

The Roles of Tuan Guru Haji (TGH) Abd Rahman Al-Fathani in the Development of Islamic Education in Patani Southern Thailand

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Abstract

Rigorous research has reported reformist figures from Islamic education in Patani Thailand, such as Tuan Guru Haji (TGH) Abd Rahman al-Fathani. This paper discusses the role of TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani in the development of Islamic education in Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing Patani Southern Thailand. This study uses field studies with in-depth interviews, observation, and a literature search. The results showed a critical point that the development of Islamic education in Muassasah Ma'had Tsaqafah al-Islamiyah since its inception until now is inseparable from the work and thought innovations of Muassasah leaders with the help of elements in Muassasah's organizational structure. This illustrates the role of TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani in the development of Islamic education by modernizing Islamic boarding schools, spreading literacy in Islamic education, conceptualizing institutional curricula, and sparking effective learning methods. Supporting factors include togetherness in managing the curriculum and teaching and learning process, adequate facilities and infrastructure, and experienced teachers. Inhibiting factors include different abilities and psychological abilities of students, low community participation, and poor management of funds.

Keywords: Tuan Guru Haji (TGH) Abd Rahman Al-Fathani, Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah, Development of Islamic Education, Modernity.

Abstrak

Penelitian yang ketat telah melaporkan tokoh-tokoh reformis dari pendidikan Islam di Patani Thailand, seperti Tuan Guru Haji (TGH) Abd Rahman al-Fathani. Tulisan ini mendiskusikan peran (TGH) Abd Rahman al-Fathani dalam pengembangan pendidikan Islam di Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing Patani Thailand Selatan. Kajian ini memakai studi lapangan dengan wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan penelusuran literatur. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan satu poin penting bahwa pengembangan pendidikan Islam di Muassasah Ma'had Tsaqafah al-Islamiyah ini sejak awal berdiri sampai sekarang yang tidak lepas dari inovasi kerja dan pikiran para pemimpin Muassasah dengan bantuan unsur-unsur dalam struktur organisasi Muassasah. Hal ini menggambarkan peran TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani dalam pengembangan pendidikan Islam dengan cara modernisasi pondok pesantren, menyebarkan literasi pendidikan Islam, mengonsep kurikulum kelembagaan, dan mencetus metode pembelajaran yang efektif. Faktor pendukung meliputi kebersamaan dalam pengelolaan kurikulum dan proses belajar mengajar, sarana dan prasarana yang memadai, dan guru berpengalaman. Faktor penghambat meliputi kemampuan dan psikologis siswa berbeda-beda, peran serta masyarakat yang rendah, dan lemahnya pengelolaan dana.

Kata Kunci: *Tuan Guru Haji (TGH) Abd Rahman Al-Fathani, Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah, Pengembangan Pendidikan Islam, Modernitas.*

Introduction

Little is known about the development of Islamic education in Southeast Asia, and in particular Patani of South Thailand, but some historical records exist, in which according to Ahmad Umar, “traditional Islamic boarding schools began to exist in Patani since the arrival of Islam in this region that later was developed by the Patanis for over 300 years before the King of Patani, Sultan Ismail Shah, embraced Islam (1488-1511 CE)¹.” Later on, family members of the king and court officials also converted to Islam. Since then, Islam began developing, and the king announced sovereignty throughout the Malay Islamic kingdom of Patani Darussalam. Ahmad Umar has furthermore explained that studying the Qur’an, at the mosque (*Balai Syah*) and houses, was the main focus of Islamic education at that time and was encouraged by the Muslims in Patani. Those who were responsible for the teaching of the Qur’an were called teacher “Tok Guru Qur’an” and were dispersed to every village. Early in Patani, the Qur’anic teaching was a

¹ Ahmad Umar Chapakia, *Politik dan Perjuangan Masyarakat Islam di Selatan Thailand 1902-2002*, (Kuala Lumpur UKM, 2000), p. 25.

boarding-based educational type, and since then, the Islamic boarding school has been established. This prototype became a premier schooling and educational system for the children. It was so influential in Islamic education that it consequently became an institution for also supporting the community socially and spiritually. The Islamic boarding school, which is considered a fortress to defend Islam and the Malay culture, took a more considerable responsibility in society, and those children who finished education there were then appointed as religious community leaders, becoming priests, preachers, *muazzin*, mosque caretakers, and spiritual leaders (*Toko Leba*). Their position was highly respected in the community².

The word of *Patani* is derived from *fathan* or *fathanah*, which means wise or intelligent, and which names the area where numerous famous Muslim scholars were born. They who were very influential in the development of Islamic education include Sheikh Daud al-Fathani, Sheikh Muhammad Zian al-Fathani, Syekh Abdul Qadir al-Fathani, Sheikh Nik Mat Kecil al-Fathani, Sheikh Abd Rahman Gudang al-Fathani, and Tuan Guru Haji Sulong al-Fathani--a highly respected *ulama* and Muslim scholar, Tuan Guru Haji Harlan Sulong, and Haji Abd Rahman al-Fathani. Some books in Jawi Arabic (*Pegon*) are still being taught in several Islamic boarding schools in Patani, which include *Mathla' al-Badrain (fiqh)*, the work of Muhammad al-Fathani, *al-Jauhar al-Mauhub* (the science of *Tawheed*) by Sheikh Wan Ali, and *Lum'ah al-Aurad* (science of *tahqiq*) by Shaykh Wan Ahmad al-Fathani, *Syarh Matan al-Arba'in an-Nawawiyah (hadith)* by Tuan Guru Haji Abd Rahman al-Fathani.

