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THE ROLE OF MAJELIS TAKLIM IN DEVELOPING RELIGIOUS CHARACTER EDUCATION ON AL-BAHJAH CIREBON

(PERAN MAJELIS TAKLIM DALAM MEMBANGUN PENDIDIKAN KARAKTER
KEAGAMAAN DI AL-BAHJAH CIREBON)

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Abstract

Majelis Taklim (Religious assembly) was a place where Islamic education takes place which carried the mission of Islamic *dakwah* (Spread an Islamic goodness). The purpose of this study was to determine the condition and development of *Majelis Taklim Al-Bahjah*. Analyzing the Development of Religious Character, as well as knowing the extent of the significance of the *Majelis Taklim Al-Bahjah* in developing Religious Character for the congregation. This type of research was included in the type of qualitative research with a case study approach. This research was carried out intensively, in detail and in depth towards a particular organization/ institution. The results of this study included; (1) the *Majelis Taklim Al-Bahjah* had experienced rapid development, the number of congregations and their administrators continues to grow. Even a place that was used as a stopover for *Taklim* cannot be done only in a room in the hall. (2) The Development of Religious Character in the *Majelis Taklim Al-Bahjah* located in the Sendang sub-district, Cirebon Regency had a very large influence, as evidenced by the implementation of the Coaching strategy, that was an organized Coaching strategy (expository strategy). (3) Development of the religious character of the members of the *Majelis Taklim Al-Bahjah* was very important/ significant. *Majelis Taklim* had a positive contribution in fostering religious character in society at large, and can be a solution for parents in educating their children in dealing with juvenile delinquency. As well as being the key to success in building a *sakinah* (harmony) household.

Keywords: Majelis; Taklim; Character; Religious; Education; Al-Bahjah

Abstrak

Majelis taklim merupakan tempat berlangsungnya pendidikan Islam yang membawa misi dakwah Islamiyah. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui kondisi dan perkembangan majelis taklim Al-Bahjah. Menganalisis Pembinaan Karakter Keagamaan, serta mengetahui sejauh mana signifikansi majelis taklim Al-Bahjah dalam Pembinaan Karakter Keagamaan bagi jamaah. Jenis penelitian ini termasuk dalam jenis penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus yaitu penelitian yang dilakukan secara intensif, terinci dan mendalam terhadap suatu organisasi/ lembaga tertentu. Hasil penelitian ini diantaranya (1) Majelis Taklim Al-Bahjah mengalami perkembangan yang begitu pesat, jumlah jamaah dan pengurusnya terus bertambah. Bahkan tempat yang dijadikan sebagai persinggahan taklim juga tidak bisa dilakukan hanya di dalam suatu ruangan Aula. (2) Pembangunan Karakter Keagamaan di Majelis Taklim Al-Bahjah yang berada di kelurahan Sendang Kabupaten Cirebon ini memberi pengaruh yang sangat besar, terbukti dengan adanya penerapan strategi Pembinaan di Majelis Taklim yaitu strategi Pembinaan yang terorganisir (strategi ekspositori). (3) Pembinaan Karakter keagamaan anggota majelis taklim Al-Bahjah sangat penting/ signifikan. Majelis taklim memiliki kontribusi yang positif dalam pembinaan karakter beragama di masyarakat secara luas, dan dapat menjadi solusi para orang tua dalam mendidik anak-anaknya dalam menanggulangi kenakalan-kenalan yang terjadi pada remaja. Serta menjadi kunci sukses untuk membina rumah tangga yang sakinah.

Kata Kunci: Majelis; Taklim; Karakter; Keagamaan; Education; Al-Bahjah.

INTRODUCTION

In the scope of education, there are various scientific disciplines in accordance with the knowledge that is carried out. The success of a scientific discipline in terms of effectiveness and practice depends on how the discipline is taught, depending on the learning process, the ways, methods and strategies of the educational actors in implementing it. Definitely, this process has many problems that characterize it all, such as the lack of support from the surrounding environment, limited duration, and unprofessional Human Resources (HR).

