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The State Intervention in the Islamic Education in Aceh: Threats or Opportunities?

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THE STATE INTERVENTION IN THE ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN ACEH: THREATS OR OPPORTUNITIES?

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Abstract

The enactment of the Aceh Governance Law (UUPA) allows the state's intervention to the nature of Islamic boarding schools in Aceh, which is originally connected to Aceh's socio-cultural system into the formality of the State's administrative structure. This article utilized a triangulation methodology, which involved the integration of document analysis, observation, and in-depth interviews. The study generated data from participants located within the dayah, including 2 teungku chik (leadership), 2 teachers, and 5 students; and participants located outside the dayah, including 2 academics, 2 social figures, and a director of Department of Dayah Education. The findings of our study indicated that the institutional frameworks of dayah had undergone modernization, with significant improvements in infrastructure, integration of curricula, enhancement of human resources (teungku-teacher and santri-student), and expansion of collaborations and networks. This modification granted the dayah of Aceh a more favorable standing within the Acehnese social hierarchy. This study highlighted that dayah institutions retained their cultural foundation as centers of Islamic instruction despite the changes they experienced. Instead, the incorporation of State action has led to the establishment of institutional and intellectual prosperity; it appeared that state intervention was more of an opportunity than a threat.

Keywords: *Politics of Education; State Intervention; Traditional Islamic Education; Dayah; Aceh.*



A. Introduction

Islamic traditional schools, known as *dayah* in the Province of Aceh are now run under the supervision of the government (Ilyas, 2016). In the Aceh Governance Law (UUPA), formally Law No. 11 of 2006 states that *dayah* is the educational sector that is part of the Acehnese government's duties and under its authority (Republik Indonesia, 2006). Since then, a range of policies, including the government annual budgets, have promoted a redefinition and formalization of the *dayah*, which in turn has had broad implications, such as in terms of curriculum and finance. This transformation has opened a new chapter in the history of Islamic educational institutions in Aceh (Mujiburrahman, 2016).

The provision of education is seen as inexorably linked to power, influencing and being influenced by diverse interests (Kalin & Barney, 2018). The Governments controls education (Almuhajir, 2015; Zainal et al., 2022). The involvement of governments in education is, in essence, used to create and promote specific public policies (Mundy et al., 2016). The role of the government is particularly important in convincing the public on the development of education (Feener & Kloos 2015).

The intersections between governments and their publics are originated in a shared "system of beliefs" (Aladegbola & Jaiyeola, 2016). However, shared goals and ideologies do not guarantee equality in the relationships between governments and educational institutions, especially community-based ones that may not share the same values (Baker, 2014). States often intervene in their national education systems through specific regulations (Yusuf & Sterkens, 2015). These regulations have fundamentally shifted and altered the education systems and policies (Lukens-Bull, 2004). Existing studies have shown that State intervention tends to promote the formalization of educational institutions (Hasyim, 2015; Li, 2016). Studies of such an intervention have also noted that it may improve education quality and resources, as shown by (Timperley & Alton-Lee, 2008). The formalization of institutions of religious education, such as *dayah*, is thus unavoidable (Basri, 2017; Saekhotin, 2013).

Research on *dayah* in Aceh has been increasing in the past 10 years (Abdullah, 2015; Dhofier, 1990). They have been seen as having a lengthy history and being deeply rooted in the Acehnese society (Bradley, 2014; Bruinessen, 2008). However, studies on *dayah* as political constructs are limited (Almuhajir, 2015; Dhuhri, 2011). Few studies have specifically attempted to analyze the State intervention on the *dayah* as institutions or its reorientation of its educational systems. Such an evaluation of the effects of the State intervention is necessary, particularly as we attempt to discuss Islamic education in Indonesia (Pohl, 2006).

The formalization of a certain educational institution has been seen as an important element in improving the quality of *dayah* education (Fitriana, 2013; Harisun, 2015; Subhi, 2016). It has fundamentally transformed various aspects of *dayah*, including its instructional approaches and instructional materials (Ilyas, 2016; Riza, 2016). The shift from a traditional to a modern system has created the possibility for the *dayah* to develop and adapt its curricula, such as by integrating religious and non-religious studies (Zubaili, 2017; Choiriyati et al., 2018; Zuhdi, 2018; Latif & Ahmad Shah, 2021).

