MODERNISING THE DAYAH A Study on an Integrated Educational System of Darul Mukhlisin in Aceh

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Abstract

The Acehenese Islamic educational institution, dayah, has played a major role in institutionalisation of Islam among the Acehness. As a traditional institution, the dayah system has developed and successfully translated principles of modernity through the establishment an integrated educational system. This article examines the modernization of Darul Mukhlisin in Central Aceh and its characteristic in modernising its educational system. The modernization of the education system is characterized by changes in the aspects of objectives, Teungku and the students (santri) of dayah, implementation of an integrated curriculum, the treasury of contemporary books, use of active strategies and varieties of educational methods, environmental changes, the application of test and non-test evaluation types, and so forth. This article further argues that the Darul Mukhlisin has been successfully adopting the dayah system into modern principles of modern management in educational institution. The Darul Mukhlisin resorts as an important agent for religious education, producing learned Muslims who contributes to the development of the Acehness.

[Keberadaan Dayah sebagai lembaga pendidikan Islam di Kabupaten Aceh Tengah memiliki andil besar dalam perkembangan keberagamaan di masyarakat. Pelan namun pasti, lembaga pendidikan tersebut berkembang, baik secara kualitas maupun kuantitas. Berangkat dari realitas tersebut, artikel ini dengan menggunakan pendekatan fenomenologi, mengkaji tentang

modernisasi sistem Pendidikan Dayah Terpadu Darul Mukhlisin, yang meliputi sub-sub sistem pendidikan Dayah. Modernisasi sistem pendidikan ditandai dengan perubahan yang terjadi pada aspek tujuan, Teungku dan Santri Dayah, implementasi kurikulum terpadu, khazanah kitab-kitab kontemporer, penggunaan strategi aktif dan metode yang variatif, perubahan lingkungan, penerapan jenis evaluasi tes dan non tes, dan lain sebagainya. Dengan demikian, keberadaan Dayah Terpadu Darul Mukhlisin mampu menjadi benteng pertahanan pendidikan agama dalam mencetak kader-kader ulama dan generasi religius di Aceh Tengah.]

Keywords: Modernising, Integrated, Dayah Education System

Introduction

Dayah is an Islamic educational institution in Aceh which is intended for the Acehnese adults. It roots at a sufi lodge zawiyah which transformed into Meunasah and Rangkang. In Aceh, zawiyah refers to the Islamic education centered at the corner of a mosque. It is place for religious gathering where students listen the Islamic subjects delivered by a teacher (sheikh). The popular history of the dayah records the cosmopolitan dimension of the system as two important Muslim scholars from Persia, Amir Sa'id and Tajuddin, established their dayah at the 13th century.²

The development of *Dayah* from the coast of Samudra Pasai (North Aceh) and Perlak (East Aceh) spread in the Aceh region to the Gayo, started in the 16th century through Muslim scholars who graduated from *dayah's* in Aceh, such as Dayah Cot Kala and Adi Geunali who has been recorded as the earliest Muslim who introduced Islam to the kingdom of Lingga in Central Aceh.³ *Dayah* was instrumental in the process

¹ Hasan Asari, *Menyingkap Zaman Keemasan Islam* (Bandung: Citapustaka Media Perintis, 2017), p. 167.

² Abd. Mukti, Konstruksi Pendidikan Islam Belajar dari Kejayaan Madrasah Zizhamiyah Dinasti Saljuq (Medan: Perdana Publishing, 2017), p. 310.

