information and data with the help of various materials in the library such as reference books, similar previous research results, articles, notes, and various journals related to the problem to be solved. Activities are carried out systematically to collect, process, and conclude data using certain methods/techniques to find answers to the problems faced.²

The author wants to know Al-Ma'mun's policies regarding education, the development of Islamic education during Al-Ma'mun's time, and the political role of Islamic education in the caliph Al-Ma'mun.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Background of Islamic Education During the Caliphate of Al-Ma'mun

Al-Ma'mun is a famous caliph throughout the history of the Abbasid dynasty. Besides being a brave warrior, also a wise ruler. His reign marks very great progress in the history of Islam. During more or less 20 years of his leadership, he was able to leave a very valuable legacy of Islamic intellectual progress. These advances cover various aspects of science, such as mathematics, medicine, astronomy, and philosophy. Al-Ma'mun reigned from 198-218 H/813-833 AD.³

Al-Ma'mun as a substitute for his father continued the scientific tradition and translated the works of Greek scientists into Arabic. Al-Ma'mun was a figure of the Bani Abbas whose knowledge, bravery, greatness, and intelligence were the most important, far different from his brother al-Amin. Al-Ma'mun was a caliph who really loved science and was pious in nature. It was his nature and good character that enabled him to hold government posts for 20 years. However, Al-Ma'mun's magnanimity and good character received sharp attention when there was a controversy regarding the imposition of *mihnah* against his discussion opponents.⁴

Al-Ma'mun as a caliph paid serious attention to the development of education. This

² Milya Sari dan Asmendri Asmendri, "Penelitian Kepustakaan (Library Research) dalam Penelitian Pendidikan IPA," *Natural Science* 6, no. 1 (10 Juni 2020): 41–53, <https://doi.org/10.15548/nsc.v6i1.1555>.

³ Ali Nupiah, *Pola dan Perkembangan Pendidikan Islam pada Periode Abbasiyah*, (Jakarta: Kencana, 2011 (Jakarta: Kencana, 2011), 71.

⁴ Nupiah, 71.

can be seen, for example, he founded many educational institutions which were used as a means of learning and developing knowledge for the community at that time. He is also aggressively doing translations and *halaqah's* that discuss and study science. Among the educational institutions established is the library. The library is a "warehouse" of knowledge because scientific books are stored there. Libraries developed widely during the Abbasid dynasty, both public libraries and private libraries. Factors that led to the development of libraries, among others, were the widespread use of paper materials to copy books, the emergence of copyists, and the development of writers and scholars, besides that respect for science encouraged Muslims to buy books from various countries. At that time the library became a very important place in the development of science and culture.⁵

Al-Ma'mun activated the translation centered on *Bayt al-Hikmah*, a library, academy, as well as a translation bureau that was first started by Harun Ar-Rashid. al-Ma'mun invited scientists from various religions to come to Bayt al-Hikmah. He places intellectuals in a noble and highly respected position. Philosophers, linguists, doctors, physicists, mathematicians, astronomers, jurists, and scholars who mastered other sciences were paid high wages. One of the translators whose salary was very high was the translator Hunain bin Ishaq, a Nestorian Christian who translated various Greek works such as Aristotle, Plato, Hippocrates, Ptolemy, Galen, and others.⁶

Especially during the period of the caliph al-Ma'mun (813-833 AD) the golden peak was reached. Movements that undermine state sovereignty can be overcome, rational mindsets are encouraged to develop, democratic government is initiated, education develops rapidly, scientific activities show encouraging achievements and educational and scientific institutions grow and thrive. Thus, the reign of caliph al-Ma'mun was the glory of the Arab nation. K. Ali in Munjahid called the reign of caliph al-Ma'mun the Islamic Augustan era. The progress made during the period of caliph al-Ma'mun made Islam increasingly recognized by the Western world, especially with the written works he left during that period both translations, comments, and originals as well as the many well-known figures in various disciplines at that time. Muslims at that time could be said to be the "Kings of the World".⁷

⁵ Imam Nurhakim, "Kebijakan Khalifah Al-Ma'Mun Tentang Pendidikan Islam," *An-Nidzam : Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Dan Studi Islam* 4, no. 1 (29 Juni 2017): 31–42, <https://doi.org/10.33507/an-nidzam.v4i1.24>.