In addition, changes and developments in the curriculum cannot be separated from the State's political interests in education as well. Decristan et al. (2015) explains that States, through a range of political processes, exert control over curricula, with different considerations influencing the process. An important variation between states is the extent to which the government controls education. Jacobsen and Saultz (2012) describe the State control as ensuring the incorporation of political agenda within the education system, with systems being classifiable as either centralized, with a high level of State control, or decentralized, with control handled at a lower (provincial) level. Fauth et al. (2014) and Harisun (2015) describe curricula as having an important role and function, as they are referenced in structured and organized education systems to promote the goals of educational institutions.

This article therefore seeks to examine if the UUPA has in any way shaped the way the *dayah* as a traditional institution of Islamic education in Aceh was managed and structured to guide our exploration, we raise three



interrelated research questions. *First*, what are the influences of the State intervention on the institutional reform, given that *dayah* is a community-based educational institution? *Second*, how has the State intervention, through the passage of the UUPA and activation of the Department of *Dayah* Education influenced the educational process of *dayah* and the education they provide? *Third*, how have communities responded to the shift in *dayah's* status from community-based educational institutions to government policy-based ones?

B. Method

This article is based on qualitative Case Study research. In the research process, the researchers follow the research process undertaken by previous scholars (Atkinson, 2017; Stenius, Mäkelä, Mioviský, & Gabrhelík, 2017). We would benefit from undertaking the Case Study as we are concerned with investigating a leadership figure within six *dayah* in Aceh, namely Ruhul Falah and Ulee Titi in Aceh Besar Regency, Darussaadah and Serambi Makkah in West Aceh Regency, Al Madinatuddinia Babussalam and Darul Ulum in Bireuen Regency. These six *dayah* were chosen for this study for four reasons. First, the six *dayah* share geographical, sociocultural, and socioreligious conditions that are comparable. Second, these *dayah* have exhibited a comparable development in institutional and educational standards. Thirdly, the local communities surrounding these *dayah* have positive relationships with the institutions, resulting in high levels of interest and participation. As part of the implementation of UUPA, all of these *dayah* have been subject to the State's educational policies and intervention.

1. Methods of Data Collection

Data were carefully collected through three techniques that are common in qualitative studies, namely document analysis, in-depth interviews, and observation. Document Analysis was used to collect information on concepts related to the substance of the research project, including education reform and reorientation, intervention, resistance, and social change. Some of the documents selected are the government

regulations related to the *dayah* education; the *dayah* curriculum; and the academic guideline of the *dayah*. In addition, in-depth interviews were used to collect data from the key participants, namely the *dayah* leaders, teachers, students and the head of *Dayah* Education department, academics, and social figures. The observation was used to reveal important information regarding the school cultures embedded within the *dayah*.

2. Methods of Data Analysis

This work was conducted primarily using a Case Study Approach, since it enable researchers to reveal research problems being investigated. In addition, this methodology necessitates the adaptation of certain data analysis techniques recommended by qualitative research. We utilized the open, axial, and selective coding techniques. These codes have been recognized as an effective means of data management, analysis, and reporting. Having transcribed the data, we organized the data based on open coding; that is, we generated data based on data emergence; it is grounded up. Then, axial coding was used to categorize all these open codes. In our final phase of data analysis, we selected all codes classified by axial coding, known as selective coding. The data from observation and document analysis is then triangulated with the interview data.

C. Result and Discussion

The research reveals several important findings related to research problems explored in this research. All three inquiries were answered through interviews, observation, and document analysis. Our findings are based on information gained from interviews, observations, and document analysis that respond to our inquiries. The analysis of relevant document informs us that the involvement of the government in the development of *dayah* education first gained steam after regulations provided a legal umbrella. This began with the passage of Law No. 11 of 2006 regarding the Governance of Aceh, better known as the UUPA. The passage of this law indicated a new chapter in the history of *dayah* education in Aceh.



Various policies and programs have been implemented by a range of government institutions as a form of intervention in the education program. The policies and programs implemented by the government have also influenced the formalization of *dayah* as educational institutions, the reorientation of their education, their resistance, and the participation of local communities.