³ Ismail Yacob, "Apresiasi Terhadap Kurikulum Metode dan Materi Pendidikan yang Dilaksanakan di Dayah," M. Hasbi Amiruddin (ed.), Apresiasi Dayah sebagai Lembaga

of islamization in Aceh, by means of graduates and founding fathers in both the Perlak and Pasai, Banua, Lingga, Indra Jaya, and of Aceh Darussalam.⁴ According to A. Hasjimy, the Seureuleu *Dayah* in Central Aceh was established between 1012-1059M,⁵ by Sheikh Sirajuddin with his main role in introducing Islam in the Lingga and producing Muslim students who *tafaqqatu fiddin* (knowledgeable in religion).⁶

Since its presence in Acehnese society, the *dayah* has been essential in producing Muslim clerics and significantly contributing to foster the religious life of the Achnese. An Acehnese scholar Hasbi Amiruddin argues that *Dayah* is never absent in producing Muslim scholars (*ulama*).⁷ *Dayah* develops in accordance with times. Initially, it aimed to produce clerics, but during the colonial period the institution also played a role in producing Muslim activists (*mujahid*) who glorified wars against the colonial government. After the independence, Dayah's orientation was identical with the goals of Islamic education: preservation of values, preparing students as competent workers in their respective fields, oriented to the development of science and technology for the future generation.

Dayah is an Islamic educational institution that has produced many clerics and leaders who are projected to lead the Muslim society.⁸ Dayah offers three levels of teaching namely Rangkang (junior), Bale (senior), and Manyang (university). It is also a place for learning and developing knowledge and culture.⁹ The development of Dayah education in Aceh

Pendidikan Islam di Aceh (Banda Aceh: Persatuan Dayah Inshafuddin, 2010), p. 135.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

⁵ M. Hasbi Amiruddin, Menatap Masa Depan..., p. 43.

⁶ Maksum, *Pola Pengembangan Pondok Pesantren* (Jakarta: Direktorat Jenderal Kelembagaan Agama Islam, 2003), p. 20.

⁷ Hasbi Amiruddin, *Menatap Masa depan Dayah di Aceh* (Banda Aceh: PeNA, 2013), p. 117.

⁸ Marhamah, "Pendidikan Dayah dan Perkembangannya di Aceh," At-Ta'dib: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Agama Islam Vol. 10, No. 1, 2018, pp. 74.

 $^{^9}$ Silahuddin, "Budaya Akademik dalam Sistem Pendidikan Dayah Salafiyah," $MIQOT, {\rm Vol.~XL~No.~2,2016,pp.~350.}$

is getting better now. Moreover, peoples rely on religious education as a place to cultivate Islamic values and Muslim scholars. To meet this need, it is necessary to develop every education sub-system of Dayah which includes: goals, *Teungku Dayah*, *Santri*, *manhaj* (curriculum), learning strategies and methods, environment, and evaluation.

Modernization of *Dayah* education is an effort to adjust to modernity, in order to remain an Islamic educational institution whose role is to educate and unite the community, by instilling values and culture according to the teachings of Islam. The idea to develop *Dayah* is an influence of the Islamic education modernization program. The modernization program is rooted in the modernization of Islamic thought and institutions as a whole because modernization cannot be separated from the rise of contemporary Muslims. In other words, the development of integrated *Dayah* education system in Darul Mukhlisin is a response to the progress and social changes to the development needs of society and commitment in advancing Aceh's education, without having to change the traditional system totally. In

This paper contributes to the issue of modernisation of Islamic educational system and education in contemporary Aceh. It addresses the question of how *dayah* adopts the modernisation principles in educational system and institutional management. The discussion focuses on the Darul Mukhlisin Burnijimet in Central Aceh. The discussion includes the transformation of *teungku* and *santri*, curriculum, learning strategies and methods, environment, and learning evaluation.

Modernising the Darul Mukhlisin Dayah

The modernisation of *dayah* in Aceh is closely related to the figure Tgk H. Muhammad Hasan Tan who established of Darul Mukhlisin as

¹⁰ Zuyyina Candra Kirana, "Pandangan Azyumardi Azra terhadap Modernisasi Pesantren," *Inovatif*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2015, pp. 79.