⁶ Rohana, Lubis, dan Ridwan, "Gerakan Penerjemahan Sebagai Bagian Aktivitas Dakwah Dan Keilmuan Di Dunia Islam (Tinjauan Historis Gerakan Penerjemahan Pada Masa Khalifah Harun Ar-Rasyid Dan Khalifah al-Ma'mun)," *JURNAL ILMU PERPUSTAKAAN (JIPER)* 3, no. 2 (31 Maret 2021): 15–33, <https://doi.org/10.31764/jiper.v3i2.4418>.

⁷ Munjahid, "Kebijakan Pendidikan Khalifah Al-Ma'mun dan Implikasinya terhadap Kemajuan

Al-Ma'mun's policy on education

Education and politics (power), both are important elements in the socio-political system in every country. The two are often seen as separate parts, which do not have any relationship with each other, even though they work hand in hand in the process of forming the characteristics of society in a country, more than that they also support and complement each other. The following are some of the policies of caliph al-Ma'mun's government:

Foreign language book translation movement

Social education for Muslims only finds its expansion when Islamic communication has spread to various corners and parts of the world outside the Arabian Peninsula. The spread of "non-religious sciences" into Islam during the Abbasid period held its power, precisely during the caliphate of al-Mansur until the time of al-Ma'mun until the time afterward until the X century AD with the translation of foreign books on a large scale.⁸ The role of the caliph al-Ma'mun in translation activities was very large, the government's large wealth was used for educational activities, especially in translating books in foreign languages. Al-Ma'mun as the caliph ordered to collect books in foreign languages from anywhere regardless of the costs involved, even the caliph al-Ma'mun used to pay translators in gold for the weight of the books they translated.⁹

As a translator Sheikh at that time was Hunain bin Ishak, one of the greatest and most noble scholars of his time. He was a Nestorian Christian who in his youth worked as an apothecary for the caliph's personal physician. Hunain's prowess as a translator is confirmed by reports stating that he as a translator receives a salary of 500 dinars every month, more than what other translators earn. The salary is a value that is quite expensive for the size at that time.¹⁰

Writing of original works

To realize the writing of original works, caliph al-Ma'mun approached the philologist al-Farra' and asked him to write a work on language. The scientist was given a place in an

Ilmu Pengetahuan," *Risalah, Jurnal Pendidikan dan Studi Islam* 6, no. 2 (13 Oktober 2020): 273–88, https://doi.org/10.31943/jurnal_risalah.v6i2.152.

⁸ Hasnan Abdi, "The Paradigm of Science Development at the Time of Al-Ma'mun (198-218H/813-833M)," *Book Chapter of Proceedings Journey-Liaison Academia and Society* 1, no. 2 (31 Oktober 2022): 155–64.

⁹ "Kebijakan Pendidikan Khalifah Al-Ma'mun dan Implikasinya terhadap Kemajuan Ilmu Pengetahuan."

¹⁰ Syamaruddin Nasution, *Sejarah Peradaban Islam* (Pekanbaru: Yayasan Pekanbaru Riau, 2013), 202.

apartment in his palace with good helpers. In addition, caliph al-Ma'mun also gave him a scribe. Then caliph al-Ma'mun ordered that the writing be done in the library, then al-Farra' dictated, in general, a book on the exegesis of the Al-Qur'an.¹¹ This shows that the works of Islamic scientists have started long ago to develop Islamic education.

Library Provision

In relation to educational needs, the library is a basic requirement so that the educational institution concerned can move forward. Bait al-Hikmah which is an educational institution that was established and reached its heyday during the time of caliph al-Ma'mun has a large public library. In the library, scientific books are collected in various languages, namely: Arabic, Greek, Syriac, Persian, Indian and Qibthian and cover various fields of science. Caliph al-Ma'mun once appointed al-Khwarizmi, an exact scientist, astronomer, and creator of al-Jabr science, as head of the library at Bait al-Hikmah.¹²

Factors that led to the development of libraries, among others, were the widespread use of paper materials to copy books, the emergence of copyists, and the development of writers and scholars, besides that respect for science encouraged Muslims to buy books from various countries.¹³