Thai government politically gives Thai Muslim not only freedom of worship and of preaching their faith (*da'wa*), but also ways of establishing their boarding schools as part of guaranteeing worship³. Islamic education is a comprehensive process of developing human personality, including intellect, spirituality, emotion, and the physical state⁴. Traditional Islamic education, such as the system of Islamic boarding school, has been the backbone of

² Ahmad Umar Chapakia, *Politik dan Perjuangan Masyarakat Islam di Selatan Thailand 1902-2002*, p. 40.

³ M. Darwan Rahardjo, *Islam di Muangthai: Nasionalisme Melayu Masyarakat Patani* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1988), pp. 138-39.

⁴ Taufik Abdullah dan Sharon Siddique, *Tradisi dan Kebangkitan Islam di Asia Tenggara* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1988), p. 409.

Islamic identity,⁵ and traditional Malay education has long existed in Patani since the 17th century in the form of madrasah and mosque. The mosque has been both a place of worship and a center for reciting and reading the Qur'an and aiding the spread of Islam.

Rigorous research has reported on the reformist figures of Islamic education in Patani Thailand, such as Hasanuddin⁶ and Sheikh Ahmad al-Fathani, for their contributions and roles in developing religious science in South Thailand. Aspects that they emphasized for the process of transforming spiritual science were taken almost entirely from moral education types in the Middle East to the Malay region during the 19th-20th century⁷. Also, research has scrutinized the role and contribution of Abdul Qadir, who fostered socio-culture and science in the Muslim community in South Thailand by providing a system called *kosono* for recitation outside the classroom. This system is provided to suit the needs of the local Muslims and the government⁸. Meanwhile, this study sought to examine Islam and politics in the Malay community, as they had very high political awareness after the 1932 Thai revolution.

Also, this study focuses on the discussion of the role and renewal of Islamic education augmented by Tuan Guru Haji Abd Rahman al-Fathani at Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing, Panarek, Patani Province, South Thailand. He was chosen as a focus of this study because he has renewed the development of Islamic education. Over time, he contributed to reforming Islamic education with the curriculum methods applied to pesantren. He tried to introduce the education system as diplomatic means exemplified by Madrasah Saudiyah Makkah with its classical system called *halaqah* that was considered less effective applied in such conditions today. Therefore, Tuan Guru Haji was seen as a reformist in Islamic education. As well, he was considered as a traditional Islamic education expert who could take a look over the phenomenon of renewal with the development of Islamic education

⁵ Chapakia, *Politik dan Perjuangan Masyarakat Islam di Selatan Thailand 1902-2002*, p. 41.

⁶ Hasanudin bin Daud, Syekh Ahmad Al-Fathani: Peranan dan Sumbangannya dalam Perkembangan Ilmu Keagamaan, *Tesis*, Universiti Malaya Kuala Lumpur, 2003.

⁷ Ma'yani Dahami, Dr. Abdul Qadir: Sumbangan dan Peranannya dalam Membina Masyarakat Selatan Thai, *Tesis*, Songkhla Nakharin University Thailand, 2005.

⁸ Hamdan bin Mohammad Salleh, Islam dan Politik dalam Masyarakat Melayu Patani: Satu Kajian Tentang Perjuangan Haji Sulong, *Disertasi*, Universiti Malaya Kuala Lumpur, 2003.

in the hope that the restoration itself can refresh a new generation to shape Islamic education further to avoid being considered stagnant. This article explores explicitly also the development of education by Tuan Guru Haji Abd Rahman al-Fathani, by presenting three essential questions: *First*, what is the current state of development of Islamic education in Muassasah Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing? What is the role of TGH Abd Rahman in developing Islamic education in this Muassasah? What are the supporting and inhibiting factors for the realization of the role of TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani in developing Islamic education?

The mechanism of selection for this research topic was done by tracing several previous studies about the role and actions of leaders in Islamic education, especially in Patani Thailand. This research was conducted to find out the central themes affecting the practices of Islamic education in the region. Additionally, this research studied the role of figures, mainly TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani, regarding the renewal of Islamic education. Data in this research was obtained through field studies,⁹ which were conducted at Pombing Patani South Thailand at Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah. This research used the qualitative approach with a description of the factual and real conditions which exist in the field of Islamic education of the Muassasah and with an observation on the phenomena, the physical settings, and the human subjects¹⁰.

In-depth interviews with informants were applied, namely, with the manager of the *ma'had*, the school principal, the teachers, and the community leaders being key informants in providing data. They are vital informants because their daily activities involve education, schooling, and management of the *ma'had*. In such, they are considered knowledgeable. In this study, the researchers also acted as participant observers of the activities and around classes to assess the role of TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani. This

⁹ W. Lawrence Neuman. *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2003); Norman K. Denzin & Yvonna S. Lincoln. *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994).

