

Role of Abdullah Ahmad on the Modernization of Islamic Education in Minangkabau

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Abstract

This study aims to explore Abdullah Ahmad's role in the development of Islamic education in Minangkabau. The research used qualitative method with individual life history approach. All data were collected through a biography of the character, literatures, documents and evidence of object legacy in terms of both written and physical data. Data collection was conducted through the process of collecting, reducing, and presenting the data and was followed by a conclusion. Overall, the result of the study shows that Abdullah Ahmad applies six methods in developing Islamic education in Minangkabau. The six methods are: i) religion-based education, ii) integration of classical and modern educational models, iii) educational consortium, iv) development of scientific culture, v) receptiveness to modernization, and vi) informal education. This study also proves that the Abdullah Ahmad's six education methods are the prototype of the establishment of today's various modern educational institutions in West Sumatra. It is no wonder that Minangkabau was formerly known as the land for producing Islamic scholars, intellectuals and powerful politicians such as M. Yamin, Buya Hamka, M. Nasir, and Muhammad Hatta. Based on the historical facts, this study found that Minangkabau scholars, intellectuals and politicians are influenced more or less by the thoughts of Abdullah Ahmad.

Keywords: *Abdullah Ahmad, Modernization of Education, Minangkabau.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi peranan Abdullah Ahmad terhadap kemajuan pendidikan Islam di Minangkabau. Penelitian menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan riwayat hidup individu (individual life history). Seluruh data dikumpulkan melalui buku riwayat hidup sang tokoh, literatur, dokumentasi dan bukti karya-karya yang ditinggalkan baik secara tertulis dan fisik. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan cara pengumpulan, reduksi, penyajian serta ditutup dengan penarikan kesimpulan. Secara keseluruhan hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat enam cara yang dilakukan Abdullah Ahmad dalam memajukan pendidikan Islam di Minangkabau. Enam cara tersebut

adalah: i) pendidikan berbasis keagamaan, ii) integrasi model pendidikan klasik dan modern, iii) konsorsium pendidikan, iv) membangun budaya ilmiah, v) keterbukaan terhadap kemajuan, vi) pendidikan luar sekolah. Penelitian ini juga membuktikan bahwa enam cara pendidikan Abdullah Ahmad tersebut merupakan cikal bakal terbentuknya berbagai lembaga pendidikan modern di Sumatera Barat hingga saat ini. Maka tidaklah mengherankan jika Minangkabau sejak dahulunya dikenal sebagai daerah yang melahirkan para ulama, intelektual dan politisi yang handal seperti M. Yamin, Buya Hamka, M. Nasir, Muhammad Hatta. Berdasarkan fakta sejarah dalam penelitian ini ditemukan bahwa para ulama, intelektual dan politisi Minangkabau tersebut sedikit banyaknya dipengaruhi oleh pemikiran-pemikiran Abdullah Ahmad.

Kata Kunci: *Abdullah Ahmad, Modernisasi Pendidikan, Minangkabau.*

Introduction

Historical facts have proven that Minangkabau society is one of the leading ethnic groups in Indonesia, as they are unique in terms of social culture, character, and religion (Faiz, 2016; Asfina and Ovilia, 2016). Various compliments for the Minangkabau community's superiority continue to be discussed and written scientifically in various literatures and scientific publications (Husna et.al., 2014). Thus, it is no wonder that as one of the major ethnic groups in Indonesia, the presence of the Minangkabau ethnic is always worth to be accounted for national and international events (Côté, 2014).

The above mentioned statement is not excessive. Elizabeth (2007) even argues that the Minangkabau society is claimed to be the most successful and lucrative ethnic among many ethnic in Indonesia, due to its involvement in the long history of Indonesian nation's struggle with the members of Minangkabau society having important roles and position in every process of the nation's struggle. Moreover, many Islamic scholars and figures from Minangkabau are included in the elite ranks of the golden history of the Indonesian nation establishment (Wanto, 2012 and Hadler, 2008).

Dobbin (2008) also states that the Minangkabau ethnic is very responsive to various reforms, modernization and changes. Hadler (2010) further state's that Minangkabau ethnic is a dynamic, outward-looking, and monotheistic society.