Establishment of Educational Institutions

Educational institutions during the Abbasid period were divided into two, namely before *madrasas* and *madrasas*, before *madrasas* consisted of *maktab*, *halaqah*, *assemblies*, *mosques* and *khan* (student dormitories). Meanwhile, the first *madrasa* was the *Nizhamiyah madrasa*, a *madrasa* that was able to preserve scientific traditions and spread the teachings of Islam in a certain version. But related to standardization and preservation of teachings are less able to support the development innovative science and research.¹⁴

The caliph al-Ma'mun established educational institutions which were places for studying knowledge everywhere. There is almost no village where caliph al-Ma'mun did not have a school. At a minimum, one *Maktab* (basic educational institution) is established per village. *Bait al-Hikmah* which was the first Islamic University was founded by caliph al-Ma'mun in around 815 AD whose presence was very important as an institution to develop various sciences. Even the caliph's palace itself was used as an educational institution, so

¹¹ “Kebijakan Pendidikan Khalifah Al-Ma'mun dan Implikasinya terhadap Kemajuan Ilmu Pengetahuan.”

¹² [CSL STYLE ERROR: reference with no printed form.].

¹³ Nurhakim, “Kebijakan Khalifah Al-Ma'mun Tentang Pendidikan Islam.”

¹⁴ Serli Mahroes, “Kebangkitan Pendidikan Bani Abbasiyah Perspektif Sejarah Pendidikan Islam,” *TARBIYA: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 1 (18 April 2015): 77–108.

many experts in science and literature gathered there, poets, physicians, and philosophers who were asked to come by the caliph al Ma'mun from all over the world who had progressed.¹⁵

Scientific research

Caliph al-Ma'mun also developed scientific research, a stargazing tool that was founded by the caliph al-Ma'mun in Baghdad to function as a research tool. Caliph al-Ma'mun also once ordered scholars to study the Majhisti book which contains astronomy, then the caliph al-Ma'mun ordered him to make binoculars to study the stars as made by Bathlimus, the author of al Majhisti. They carried out the order, they made stargazers in Baghdad and Damascus and all the results of their investigations were recorded in a book and named Al-Ma'muni's Observatory. Another caliph al-Ma'mun's policy was to establish an Observatory center on the Tadmor Plain for the benefit of astronomical and geometric research. Space observations at that time experienced rapid progress. For example, Abu Hasan was able to invent a tube telescope.¹⁶

The science of astronomy was developed because this field of knowledge greatly supports Islamic personal beliefs, such as in determining the beginning and end of the month of Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, and so on. All of this requires careful calculations based on the rotation of the heavenly bodies. Careful calculations can be done by studying the science of arithmetic.¹⁷

Scientific discussion

Caliph al-Ma'mun also promoted discussion as a very effective educational process. Discussions were held at the palace regarding various issues, such as: logic, law, grammar, and other sciences. Caliph al-Ma'mun was very concerned about the great figures of scientists even though their tendencies and nationalities were different. Often he started discussions and aroused scientists for discussion. He forbade philosophers and scholars to put forward the arguments of their holy books. He told them not to postulate the Koran or the Bible in the hope of luring him. Caliph al-Ma'mun also conducted philosophical studies. Tuesday is reserved for this study. Educated people and educated people took turns entering the study room of caliph al-Ma'mun. He entertained them with various philosophical discussions.¹⁸

¹⁵ “Kebijakan Pendidikan Khalifah Al-Ma'mun dan Implikasinya terhadap Kemajuan Ilmu Pengetahuan.”

¹⁶ [CSL STYLE ERROR: reference with no printed form.].

¹⁷ Samsul Nizar, *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam: Menelusuri Jejak Sejarah Pendidikan Era Rasulullah Sampai Indonesia* (Jakarta: Kencana Prenada Media Group, 2008).

¹⁸ “Kebijakan Pendidikan Khalifah Al-Ma'mun dan Implikasinya terhadap Kemajuan Ilmu

The Political Role of Islamic Education in Caliph Al-Ma'mun

Educational institutions and processes play an important role in shaping people's political behavior, and vice versa, political institutions and processes have a major impact on the characteristics of their education. So education and politics (power) have a close and dynamic relationship. This relationship is an empirical reality that has occurred since the beginning of the development of human civilization and has become a concern of scientists. Therefore, the ruler's policy on education will greatly influence how development and progress of education. As described above, al-Ma'mun as a caliph paid serious attention to the development of education. This can be seen, for example, he founded many educational institutions which were used as a means of learning and developing knowledge for the community at that time. He also intensively carried out translations and *halaqahs* which discussed and studied science.