1. Result

a. Regulations and Institutional Formalizations of Dayah

Our analysis of the document shows that the UUPA was passed as the legal basis for the development of a “New Aceh” after the region was plagued by a lengthy armed conflict (1976–2005) and stricken by a tsunami on December 26th, 2004. Enabling autonomy in the Acehese governance and social life, the UUPA was passed primarily to promote the development of a dignified “New Aceh”, one which applied the Islamic *sharia* (Feener & Daly, 2016; Fountain, 2016; Paul et al., 2013; Reid, 2015). It also referenced education, as in Article 216, Paragraph 1, which reads: “Every resident of Aceh has the right to receive a quality and Islamic education, reflective of scientific and technological developments”; Islamic education is referenced specifically as it has long been the educational model applied in Aceh. This includes in *dayah*, as mentioned explicitly in Article 218, Paragraph 1: “The government of Aceh and the regencies/cities shall pass policies regarding the provision of formal education, *dayah* education, and other non-formal types of education by passing core curricula and quality standards for all types and levels of education, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations” (Sekretariat Negara RI, 2006).

To gain information on the regulation regarding the management of the *dayah*, we analysed the Government Regulation regarding the *dayah*. The operational and technical management of *dayah* is regulated further through Qanun No. 5 of 2007 regarding the Organizational Structure and Operations of the *Dayah* Education Guidance Agency. In Article 164, Paragraph 1, it stipulates that the Dayah Education Guidance Agency is a

regional government agency used to help the Acehese government provide guidance to *dayah* as follows: 1) technical education and teaching guidance, 2) facilitation of teacher welfare, 3) improvement of facilities and infrastructure as well as teacher/ student resources, 4) monitoring, evaluation, and reporting of guidance activities, and 5) guidance of the Technical Implementation Unit. In 2016, Qanun No. 13 of 2016 regarding the Formation and Formulation of Acehese Structures and Gubernatorial Regulation No. 132 of 2016 regarding the Position, Organization, Duties, Functions, and Operations of the Office of Dayah Education (Sekretariat Daerah Provinsi Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, 2007).

b. Legalization of dayah as legal bodies (the notary act)

The interviews with influential individuals, such as the academics and leadership of the *dayah* and the director of the department of *dayah* education, disclose pertinent information that enables us to comprehend how the government regulation shape how the *dayah* is managed. The legalization of *dayah* as legal entities (via notarial acts) is one example of the State's intervention through the dissemination of a particular policy and program implemented by the DPDA (DPDA, 2018). Through these programs, *dayah* have received information on the benefits of legalization, and have been motivated to establish legal bodies. In this context, the Chair of the DPDA stated:

One of the main duties and functions of the Office of Dayah Education is to guide and develop dayah as institutions. We have regularly socialized the need to and urged the leaders of dayah to make notary acts or legal bodies. Having a legal body is important for dayah, as it indicates the comprehensiveness of the administration and provides physical proof of their legal status. With this notary act, the dayah have an institutional means of measuring their operational permissions and evaluating their accreditation. Dayah that has legal bodies and are administratively sound can receive specific attention in the form of assistance and funding. Meanwhile, dayah that lacks a legal body will experience obstacles when seeking funding and assistance (interview with the Director of the Office of Dayah Education, August 2018).



This shows that the legalization of *dayah* is one of the means through which the government has intervened in *dayah*. Legalization is a process that cannot be ignored, and *dayah* has no choice but to comply. *Dayah* that has legal bodies and the accompanying administration can more easily access government assistance. This was mentioned by Tgk. HD, the leader of Ruhul Falah, a *dayah* in Aceh Besar Regency:

As the leader of our *dayah*, we have been able to accept the government's policy, through the Office of *Dayah*, that requires *dayah* to become legal bodies. Our *dayah*, from its establishment twenty years ago, has had a legal body. However, we hope that this requirement is only applied to *dayah* that are willing to accept it, rather than forced upon *dayah* that do not want it.

Menurut pikiran lon, aturan nyoe peureule taikuti untuk tapeunuhi administrasi dayah mantong, Bek meuleubeh dari nyan, bek sampe but tanyoe seumeubeut pih dijak atoe le pemerintah (In my opinion, this rule need only be followed to fulfill the institutional requirements for *dayah*, and no more. We must not allow our duty to educate our students to be controlled by the government) (interview with the leader of Ruhul Fatah, July 2018).