Moreover, Abdullah (2011) argues that the characteristics of the Minangkabau society has been formed by the nature's harmony and the mindset in sustaining the original tradition with open-mindedness and flexible attitudes toward new elements. This idea is important to achieve and create an ideal society and social life (Muda, 2013; Durkheim, 2016 and Fay, 2014).

All positive judgments and opinions from various groups towards Minangkabau ethnic are addressed to the Minangkabau's golden generation in the 20th century (Marihandono, 2008 and Darwis, 2013). They were born in dynamic and changing social environments, and the figures from Minangkabau were courageous and passionate in their participation in the modernity of intellectual struggling (Purnamasari, 2016 and Nizar, 2013). From this dynamics environment, the famous people were born; Abdullah Ahmad (1878), Tan Malaka (1896), Agus Salim (1884), Mohammad Hatta (1902), Sutan Sjahrir (1909), Muhammad Natsir (1908), Muhammad Yamin (1903), Hamka (1908) and some other famous names that became the first generation of Indonesia's modern elite. These figures with their names are still mentioned with pride by the Minangkabau community, over their legacy of thoughts, ideas, and contributions in religious, political, social, cultural and educational aspects (Navis, 1984; Farisi, 2014 and Bourchier, 2014).

Based on the above entry, the authors were encouraged to learn about the roles and contributions of the Minangkabau's figures from education, especially Islamic education. After collecting, reading, reviewing and analyzing the data, it was the name Abdullah Ahmad that emerged as the spotlight for the movement and reforms of education, the most appropriate person as a reference, a person who has dedicated himself and served for education's sector until the end of his life. His legacy remains in the present, and it could become a future reference model of education.

Method

This study uses a qualitative method with content analysis approach, all data taken from various sources are derived from classical holy books, books, theories and expert opinion of Islamic education. According to Downe (1992) and Guthrie et al.,

(2004) this research approach design can be done to discuss problems, issues or specific topics derived from the literature collected thoroughly and then take the appropriate themes with the necessary data. Once all the data the authors collected then the next step is to choose the necessary data in accordance with the issues raised in this article.

Findings and Discussion

Biography of Abdullah Ahmad

Abdullah Ahmad was born in 1878 in Padang Panjang, and died at 55 years of age in Padang in 1933. He was one of the reformists of Islamic scholars of the Minangkabau, and was also the founder of the Sumatera Thawalib School, the Adabiah School and the PGAI in West Sumatra (Indrawati, 2016 and Suleman, 2016). Abdullah Ahmad was the son of Haji Ahmad, a Minangkabau scholar who was also a merchant, but his mother came from Bengkulu. Historically, it was found that in addition to Buya HAMKA, Abdullah Ahmad was also one of the earliest Indonesian scholars who earned honorary doctorates from the Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt (Azra, 1999; Asnam, 2007 and Rush, 2016).

Abdullah Ahmad's education did not start from a formal school, since it was so difficult to gain education from the Dutch imperialists who colonized the Indonesian nation then (Butamam, 2011; Hamid, 2013 and Meliono, 2011). Nevertheless, he still gained knowledge from his father, Haji Ahmad (Azra, 1999; Asnan, 2007). Abdullah Ahmad's father was also a teacher with religious knowledge and was a man ahead of his time (Asnan, 2007; Daya, 1990). Besides obtaining knowledge from his father, Abdullah Ahmad also directly studied under his father's brother, Sheikh Abdul Halim (also known as Sheikh Gapuak), the founder and caretaker of Masjid Raya Gantiang (Asnan, 2007; Daya, 1990).

In 1895, after obtaining religious education from his father and his teacher, his father sent Abdullah Ahmad to study in Mecca. Two reasons made Abdullah Ahmad being sent to Mecca: first, at that time there was no good school yet in Minangkabau region, and Mecca is known as the center for learning authentic Islam;

and second, there were many Minangkabau people who went to study to Mecca, such as Sheikh Ahmad Khatib Al-Minangkabawi (Nata, 2005).

Abdullah Ahmad learned about Islamic religion from many scholars during his time in Mecca. Among the scholars who strongly influenced the thought of Abdullah Ahmad was the Sheikh Ahmad Khatib Al-Minangkabawi, a scholar from Minangkabau ethnic (Mukani, 2016; Pramono, 2009 and Masril et.al., 2013). In 1899, Abdullah Ahmad returned to Minangkabau. At that time, he began to observe the condition of children in Minangkabau. They were still uneducated because not all Minangkabau children had the opportunity to obtain education from the Dutch imperialists. This condition became a factor that fueled Abdullah Ahmad to perform various educational movements in Minangkabau (Asnan, 2007).