Factors to realize the creation of scientific and intellectual development. First, welfare through economic improvement. At the time of the Caliph Harun, scholars, poets, writers, and others were given living facilities. They lived in the caliph's palace. During al-Ma'mun's time, they were paid handsomely. Second, knowledge is valued. At the time of the caliph Harun, he and the Persian family competed to give gifts to translators in the form of gold weighing the book they translated. Third, the ruler of the state is a person with a scientific mind.¹⁹

Islamic education as a system cannot be separated from political conditions. During the Abbasid dynasty, religious ideas also colored the political situation in the Islamic world. The ups and downs of various religious sects in the political arena have led to changes in the policies of the authorities, as a result of which the implementation and conditions of Islamic education have also been affected. Islamic education which is experiencing growth is developing rapidly, due to changes in the atmosphere and Islamic political policies.²⁰

The Caliphs at all times considered the Imams of Ahlul Bait a.s. as a source of political movement and a symbol of resistance, a haven for the opposition. Therefore, none of the Imams of Ahlul Bait a.s. who have survived persecution, ill-treatment, hardship and the target of spying, imprisonment or murder.

Pengetahuan.”

¹⁹ Nasution, *Sejarah Peradaban Islam*, 203.

²⁰ Nuzulia Istiningsih dan Mukani, “Kontribusi Masa Khalifah Al-Ma'mun terhadap Dunia Pendidikan Islam,” *Urwatul Wutsqo* 5, no. 2 (6 September 2016): 107–31.

The political situation during the time of Imam al-Jawad a.s. is a situation where oppression and suppression and terror against the leaders of Ahlul Bait a.s. and his followers. This period was the time of the Caliphs al-Ma'mun and al Mu'tashim, and the period of conflict between the power centers of the Bani Abbas. Al-Ma'mun only took power after he succeeded in defeating his brother, al-Amin who was killed at the hands of one of al-Ma'mun's commanders, named Thahir bin Husain.

This event gave birth to disputes within the Abbasid government, which prompted al-Ma'mun to appoint Imam al-Jawad as crown prince and marry him to Umm Fadhl. All the plans carried out by al-Ma'mun aim to win the support of the followers of Ahlul Bait a.s. and extinguish the spirit of rebellion among the Alawiyyin, as well as control the attitude of the people towards the political upheavals that occurred between al-Ma'mun and al-Amin which ended with the killing of his brother. Thus, the acceptance of Imam al-Jawad a.s. against the position of crown prince remained compulsorily, on the condition that was submitted to al-Ma'mun, that he would not interfere in government affairs as long as al-Ma'mun was still alive so that he would not bear the burden of responsibility and so that he would not support al-Ma'mun's reign.

Even though there was a mix of al-Ma'mun's political roles in his government, it did not dampen his enthusiasm to continue to develop Islamic education. This is proof that Islam during Al-Ma'mun's reign showed that Islam was winning its glory and this is an example that Islamic education must continue to rise and be able to continue to upgrade its knowledge in accordance with the times so that it is not left behind by other scientific fields.

CONCLUSION

During Al-Ma'mun's time, Islamic education progressed to cover various fields of knowledge, both general knowledge and religious knowledge. Al-Ma'mun as a caliph paid serious attention to the development of education. This can be seen from the many establishments of educational institutions that were used as a means of learning and developing knowledge for the community at that time. Al-Ma'mun's policy in Islamic education was to promote the movement of translators of foreign language books, to write original works, to provide libraries, to establish educational institutions, and to carry out scientific research and scientific discussions.

The development of Islamic education during the time of Al-Ma'mun developed very rapidly. It was even during Al-Ma'mun's time that it was said that the progress of classical

Islam in science reached its peak. The heyday of Islamic education was a period in which Islamic education developed rapidly, marked by the development of Islamic educational institutions and madrasas, formal schools, and universities in various centers of Islamic culture. Islamic education as a system cannot be separated from political conditions. During the Abbasid dynasty, religious ideas also colored the political situation in the Islamic world. The ups and downs of various religious sects on the political stage have led to changes in the policies of the authorities, as a result of which the implementation and conditions of Islamic education have also been affected. Islamic education which is experiencing growth is developing rapidly, due to changes in the atmosphere and Islamic political policies.

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