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Phenomenology Of Religion In Islamic Studies

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the phenomenological approach to religion within Islamic studies, particularly in understanding the religious experiences of Muslims in a more comprehensive manner. The method employed is a literature review using a descriptive qualitative approach, which analyzes various scholarly works related to the phenomenology of religion and its application in Islamic studies. The findings indicate that the phenomenology of religion is a methodological approach that focuses on the religious experiences of individuals and religious communities, emphasizing an objective stance through the concept of epoché or the suspension of judgment. This approach enables researchers to understand the meaning of religious practices such as rituals, symbols, and traditions from the perspective of the practitioners themselves. In the context of Islamic studies, phenomenology holds significant relevance as it bridges normative-theological and scientific approaches, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of Muslim religiosity. Nevertheless, this approach also faces criticism, particularly regarding the issue of neutrality, which is considered to be less aligned with the principles of faith. Therefore, adaptive efforts are needed to ensure that phenomenology remains relevant and contextual within Islamic studies.

Keywords: phenomenology of religion, Islamic studies, religious experience, epoché, methodological approach, religiosity

INTRODUCTION

The study of religion, particularly in the context of Islamic studies, continues to evolve in both the approaches and methodologies used. In the development of modern Islamic studies, scholars employ not only a normative-theological approach but also utilize various scientific

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approaches developed in the social sciences and humanities. This is done so that understanding Islam is not merely doctrinal but also able to explain the reality of the religiosity of Muslims more comprehensively and objectively. One particularly important approach in the study of religion is the phenomenology of religion. The phenomenology approach emerged as part of the methodological development in religious studies that seeks to scientifically understand religious phenomena. Initially, Islamic studies in the modern academic world were often placed within the framework of the history of religion, comparative religion, or the Swissschaft tradition of religion that developed in the West. This approach aims to understand religion as a universal phenomenon that can be studied scientifically using various research methods.

The phenomenology of religion essentially seeks to understand religion from the perspective of the religious experiences of its adherents. This approach does not merely view religion as a doctrinal system or social institution, but rather emphasizes the religious experiences experienced, felt, and interpreted by individuals and religious communities. Thus, the phenomenology of religion seeks to describe how religious practices, rituals, symbols, and various forms of religious expression have specific meanings for their adherents.

In a phenomenological approach, researchers are required to maintain a neutral stance and strive to understand religion from the perspective of its adherents. This is achieved by removing prejudice, subjective judgments, and vested interests that could influence the objectivity of the research. This concept is known as epoché, which involves suspending initial judgments so that researchers can see religious phenomena as they are. Through this process, researchers attempt to reconstruct others' religious experiences more authentically.

The phenomenological approach also has another characteristic: its attempt to classify various religious phenomena within a taxonomic scheme. The goal is to discover common patterns in human religious experience that transcend cultural, temporal, and religious boundaries. In this way, the phenomenology of religion seeks to uncover the fundamental, universal structure of human religious experience.

Furthermore, the phenomenology of religion also opens up a dialogue between theological and scientific approaches to the study of religion. This approach straddles two poles: theology, which emphasizes the truth of religious doctrine, and the social sciences, which view religion solely as a social phenomenon. Phenomenology seeks to bridge these two approaches by placing religious experience at the center of its study.

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RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with library research. This approach was chosen because the study focuses on a conceptual analysis of the phenomenology of religion in Islamic studies through various relevant scientific literature sources. Library research allows researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the concepts, theories, and developments of the phenomenological approach in Islamic studies.

This research is descriptive-analytical in nature, describing the concept of religious phenomenology and analyzing its characteristics, methods, and relevance to understanding the phenomenon of Muslim religiosity. The data used are secondary data obtained from books, scientific journal articles, and indexed academic publications, particularly through platforms like Google Scholar.

The data analysis technique used content analysis, which involves organizing, classifying, and interpreting concepts related to the phenomenology of religion. The analysis process involved data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. In this process, the researcher also applied phenomenological principles such as epoché (suspension of judgment) to objectively understand religious phenomena based on the subjects' experiences.