Abdullah Ahmad's concerns about the condition of the Minangkabau's community empowere him to establish the Adabiah School (formerly known as Yayasan Syarikat Oehasa (YSO) Adabiah). In 1909, he also publicized the Association of Islamic Teachers (PGAI) (formerly known as Yayasan Abdullah Ahmad) in Padang (1919). Historical facts prove that the realization of educational reforms by Abdullah Ahmad in Minangkabau happened long before Taman Siswa (literally means Garden for Students) was pioneered by the Ki Hajar Dewantoro or Raden Mas Soewardi Soerjaningrat (2 May 1889-26 April 1959). Even the Adabiah School is the first *madrasa* in Indonesia, because no other madrasa or similar schools were established earlier than the Adabiah School.

According to Noer (1981), Adabiah received educational assistance from the Dutch government in 1915, its name changed to HIS or (Hollandsh Malaiche School Adabiah). In other words, the shool was not much different from the public schools established by the Dutch. However, the school was different; if the Dutch-founded schools were secular (separating the religious teachings from the formal subjects), the Adabiah School prioritizes Islamic values on the basic of tawheed (monotheism) to Allah Subhanahu wata'ala. It emphasizes the education materials toward the

teachings of monotheism, morality and worshipfulness based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

While performing his duties in Adabiah School, Abdullah Ahmad was also productively active in writing various articles. He was also supported by his deep, comprehensive knowledge on Islamic religion. The Middle Eastern scholars even acknowledged his intellectuality at the Khilafat conference in Cairo in 1926. The acknowledgement was proven by an honorary degree in theology as a *fid-din* doctorate to Abdullah Ahmad (Nata, 2005).

Therefore, it is no wonder that the existence of Adabiah School and the PGAI in the present and in the future is seen as real, and it could not be separated from the legacy of Abdullah Ahmad as the founder of Adabiah School (Tunus, 2011). Currently, the Adabiah School is in its 101th year with multiple educational programs including Kindergarten (TK), Elementary School (SD), Junior High School (SMP), High School (SMA) and a college called Adabiah Institute of Administration (STIA).

The existence of the Adabiah School, PGAI and other educational institutions pioneered by Ahmad was born from his sincerity, spirit of nationality, and spirit of nationalism toward his religion and nation. He has manifested all his passion through educational reforms, because Abdullah Ahmad believes that to develop a community or a nation, one should start from education. Abdullah Ahmad's persistent strive ended on Saturday, November 25th 1933. He died when he was 55. May all the deeds of his worship were accepted and recorded by Allah Subhanahu wata'ala as charity and as useful knowledge until the end of time.

The works of Abdullah Ahmad

As an agent of change and an educational figure, Abdullah Ahmad was known for his productivity in writing. Among his works was the publication of *al-Munir* magazine (Azra, 1999; Fachri, 2004). Published in 1911, the *Al-Munir* magazine was the first modern Islamic magazine in Indonesia (Schrieke 1973, Abdullah, 2011). Abdullah Ahmad himself directly managed this magazine. Besides

establishing the Al-Munir magazine, he was also an expert in other fields such as Astronomy, Tawheed, and Ushul fiqh.

Modernization of Islamic Education in Minangkabau by Abdullah Ahmad

Based on historical facts, collections of literature and research analysis, it was found that generally there are six models of educational modernization made by Abdullah Ahmad in the Minangkabau society (Nasrullah, 2016; Azra 2015; Hasibuan, 2016 and Salim, 2015). The models are: religion-based education, integration of classic and modern education, establishment of educational consortiums, development of a scientific culture, receptiveness to modernization, and development of informal education (Ihsan, 2009; Manti et.al., 2016 and Saerozi, 2014). The Figure 1. below gives more clear description for the six models of modernizations:



Fig 1. Modernization of Islamic Education by Abdullah Ahmad

First: *the religion-based education* has proven that Abdullah Ahmad is one of the leading figures of movement and reforms in Islamic education in Indonesia. He was known in his steadfastness in holding Islamic norms, and there is no doubt of his knowledge's depth in Islamic science. The concept of Abdullah Ahmad's religion-

based education is seen in the choice of the name of schools he pioneered, like the Adabiah, and the PGAI Sumatra Tawalib.