¹⁰ Lexy J. Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 1995), p. 11; Robert L. Miller and John D. Brewer. *The A-Z of Social Research: A Dictionary of Key Social Science Research Concepts* (London: Sage Publications, 2003); Robert C. Bogdan & Sari Knopp Biklen. *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods* (Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 1992).

study utilized field research that allows researchers to collect data through interviews, observations, focus group discussions, and the review of documents. Data is then processed qualitatively through analytical methods, namely interactive analysis, content analysis, and comparative analysis, by using Miles and Huberman's data reduction activities, data presentation, and drawing of conclusions¹¹.

Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing: History and Programs

Renewal of education was carried out by TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani, the founding father of Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing Patani called "Pondok Pombing," on November 16, 1961. This is a boarding school and a top Islamic education center in the region that combines traditional and modern systems, namely religious education (*sasena*) and general education (*saman*). The school now occupies 72 hectares of land, part of which was donated through *waqf* by a person named Muhammad Hanafiyah, and by his parents, to TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani. The son and father endowed the land and structures in it. Earlier since its formation, only Muslims were taught, and the Muassasah had an initial enrollment of forty young males, and this first-class utilized the small wooden-made mosque¹².

In 1961, the *ma'had* was registered as Pondok pesantren in the local government, according to the decree No 10 November 16, 1961, so it complied with the state law. Previously this *ma'had* had not made any addition in terms of teaching beyond only Islamic studies. In the beginning, this *ma'had* only held Islamic education following its primary guiding objectives, and its members had little respect to interact with the community. In 1964, the name of *ma'had* was changed into the Thai language as *Rongrian Wattanatham Islam Pombing*. It submitted a request to the government to add subjects such as the Thai language, and this was primarily for the adult class (*suksa phu yai*). In 1965, in cooperation with the government, the *ma'had* succeeded in opening this adult class and changed its status as a private Islamic school (*Rongrian Egkachun Son Sasena Islam*) under the direction of the education

¹¹ Matthew B. Miles & A.S. Michael Huberman, *Analisis Data Kualitatif*, trans. Tjetjep Rohendi (Jakarta: UI Press, 1992), 16; Earl Babbie. *The Practice of Social Research* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2001).

¹² Ma'had Tsaqafah al-Islamiyah Pombing, *Buku Kenangan 40 Tahun Pondok Pombing* (Patani: Ma'had Pombing, 2002), p. 14.

office of the 12th region of southern Thailand. In 1979, TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani, as the founder of the first Islamic boarding school, saw that academic science (*saman*) or general education was very advanced and rapidly developing in Patani.

Moreover, this had encouraged the *ma'had* management to open *Mathyum Suksa Toon Tun* (secondary school curriculum) administered from the education office in the 12th region of southern Thailand for private schools that teach Islam¹³. This *ma'had* is located on Jalan Pombing No 111/1 Mo 03 Pombing Village, Pombing District, Panarek Regency, Patani Province, South Thailand 94130. It has building facilities that include male and female dormitories, a mosque, *raudlatul athfal*, and *madrasah diniyah ibtidaiyah*, secondary school and high school building, a library and laboratories, and principal buildings used for learning activities¹⁴.

Like other Islamic schools in general, the *ma'had* also has a vision and mission to clarify its founding direction. Vision: it aims to produce knowledgeable students, believers, preachers. In other words, it creates qualified graduates who have values of the universalism of Islam, faith, and knowledge that they could devote themselves to religion, nation, and awareness of being citizens of the world. Mission: the *ma'had* aims to 1) develop and foster students to carry out Islamic teachings and increase the unity of Muslims in all disciplines, 2) establish a noble educational method, 3) create a learning method for the benefit of students in everyday life, 4) nurture a productive learning environment, 5) implement a curriculum that suits the needs of the community, 6) provide sports and exercises for healthy soul and body, 7) develop the interests of students to love reading critically, 8) improve the quality of learning, and 9) encourage students to develop in the field of religion (*sasena*) and academics (*saman*).

Development of Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing

Islamic education is aimed at optimizing the function and role of children's potential, as embedded in the teaching and learning process of Islamic education, to achieve a better future. Given this goal, it is necessary to

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Interview with Mr. Pausee Ha'deng, head of staff at the *ma'had*. Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing, in January 4th, 2016.

provide leverage that can accelerate strategic development following the conditions of the *ma'had*¹⁵. The formation of Islamic education is a means of encouraging young students to focus on studying science in an orderly way to shape them as human believers who consciously and sincerely apply Islamic values in all aspects of life.

TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani is a central figure in the development of Islamic education and was a great Patani cleric in the mid-20th century, who was famous as "Tok Pombing" because he was born and raised in a village called Pombing. He was born on July 10, 1930,¹⁶ and was the eldest child of three siblings. His brother was Abdul Halim and had a sister, Aisyah¹⁷. His father was Ahmad bin Chek Tam, and his mother was Hajjah Wan Yah Binti Wan Teh. The parents were residents of Pombing Village. The ancestral genealogy of the mother came from Teras City, Raman Regency, Yala Province, and was the second wife of the former Young Meakong to Raman King named Tuan Lebih¹⁸.

TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani had been resourceful for Islamic education in South Thailand, and this was evidenced through his educational legacy. He started at a low-nationality school similar to *Sekolah Dasar* in Pombing Village in 1937¹⁹. Then he moved to study religion in a pesantren owned by TGH Abd Rahman bin Shaghir, son of Tok Yaman Kuala Beruwas, Panarek Regency, Patani Province, from 1940 to 1946. He continued his studies for three months at the *pesantren* of TGH Wan Ahmad, Yaring Regency Patani Province, and for six months at the *pesantren* of TGH Hasan bin Muhammad Amin Mak Anggul, Mayor District Pisii Province in 1948²⁰. In the same year, however, after TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani reached age 19

¹⁵ A. Rifqi Amin, *Pengembangan Pendidikan Agama Islam* (Yogyakarta: LKiS Pelangi Aksara, 2015), p. 4.

¹⁶ Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing, *Buku Kenangan 40 Tahun Pondok Pombing* (Patani: Ma'had Pombing, 2002), p. 16.

¹⁷ Abd Rahman Ismail Dewani, *Tokoh Ulama Silam Fathani*, (Patani: Saudara Press, 2011), p. 55.

¹⁸ Ahmad Fathi, *Tuan Guru Haji Abd Rahman al-Fathani Penerima Anugerah Tokoh Ma'alhijrah Negeri Terangganu 1423 H*, *Majalah Pengasuh*, (Kelantan: Majelis Agama Islam dan Adat Istiadat Melayu Kelantan, Bill. 574, 1 April-Juli 2002), p. 3.

¹⁹ Abd Rahman Ismail Dewani, *Tokoh Ulama Silam Fathani* (Patani: Saudara Press, 2011), p. 40.

²⁰ Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing, *Buku Kenangan 40 Tahun Pondok Pombing* (Patani: Ma'had Pombing, 2002), p. 16.

and had married Fatimah, a daughter of Tuan Guru Beruwas Cottage, Tuan Guru left for Makkah²¹. There he learned from either formal or informal institutions to forge religious science, such as at Masjid al-Haram, from many famous scholars and *ulama* from 1948 to 1951. Tuan Guru then pursued his formal learning through Madrasah Sa'udiyah, beginning with *ibtidaiyyah* class in 1952 and connecting a higher education in Ma'had al-Ulum in 1953²². In 1958-960, he studied *Shari'ah* at Ummul Qura University Makkah but did not complete it. During those years, he took an additional informal education at Masjid al-Haram, and he taught Patani students who were at Jam'iyah al-Islamiyah al-Fathaniyah, Makkah. This all aimed at maintaining goodness among Patani students. Some experts who graduated from this institution were Zakaria bin Lutfi (Kelaba), Wan Ahmad (Kerisik, Patani), Ismail Pitsuwan, Hasbul Lah (Ko'Po), Abdul Hadi (Yala), Nik Mahmud (Panarek), Arsyad (Palas), and Abdul Ghani (Yala)²³. He became useful to TGH Wan Ismail (at Eil Makkah) as an assistant teacher after twelve years of pursuing his studies. After that, he returned to Thailand and established the *ma'had* simultaneously to spread Islam to the people²⁴.

This history is an outline of the development of Islamic education in Ma'had Tsaqafah al-Islamiyah Pombing, and a review of the development of the *pesantren* was established earlier and has not revealed a transparent educational system in terms of formal legality, namely that it has not been recorded in the Thai government as a boarding school, but after that, Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing was recorded in the government body as a boarding school in November 16, 1961, which was inaugurated under the auspices of the ministry of education. The forerunner to its development, the *ma'had* has not entirely been able to conduct Islamic education as a whole;

²¹ Ahmad Fathi, Tuan Guru Haji Abd Rahman Pombing al-Fathani Penerima Anugerah Tokoh Ma'alhijrah Negeri Terangganu 1423 H, *Majalah Pengasuh*, Kelantan: Majelis Agama Islam dan Adat Istiadat Melayu Kelantan, Bil. 574, 1 April-Juli 2002), p. 3.

²² Ahmad Fathi, *Tuan Guru Haji Abd Rahman al-Fathani Penerima Anugerah Tokoh Ma'alhijrah Negeri Terangganu 1423 H, Majalah Pengasuh* (Kelantan: Majelis Agama Islam dan Adat Istiadat Melayu Kelantan, Bill 574, 1 April-Juli 2002), p. 3.

²³ Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing, *Buku Kenangan 10 Tahun Pondok Pombing* (Patani: Ma'had Pombing, 1972), p. 7.

²⁴ Abd Rahman Ismail Dewani, *Tokoh Ulama Silam Fathani* (Patani: Saudara Press, 2011), pp. 40-41.

however, its development was going through several stages. In line with the reality above, the management of the *ma'had* put it:

The running of education in this *ma'had*, in the beginning, did not show the transparent system of *pentadbiran*. Tuan Guru catered to the need of the Muslim community about religious science (*sasena*). Then as the number of students increased and with the experience of Tuan Guru Haji Abd Rahman al-Fathani, this *ma'had* led to a new wave for encouraging the development of Islamic education in Patani especially Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah²⁵.

One development can be seen from the beginning. This grandfather held Islamic education with his primary guiding objectives, and by following his shift, the members of *ma'had* gained the view that Islamic education can include interacting with the surrounding community and submitting requests to the Thai government in order to add subjects in the form of Thai Language, and eventually have an adult class education arrangement (*Suksa Phu Yai*). Then in a 1965 collaboration with the Thai government, Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah successfully opened an adult education class (*Suksa Phu Yai*) and arranged it to become a private school teaching Islamic religion (*Rongrian Egkachun Son Sasena Islam*) under the direction of the 12th region education office in South Thailand²⁶.

