

THE DYNAMICS OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

Johari Jamal

Imam Bonjol State Islamic University, Padang

Correspondence Email: joharimelayu158@gmail.com

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Abstract

Brunei Darussalam is one of the richest countries in Southeast Asia with abundant natural resource potential. However, this potential has not been fully utilized for the world of education. The curriculum is an important element in the running of a country's education system or government. This article examines education in Brunei Darussalam. This writing uses a literature review method that presents reviews, summaries, and thoughts from various literature sources. The author concludes that the education system set by the government for the people of Brunei consists of three parts, namely the implementation of the bilingual system in all schools, the integration of the concept of Malay Islam Beraja (MIB) in the curriculum, and the development of human resources including vocational education. Education is more emphasized on technical, vocational, trade, carpentry and mechanic membership. The education period in Brunei is at the primary level for 7 years, the junior secondary level for 3 years, the upper level for 2 and 2 years pre-university. The length of the study period is known as the A7-3-2-2 pattern. Brunei Darussalam eventually adopted an education system that is the "Integrated education system" after considering many aspects. The integrated education system is considered the best education system since then, because its implementation refers back to Islam, namely the Qur'an and Al-Hadith. In addition, the commitment and political will of the Brunei Darussalam government is also an important factor in the management of the curriculum and education in general in the country.

Keywords: Education; Curriculum; Brunei Darussalam

A. Introduction

Education is the determinant and initial indicator of the progress and retreat of a country. From education, high-quality human beings emerge, competent in a field, and moral and have good morals. Therefore, the progress of a nation can be seen from the quality of its human resources (Madjid, 1995). Human resources (HR) are defined as all people in an organization who contribute to the running of the organization, or all the abilities or potentials of the population in a certain area along with their demographic,

social and economic characteristics or characteristics that can be used for development purposes (Papayungan, 1995).

Human potential is shown in one of its aspects is quality, which can be achieved by the development of human resources (Hasan, 1995). The progress of a nation, in fact, is never separated from the role of education. Becoming a developed nation is certainly an ideal that every country in the world wants to achieve. It is no longer common knowledge that the progress of a country is influenced by educational factors.

Education is so important, so that a nation can be measured whether the nation is advancing or regressing, with education can produce quality human resources both in terms of spirituality, intelligence and skills, and education is the process of producing the next generation of the nation. If the *output* of this educational process fails, it is difficult to imagine how progress can be achieved. For a nation that wants to progress, education must be seen as the quality of education also affects the development of a nation, and each country has different educational conditions, whether it includes history, education system or policies.

Brunei comes from the Sanskrit word "Varunai", taken from the word "Varunadvipa" which means the island of Kalimantan, as well as the area of Brunei is located in the Kalimantan island area. Brunei is located in the Southwest of the island of Borneo or Sabah. At first Brunei was a very large territory, but since the arrival of the colonizers, Brunei has become a very small country. Brunei faces the South China Sea which is in Serawak, Malaysian districts namely "Tutung, Belait, Temburong, and Brunei or Muara districts". The number of people in Brunei is around 66,000 people and 59% are mixed populations. The largest tribe in Brunei is 90% Malay Muslims, 1/5 ethnic Chinese and the rest are ethnic Indians. The main language used in Brunei is Malay, while other languages such as English, Iban Chinese which Brunei has 17 languages in total. Brunei is also known as a wealthy country in one of the Southeast Asian countries, whose greatest wealth is petroleum (Ghofur, 2015). Judging from the number of ethnicities in Brunei, the largest ethnicity is the Malay Tribe, which is the majority of Muslims. Therefore, the religion of Islam owned by the state of Brunei is inseparable from the history of Islam that entered the country of Brunei.

Brunei Darussalam, which is the focus of this discussion, is one of the small countries in Southeast Asia when compared to its neighbors, Malaysia and Indonesia. Before talking further about the development of education in the country, the development of Islam is first described as an inseparable part of the discussion of the development of education in the country in question. One interesting thing is that Brunei Darussalam is a country that is somewhat exclusive/closed to the outside world, so studies on Brunei Darussalam in some aspects are somewhat difficult to find. This may be because it is a prosperous country. Through this article, the author describes education in Brunei Darussalam. From this discussion, it is hoped that it can expand the macro insight of Islamic education, which will further become important knowledge for efforts to advance national education

B. Method

This research is a type of Library Research. Literature review is the study of reading materials that are specifically related to objects that have been done by others. The reading materials in question are generally in the form of papers, theses, theses, and dissertations,

both unpublished and unpublished. (Ratna, 2010). This writing uses the literature review method. Literature reviews contain reviews, summaries, and writing thoughts about several literature sources (can be articles, books, slides, information, internet, etc.), about the topic being discussed. A good literature must be relevant, up-to-date, and adequate. There are five steps in using literature review, namely: 1) Finding relevant literature; 2) Choosing a specific source; 3) Identify the details of the article' 4) Create an outline; 5) Compile a literature review. (Djamil et al., 2021: 178). The data collection process is carried out in several ways, including reading, taking notes, then describing and compiling it systematically. As for the data analysis technique, it uses content analysis. Content analysis is a research technique to make conclusions that can be replicated and valid from a text (or other meaningful material) to the context of its use (Krippendorff, 2004).