Education is synonymous with teaching and learning activities and all aspects that influence it. To achieve the learning objectives, the learning process must be carried out optimally, so that students can achieve better learning achievements. As stated by (Shaleh, 2005a), the functions and objectives of national education in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 of 2003 which he quoted, that:

"The functions of National education is to develop capabilities and shape dignified national character and civilization in the context of educating the life of the nation, aims to develop the potential of students to become human beings who believe and fear God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become a democratic and responsible citizen" (Shaleh, 2005b).

Education is a necessity in human life, education as a necessity of life (Dewey, 1964). In contrast to Shaleh in the view of *Madkhal ila al-Tarbiyah*, starting from the etymological view of *Tarbiyah*, he argues that education consists of four elements, namely first, guarding and nurturing the nature of children approaching puberty

(adulthood); second, developing all the various potentials and readiness; third, directing all of these natures and potentials towards the goodness and perfection that they deserve; and fourth, the process is carried out in stages (An-Nahlawi, 1989).

In the other hand, a good education (in the field of spiritual and moral growth) can help individual strengthen their faith, creed, and knowledge of their God, the laws, teachings, and morals of their religion. Likewise in individual social growth, education plays a major role in preparing a successful and productive individual social life (Langgulung, 1989). Education is a model for the formation and inheritance of religious values and community traditions. It means that if the child already has a positive attitude in religion and in maintaining the traditions of the community, then education is considered to have carried out its mission (Majid, 2012).

As the we already knows that society is the third field of education. Educators also generally agree that the educational field that influences the development of students is the family, educational institutions, and the community environment. Harmony between these three educational fields will have a positive impact on their development, including in the formation of their religious spirit. Here we can see the relationship between the environment and people's attitudes towards religious values. The environment of the santri community will probably have more influence on the formation of a religious soul compared to other societies that have loose ties to religious norms. Thus, the function and role of society in the formation of a religious soul will be very influential, especially useful knowledge will only be obtained by people who are decorated with various noble manners and morals (Al-Ajurri, 2019)

Majelis Taklim (Religious assembly) is the place where Islamic education takes place which carries the mission of Islamic *dakwah* (spread an Islamic goodness). The goal is none other than that Islamic values are inherited by every human being and characterize themselves and are realized in the behavior of everyday life. If Islamic values have been institutionalized in each individual, this religion will become strong in the world, spread to all layers of the world and the function of the religion of Islam as *rahmatan lil 'alamin* can be proven (Hasbullah, 1995). In simple terms, the purpose of the *Majelis Taklim* is a place for people to gather in which to discuss religious knowledge and the establishment of *silaturahmi* (friendship) in order to increase public awareness about the importance of the role of religion in everyday life. With the *Majelis Taklim*, the community is trained to become independent individuals in carrying out their duties as caliphs of Allah, and are also trained to be able to solve problems related to religious matters.

Based on the pre-observations result conducted by the authors by attending the *Majelis Taklim* held by the *Al-Bahjah* led by Buya Yahya, it showed that the reality of the *Majelis Taklim* is still far from expectations. The problems experienced by the *Majelis Taklim* are very varied. Starting from a place to show off its strength, a place to show off the many congregations, and the most striking thing is that there is a difference in terms of appearance. This can be seen from the difference in the social status of the congregation. Some housewives who have high social strata tend to show off with the luxurious clothes and accessories they wear. However, this also depends on their intentions and will return to each other personally. So the authors want to answer is what is the condition and development of the *Majelis Al-Bahjah*, how is the

development of religious character, and what is the significance of the *Majelis Al-Bahjah* in fostering religious character for the congregation.

METHODOLOGY

This research used qualitative method with a case study approach, which is intensive, detailed and in-depth research on an organization, institution/ certain symptoms. Judging from the area, case research only covers a very narrow area or subject but from the nature of the research. The case research is more in-depth (Moleong, 2011). Meanwhile, (Dja'am & Komariah, 2010) stated that qualitative research is a research approach that uncovers certain social situations by describing reality correctly, formed by words based on data collection techniques and relevant data analysis obtained from natural situations. In other words, this study seeks to describe an ongoing situation based on facts and information obtained from the field and then analyzed based on one variable with another in an effort to provide solutions regarding development in learning, which research is conducted in Sendang District, Cirebon Regency.