This comment casts doubt on the government's involvement in the management of the *dayah*. On the one hand, the *dayah* leadership emphasizes that, while they must comply with government regulations addressing administrative issues, the government should not influence the school's instructional process.

c. Shifts in dayah leadership: from individual to formal-collective and collegiate leadership

Since the implementation of the UUPA, the leadership of *dayah* has also shifted from the traditional and charismatic leadership to modern formal and collective leadership. This shift began with the policy that required *dayah* to receive legal status and become legal bodies. This can be seen from the following quote:

Before the Acehese and regency/ city governments became involved, generally *dayah* were institutions that belonged to their *teungku dayah* (leader) and applied traditional approaches; they had no notary recognition or legal validation/ status in the eyes of the government. However, now, almost all the *dayah* in Aceh have received notary certification and legally become foundations (interview with the Director of the Office of Dayah Education, August 2018).

This explanation indicates that, with the requirement that *dayah* receive legal recognition, these schools have decided to adopt non-governmental regulated institution format. In this formal-collective structure, the *dayah* leadership consists of several leaders and staff, each of which has a different role and function determined by their function (Figure 1). The leadership and their coordination are handled professionally following the standard procedures, with them working together to realize shared goals, which is to educate Muslims.

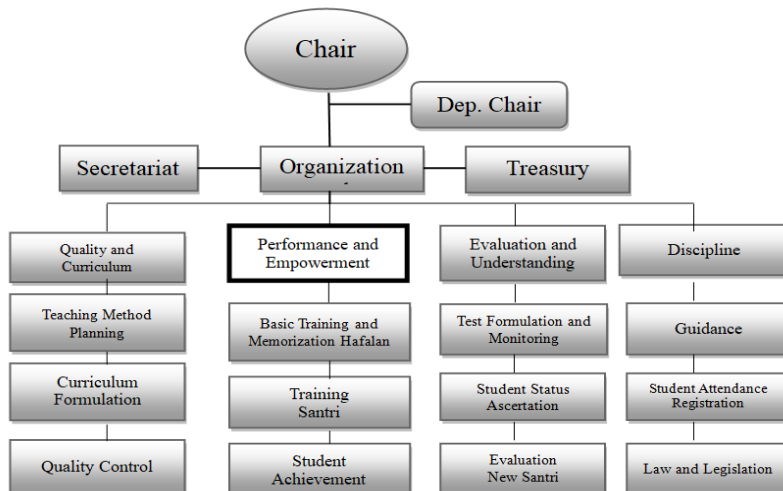


Figure 1. The organizational structure of the Ulee Titi Dayah, Aceh Besar Regency
Source: Structure of the Ulee Titi Dayah, Aceh Besar Regency.

d. The Dayah accreditation agency

After *dayah* has received legal status by the notary act, they must undergo accreditation. A survey of *dayah* conducted by the DPDA in 2017 focused on 793 of the 1,191 *dayah* in Aceh, classifying them based on their



institutional capacity, administrative requirements, and quality of education. It recognized four categories: Type A, Type B, Type C, and Type D *dayah*. Categorization was determined by six elements: 1) establishment, 2) legal status, 3) facilities/ infrastructure, 4) human resource quality, 5) number of students/ alumni, 6) role in and contribution to social and national development. The results of their evaluation and accreditation are presented in detail in Table 1.

Table 1. Data on *Dayah* Accreditation in Aceh, 2017

No.	Regency/City	Number and Types of <i>Dayah</i>				Total
		Type A	Type B	Type C	Type D	
1.	Banda Aceh City	3	2	3	9	16
2.	Aceh Besar Reg.	13	40	43	17	117
3.	Sabang City	0	1	1	3	5
4.	Pidie Jaya Reg.	1	5	5	24	35
5.	Pidie Reg.	2	50	14	62	128
6.	Bireuen Reg.	7	15	25	15	62
7.	North Aceh Reg.	6	10	22	38	76
8.	Lhokseumawe City	2	3	4	4	13
9.	East Aceh Reg.	2	15	47	30	94
10.	Langsa City	2	2	1	5	10
11.	Aceh Tamiang Reg.	1	1	2	1	5
12.	Aceh Jaya Reg.	1	1	8	13	23
13.	West Aceh Reg.	2	3	20	33	58
14.	Nagan Raya Reg.	0	2	2	22	26
15.	Southwest Aceh Reg.	1	1	8	25	35
16.	South Aceh Reg.	3	5	15	4	27
17.	Aceh Singkil Reg.	1	1	1	8	11
18.	Simeulue Reg.	0	0	0	1	1
19.	Central Aceh Reg.	0	0	3	3	6
20.	Bener Meriah Reg.	0	0	2	2	4
21.	Southeast Aceh Reg.	2	3	5	3	13
22.	Gayo Luwes Reg.	1	1	5	10	17
23.	Subulussalam Reg.	1	2	9	1	13
	Total	50	163	245	349	793