Additionally, in 1979, TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani acted as the founder of the Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah. He believed that general education (*saman*) was very advanced and rapidly developing in Patani, and Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing was successful in opening *Mathyum Suksa Toon Tun* (secondary school), according to the purpose of *Mathyum Suksa Toon Tun* (secondary school curriculum) from the education office of the 12th region of South Thailand for private schools teaching Islamic religion. Along with the innovation by the master teacher, his leadership was active during the second period of 1981. Meanwhile, TGH Abdullah Beruwas had been trusted by the teacher council of the Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing to be the secondary commander of the *ma'had*, and the third period was held by TGH Ibrahim (1988-present).

²⁵ Interview with TGH Ibrahim as director of Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing, January 21, 2016.

²⁶ Seni Madakakul, *Sejarah Patani* (Bangkok: Majelis Agama Islam Bangkok, 1996), p. 43.

To attain the idea in the development of the *ma'had*, one of leader, TGH Abdullah Beruwas, by using all his educational experiences, opened up a small space for educational innovations. Three of the ensuing developments are especially notable.

The first was conducting a comparative study to provide insight and ideas of Islamic education to improve quality education by collaborating with other educational institutions in the area, including Ma'had Bithat Diniyah in Yala Province. The second was meeting with teachers, administrators, and community groups to create relationships so that educational institutions could expand communication among teachers and stakeholders. In this way, new ideas would emerge to advance Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing in terms of academics, human resources, and educational facilities. The third is developing literacy movement as another way to encourage new ideas. This was initiated by leaders at Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing community and was socialized to teachers and students to widen their horizons as educators and produce innovative ideas for learners. Tuan Guru's active leadership in Islamic education led his successors to serve as critical managers, such as principals of Raudhatul Athfal Islam (*Rongrian Wattanatham Islam Phombing Panarek Anubarn*),²⁷ madrasah diniyah Islamiyah,²⁸ and secondary school (*Mathyum Suksa Toon Tun*) in the Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing²⁹.

The development of Islamic education at Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing used vision and innovation, supported by concrete steps taken by leaders to build social relations in the educational environment. Over time, the significant roles the *ma'had* leaders were seen in combining their knowledge and experience to strengthen the existence of Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing.

²⁷ Document of Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing, Data Rongrian Wattanatham Panarek Anubarn (RAI) Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing, January 24, 2016.

²⁸ Document of Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing: Vision and Mission of MDI Ma'had Tsaqafah al-Islamiyah Academic Year 2015/2016, February 3, 2016.

²⁹ Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing, *Buku Kenangan 40 Tahun Pondok Pombing* (Patani: Ma'had Pombing, 2002), p. 14.

The Roles of TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani

The theory of “role” is established through various methods, orientations, and disciplines, and primarily is used in sociology and anthropology. The theory of the role of Biddle & Thomas in Sarlito Wiraman Sarwono has divided “role” into four aspects, namely the people who take part in social interactions, the behaviors that arise in communications, the positions of people in action, and the effects between people and behavior. This theory is a combination of various disciplines. The term “role” is taken from the world of theater. In the theater, an actor must play as a particular character, and his character is expected to behave in a certain way, analogous to a position in society, such that the behavior is expected from him does not stand alone, but is always related to the roles of other people³⁰.

Contextually, TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani is a prominent Islamic education figure which was quite influential in implementing modern Islamic education among the Patani Muslim community, especially in Pombing Village, Pombing District, South Thailand. In this section, we briefly will explore the role played by the Tuan Guru in the development of education. There is a paradigm that must be built earlier related to the foundation for the development of Islamic education; first, the orthodoxy paradigm; second, the Islamization paradigm; and *third*, the paradigm of modernizing Islam³¹. The modernization paradigm needs to be considered to offer an alternative concept of Islamic education amid a competitive world in which traditional life is changing. TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani initiated such development of Islamic education in Ma’had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing as follows.

Master of Modernism in the Islamic Boarding School

TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani is a famous reformist cleric in Patani, South Thailand, in the mid-20th century. The arrival of Tuan Guru has modernized Islamic educational institutions entering a new phase. Tuan Guru's efforts to modernize Islamic education institutions are influenced directly from the holy land of Makkah, and shortly after returning from

³⁰ Sarlito Wiraman Sarwono, *Teori-Teori Psikologi Sosial* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2014), p. 215.

³¹ Muhaimin, *Pemikiran dan Aktualisasi Pengembangan Pendidikan Islam* (Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 2012), p. 12.

Makkah to Patani, he founded Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing. At first, he used the *halaqah* system in the application of his teaching, but over time, he changed to a network, adopted from Ma'had al-Ulum Saudiyah Makkah, which is known to be more modern. The change was due to his view that the *halaqah* system was less effective with the condition of the community at that time, so he used the classical system instead, which was considered relevant and able to improve the level of education in Islamic boarding schools (*ma'had*).