The selection of this method was based on several considerations. First, adapting qualitative methods was easier when dealing with multiple realities. Second, this method presented directly the nature of the relationship between researchers and informants. Third, this method was more sensitive and more able to adapt to the many sharpening of joint influences and to the value patterns encountered (Moleong, 2011).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. An overview of *Majelis Taklim Al-Bahjah*

The *Lembaga Pengembangan Dakwah Al-Bahjah (LPD Al-Bahjah)/ Dakwah Development Institute* or better known as *Al-Bahjah* began with a series of *dakwah* trips by Buya Yahya, a young charismatic who later became the founder of the *dakwah* institution located in Sendang Village No. 179 Blok Gudang Air, Sumber, Cirebon, West Java. The name of "*Al-Bahjah*" chosen by Buya Yahya means "Light" or "Shine". Philosophically, as the name implies, the existence of *LPD Al-Bahjah* is expected to be a "Light of Light" for the people of the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

At first, Buya Yahya came to Cirebon in 2006 in order to carry out a mission from *Al-Ahgaff* University to create a preparatory school for *Al-Ahgaff* University in Indonesia. After going through studies and evaluations, the program only ran effectively for a year, and finally it was returned to Yemen. Together with that, Buya Yahya then asked permission from Al-Habib Abdullah Bin Muhammad Baharun, who was also his teacher, to start preaching in Cirebon. For his prayers and blessings and the other teachers of Buya Yahya, the effort of preaching was greatly facilitated by Allah SWT.

In the second year, Buya Yahya's *dakwah* struggle in the city of Cirebon was able to open several *Majelis Taklim* in several large mosques in the city of Cirebon and its surroundings. The *dakwah* efforts were always being developed until finally a request came from some Muslims to entrust their children to Buya Yahya's place.

Buya Yahya did not immediately accept because of the condition of his residence, which still rented house in Cirebon. It was only after Buya Yahya had another place to live, namely a rented house that was close to Buya Yahya's place (in the Karang Jalak area of Cirebon). Therefore, at that time, Buya Yahya began to accept some students. Indeed, not all students who come are immediately accepted. However, in addition to seeing the capacity of the residence, the acceptance of students is also carried out with a positive attitude.

Until the following year, it was felt that the residences were increasingly crowded with students. At that time, it was calculated that in one house that was not too big, 12 male students were occupied, then in the other house 10 female students were occupied.

The impact of all made Buya Yahya and his friends both in Cirebon and outside Cirebon try to find a more flexible place as the official center for the *Al-Bahjah Dakwah* Development Institute including the *Pondok Pesantren Al-Bahjah* (Islamic Boarding School). Finally, the choice fell on a place called Sendang Village, Sumber District, Cirebon Regency. A boarding school location in the middle of a rice field far from residential communities.

The first building is a small hut and a large hall with a size of 15 x 25 M which is used as a multi-purpose room starting from the weekly *Majelis Taklim* and a place for students to study. Then followed by the mosque building with a size of 15 x 15 M and 8 student dormitory rooms, a caretaker's house and 20 bathrooms along with a *Radio-Qu* Fm studio.

After Buya Yahya received permission from Al-Habib Abdullah Bin Muhammad Baharun to build a *pesantren*, there was a special message to make it easy to build, that is "*don't bother or beg for funds from anyone, just start from simplicity and make it simple*". Under his instructions, the construction of the *pesantren* was really very easy without any difficulties. Thanks to the blessings and prayers of Buya Yahya's teachers, Allah sent the people who built the building so that the *pesantren* could be occupied by Buya Yahya and he never felt the difficulty of taking care of the builders and the building. The students are also free of charge with educational services, accommodation and 3 meals.

In June 2008, to be exact, the construction of the *pesantren* began. After about one and a half years (January 10th, 2010), the Islamic boarding school was officially occupied by male and female students which was inaugurated on the same day by Al-Habib Abdullah Bin Muhammad Baharun from Yemen. On that occasion the *Al-Bahjah Dakwah* Development Institute (*LPD Al-Bahjah*) was inaugurated.

Buya Yahya's *dakwah* activities through lectures and Islamic study councils are the main program that continues to be developed by *LPD Al-Bahjah*. Most of Buya Yahya's activities are currently allocated more to fill in recitations at routine science assemblies both within the country and abroad.