The phenomenological approach in qualitative research focuses on understanding the meaning of an individual's subjective experience of a phenomenon, making it highly relevant in religious studies that emphasize the dimensions of religious experience. In the context of Islamic studies, this approach helps uncover the meaning of religious practices in greater depth and context.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Evidence 1: Phenomenology of Religion in Islamic Studies

In the study of Islam as a religion, the terms insider and outsider emerged. From a Muslim perspective, an insider is a person within a Muslim perspective; an insider is a person within a Muslim perspective who wants to study Islam. Meanwhile, an outsider is an outsider (non-Muslim) who wants to study Islam. The difference between the two (insider and outsider) lies in the meaning, that the insider has a deeper and more complete understanding of the religious teachings they possess than the outsider. Because the scope of the outsider is so narrow, the most appropriate and effective method for understanding religion outside of itself is through a phenomenological approach.

Phenomenology of religion is a methodological approach used in the study of religion to

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understand human religious experience as experienced and interpreted by religious adherents themselves. Etymologically, the term phenomenology comes from the Greek phainomenon, meaning something that appears or manifests itself, and logos, meaning science or study. Thus, phenomenology can be defined as the science that studies phenomena or symptoms that appear in human consciousness. Phenomenology is essentially the study of how reality is understood through the experience of human consciousness regarding certain phenomena.

The anthropological approach to the study of Islam can be understood as an attempt to understand religion by observing and analyzing religious practices that emerge and develop within society. An understanding of Islam, developed through history and culture, would not be complete without understanding humanity itself. Religious reality is truly the reality of humanity manifested in everyday life. Furthermore, the true meaning of diversity lies in how religion is interpreted and practiced by individuals and society. Therefore, anthropology is crucial in understanding Islam because this science functions as a tool to explore the reality of humanity and see how Islam is applied in real life, which reflects human diversity.

The anthropological approach to the study of religion has resulted in the anthropology of religion, which is a branch of cultural anthropology, not social anthropology. The anthropology of religion views religion as part of the systematic science of religion. This approach focuses on understanding religion by examining religious practices that develop within society. This approach is also closely related to the problems faced by humans, seeking to explain and provide solutions to these problems. The Raharjo Council emphasizes the importance of direct observation and active participation in research, using an inductive approach, namely going into the field without being tied to formal theories that are often abstract. In line with this, research in the anthropology of religion also demonstrates a relationship between religious beliefs and social, economic, and political conditions. Poorer or less fortunate groups are often more attracted to messianic religious movements, which promise social change. Conversely, wealthier groups tend to maintain the established social and economic order, as this system benefits them. Anthropological approaches demonstrate that religion can be closely linked to economic conditions and societal development. In this case, changing a person's perspective and work ethic can be achieved by changing their religious views.

By using an anthropological approach, the relationship between religion and various human life issues can be more clearly understood. This approach is crucial because religious issues can only be comprehensively explained through an anthropological perspective. This means that human understanding of religious teachings can be deeper and broader with the help of various

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branches of anthropology.

Three major theories in anthropology—structuralism, functionalism, and symbolism—are rooted in the thinking of Emile Durkheim. In his book "The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life," Durkheim introduced an approach to religion, starting with the simplest forms practiced by Aboriginal Australians, and progressing to more structured forms such as monotheism. Durkheim found that the most important aspect of religion is the division between the sacred and the spiritual. In simple religions, such as those practiced by Aboriginal people, the sacred can be worshipped in the form of essentially profane objects, such as the worship of kangaroos.

In the development of modern philosophical thought, phenomenology is often associated with the thinking of Edmund Husserl, who developed phenomenology as a method for understanding the nature of a phenomenon by returning to the direct experience of human consciousness. Husserl emphasized that phenomenology is a method for studying the structure of consciousness that enables humans to understand objects that exist outside themselves. With this approach, phenomenology attempts to describe phenomena as they appear in human consciousness without being influenced by preconceived notions, theories, or pre-existing interpretations.

Linguistically, the word phenomenology is adopted from the Greek word "phainein," meaning to show. From this word comes "phainemeon," meaning something that appears. In simple terms, phenomenology means returning to something that appears. In simple terms, phenomenology means returning to the thing itself (back to the things themselves). Hadiwojoyo added that the word phenomenology means "appearances such as fever, cough, chills, which indicate the phenomena of symptoms of disease."

Phenomenology is a philosophical and methodological approach that focuses on understanding and describing human phenomena from a subjective perspective. Essentially, phenomenology aims to explore people's direct experiences of the world around them without prior judgment or interpretation.

Edmund Husserl, a German philosopher considered the father of modern phenomenology, developed the basic concepts of phenomenology in the early 20th century. He emphasized the importance of the “epoche,” or suspension of judgment, to allow for a more pure observation of phenomena. Later, Husserl's student, Martin Heidegger, further developed the ideas of phenomenology by emphasizing human experience in the context of existence.