Source: Office of *Dayah* Education, 2017.

e. Funding Allocation

The implementation of the UUPA has also had consequences for the allocation of funding for the construction and development of *dayah*.

Previously, *dayah* had been managed individually, using internal funding and other external resources, such as community assistance. The DPDA routinely allocates money for the development of *dayah* in the Acehnese budget. The amount of funding allocated may be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Recapitulation of funding for Dayah Education Development, 2009-2017

No.	Year	Allocation
1.	2009	223 billion
2.	2010	107 billion
3.	2011	98 billion
4.	2012	136 billion
5.	2013	250 billion
6.	2014	230 billion
7.	2015	376 billion
8.	2016	230 billion
9.	2017	186 billion

Source: Office of Dayah Education, 2017.

Table 2 indicates the funding for *dayah* provided by the DPDA between 2009–2017. This money has been used primarily to build and develop *dayah* facilities, such as mosques, dormitories, learning spaces, cafeteria, and libraries, as well as to procure books, learning media, and toilets. These funds are also used to run various training programs for human resources development, including both teachers and students. Certainly, this allocation of money has received a positive response, not only from the *dayah* management, but also from students. One of the students suggests that “the money granted by the government enables the *dayah* to support educational process, such as establishing learning facilities.

f. The State involvement in the curriculum development

In more than ten years since the UUPA was implemented, the government has developed *dayah* curricula through three stages: through initial surveys to identify the curricula already applied, through workshops and training sessions to help the *teungku* develop curricula, and through the formulation of new curricula. The curricula developed by the government do not only include religious lessons, but also include non-religious ones



such as English, computers, and life skills. Interviews indicated that the government’s formulation of new curricula received resistance from some *teungku*, who felt that *dayah* are institutions of Islamic education and as such should only teach religious lessons. Observations in the field indicated that these curricula tended to include such lessons as Qur’anic/ hadiths reading and comprehension, *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *ushul fiqh* (methodology of Islamic jurisprudence), *tauhid* (basic Islamic principles), *kalam* (Islamic theology), *akhlak* (morality), and *tarikh* (Islamic history).

Over time, the perspectives of the *teungku dayah* began to change, and they began to accept the new curricula. Table 3 indicates that, before non-religious classes were introduced to *dayah*, the government—through the DPDA—began training teachers and students. As such, when the new curricula were implemented in the *dayah*, all involved were ready.

Table 3. Dissemination of information and Training Activities for Dayah Teachers (T) and Students (S)

No.	Type of Training	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
		T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S
1.	Arabic language	50	40	50		50		50		50	
2.	English language	40	40	40		40		40		40	
3.	Mathematics	40		40		40		40		40	
4.	Computer		40		40						
5.	Calligraphy	50		40		-		-	40	-	
6.	<i>Falaq</i>	-		-		48		80		-	
7.	Academic Writing		40		40						
Total		180	160	170	80	138		210		90	

Data from 2018 indicates that the majority of the *dayah* in Aceh have begun teaching ‘non-religious’ subjects as part of their curriculum. The State has had an active role in the development and creation of standard curricula for *dayah*, as mentioned by the Director of the Office of *Dayah* Education:

Now we’ve successfully facilitated the creation of a curriculum and syllabus for dayah. This syllabus has been prepared by the ulama dayah



themselves, including Abu Mudi, Abu Kuta Krueng, Tu Min, Waled Nu, Waled Marhaban, etc. The curriculum and syllabus have been socialized to *dayah*, and they have started applying it uniformly. The curriculum and syllabus have even been adopted nationally in Indonesia. There's a curriculum for modern *dayah* and a curriculum for salafi *dayah* (interview with the Director of the Office of Dayah Education, July 2018).