C. Result and Discussion

1. Result

a. Brunei Darussalam Country Profile

Brunei Darussalam is one of the countries in the Southeast Asian region that is known to be very prosperous. Brunei Darussalam, which is the 6th member of ASEAN, gained its independence from Britain on January 1, 1984. The head of state of Brunei Darussalam is a Sultan who is also the Head of Government (Prime Minister). Although the authority and power of the Sultan given by the Constitution is so great, the government system of Brunei Darussalam is democratic (Awang, 2001). But in terms of the way bureaucrats are elected, Brunei tends to have a closed recruitment system. This system does not absorb personnel from all walks of life. Thus, it can be known that Brunei Darussalam is a kingdom with the head of government in the hands of the sultan.

It is recorded that two-thirds of Brunei's total population is Malay. The most important ethnic minority group and the one who controls the country's economy is the Chinese (Han) who make up about 15% of the population. These ethnicities also describe the most important languages: Malay which is the official language, as well as Chinese. English is also widely spoken, and there is a rather large expat community with a large number of British and Australian citizens. Islam is the official religion of Brunei, and the Sultan of Brunei is the country's head of religion. Other religions practiced include Buddhism (mainly by the Chinese), Christianity, and indigenous religions (in very small communities) (Awang, 2001). This rich small economy is a mixture of domestic and foreign entrepreneurship, government control, welfare, and village traditions.

Brunei Darussalam is one of the countries in Southeast Asia that is very prosperous. Brunei Darussalam is led by a sultan who is also the Head of Government. In the field of education, the government of Brunei Darussalam prioritizes the creation of human resources who are moral, religious and master technology. Formal education in Brunei began in 1912 with the opening of the Malay School in Bandar Brunei (Bandar Seri Begawan now). Then followed by the opening of other schools in the Brunei Muara, Kuala Belait and Tutong areas. Previously in 1916, the Chinese community had established their own school in Bandar Seri Begawan (Awang, 2001).

In 1966, a Malay school at the secondary level was opened in Belait. In 1979 kindergarten education, which is part of the basic level, began to be implemented in Brunei. Meanwhile, the University of Brunei Darussalam was established in 1985 as the highest institution in the field of education. Since 1984, the national education curriculum has required students to master bilingualism, namely Malay and English. The Malay language is used to teach Malay language subjects, Islamic knowledge, physical education, painting and handicrafts. While English is used to teach subjects such as Science, Mathematics, Geography, History and English itself.

Thus, the government of Brunei Darussalam formulated an objective education model, namely education as a forum to give birth to people who are devout in religion where they will become the lamps of the ummah who have the right understanding and grip. In that direction, the Brunei Darussalam government also hopes that the human beings who are designed and will be born will become knowledgeable Bruneian people who are proficient and do righteous deeds.

b. Brunei Education System

The Brunei government has established three main areas in education, namely: the bilingual system in schools, the concept of Malay Islamic Monarchy in the school curriculum and the improvement of human resources including vocational and technical education. The general education system in Brunei Darussalam has many similarities with other Commonwealth countries, such as the United Kingdom, Malaysia and Singapore. This system uses the A7-3-2-2 pattern which symbolizes the length of study for each level of education, such as 7 years at the elementary level, 3 years at the junior high level, 2 years at the high school level, and 2 years at the pre-university level (Binti Ma'unah, 2009).