This was done after TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani recognized that the exact condition of Islamic education in Patani was still traditional. He considered that the public schools known as Western educational institutions were not considered ideal for being applied in Islamic education institutions, because the support provided by the Thai government embeds specific missions that are not in line with Islamic teachings. With such a particular purpose, the Patani Muslim community became less interested in having their sons educated in the public schools. The perception of the Patani Muslim community became a driving force for the acceptance of the idea of TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani to establish the *ma'had*. He had called for the Malay of Patani to take modernity initiated by the West, and one way to have progress must be done through education. Therefore, the establishment of the *ma'had* was seen by the Patani Muslim community as appropriate to overcome the backwardness of education, which had been long suffered by the Malay of Patani.

The ideas and thoughts of TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani not only purified Islamic teachings but also encouraged the Malay of Patani to learn and take advantage of the advances in modern technology, which had not been studied at madrasah or Islamic boarding schools (*ma'had*). Through Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing, he introduced the classical system and incorporated general knowledge into the *ma'had* curriculum. The teaching and learning processes in the *ma'had* use Arabic and English as predominant languages. Efforts of TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani for change and renewal in Islamic education were enveloped in a wealth of experience as he had to deal with traditional scholars who had long lived during the Patani Muslim community. Therefore, he focused both on developing human resources

through modern Islamic education, and on the provision of educational infrastructure, as revealed by TGH Ibrahim, director of the *ma'had*:

For purchasing land, and after returning from Makkah in 1961, he established Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing, on the lot of 32 ha endowed by Haji Muhammad Hanafiyah with his parent named Kuno. Then TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani bought an additional 40 ha, and he endowed it to the *ma'had*³².

Various ways have been used for modernizing the Islamic boarding schools, such as that was carried out by TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani, and it is concluded that he encouraged many charismatic figures in Patani to modernize Islamic education, such as in the *ma'had*. At that time, the method of teaching had still used the traditional system, but he switched to renew the system of Islamic education.

Literacy of Islamic Education

TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani was motivating the personnel in developing Islamic education at Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah because he was in charge of guiding senior leaders, educators, and senior employees. His guidance was specific to implementing the concept of Islamic education through programs and activities to create better and more developed teaching-learning processes. The director of the *ma'had*, TGH Ibrahim, revealed:

TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani acted as a motivator, observer, and facilitator for the personnel. He was in charge of guiding the school principal, the educators, and the employees, as well as being an observer and evaluator for issues related to the management and development of Islamic education. His tasks focused on teaching and program evaluation to create a better environment so that children can lift their potential beyond the traditional method. In order to do this, he gave trust to individual personnel according to their expertise. His task also covered school expenditure, and he was a peer consultant to the

³² Interview with TGH Ibrahim as director of Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing, February 9, 2016.

director and executive director who had the rights and responsibilities to make decisions on issues they encountered³³.

TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani gave essentially to trust to personnel who were assigned to implementation or decision-making, according to their respective duties. He stated that the *ma'had* was not his personal property; therefore, he did not insist that his subordinates follow all his words and orders. All actions must be carried out by the purpose of education, as expressed by TGH Ibrahim:

The task of Tuan Guru was as *muallimulawwal fie al-Islam*, which was to read and convey for everyone in the community verses of the Qur'an to cleanse souls and hearts and to wash away sins. He also explained *halal* and *haram*, and told the histories of people of old eras, to connect with the current situation, and to predict the future. The conclusion is that each person is responsible for guiding his or her students, whether individually or in class, in school, and outside³⁴.

Because the *ma'had* is under the auspices of the Pombing Foundation, the management is responsible for developing and supporting teaching-learning processes. Therefore, in this very particular case, TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani did not require all his words and orders to be followed by his subordinates. All actions were to be carried out following the purpose of education. It is summarized that educational literacy developed by TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani applies more than merely giving motivation and modeling. He gave direction to teachers in conducting teaching by the purpose of Islamic education.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

Facilitator of Islamic Education

Students are one of the human clusters that are central in the teaching-learning process. As such, the first thing we need to pay attention to is to the students, their conditions, and their abilities, to determine concrete actions and delivering instruction. Learning errors often occur among students, not only because of their ignorance but also because of bad habits. Students have to learn either to avoid or change their wrong ways to achieve maximum learning outcomes³⁵. To anticipate undesired habits, the *ma'had* has implemented appropriate models within the school. All this can be more easily done because the *ma'had* is located in a boarding school environment. All students in each institution who attend the Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing are required to pay attention to regulations set by the *ma'had*, such as praying before school or after school. They must use the prayer taught by TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani. They must also establish five obligatory prayers in congregation time and must use the specific prayer, taught by TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani, that is used by all Islamic boarding schools and educational institutions under the leadership of the *ma'had*³⁶.

Being a facilitator in Islamic education conducted by teachers and leaders as above, the authors conclude that such steps are useful since the teaching staff facilitates the students in anticipating bad habits, thus emphasizing the aspect of fulfilling the spirituality of students by practicing religious values in the *pesantren* environment.

Curriculum Concept

Developing Islamic education by TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani was done through educational reforms that became standards for learning. A breakthrough he made in Islamic education was in *pesantren*. The greatness of Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing is that it uses a curriculum as a guideline for the development of teaching-learning activities in the *ma'had*, as created since 1961, starting since the birth of the comprehensive curriculum document, which has been circulating in the community. With a

³⁵ Interview with Mr. Ma'ming H Mamaing as Islamic Religion Teacher at Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing, February 10, 2016.