This involvement in curriculum development illustrates that the State has taken an increasingly active role in orienting religious education in Aceh, which may be seen as signifying a significant shift in *dayah*, institutions that have been traditionally rooted in the Acehnese history and culture.

g. Reorientation of the *Dayah* Education

The reorientation of *dayah* education may be seen from two aspects, namely the development of scientific insights and a shift from a focus on Islamic studies to more general subject matter. Since 2007, *dayah* has received training and guidance from several institutions, including the Agency for Reconstruction and Rehabilitation (BRR), and the Center for Study Education and Society (PKPM). Individuals trained by these institutions have produced various academic works, as shown in Table 4. While some have viewed traditional institutions of Islamic education as focusing only on religious issues, since the passage of the UUPA the issues examined by *dayah* have become broader in scope.

Table 4. Books by the Ulama, Teachers, and Students of Acehnese *Dayah*

No.	Title	Writer(s)	Publisher	Year of Pub.
1.	<i>Pemikiran Ulama Dayah Aceh</i> [The Thoughts of the Acehnese Dayah Ulama]	Five <i>ulama dayah</i>	Logos	2009
2.	<i>Resolusi Konflik dalam Islam</i> [Conflict Resolution in Islam]	Tgk. H. Ibrahim Bardan	BRR and the Aceh Institute	2008
3.	<i>Percikan Pemikiran Perempuan Aceh</i> [A Light Upon Acehnese Women's Thoughts]	Ten <i>Teungku Inong</i> (female teachers)	BRR, PKPM, Pena	2008
4.	<i>Perspektif Ulama Perempuan Aceh</i> [Perspectives of the Female Ulama in Aceh]	Seven <i>Teungku Inong</i> (female teachers)	MISPI	2008



No.	Title	Writer(s)	Publisher	Year of Pub.
5.	<i>Wacana Pemikiran Santri dayah Aceh</i> [Discourses of the Students at Acehnese Dayah]	Five students of a salafi <i>dayah</i>	BRR and PKPM	2007
6.	<i>Dinamika Peran Perempuan Aceh</i> [The Dynamics of Acehnese Women's Roles]	Five students	BRR and PSW IAIN Ar-Raniry	2008
7.	<i>Menuju Syariat Islam Kaffah: Pemikiran dan Pengalaman Santri Aceh</i> [Towards a Total Islamic Sharia: Thoughts and Experiences of Acehnese Students]	Four students	BRR and Lapena	2008
8.	<i>Masa Depan Remaja Islam: Kumpulan Tulisan Santri Dayah Terpadu</i> [The Future of Muslim Youths: An Integrated Collection of Dayah Students' Writings]	Six students of salafi/ modern <i>dayah</i>	BRR and Lapena	2009
9.	<i>Media Dakwah Santri Dayah</i> [Proselytisation Media of Dayah Students]	Dayah Monthly Magazine		2010–present

Source: Data collected from the annual report of the Religious, Social, and Cultural Unit of the Agency for Rehabilitation and Reconciliation (BRR), PKPM, Lapena, 2010.

An interesting fact shown in Table 4 is that critical thinking has been introduced to and trained at the *dayah*. This can be seen from various titles, including: *Resolusi Konflik dalam Islam*, *Perspektif Ulama Perempuan Aceh*, and *Dinamika Peran Perempuan Aceh*. Looking more in-depth, these three books represent progressive and critical studies.

h. Responses to the Formalization of *Dayah*

The involvement of the State in the institutional development of *dayah* has, certainly, drawn a range of responses from the public, both those within and without the *dayah*. For instance, a survey of students conducted in 2017 found that 40.3% of students approved and 13.4% strongly approved. Meanwhile, some 25% disapproved and 19.4% strongly disapproved (see Diagram 1).