¹¹ Marzuki, "Sejarah dan Perubahan Pesantren di Aceh," *Millah*, Vol. 11, No 1, 2011, pp. 230.

a prototype of an integrated *dayah* system in the 1990s. This institution combines classical model (*salaf*) and modern (*khalaf*) model of *dayah* system. The Darul Mukhlisin is the earliest Islamic education that adopts modern principles of education and introduces secular sciences into the curricula of the *dayah*. In addition to modern curricula, the Darul Mukhlisin still preserves traditional model of Islamic education as a learning institution exclusively dedicated to cultivate pious Muslim.¹²

The establishment of Darul Mukhlisin clearly contradicts to the secular thesis on tradition and modernity. Rather than disappearing due to the force of modernity, the *dayah* embrace modernity while still maintaining its fundamental principle as Muslim educational institution.¹³ According to Eko Setiawan, 'modernization' means the latest or the attitude and way of thinking in accordance with the demands of the times¹⁴ Therefore, modernization of the *Dayah* education system can also mean the integration of Islamic teachings with science and religion.¹⁵

Muslim Thahiry stated the existence of *Dayah* as an educational institution with its traditional education system is expected to be able to overcome the problems being faced including the creed and the destruction of Islamic values. ¹⁶ Darul Mukhlisin basically aimed at forming students who have faith, noble, charitable to the community, and educated Muslims to be scholars based on the Qur'an and the prophetic tradition (*sunna*). The objectives of *Dayah* education will be achieved by compiling work programs, including teaching, cadre

¹² M. Hasbi Amiruddin, Menatap Masa Depan Dayah di Aceh (Banda Aceh: PeNA, 2013), p. 118.

¹³ Mohammad Muchlis Solichin, "Modernisasi Pendidikan Pesantren," *Tadrîs*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2011, pp. 36.

¹⁴ Eko Setiawan, "Modernisasi Pola Sistem Pendidikan Pesantren: Studi Kasus Pondok Pesantren Modern Daarul Fikri Mulyoagung Dau Malang," *Ulul Albab: Jurnal Studi Islam,* Vol. 14, No. 2, 2013, pp. 7.

¹⁵ Syarifah Gustiawati Mukri, "Modernisasi Sistem Pendidikan Pesantren," *Fikrah*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2013, pp. 9.

 $^{^{16}\,}$ Muslim Thahiry, Wacana Pemikiran Santri Dayah Aceh (Banda Aceh: Wacana Press, 2007), p. 146.

regeneration, fostering and inculcating of Islamic values as religious insights, language development programs, skills development, and else.¹⁷ Thus, the development of *Dayah* education is an effort to expand the goals, vision and mission. Besides resulted Muslim scholars, *Dayah* also aims to educate the nation's life.

Elements of Modernisation

In this part, I would like to introduce elements of modernization of Darul Mukhlisin dayah. The discussion focuses on four elements essential in contemporary modern educational system of *dayah*: *teungku*, *santri*, the curriculum, learning strategies and methods.

Teungku

The first crucial sub-system of Dayah is *Teungku*. *Teungku* is a teacher, cleric and leader in *Dayah*. This status is obtained because he is the mastery of Islamic values and compliance in carrying out Islamic sharia teachings. Teungku became an exemplary figure respected by the people with their authority and charisma. M. Hasbi Amiruddin explained that every *Dayah* where there is a *Teungku* or cleric is the center of the growth of Islamic knowledge.¹⁸

The term *Teungku* is generally used by Aceh people to refer to the cleric in the tradition of Muslim communities in the Aceh. They have charisma, teach *Kitab Kuning* and have attachments to traditional Islamic communities. when it was founded in 1990, Darul Mukhlisin only had two *Teungku* as teaching staff and a founding figure of the Dayah namely Tgk H. Muhammad Hasan Tan and Tgk. Adnan Yakub. They have expertise in theology and become community leaders and their *fatwas* are always considered. *Teungku* in Darul Mukhlisin is a human resource of the education system whose job is to create and utilize individuals productively in an effort to achieve organizational goals and in the

 $^{^{\}rm 17}\,$ Interview with Tgk. H. Mupasirin as the leader of Darul Mukhlisin Burnijimet, July 4, 2019.

