
Religious Schools: Dualism Between Academic and Religious Attainments
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This presentation will analyze the economic implication of and policy recommendation for religious schools. Particular reference will be made to Islamic boarding schools (*Pesantren*) in Indonesia. Religious schools have more than one objective as opposed to regular schools which focus on academic attainments. As a consequence religious schools must operate more efficiently to allocate limited resources such as teachers, schooling hours, facilities and student's concentration. This issue has provoked a continuing dilemma: Should religious schools choose a balanced-policy ('fifty-fifty policy') to develop academic as well as religious programs or specialization? Religious educators want to ensure students are engaged in learning religious values. However, to develop both objectives, the schools are challenged by a crowded 'secular' curriculum, a lack of trained teachers to deliver religious messages within secular subjects and limited facilities. To analyse the problem, the study uses a theoretical economic model to generalize its findings to all religious schools. As a case study, empirical evidence is provided based on data from *Pesantren* in Indonesia. Further analyses also include issues on secularism in education and its impacts on national economic growths.