In the context of Islamic studies, a phenomenological approach can be used to understand the diverse experiences of individual Muslims, from religious practices and mystical experiences

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to social interactions within Muslim communities. Through this approach, researchers can explore the complex and often personal dimensions of religiosity within different cultural and social contexts.

Phenomenology of religion can also be understood as a study of observable religious facts, objects, and events in human life. This approach not only seeks to describe these phenomena but also to classify the various forms of religious experience that emerge in various religious traditions.

In the context of Islamic studies, a phenomenological approach plays a crucial role in understanding the diversity of Muslim religious practices across regions and cultures. Phenomenology helps researchers see that religious practices are not solely related to theological doctrine, but also to the spiritual experiences, culture, and social context of Muslim communities. Therefore, this approach can provide a broader understanding of how Islamic teachings are interpreted and practiced in everyday life.

Evidence 2: Characteristics and Methods of the Phenomenological Approach in Religious Studies

The phenomenological approach has several key characteristics that distinguish it from other approaches to the study of religion. One of these is its attempt to understand religious experience from the perspective of the religious adherents themselves. In this regard, phenomenology does not aim to judge the truth or falsity of a religious teaching, but rather to understand the meaning that adherents attach to their religious practices. Phenomenology is a method for understanding a person's religion neutrally by examining their choices, commitments, and religious experiences as a basis for reconstructing that religious experience.

First, phenomenology emphasizes subjective experience (religious experience) as the center of study. Religion is understood as an inner experience that has profound meaning for the individual, not simply a doctrinal system. This approach sees human spiritual experience as key to understanding religion as a whole.

Second, the concept of epoche (suspension of judgment). In the research process, researchers are required to suspend prejudice, personal beliefs, and initial assumptions in order to objectively understand religious phenomena. This is essential to maintaining neutrality in phenomenological research.

Third, phenomenology has a classificatory and comparative nature, namely grouping various religious phenomena such as rituals, symbols and myths to find general patterns in human religious experience.

Fourth, this approach is interdisciplinary, utilizing various disciplines such as anthropology,

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sociology, and psychology to understand religious phenomena more comprehensively. This demonstrates that phenomenology does not stand alone but develops within the framework of the social sciences and humanities.

Fifth, ethical and epistemological implications. Using a phenomenological approach in Islamic studies also raises ethical and epistemological questions.

Furthermore, phenomenological studies are characterized by developing epoche, empathy, and sympathetic understanding. With an epoche attitude, which involves postponing assumptions or judgments about what is in the researcher's mind until a phenomenon speaks or reveals its own data, it is hoped that phenomenology will not be trapped in an a priori perspective while simultaneously manifesting an empathetic attitude (trying to feel what the research subject feels). Sympathetic understanding, namely the realization of a pro-existential understanding of what is understood, experienced, and felt by religious adherents. In turn, with this awareness, phenomenology will lead to a more intense understanding of the "meaning," "essence," and "fundamental structure" of the experience of human diversity.

Evidence 3: The Relevance of the Phenomenological Approach in Understanding the Practice of Diversity among Muslims

The phenomenological approach is crucial for understanding the phenomenon of religiosity in Islam, particularly in the context of contemporary Islamic studies, which are increasingly developing multidisciplinaryly. Phenomenology enables researchers to view religion not merely as a system of doctrine or normative teachings, but also as a lived experience experienced by its adherents in their daily lives. The phenomenology of religion places human religious experience at the center of its study. This means that various religious practices such as worship, rituals, religious symbols, and religious traditions are understood as expressions of human spiritual experience in their relationship with God. In the Islamic context, practices such as prayer, fasting, zakat, hajj, and various other religious traditions can be analyzed through a phenomenological approach to understand the meaning felt by Muslims in carrying out these worships.

A phenomenological approach is also relevant in understanding the diversity of religious practices within Muslim communities. Social reality shows that Muslim religious practices are not always uniform but are influenced by various factors such as local culture, history, social conditions, and individual spiritual experiences. By using a phenomenological approach, researchers can understand how Muslims interpret religious teachings within the context of their

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respective lives without having to judge those practices from a normative perspective.