¹⁸ M. Hasbi Amiruddin, Menatap Masa Depan Dayah ..., p. 80.

context of the realization of job satisfaction and fulfillment of the needs of individuals.¹⁹

Teungku's number in Darul Mukhlisin in 2001 increased to 14 people, consisting of several educational qualifications: three masters, one graduates: , and ten people were pursuing undergraduate education. However, in 2014 the number increased to twenty-seven people: three masters, 11 graduates, one diploma, and three people currently taking the master's program. Whereas in 2018 the amount of *Teungku* continues to increase to twenty-one people.

The recruitment pattern mostly uses alumni networks, by tracking the alumni who are excellent. Darul Mukhlisin has not been recruiting selectively with clear administrative procedures and requirements until now. For the welfare of *Teungku*, *they* will be given a varies salary according to the length of time dedicated. Furthermore, the institution provides a house for the *Teungku* family and a special dormitory for those who are not married.

Santri

Santri is the second crucial stakeholder in Dayah. The *Santri* are people who practice a more orthodox version of Islam. The first *Santri* Dayahs in 1990 amounted 36 people. Then in the following year the amount increased to 175 people, and it continues to increase until now.²⁰ The development of *Santri* data in the last 6 years totaled 3392. The composition of the number of students in Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) was 57%, more than Madrasah Aliyah (MA) which is 43%. The recruitment pattern is also different because it is carried out in a structured and systematic manner. The *Santri* came from areas scattered in the districts of Central Aceh, Bener Meriah and Gayo Lues.

¹⁹ Abdullah Qadir, "Manajemen Sumber Daya Manusia di Pondok Pesantren Alfalah Bakalan Kecamatan Kalinyamatan Kabupaten Jepara," *JMP*, Vol. 1 No. 3, 2012, pp. 275.

²⁰ Interview with Tgk. Masturi, on July 4, 2019.

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The Curriculum

Darul Mukhlisin is an Islamic educational institution that has been popular in all regions in Central Aceh. The curriculum developed at this institution is about Islamic religious knowledge. In accordance with the objectives of the institution to be achieved, the material in the Darul Mukhlisin curriculum is prepared based on the needs of the community in understanding Islam. Nevertheless, the education curriculum is also adapted to *Teungku's* ability in understanding *kitab*. This was also explained by Ismail Yacob that the subject matter, systems and books studied were not fully regulated in a particular curriculum, but were highly dependent on the ability of the *Dayah* leader and the wishes of the students themselves.²¹

The distribution of subject matters in Darul Mukhlisin's curriculum since it was founded in 1990, is regulated by leaders in accordance with institutional goals and takes into account the conditions of the community. However, conceptually, the Darul Mukhlisin curriculum was prepared by combining the *salafi* and *khalafi* systems and adapting to the government curriculum.²²

Social change requires educational institutions to be responsive. It takes changes and adaptation that is sustainable in terms of the curriculum. Therefore, in addition to integrating *salafi* and *khalafi* systems, Darul Mukhlisin also expanded the scope of its curriculum by adopting a curriculum formulated by the *Dayah* education office in Aceh. This curriculum is spread in a variety of subject matters and is reviewed by discussing a number of predetermined books, such as *Kitah Kuning*. In addition, the *Santri* were also introduced to the treasures of contemporary books to be studied and mastered.

²¹ Ismail Yacob, *Apresiasi terhadap Kurikulum Metode dan Materi Pendidikan yang Dilaksanakan di Dayah* (Banda Aceh: Pengurus Besar Persatuan Dayah Inshafuddin, 2010), p. 142.

²² Interview with Tgk. Masturi...

Darul Mukhlisin has been modernized by developing its current curriculum. In addition, fundamental changes were made in the implementation of the curriculum in the form of an improved learning system including management and supervision.²³ Curriculum changes were made by expanding the scope of the curriculum compiled by Aceh's *Dayah* education office and adding to the wealth of classic and contemporary reference books as a development of learning resources. The addition of the number of books is expected to increase understanding and broaden the perspective of students in certain fields such as *tafsir*, *fiqih*, *nahwu sharaf*, *hadith*, and *akidah akhlak*. By enriching the collection of books, it was proven to be able to also improve language skills of santri (*maharah al-lughah*).