The schedule for Buya Yahya's routine recitation activities is continuously organized and divided into weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual regular studies. Buya Yahya's *dakwah* safaris abroad that have been routinely held are in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore and Korea.

The arrival of Buya Yahya, whose full name is Yahya Zainul Maarif, to Cirebon at the end of 2005-early 2006 in order to carry out the duties of his teacher, Chancellor of *Al-Ahgaff Almurobbi* University, Professor of Doctor Al Habib Abdullah bin Muhammad Baharun, to lead the Preparatory Islamic Boarding School for students before studying at *Al-Ahgaff* in Yemen. To carry out his activities, Buya Yahya contracted a place at the *Nuurussidiq* Islamic Boarding School, Tuparev-Cirebon. This lasted until mid-2006. At that time, Buya Yahya had not yet received permission from his teacher to preach to the community.

At the end of 2006, Buya Yahya met his teacher in Yemen and since then he has been allowed to preach in the community. Buya Yahya started preaching from small things, not forcing and as it is. With great patience, Buya Yahya entered small prayer rooms until finally Allah made it easy for him to open taklim majlis at the largest mosque in Cirebon, *At-Taqwa* Mosque, Alun-alun every Monday night, Tuesday, which was originally only attended by 20 people, until now the congregation fills the room and the mosque courtyard.

Buya Yahya believes that this convenience was provided by Allah SWT and his teachers' blessing. At the same time, Buya Yahya opened tens of monthly Majelis Taklim in various places in Cirebon City, Cirebon Regency, Majalengka Regency and Kuningan Regency, Indramayu Regency. The *Majelis* held at the *Al-Imam* mosque in the town square of Majalengka, the *Al-Istiqomah* Cilimus Kuningan mosque, the Great Indramayu mosque, and the *Al-Mustaqim* Weru mosque. Buya Yahya's preaching was not limited to mosques, but Buya Yahya also preached in several supermarkets and department stores, such as Yogya, Matahari Department Store Grage, Kesambi Penitentiary, etc. The *Majelis* that Buya Yahya takes care of is named as *Majelis Al-Bahjah* as well as the name of the *pesantren* he is currently starting.

Buya Yahya's introduction to the community through his patience to make friendly visits to the small mosques and mosques. Coincidentally, in mid-2006, Buya Yahya had struggled for one year at the Islamic radio station Salma 101 FM, which at that time Buya Yahya was entrusted with being the operational director of the radio. During this time, Buya Yahya also tried to present *dakwah* via radio by creating an air boarding school program by condensing the radio program with recitations.

Buya Yahya also participated in the preaching in the print media. Buya Yahya maintained a question and answer section in the general daily newspaper Kabar Cirebon. Until now, he is still active in fostering the *Masail Diniyah* rubric in an Islamic magazine, *Al-Bashiroh*, which is published in East Java. Besides that, Buya Yahya also produced printed works in the form of essays or book treatises such as: *The Beauty of Understanding the Differences of Ulama* (Islamic Teachers), Buya Yahya, etc. In television media, Buya Yahya has also been active on Titian Qolbu TV one, Damai Indonesiaku TV one, Siraman Qolbu MNC TV, Cirebon TV

and Islamic programs on RCTV. Currently, Buya Yahya and his *dakwah* team have been able to present an online *dakwah* media website at www.buyayahya.org and several official websites and other social media as well as the official Islamic boarding school's radio, namely Radio-Qu. This is all done in an effort to target all gaps in human life to be filled with *dakwah*.

2. The Character Development at *Majelis Taklim Al-Bahjah*

One of the factors that influence the success of massive and widespread character building includes *dakwah* media, those are television, radio, *majelis taklim*, internet, multimedia, and the environment. All of that can provide success in learning if it is designed as well as possible. By asking members/ congregants to attend and listen to the *majelis taklim* on a regular basis, a society with good religious character will be developed. In addition, by frequently listening to Islamic studies, it will instill noble character in the members/congregants so that they will have good character.