According to Azra (1999), the naming of the Adabiah School itself was inspired by Abdullah Ahmad's journey to Malay Peninsula and Singapore in 1907. Upon his returning from Singapore in 1909, Abdullah Ahmad established Adabiah School as the first *madrassa* in Indonesia which had a curriculum emphasizing on the teaching of monotheism, morality, worshipfulness, and *muamalah* based on the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Another factor for the establishment of Adabiah School was that Abdullah Ahmad did not want the Minangkabau Islamic generation to be educated under the influence of secularism brought by the Dutch imperialist (Noer, 1990). Adabiah School as a *madrassa* survived until 1914, then it changed into H.I.S Adabiah in 1915 in which the religion subject was to complement other subjects in H.I.S.. Thus, the H.I.S Adabiah is the first H.I.S in Minangkabau that incorporates Islamic religion lessons to its students (Yunus, 1993).

According to Assegaf (2007), the internal factors that force the development of Islamic education in Indonesia at the beginning of the 20th century is the spirit of revolution and Islamic reformation by the modernists consisting of leaders of the mass organizations, socio-religious, socio-political and socioeconomic groups, who mostly proposed the purification of Islamic doctrine with the slogan "Return to the Qur'an and Sunnah."

According to Salam (1968), the model of religion-based education conducted by Abdullah Ahmad in Minangkabau has also inspired Ahmad Dahlan (1868), who founded Muhammadiyah School. One of the reasons he established the school was because the Dutch colonial government did not include religion subject in the curriculum at school. Ahmad Dahlan took the initiative to run a religion-based school which was called Muhammadiyah School. The purpose of the establishment of Muhammadiyah School was to create a balance between the intellectual and spiritual intelligence of the students (Syahminan, 2014).

Second: integration of the classical and modern education models. Before the 20th century, the Islamic education in Minangkabau was conducted using the halaqah system in the *surau* (masjid). The halaqah system means that the teaching process is not held in a class as it is today, and the students are divided into two levels: Qur'anic study and Scholar's books study. According to Ramayulis and Nizar (2012), in the early 20th century, the Islamic education in Indonesia began its reformation. This movement could not be separated from external factors such as the classical learning method as applied by Abdullah Ahmad in Adabiah School.

Hamka (1982) argues that implementing Islamic education in Minangkabau started to be managed systematically when it was pioneered by the leaders of Islamic thinkers and the figures of scholars of Minangkabau. In terms of integrating the classical and modern educational model, Abdullah Ahmad tried to combine classical learning method (sitting cross-legged around a lecturing teacher) with modern learning method which involves multiple approaches and learning models. Abdullah Ahmad also conducted other integrations evident in his school's curriculum aspect. In the previous years, the curriculum of classical Islamic education only taught about religion. Then, Abdullah Ahmad designed a curriculum of modern Islamic education that integrated other general subjects such as writing, reading, arithmetic, earth sciences, and language into the religion subject (Asnan, 2007; Yunus, 1993; Hasyim and Langgulung, 2008).

The Adabiah School had also used the method of debating club, a method of discussion that provides opportunities for students to be creative. This method provides the widest possible opportunity for students to ask and discuss religious topics openly (Kodir, 2015; Nizah, 2016 and Idris, 2015). This was made as an effort to change the old ways in which students are passive listeners and lack freedom, with the learning time dominated by the lecture of the teachers (Ghani, 2015).

In addition, Abdullah Ahmad implemented the reward and punishment method as applied today. According to him, teacher should praise the students if they have a noble character and even rewarded him with a gift when necessary. At the

same time, punishment also needs to be executed if the student does the opposite. However, this punishment does not have to be rough, because rough punishment can diminish the courage inside the children (Ramayulis, and Nizar, 2005; Murniyetti et al., 2016).