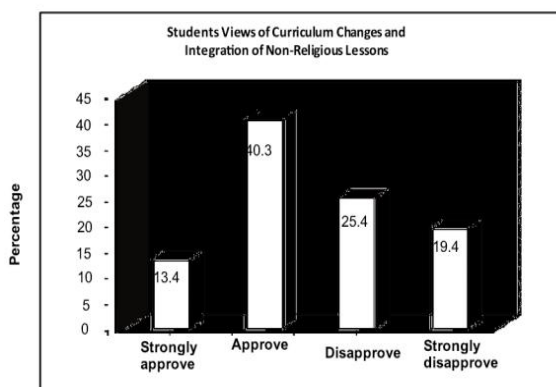


Diagram 1. Students' responses to curriculum-development policies

Response to the State's involvement in *dayah* has also come from the *teungku*. Tgk. Abdul Hafidh, the leader of the Darul Falah Dayah in Aceh Besar, explained:

Whatever is done by the government to positively affect our school, we can accept it. Be it physical construction, such as mosques, dormitories, study spaces, etc., or non-physical contributions such as texts, books, computers, scholarships, and training. We can even accept the ideas and efforts made by the government, particularly the Office for Dayah Education and the Office of Religious Affairs, to help develop and expand the curriculum of our schools with general subject matter. Currently, such lessons can prove useful for students (interview with Tgk. AH, July 2018).

Meanwhile, responses from communities outside the *dayah* have generally been negative. Local communities have viewed State intervention as transforming *dayah* from community-based institutions into formal institutions under State control. As such, the *dayah* receives less community participation and assistance. This was mentioned by a community leader in Aceh Besar Regency:

Talking about the support for and assistance of Acehnese society for the Islamic schools in Aceh, it's never been doubted. There has been a lot of support, both financial and otherwise, for the development of these schools. However, since the government has begun providing specific assistance and attention through its Dayah Agency, which is tasked with and serves to help fund the construction of Islamic schools' facilities and infrastructure, social participation and support has eroded somewhat. Generally, people



believe that, with government assistance, all of the needs and operational costs of our schools can be met, and as such their contributions are no longer needed (interview with Tgk. HM, July 2018).

Social resistance to the State involvement was also evident in our observations. Presently, the people of Aceh are less than willing to provide assistance to students who are seeking to collect financial aid for their *dayah*, either at their homes or in public spaces. Many are cynical when they see the students' seeking donations, and some have even reproached the *teungku*, urging them to no longer seek social assistance. This represents a considerable shift, and traditionally the people of Aceh have given as much aid—money, rice, eggs, goats, etc.—to the *dayah* as they can (observations, August 2018).

2. Discussion

Traditional Islamic education in Aceh, as commonly found in many parts of Indonesia, has often involved in the process of shaping students' morale. Often, when a *teungku chik* (leader) died, nobody would be able to replace them, and the *dayah* would be closed (Brooks & Mutohar, 2018). This occurred, for example, in the *dayah* run by Tgk. Syik Tanoh Abee and Tgk. Chik Lambirah in Aceh Besar, as well as the *dayah* run by Tgk. Chik Awee Getah in Bireuen (Marzuki, 2011). Another issue is related to the lack of physical infrastructure and facilities for learning activities. Most *dayah*, having been established and operated by individuals, relied on individual sources of funding; in most cases, their leaders had limited financial capacity. Although *dayah* collected money from surrounding communities, including students' parents and the general populace, the amount was generally not sufficient to meet their needs.

Studies of the politics of education have identified reciprocal interactions between educational institutions and the State, and actors—each of whom has specific interests—attempt to influence each other (Almuhajir, 2015). The involvement of the State is seen as part of the State's responsibility to help schools such as *dayah*. This is manifested, in part, by

the passage of regulations (Feener & Kloos, 2015). The passage of a range of regulations regarding *dayah*, their accreditation, and their funding is further indicative of this involvement (Yusuf & Sterkens, 2015; Syarifuddin, 2021). The State, in creating education policy, seeks to improve the quality of educational institutions and of education itself (Walker & Bergmann, 2013).

However, in the context of the Aceh's *dayah*, the State's intervention has resulted in the institutional formalization of *dayah*. This formalization has had a positive effect on *dayah*, as shown in their structures becoming more professional and modern (Mujiburrahman, 2016). Furthermore, *dayah* has also received additional funding and spaces to engage in human resource development, both of which are central to the education system. Our observations suggest that this formalization has not eroded the autonomy of the *dayah* or the power of the *teungku chik*. The *dayah* retains the power to conduct lessons in accordance with their visions and missions. Similarly, the *teungku chik* retain their authority as charismatic leaders who are respected by their communities (Dhofier, 1990; Ishak & Abdullah, 2013).