Learning Strategies and Methods

Learning strategies and methods serve to facilitate transferring materials and knowledge to students. This process occurs when there is an interaction between *Teungku* and *Santri*. In learning, *Teungku* uses classical strategies and active learning, increases *Santri* participation, and trains them to solve problems. Moreover, *Teungku* also uses various methods like lectures, debates, questions and answers, *tahfiz*, *tamrinat*, *rihlah*, *munadharah*, and *muhadharah*. Thus, the learning process will be fun and not boring for students.²⁴The development of *Santri's* skills is done by adding extracurricular lessons. Among the extracurricular activities is learning to speak Arabic (*muhadatsah*) and writing, sewing, computer tutoring, sports and arts.

Environment in Education

As an environment issues in education system, Darul Mukhlisin forms a unified space with all objects, power, situation, including humans and their behavior, which affect the continuity of education. Therefore,

²³ Mujianto Sholichin, "Perkembangan Pendidikan Meunasah dan Dayah di Aceh," *Dirasat: Jurnal Manajemen dan Pendidikan Islam*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2015, p. 145.

²⁴ Interview with Tgk. H. Mupassirin...

the environment is everything that appears and exists in the realm of life that is always used for the education development. Transformation of environment are identical to public facilities in the form of locations and buildings, such as the availability of sports facilities, libraries, canteens, parking lots, parks and access roads. the buildings in Darul Mukhlisin adopt a modern style. At the beginning of its establishment, the building was very simple because it only consisted of one small Pondok (Bale), one class, and one dormitory on one and a half hectare land.²⁵ However, the circumstance has changed significantly since Darul Mukhlisin currently has an area of six hectares. The facilities are already advanced including dormitories, classrooms, offices, mosques, Teungku Dayah houses, Teungku dormitories, learning facilities, sports, bathrooms, cafetaria, cooperatives, computers, sewing machines, internet, and clean water. In addition, the design of the Dayah's buildings has been arranged based on the order (nidzam) to form an athmosphere which enforce behavior on learning, worship, sports, rest, cooking and eating.²⁶

Thus, the condition of Darul Mukhlisin at the beginning of the stand was arguably very simple. With limited capital, at the time of its founding there was only a *Bale* for student learning, and one dormitory unit as a residence for students. In fact, *Santri* was also encouraged to use the founder's porch as a place to study. Small cottage building was built right on the hill in the Burnijimet area, part of the surrounding community claimed as dead and unproductive land. Nevertheless, supported by high enthusiasm, this location has gradually leveled up and erected new permanent buildings to make it more sustainable.

Transformation in the environment of Darul Mukhlisin also occurred in the cultural aspect by carrying out various institutional activities oriented to the inculcation of values and norms. Culture is

²⁵ Mashuri, "Dinamika Sistem Pendidikan Islam di Dayah," *Didaktika*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 2013, pp. 259-270.

²⁶ Interview with Tgk. H. Mupassirin....

an inseparable part of human life.²⁷ Therefore, this institution always strives to create a culture (Islam) by adopting a harmonious lifestyle, full of friendship, cooperation, discipline, independent, and in accordance with the ethical teachings of Islam as taught by the Prophet Muhammad.

The created cultural climate leads to the formation of Muslim character. Culturally, the preservation of scientific and religious traditions in Darul Mukhlisin is very dependent on the value system held, such as the almost unlimited admiration of science and *Teungku*.²⁸ Culture is a social phenomenon that is produced by a group of people in a certain time and place that naturally affects the group members' behavior.²⁹ The Darul Mukhlisin environment greatly influences the formation of academic culture to support the achievement of education goals.

Darul Mukhlisin's environmental development mainly focuses on infrastructure aspects. The characteristics of *Dayah* education are mosques that continue to develop, This institution built a mosque as a means of worship and a center for the dissemination of Islamic values because *Santri* who are accustomed to living with religious nuances are believed to be able to change their behavior, skills and attitudes for the better. The learning processis carried out 24 hours a day. The *Santri* are guided so they are accustomed to all aspects of life, such as worship, noble character, patience, honesty, polite, independent, responsibility, discipline, and diligent.