³⁶ Ibid.

significant and valid foundation and application, the existence of the curriculum has incised a new history in the development of the *ma'had*³⁷.

The *ma'had* has the Islamic education curriculum adopted from the Ministry of National Education as 30% of its entirety, while the other 70% is created from in-house. To do so, teachers evaluate students' learning outcomes in the context of lesson plans made by teachers.

Furthermore, as a distinctive feature of education, the *ma'had* uses religious curriculum according to government policy, and with religious knowledge cited from books written by Imam Shafi'i. This is following the Articles of Association by which the *ma'had* adheres to the Shafi'i school, so the understanding of religion and Syafi'i teachings are practiced among people of the *ma'had*. The rapid development of schools in the *ma'had* reflects the image of its founders. Thereby came the nickname *Tok Pombing al-Fathani*, meaning "a great Patani scholar," by the Pombing community in particular and Patani Darussalam in general.

Conceptor of Islamic Education Learning Methods

TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani had various roles in suggesting the learning methods as explained: "in Ma'had Is Full of Pearl TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani Advice". TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani suggested the learning methods, as they are a tradition in the *ma'had*, especially in welcoming new students. In this *ma'had*, every new enrollee must follow his teaching for forty days before starting regular classes, as the *ma'had* has held this tradition since its inception. Furthermore, each student is mentored by a teacher during the orientation program in order to understand and accept the norms and traditions of the *ma'had*. Also, new students are entrusted by their respective guardians to the *ma'had* with the placement into appropriate educational levels, such as *raudlatul athfal*, *madrasah diniyah Islamiyah*, secondary school, or high school.

During the hand-over process, administrative staff and teachers gather to witness the surrender. The submission is made with a sincere heart and a pledge that the new students will be educated to obtain knowledge and

³⁷ Interview with Mr. Maha'mu Dereh as Head of Curriculum Affair Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing, February 10, 2016.

to get a blessing and that these will be beneficial for religion, the nation, and homeland³⁸. Besides, the traditions that have been preserved in common, such as reading *yasinan* in the congregation, *zikir*, or payers. Such traditions are maintained with the aim that the value of struggle, as existed in TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani, needs to be maintained. "Learning Methods at Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing". The method, applied in the Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing, has to do with curriculum implemented by the Thai government at all school levels. However, apart from the government-derived curriculum, the *ma'had* also provided local subject content for students, such as Arabic, Malay language, English, and local traditions. The curriculum application may be made along with government supervision during the evaluation process. However, under the ma'had *auspices* and its uniqueness, the *ma'had* can determine local content, to facilitate students in understanding the values of the *ma'had*.

In the curriculum of the *ma'had*, a zero-hour program exists (traditional *ma'had* system), in which learning occurs before and after formal lesson hours. A morning class starts after the midnight prayer at 5:30 am to 6:30 am; the mid-day class starts from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm, and the afternoon class starts from 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm and is primarily for students who do not attend general programs every day except Friday/Saturday. At the same time, nighttime begins after *maghrib* prayer from 6:40 pm to 7:40 pm every day except Tuesday and Friday. In this learning process, the *ma'had* uses the classical method centered on TGH and educators. The method is called *talaqqi al-jama'ie (bandongan)*. Along with the need to support the development of Islamic education, there is a need to learn from *Kitab Kuning* (yellow texts) in the form of recitation, discussion, memorization, and translation.

TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani had advanced his educational institution, and he forged himself as a role model for teachers and students. We aver that the leading role played by TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani is by building his authority to become *ulama* in South Thailand generally, with knowledge of religions that are proliferating and with teaching experience,

³⁸ Interview with Mr. Abd Qadir Sawi, Teacher at Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing, February 11, 2016.

and finally doing quite a lot of renewal with the development of a more modernist education carried out by him, as seen in the above explanation.

Supporting Factors in Developing Islamic Education

It is significant for educators to help realizing ideals and values of Islamic education, and TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani's efforts could not be denied. He has suggested four essential points as his successors might use them:

First, teachers, administrative staff, and principals should unite themselves to bolster the teaching-learning process. As this had been done in the *ma'had*, the principal, Mr. Che Samail Ma'derawae, stated that one of the most important efforts to develop Islamic education in the Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing is that all stakeholders within the school organization should engage in solid teamwork, and this was evidenced through having a mandatory agenda for the *ma'had*, about which at the end of each month, special meetings are always held by school principals, teachers, staff, and employees to evaluate the programs thoroughly. The end objective is to find out strengths and weaknesses and to do problem-solution³⁹.

Second, the support of facilities is considered critical, and this was commented on by Mr. Pausee Ha'deng in describing the learning facilities of Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah, which include representative learning spaces, the laboratory, the library, males and girls' dormitories, the clinic, and the educational media, all of which are meant to develop Islamic education at Ma'had Tsaqafah al-Islamiyah Pombing as a valuable community chest⁴⁰. We conclude that the availability of these facilities is vital for strengthening the teaching-learning process.

Third, the teachers with qualified educational backgrounds forge the role of the *ma'had*. This can be noticed from the 146 people who are employed, most being educative staff, ranging from some pursuing their higher education, up to others who have already two degrees. In terms of the

³⁹ Interview with Mr. Che Sa'ma-il Ma'derawae as School Principal Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing, February 12, 2016.