All policies implemented by a State may potentially have negative consequences. In the context of the *dayah* in Aceh, one negative effect of the UUPA has been the tendency to implement policies in a top-down manner, without considering community aspirations. Robinson (1995) indicates that, through their hegemonizing power, States will frequently implement policies that have been formulated based on considerations of power and national interests. State policies that are not rooted in the aspirations and needs of the people (in this case, the *dayah*) generally perform poorly, or may even be detrimental. Similar arguments have been made by (Basri, 2017; Hasyim, 2015; Subhi, 2016), who note that the formalization of religious education, such as in *dayah*, is unavoidable.

The State's involvement in the *dayah* education system in Aceh, particularly its introduction of non-religious lessons, has also resulted in a shift in the perspectives and directions of *dayah*. Previously focused on Islamic studies, they have begun teaching more general religious subjects (Zubaili, 2017; Choiriyati et al., 2018; Zuhdi, 2018). This has been accepted



by the leaders of the *dayah* in Aceh since the implementation of the UUPA (Fitriana, 2013; Harisun, 2015; Subhi, 2016). The interactions between the *dayah* and the values of modernity have driven the schools to reorient themselves in the development of their curricula. This has been explored by Dhofier and Horikoshi, both of whom have found that such changes are inevitable, as religious schools cannot be separated from the influences of the values existing outside them (Dhofier, 1990; Horikoshi, 1987).

However, unlike the arguments of Dhofier and Horikoshi above, shifts in *dayah* curricula cannot solely be attributed to outside values. They have also occurred because of the State's approach to education, including its attempt to control the *dayah*. This aligns with the argument of Didaskalou and Millward (2002), who finds that the State, through its political processes, exercises control as part of its responsibility for education. As such, the development of *dayah* curricula cannot be separated from the control and involvement of the State, which seeks to ensure that the education provided at these institutions reflect the State's vision and mission for education, as specified in Law No. 20 of 2003.

The formalization of *dayah* following the implementation of the UUPA has received responses. Those willing to accept the State's involvement in *dayah* education have made several arguments. *First*, the Acehnese people expect *dayah* to become institutions that provide high quality Islamic education; government involvement, thus, can improve the religious and general knowledge of graduates and therefore enable them to live as productive members of society. *Second*, religious schools have long gone without government attention or assistance, and as such many have welcomed its attempts to further build and develop such institutions (Thomas & Hardy, 2011).

Meanwhile, those who disapprove of the State's intervention in *dayah* have made several points. *First*, traditionally *dayah* education has been inseparable from community involvement, yet in recent years these institutions have been seen as government owned. *Second*, communities have lost their sense of ownership of *dayah*; they feel that government

policies and assistance has created distance between the *dayah* and their communities. *Third*, the large amount of funding available for the infrastructural development of *dayah* has led many people to establish new *dayah*. *Fourth*, many of the programs and policies to date have been project-oriented, and as such the quality of the work has been lacking (Mujiburrahman, 2010).

D. Conclusion

Following the implementation of the UUPA, the culture-based religious education in Aceh—the traditional *dayah*—entered a new chapter in its history. The passage of the UUPA offered the State a means of entering the traditional institutions of religious education that have long functioned to maintain Acehnese values and identity. This uniquely Acehnese system of religious education, which has passed from generation to generation, is facing new challenges as political forces have become involved in its management. This article has highlighted three important aspects that mark the State's intervention in *dayah* as educational institutions: formalization, reorientation, and social resistance.

The formalization of *dayah* as educational institutions has transformed them from local institutions into a broader social system. As such, *dayah* has taken a more strategic position in Aceh's social structure. Furthermore, modernization in the field of education has been perceived as a threat to tradition, and indeed it has had a tangible effect through the reorientation of *dayah* education. This article emphasizes that, although recent changes to *dayah* have not, in and of themselves, caused *dayah* to abandon their roots as culture-based institutions of religious education, they have resulted in a reorientation of these institutions and created new problems regarding their roles in the community. As such, further research is necessary to identify solutions for the problems currently facing the *dayah* of Aceh. Finally, although accommodation of government intervention has produced institutional and intellectual wealth, the political interests involved in the process have resulted in the Acehnese people being unable to accept the new model of *dayah*.



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