Evaluation Methods of Dayah

When it first started, Darul Mukhlisin had not used a structured evaluation methods. To measure *Santri's* ability, they were asked to read, translate, and explain the contents of the *kitab*. Ability to memorize,

Muhammad Anwar, "Modernisasi Pesantren: Pergeseran Tradisi dan Pudarnya Kiai," Hunafa: Jurnal Studia Islamika, Vol. 10, No. 1, 2013, pp. 31.

²⁸ Abdul Basyit, "Pembaruan Model Pesantren: Respon terhadap Modernitas," *Kordinat*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2017, pp. 305.

 $^{^{29}\,}$ Silahuddin, "Transformasi Budaya Pendidikan Dayah di Aceh," $\it Mudarrisuna,$ Vol. 5, No. 2, 2015, pp. 390.

the use of evaluation has changed using tests and non-test evaluation techniques. This evaluation uses observation, the evaluation of the test uses a semester exam, and at the end of the semester, *Santri* is asked to prepare a miniscription, the acquisition of the value contained in the report card and when they graduate they will get a diploma.

There are efforts done to improve the learning process by looking at the results of evaluations carried out, *Teungku's* ability to evaluate through observing the learning process using the debate method. *Santri* who are able to maintain their ideas means that they have mastered the *kitab*. To measure the level of success of *Santris* in learning, they use evaluation techniques by testing their ability in mastering the *kitab such* as: the ability to read, interpret, and explain the contents of the *kitab* and sentence structure (*i'rāb*). In addition to observing and testing the ability to master the *kitab*, by discussing the materials as The evaluation methods, evaluation is carried out systematically and scheduled every semester by holding exams at the end of the semester. Exams are carried out on all subjects by written and oral tests, and the results of the exam are included in raport (*kasyfud darajab*).³⁰

While the evaluation of learning ability of students in the cognitive domain includes: first, the ability of students to memorize hadith, salat, mufradat, nahwu and sharaf. Then santri's ability to memorize was evaluated by translating and writing properly. Second, Santri's ability to understand kitah, study and memorize material. Santri's understanding of the kitah and other subject matter was evaluated by asking them to explain the contents of the material contained in the book and the subject matter in detail. Third, Santri's ability to apply theories and their understanding of the kitah. Their ability is evaluated by means of tests of the ability to show and actualize their understanding in everyday life.

Fourth, Santri's ability to analyze and describe subject matter. This ability is evaluated by the way Santri thinks carefully about the concrete

³⁰ Interview with Tgk. Masturi...

form of the material he understands in the hostel and in everyday, then the maturity of the analysis is evaluated in the form of a debate. Fifth, Santri's ability to integrate parts of the subject matter logically. This synthesis ability is characterized by Santri who is able to write about the part of subject matter that has been studied. Sixth, Santri's ability to consider a circumstance. Santri is able to weigh the benefits and impacts that will arise from the problems faced. This ability is evaluated in learning by using problem solving strategies (bah'sul masā'il).

Conclusion

The above discussion reveals a particular model of modernizing Islamic educational institution in contemporary Aceh. It further argues four elements essential in the transformation of dayah educational system of Dayah Darul Mukhlisin: teungku, santri, the curriculum, learning strategies and methods. Over the years, Teungku Dayah has grown in both its quantity and quality and their influence have shaped contemporary Islamic-Acenese landcape. The Santri is also the case, the number continues to increase because management has expanded. As for the curriculum, the Dayah Darul Mukhlisin integrates also Islamic subjects and secular sciences and technology. It also combines the religious curriculum with the national education curriculum and has been successfully attracting more santri to learn at the Darul Mukhlisin dayah. As for strategies and learning methods, Darul Mukhlisin integrates classical methods with active strategies and various other methods. Furthermore, Darul Mukhlisin also expanded the area and provided supporting facilities and facilities with more effective infrastructure, as well as the application of culture through a more systematic order. On the other hands, the evaluation of learning uses technical tests, observations, which aim to measure learning outcomes in the cognitive, affective and psychomotoric domains.

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