⁴⁰ Interview with Mr. Paosee Ha'deng as Head of Human Resource Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing, February 13, 2016.

quality of the staff and educators, many had gotten extra training and taken studies in short courses⁴¹.

Fourth, the substantial experience of the teaching staff is vital as one of the supporting factors in honing the quality of Islamic education. A variety of education and teaching experiences exist among teachers and educators. Most of them have spent more than ten years of being teachers in class, some have spent more than 20 years, and a few have taught for about 30 years. Clearly, it can be stated that most of the teachers in the *ma'had* have good experience in their profession. Furthermore, this is a supporting factor in realizing the role of TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani in developing Islamic education.

Inhibiting Factors in Developing Islamic Education

First, the students have diverse characters, social statuses, and educational backgrounds that may give significant contributions. Many graduated from public Islamic elementary schools (state or private), so if there are lessons taught in Arabic, many teachers provide the most basic lessons. Additionally, the students come from various regions around and outside the area of Patani. Their backgrounds are different, namely from farming families, state employees, tourism, and others⁴². The disclosure conveyed by the informant shows that obstacles exist, such as in providing understanding to students because the most basic constraints include the psychological aspects like lack of understanding and difficulty with gaining knowledge as transferred by the teacher in the class.

Second, the lack of public participation is one deficit the *ma'had* may have to develop its quality. The development of Islamic education, if traced further, may find its ways hobble because no enough information about the *ma'had* is known to the public. It is not surprising that the *ma'had* has tended to become a kind of 'foreign guest' in the community. As revealed by the head of the public relations, the *ma'had* is still known in the community as a grade B school. However, there is optimism to introduce and provide a

⁴¹ Interview with Mr. Lateh Rira as Teacher at Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing, February 13, 2016.

⁴² Interview with TGH Noordin bin Usman as *Amin am* Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing, February 14, 2016.

good understanding of the community regarding the existence and qualities of the *ma'had* through mass media and via word of mouth⁴³. The lack of public knowledge about the Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing is an obstacle due to the lack of experience of the community regarding the place. So we conclude there is a need for socialization of information about the *ma'had* to the public.

Third, fund allocation to the *ma'had* is a big priority but also a concern. Funds obtained from various sources need to be used effectively, meaning that each fund acquisition in its expenditure must be based on needs that have been adjusted to the plan determined. According to the principal, developing Islamic education needs funds because, with these funds, any problem will be handled. The *ma'had* most of the time, may struggle as it lacks fund-raising. Nevertheless, other sources from which it will benefit from are businesses, tuition, the donation from companies, and contributions of parents. These may not fully cover the shortfall but will help the budget⁴⁴. All funds must be used responsibly by not overlapping one another. Furthermore, such management can be the achievement of mutual prosperity.

Fourth, even among formal teaching staff, many are lazy even lack discipline. Many of them do not envision how to develop the *ma'had* in the future and how overall to develop Islamic education. Che Samail Chederawae, head of the school, revealed that numerous teachers also teach elsewhere so that sometimes they have to leave their responsibilities in the *ma'had*. As well, many of them have not finished their university diplomas. The value they have is their teaching experience and their ability to find any solution to issues as the *ma'had* encounters⁴⁵.

Fifth, for non-formal teaching staff, discipline is still a problem because this wastes much time. For example, a religious teacher is supposed to teach at 1:30 pm, but sometimes it is late, so the recitation then begins

⁴³ Interview with Mr. Ruhman Salika as public relation head of Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing, February 14, 2016.

⁴⁴ Interview with Mr. Che Samail Chederawae as the School Principal at Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing, February 15, 2016.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

around 2:00 pm. This occurs in the Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah. Thus it is concluded that Islamic education must pay attention to time management.

As has been described above, that there are so many opportunities and challenges that must be faced by the *ma'had*, in the development of Islamic education. Thus, future efforts are needed to compensate for the rapid flow of times and accompanied by various social changes. The presence of this inhibiting factor, at least, becomes a barometer to encourage, evaluate, and enhance human resources, so that in the future there will be increased ability to realize Islamic education for humanizing humanity.

Conclusion

The development of Islamic education that has been established in the Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing has yielded development and innovations within the *ma'had* and under the responsibility of the leaders and the organizational structure, including top managers, the principal, educators, employees and many more. Periodically, Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah Pombing had experienced a change at the level of top-leadership during three periods: *first*, the leadership period of TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani (1961-1981); *second*, the period of leadership of TGH Abdullah (1981-1988), and *third*, the period of the direction of TGH Ibrahim (1988---). The development in each period was partly evidenced by the achievement of the number of educational institutions from the first *ma'had* leadership period to the present. For the sake of developing Islamic education, the figure of TGH Abd Rahman al-Fathani was impressive and influential to the step-by-step developmental phases of the Ma'had Tsaqafah Islamiyah, and these are summarized as fostering modernization of Islamic boarding schools; accelerating literacy of Islamic education; facilitating expertise and experience in uplifting Islamic education; being conception of curriculum and counselor of enrolment, and authenticating methods of learning Islamic education.

The supporting factors in this context are seen to be the existence of solid management of the curriculum and the teaching-learning processes, adequate facilities and infrastructure, and qualified teachers; while the inhibiting factors include the differing abilities and psychological psyches of

students, the low rate of participation by the community, and the lack of managing funds.

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