According to Abdullah, another method that needs to be applied is playing and recreation. He stated that children need to be provided with time to play, have fun, and rest during the ongoing teaching and learning process. If there is no break time between learning, it could harm the children behavioral development. This will affect even the students who are obedient and intelligent, since boredom will drain their brain energy. As a result, their conscious mind will work slowly; it will be difficult for them to understand the lesson and it could inhibit their cognitive development entirely (Ramayulis, and Nizar, 2005).

The integration of classical and modern educational models has turned Adabiah School into an institution characterized as 'religious-secular' (Asnan, 2007). Adabiah School has even been regarded as the pioneer of Indonesia's national education pattern: a public educational institution with a religious view on education, and a religious educational institution with a broader vision (Daya, 1995).

Thus, it is confirmed that the modernization of Islamic education system in Minangkabau has been made through integration of classical and modern educational model. Modernization is also inseparable from the influence of thoughts of Minangkabau scholars who ever studied abroad, especially from the Middle East like Mecca and Egypt. Lastly, the reformation inside the Islamic educational institution was in the form of its system: the learning that was used to be in Surau is now practiced in madrasa, and the halaqah system was changed into classical system (Gazalba, 1983).

Third: the education consortium. Consortium is defined as a group of several scholars, traders, businessmen or industrialists who agree to joint business and manage a common interest. Abdullah Ahmad's idea to initiate education consortium is due to the minimum funds available to organize the education service he

pioneered. Education consortium is the implementation of education by several institutions or various parties, so the education process could be sustained (Moore & Kearsley, 2011). Thus, initiating a consortium of education was a smart move to counteract the low level of awareness of Minangkabau society towards education, which results in the school's limitation in funds and human resources.

With the idea of the education consortium at work, the modernization of education in Minangkabau began. The initial location of educational practice in Surau then moved to modern Islamic educational institutions, such as the Adabiyah School, Sumatra Thawalib, Madrasa Diniyah, Madrasa Tarbiyah Islamiyah (Rahman, 2015; Nizar, 2016; Resmiwal, 2011 and Arifin, 2011). There was also a change of learning system from the Halaqah model into classical system, and the grouping of students into levels and educational unit, as well as the curriculum used. These changes did not only happen to the education of religion but also other general sciences.

Fourth: Establishment of scientific culture. In addition to managing the School he established, Abdullah Ahmad is also known as a productive writer. To foster his passion in writing, he founded the al-Munir magazine, the first journal of modernists in Indonesia. According to some articles that the authors read, the al-Munir magazine was widely accepted by many Muslims, not only in Minangkabau but also in the peninsular countries: Malaysia and Singapore (Noer, 1981).

Suryanegara (2017) and Assyaukanie (2009) describe that in early April 1911, the al-Munir magazine was published on the initiative of Abdullah Ahmad. It was written in the historical record that Al-Munir magazine is Indonesia's first Islamic mass media. The founding of this magazine is also often associated with Al-Imam magazine in Singapore, founded by Tahir Jalaluddin Al-Azhari (1906-1909). This magazine contained recent articles that had never been published before. In addition to Abdullah Ahmad, several names such as Abdul Karim Amrullah, Muhammad Thaib Umar and Sutan Muhammad Salim were recorded as members of the editorial board of this magazine.

The al-Munir magazine carries on the mission as the media for youth movement, and it played an important role in the second wave of Islamic reformation in Minangkabau, West Sumatra at the beginning of the 20th century. The magazine featured some of the rubrics, including articles covering Islamic issues, question and answer forums that generally concerned syari'a jurisprudence, and the development of the world's Islamic view, which was usually translated from Middle Eastern Islamic magazines. However, due to financial constraints, the magazine stopped publishing in 1915. Even so, the founding of Al-Munir was soon followed by a similar publication by various Islamic movements nationwide (Rahiem & Mochtar, 2001).

The history of al-Munir magazine started in 1906 with the establishment of Al-Imam magazine in Singapore, which Tahir Jalaluddin Al-Azhari pioneered. Throughout its history, this magazine has closely connected with Al-Urwatul Wusqa, a magazine published by Jamal-al-Din Afghani and Muhammad Abduh in Paris, France. The Al-Imam magazine was distributed in the Malay Peninsula and the island of Sumatra. One community highly influenced by the Al-Imam publication was the Minangkabau community in West Sumatra (Daya, 1990).