This means, if an institution or educator is going to use the *majelis taklim* as a source of learning Islamic teachings, then it must develop human-type learning resources (*mu'allim and muta'allim*), the material (books) that are taught, and the method of delivery. The role of religious teachers (*muallim*) in the field of *dakwah* is basically an obligation, because they are aware of their respective duties to convey Islamic teachings to mankind. Therefore, religious teachers or better known as ustadz are considered as people who understand and understand their knowledge better by the community. So that they are more responsible for their obligations in conveying knowledge (*tabligh*) and fostering community character.

An interesting thing was conveyed by the woman of the congregation on personal communication, she said that:

“Strengthening the role of parents is not easy in educating children because a child is a mandate that must be accounted for in the future before Allah SWT. If there are parents who are willing to just let go without any sense of worry about the development of their children in a bad direction and free all their children's activities without any supervision, then be prepared for us as parents to feel tired of seeing their children's behavior” (Karsina, personal communication, October 23, 2022).

The position of the religious teacher (*mu'allim*) is indeed strategic to take on the role of muballigh, because a religious teacher has greater influence in society. In addition, parents teach children to choose good friends to hang out with. Because every human being in living this life definitely needs a friend to build a harmonious interaction among others in carrying out their daily activities both in the scope of school, community, workplace, and society in general. In contrast to *Kiai* (teacher) Ahmad Kholik in building a community at the Babakan Ciwaringin Islamic Boarding School in Cirebon, namely *Komunitas Pecinta Al-Qur'an (KAFa)* or the

Koran Lovers Community, he built his authority in society through mass media whose media is through gadgets (Hanan et al., 2021)

This is not a trivial matter, a child must be selective in socializing, especially in this digital age, because sometimes a friend can have a bad influence on ourselves. To avoid the bad things that are brought by his friends, then we as parents should teach children to be selective in choosing to build a friendship. As stated by Buya Yahya in personal communication, that:

“We try to convey all Islamic teachings based on Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah Annahliyah such as faith, worship, morals, tasawwuf and fiqh. However, we often emphasize the community/congregation of taklim assemblies is a matter of morality and fiqh because now due to cultural influences that do not originate from Islamic teachings, the result is a lot of moral decline and moral degradation” (Yahya, personal communication, October 23, 2022).

From the results of the observations and interviews above, it can be concluded that the role of educators (*kiai*) in the *Majelis Al-Bahjah*, Sendang Subdistrict, Cirebon Regency is very instrumental in educating congregations/members based on the Classic book curriculum (*turats*) which is easily digested by congregations and applied to yourself and family. In another *majelis*, regarding the role of educators or *Kiai* in religious development for the community in Cirebon, it was stated that sufficient insight was given based on the principles contained in the Classic Book (*Kitab Kuning*), such as educating the morals of the students which have been explained in the book *Taklim al-Muta'lim* (Hanan, 2022)

In this case, the character building that has been carried out by the lecture method with relevant strategies (appropriateness with the material), such as material on monotheism that the Islamic belief is the existence of Allah, angels, messengers, prophets, the Day of Judgment and so on cannot be described or demonstrated at all. Buya Yahya said the following:

“The only appropriate method to use in conveying monotheism (faith) material is the lecture method, the use of this lecture method is not only the maturity of knowledge, but requires the agility and art of speaking from an ustadz/kiai in explaining” (Yahya, personal communication, October 23, 2022).

In addition, the exemplary method is also conveyed as a method of education as well as direct coaching by means of educators providing good role models for children to emulate and implement. In this case, an educator is an *ustadz/kiai* who sets a good example for the congregation/members. As Mrs. Juwita said, that;

*“In order to be a role model directly, a teacher must have an attitude or character that is *uswatun hasanah*. That is, having the character of being honest, trustworthy, noble, courageous, not immoral, etc. If Rasulullah SAW has set a good example for his people, then an *ustadz* is also required to be able to set an example of praiseworthy behavior for the congregation”*(Juwita, personal communication, October 23, 2022)

Majlis Taklim Al-Bahjah specifically teachers (*ustadz*) applies lectures or presentation of material verbally with the aim of optimizing the material that has been explained in accordance with its goals and expectations. This suitability can be seen through a theory that is in line with Sanjaya’s opinion, that the expository character development strategy is a learning strategy that emphasizes the process of delivering material verbally by educators to students or also called direct instruction (Sanjaya, 2008).