Phenomenology provides a broader approach to interpreting diverse religious rituals and practices, beliefs, and spiritual experiences. Phenomenology, in Islamic studies, cannot be separated from the anthropological and historical contexts within which individuals find themselves. This method allows researchers to study how elements beyond the individual can influence the diverse experiences of a society or individual. It also provides an opportunity to understand how religious adherents interact with society and culture. As Kuntowijaya points out, we need prophetic social science, namely social theory that goes beyond explaining and transforming social phenomena, but also provides guidance on the direction of such change, its purpose, and who should carry it out.

In more detail, social science can transform phenomena based on certain ethical and prophetic ideals, which not only focus on social change, but also pay attention to moral values and spiritual goals in the transformation process. Phenomenology still requires support from other scientific disciplines. One of them is anthropology, with an anthropological approach, phenomenology can help understand the relationship between religion and the state. introduced him to various thoughts and social activities of the group. He also studied Sayyid Qutb's ideas on social justice and the concept of Islam. After graduating from Tsanawiyah. Hanafi continued his studies at the Department of Philosophy, Cairo University, earning a Bachelor's degree in 1956, and then continued his education at Sorbonne University, France, where he deepened various disciplines.

In the context of Islamic studies, a phenomenological understanding involves applying phenomenological principles to understand the experiences of diversity among Muslim individuals. This approach allows researchers to explore the various dimensions of diversity within Muslim societies in greater depth, without being tied to a specific doctrinal or theological framework. First and foremost, a phenomenological understanding in the context of Islamic studies involves acknowledging the complexity of individuals' experiences of diversity. Islam, like other religions, is inclusive in understanding diverse religious practices, beliefs, and spiritual experiences. Furthermore, in understanding phenomenology in the context of Islamic studies, it is important to understand that the experience of diversity is inseparable from the social, cultural, and historical context in which the individual lives. This allows researchers to explore the influence of external factors in shaping an individual's experience of diversity and to understand how the individual interacts with the surrounding society and culture.

A phenomenological understanding in the context of Islamic studies also emphasizes the

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subjective aspects of the experience of diversity. Each individual has unique perceptions, emotions, and meanings related to their religious practices. Phenomenology allows researchers to better capture the richness and diversity of individual Muslim experiences, without neglecting their personal and subjective dimensions.

By applying phenomenological understanding to the context of Islamic studies, researchers can develop a deeper understanding of the dynamics of diversity within Muslim societies. This not only allows for the development of more inclusive and empathetic theories and knowledge about Islam but can also provide valuable insights for religious practitioners in understanding and responding to the needs of contemporary Muslims.

In modern academic studies, phenomenology also helps foster dialogue between different religious traditions. By understanding human religious experience more objectively and empathetically, phenomenology enables researchers to see the similarities and differences in religious experiences across religions. This can enrich understanding of religion in general and foster tolerance and mutual respect among adherents.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion of phenomenology in Islamic studies, several conclusions can be drawn.First, the phenomenology of religion in Islamic studies is a methodological approach used to understand religious phenomena based on the religious experiences of religious adherents. This approach seeks to view religion not only as a system of doctrine or normative teachings, but also as a lived experience lived by religious believers. In the context of Islamic studies, phenomenology helps researchers understand how Islamic teachings are internalized, interpreted, and practiced by Muslims in their daily lives.

Second, the phenomenological approach to religious studies has several key characteristics and methods. These characteristics include emphasizing understanding religious experience from the perspective of religious adherents, being descriptive, and prioritizing objectivity through the suspension of judgment or epoché. Furthermore, phenomenology also emphasizes the search for the essential meaning of religious phenomena through the concept of eidetic intuition. In its application, this approach utilizes phenomenological description, analysis of the meaning of religious experience, and classification of various religious phenomena to gain a deeper understanding of the structure of human religious experience.

Third, the phenomenological approach is crucial for understanding the phenomenon of religiosity in Islam. This approach enables researchers to understand various Muslim religious

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practices more comprehensively by considering religious experiences, religious symbols, and the underlying social and cultural contexts. Through phenomenology, Islamic studies are not limited to the study of religious texts alone but also encompass the spiritual experiences and social practices of Muslims in real life. Thus, phenomenology can make a significant contribution to enriching methodological perspectives in Islamic studies, particularly in understanding the dynamics of Muslim religiosity across various societal contexts.

Overall, phenomenology is an important approach in the study of religion because it can provide a deeper understanding of the meaning of human religious experience. In the context of Islamic studies, this approach can help explain how Islamic teachings are not only understood theoretically but also lived and interpreted in the daily lives of Muslims.

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