After the publication of Al-Imam halted in 1909, the Minangkabau delegation initiated by Abdullah Ahmad immediately met the leader of Al-Imam magazine in Singapore. During his visit, Abdullah Ahmad expressed his desire to publish a magazine with the same vision and mission of da'wah (Assyaukanie, 2009). Upon his return from Singapore, Abdullah Ahmad with the support of local merchants began the pioneering of the publication of Al-Munir in Padang (Rahiem & Mochtar, 2001). The association of Al-Munir founders was incorporated in the *Sjarikat Ilmu*, which also became the publisher and the management board of Al-Munir (Nata, 2005). Its members consisted of scholars from the group of reformist in Minangkabau or often called Kaum Muda (literally means Young People). Abdullah Ahmad was not included in the daily committee. The magazine's daily editor was Marah Muhammad. In the ranks of the editorial board, which Sutan Djamaluddin Abubakar headed, there are several names mentioned: Abdul Karim Amrullah

(Hamka's father), Muhammad Thaib Umar, and Sutan Muhammad Salim (father of Agus Salim) (Nata, 2005). Other writers who are not included in the structural committee are Ibrahim Musa Parabek, Abbas Abdullah, Zainuddin Labay El Yunusy, and Muhammad Jamil Jambek.

Al-Munir means a candle or flash light. The magazine was published every Saturday, at the beginning and in the middle of the Islamic calendar month (Asnan, 2000). Most of its editions consisted of 16 pages. The Al-Munir uses Arabic-Malay script, since in the early 20th century some Minangkabau people were still very good in writing and reading Arabic-Malay script. However, the spelling used the spelling standards applied by the colonial government schools (Asnan, 2007). In distributing the magazines and collecting subscriptions fee, Al-Munir had 31 agents in various areas spread across Sumatra, Java, and the Malay Peninsula. One of the factors that caused this magazine's widespread distribution is the existing Al-Imam magazine network that stopped its publishing (Naldi, 2008). Since its first publication, Al-Munir had been distributed to readers throughout the regions of Sumatra, Java and Malay Peninsula (Hamka, 1986). However, in its subsequent development, there was addition and development of number of readers in Sulawesi and Kalimantan (Hamka, 1986).

In terms of its content, Al-Munir has some similarities with Al-Imam. Many issues already published in Al-Imam were re-loaded in Al-Munir. In general, the contents of Al-Munir magazine can be grouped into several sections: editorials, mailings list, questions and answers, and domestic/foreign news. In addition, there were also translated articles from Middle Eastern magazines such as Al-Manar and Al-Ahram. Many written articles and the answering letters of the reader's column were related to issues on jurisprudence and aqeedah. Besides presenting arguments on compatibility of Islam with modern science and rationality, Al-Munir was keen to promote Muslims to return to pure Islamic teachings by abolishing taqlid and opposing the ecumenical practice of bi'dah, khurafat, and tarekat (Amir, 2000).

Through *Al-Munir*, the scholars of the Young People expressed their *ijtihad* to some issues previously unlawfully forbidden by traditional scholars, such as being photographs, or wearing ties and hats. *Al-Munir* ceased its publication in 1915 (Daya 1990). The last edition dated in 15 Rabiulawal 1333 (Calendar AD: January 31, 1915) presented a farewell essay titled "Khatama". The essay stated that "*Al-Munir* could not be continued, but to the readers and the Islamic community it is advisable to continue to increase their knowledge by reading diligently (Daya, 1990). The magazine was suspended possibly due to lack of funds, as several last editions repeatedly reminded agents and subscribers to send their subscriptions fee. Another reason why the magazine stopped its publishing is because the scholars who run this magazine had no background as merchants. At that time, the publications were held only for da'wah, without having the necessary skills in business and professional publication (Hamka, 1986).

Three years after the end of *Al-Munir*, as proposed by Abdul Karim Amrullah, the Sumatra Thawalib published a magazine in 1918 with the name *Al-Munir Al-Manar* in Padang Panjang (Daya, 1990). The magazine was led by the local scholar Zainuddin Labay El Yunusi, the older brother of Rahmah El Yunusiyah. However, this magazine only lasted for six years. The publication of *Al-Munir Al-Manar* halted after the death of Zainuddin Labay El Yunusi in 1924. Even so, *Al-Munir Al-Manar* is often referred to as the continuation of *Al-Munir* magazine. Like *Al-Munir*, this magazine was published twice a month, at the beginning and middle of the month.