3. The Significance of Developing Religious Character at *Majlis Taklim Al-Bahjah*.

The existence of the *majelis taklim* has a big message in efforts to foster religious character, activities at the *Majelis Taklim Al-Bahjah* in general have a positive impact on the congregation. This statement, expressed by the congregation, that:

“The majelis taklim in society helps community members, especially women, in discovering their identity as someone who has an identity and a place of honor and is blessed by Allah SWT” (Muda, personal communication, October 23, 2022).

The big implications for learning in the *Majelis Taklim Al-Bahjah* for the community, including interest in forms of religious studies. Because religious understanding is a primary need psychologically in society. Apart from that, it provides more opportunities for social life among fellow citizens, or opens the way to get to know more people and adds to the personal experiences of members/congregants, and other positive things (Afandi, 2013)

Nadzir et al. (2019) stated that the taklim assembly had a positive contribution in tackling juvenile delinquency through various means, namely increasing outreach to all levels of society, supporting religious leaders, praying in congregation, dhikr, and carrying out religious activities for youth, such as tadarus al-Quran, study of the yellow book, Marhabanan around (Marhaling), Commemoration of Islamic Holidays (PHBI), and Activities for the Month of Ramadan.

Meanwhile, Romli (personal communication, October 23, 2022) stated that the supporting factors for developing the religious character of members are as follows:

- a. There is an ongoing effort to guide the community about the Islamic religion.
- b. There is good and sustainable cooperation between the community and the *kiai* and parties who have links with the *taklim* assembly, especially the *taklim* assembly itself. Another collaboration is community activity in providing self-help contributions to the implementation of the development of Islamic religious education.
- c. Conducting collaboration involving places of recitation, such as: TPA and TPQ as well as all the people in the Sendang Village District.

The pattern of cooperation between the *kiai* and the community in overcoming their lack of understanding of religious knowledge, and the development of religious character can be integrated through several collaborations, such as cooperation in the field of information related to people who still do not understand religion. With the collaboration between the *kiai* and the community, communication is also established between the two. So that if there are people who do not understand religious matters, the people do not hesitate to ask the teacher (*ustadz/ kiai*).

Based on the explanation above, the writers concluded that character building in the religious development of members of the *Majelis Taklim Al-Bahjah*, Sendang Village, Cirebon Regency is very important/ significant, because both of them contribute to each other in fostering good religious character for society, especially in coaching for people who are still lacking. morals. In another assembly, related to character building in socio-religious development for the people in Tegal it was stated that *Kiai Sa'id bin Armia's* strategy was how to provide sufficiently deep insight based on the principles of the nine verses in the Koran, which have been explained in the book *Ta'lim al-Mubtadiin fi Aqaid al-Din*. such as implementing the morals of Rasulullah SAW towards society at that time (Hanan, 2019)

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results that the authors described in the description and analysis of the Role of *Majelis Taklim* in Developing Religious Character Education on Al-Bahjah Cirebon, the authors referred to the conclusions on the subject matter and paid attention to the research objectives. These are the following conclusion:

First, the condition and development of the *Majelis Taklim* Al-Bahjah in developing religious character. From the beginning of the *Majelis Taklim* until now, it had developed so rapidly, the number of pilgrims and administrators continued to grow. Even a place that was used as a stopover for *Taklim* cannot be done only in a hall room, even outside the Islamic boarding school on the streets. And also, in the schedule had been included additional activities. However, every change and

development made was for the sake of creating the activities of the *Majelis Taklim* which was beneficial for the society.

Second, the development of religious character at *Majelis Taklim* Al-Bahjah has a great influence, as evidenced by the implementation of the coaching strategy on it, namely an organized Coaching strategy (expository strategy), which emphasizes the process of delivering material verbally by the teacher (Kiai/ Ustadz) to members/ congregants or also called direct instruction. This was implemented for its purpose, that was *Majelis Taklim* which able to adapt to the times and the needs of the members/ congregation.

Third, the development of the religious character of the members of *Majelis Taklim* Al-Bahjah was very important/ significant.

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