Although the number of copies of the *Al-Munir* magazine is not more than 2,000 copies, this magazine is widely distributed in several areas in Sumatra, Malay Peninsula, and Java. While in Minangkabau itself, the existence of this magazine raises a pro and contra reaction. After the presence of *Al-Munir*, there appeared some magazines with the same spirit, such as *Al-Akbar* which is based in Adabiyah School. The Thawalib Sumatra networks in various regions published limited-circulated magazines, such as the *Al-Bayan* in Parabek, *Al-Basyir* in Sungayang, *Al-Ittiqan* in

Maninjau, and Al-Imam in Padang Japang (Asnan, 2007; Sarwan, 2010; Abdillah, 2016 and Murni, 2015). Similarly, the conservative scholars, often called as Kaum Tua (the Old People), published counter magazines such as *Suluh Malayu* under the leadership of Sheikh Khatib Ali, and *Al-Mizan* under the leadership of Haji Abdul Majid and Hasan Basri (Asnan, 2007; Azwar, 1983).

In 1916, Abdullah Ahmad worked with the Chairman of the *Syarikat Islamic Tjokroaminoto* to establish an *Al-Islam* magazine in Surabaya. This magazine became the milestone of the acceptance of Indonesian Muslims towards the use of Latin letters; in addition to using the Jawi's letters (Asnan, 2007; Bakri, 2015 and Falah, 2012). From the long history of *al-Munir* magazine as mentioned above, it could be said that Abdullah Ahmad was the first person who pioneer the idea to write scientific writings in modern ways and apply da'wah through publications in Indonesia (Avivy et.al 2015; Azra, 2015 and Anie et.al., 2013) .

Fifth: receptiveness to modernization. Abdullah Ahmad is very receptive with all newer ideas and not resistant to various innovations, especially the innovations in education. The receptive term relates to the student's placement system and teachers' selection who would teach at the *Adabiah School*. Students may come from any levels of society as long as they were Moslem. Abdullah Ahmad selected teachers with similar qualifications to the teachers of the Dutch schools. The decision to accept students and to select teachers with equal qualifications as the teachers in the Dutch schools aims to produce graduates of *HIS Adabiyah*. They have the same capabilities with the graduates of *HIS* conducted by the Dutch government.

Sixth: development of informal education. The establishment of *Adabiah School* has encouraged the formation of many other institutions of education in various regions. The objective of these insitution was to socialize the Islamic doctrine or to introduce Islamic teachings to the people of West Sumatra. Among them are *Muhammadiyah Foundation* (1912), *Syarikat Oesaha Padang Foundation* (1915), *Foundation of Association of Islamic Religion Teachers or PGAI* (1919), *Sumatra Thawalib Parabek* (1918) in Bukittinggi, *Diniyah Putri Education Institute*

in Padang Panjang (1923), and Taman Siswa Foundation in 1934 in Padang (Daya, 1990; Yunus, 1993).

Conclusion

The social dynamics of Islam in Minangkabau developed very well, due to the high response of the public towards education and the interaction between scholars and educators with the foreigner, through their study in Mecca and Egypt and/or their interaction with Dutch imperialist. This interaction certainly provides a style of thinking that proves to be dialectic with the development of its era. Furthermore, the dynamics of Islamic education in Minangkabau is quite good, as seen from the change of the education system of surau with halaqah model in its initial period to a modern educational system with a classical model, revisions of the curriculum with the addition of religion subject and also the teaching of general subjects, an improvement in the educators' quality, and the implementation of learning evaluation as the benchmark for successful implementation of Islamic education. Abdullah Ahmad is a modernist education figure in Minangkabau, and in Indonesia. He made a reformation in the education system, and he also dedicates his thoughts to writing scientific articles in al-Munir magazine. Through this magazine he expressed his ideas and concepts about knowledge to the people. In terms of conceptual thinking, Abdullah Ahmad is very receptive to various modern concepts from other thinkers outside Indonesia. Thus, the authors believe he deserves to be called a modernist of education in Indonesia because of his receptiveness towards modernity which inspires other intellectuals in Indonesia today and in the future.

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