The following is a brief overview of the education system in Brunei Darussalam at the level of Education;

a. Kindergarten

Kindergarten (Kindergarten) education is a basic part of Brunei in 1979 and since then every 5-year-old child is required to enter kindergarten for a year before being accepted into elementary school grade-1. The increase in grades from kindergarten to elementary school is carried out automatically.

b. Primary Education Level

Basic Education aims to provide basic skills for students in writing, reading, and arithmetic in addition to fostering and developing personal character. The difference is in the tiering system, where kindergarten (kindergarten) education is part of the basic level, was implemented in Brunei in 1979 and since then every 5-year-old child is required to enter kindergarten for a year before being accepted into elementary school grade-1. The increase in grades from kindergarten to elementary school is carried out automatically. At the elementary level, starting from grade 1 onwards, each student will take the year-end exam and only students who excel can continue to the next class (Haidar, 2009).

c. Junior High School

After attending 7 years of basic education, students who pass the final exam can continue their education to junior high school for 3 years. Then take the exam

in the third year. For students who pass the final junior high school exam, they will have options, namely:

- 1) Can continue to the high school level; for high school students, in the 2nd year students will undergo a level determination exam known as BCGCE (*Brunei Cambridge General Certificate of Education*) which consists of 2 levels, namely AO and AN levels. For students who perform well, they will get an AO level diploma, which means that students can continue their studies directly to pre-university for 2 years to get a Brunei Cambridge Advanced Level Certificate level AA diploma. Meanwhile, AN level students must continue their studies for another year and then can only take the exam to get an AO level diploma.
- 2) Can continue vocational school; for junior high school graduates who do not want to continue their studies to university, they can choose vocational schools such as health nursing, technical and arts vocational, courses or can go directly into the world of work.¹⁷ In the third year, students will sit for the Lower Secondary Assessment (PMB) examination. Students who successfully complete their studies at the PMB level have several options: Pursue further education to the upper secondary level leading to the Brunei- Cambridge General Certificate of Education (GCE 'O' Level) examination or GCE 'N'; or Continuing their studies in the field of carpentry and technical skills or vocational or working institutions (Haidar, 2009).

d. High School

Similarly, at the Upper Secondary level, based on achievement in the PMB examination, students will be channelled into Science, Literature or technical streams. The duration of schooling at this stage is either two or three years. Education at the upper secondary level is general with several specific designations in the fields of science, literature and technical. At the end of the second year, qualified students will sit for the Brunei-Cambridge GCE Ordinary level (GCE 'O' Level) examination. Meanwhile, students who are not academically qualified to take the GCE 'O' Level exam will sit for the GCE 'N' Level exam first. Students who obtain good grades at 'N' level will be given the opportunity to sit for the GCE 'O' Level examinations after they have completed one academic year. For students with sufficient and relevant 'O' level passes, they can pursue their studies at the pre-university level which will lead to the Brunei-Cambridge Advanced Level Certificate of Education (GCE 'A' Level) examination.

While others either want to enter the world of work or take part in education and training programs at the Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Institute of Education, University of Brunei Darussalam, technical colleges, vocational schools, nursing colleges or continue their studies abroad, who are lucky to continue to higher education, there are many options and great opportunities, because those who graduated from the upper secondary level at the school and madrasah have the opportunity to enter any university. both domestically and internationally.

Among the most important education for every human being is Islamic education. The Brunei government places great emphasis on Islamic education. Islamic religious education began to be given to children from before they went to school. Because

Islamic education is an education that trains the sensitivity of students to behave based on the spirit of Islam. and art, courses or can jump directly into the world of work.

2. Discussion

Islamic Education in Brunei Darussalam

a. Development of Islamic Education

Some of the research that has been done about the State of Brunei is only a cursory without giving the early history of the country of Brunei was formed. This gives an idea that since Brunei was colonized and its independence was granted by the British on January 1, 1984, the education system used consisted of bilingual, namely Malay and English which were mandatory for Bruneians to learn.

Brunei Darussalam, which has gained independence from Britain, education is still experiencing dualism but Islamic law is still running as it should. In terms of Islam, Brunei practices the philosophy of Malay Islamic Monarchy (MIB) by emphasizing the education of Islamic teachings whose purpose of education is to produce students who are balanced intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically. This philosophy has been officially enacted since 27 Rabiulawal 1404 Hijri which coincides with January 1, 1984 AD. The content of the content of the philosophy of Malay Islam Beraja is "...Brunei Darussalam is and with the permission and bounty of Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala will forever remain an independent, sovereign and democratic Malay Islamic Monarchy, in line with the teachings of Islam according to the Sunnah wal Jama'ah...". (Classics, t.t., p. 1) This decree has been enacted since the 24th king, Sultan Abdul Momin (1852-1885).

The philosophy of the Malay Islamic Monarchy (MIB) in Brunei is more inclined to adhere to the Shafi'i School and the Ahl Sunnah wal Jamaah School, even though the king of Brunei freed his people to follow other schools besides the shafi'i. This school was motivated around the 17th to 20th centuries AD, with the standard curriculum of the sultanate system using the study of the books *Sabilah Muhtadin* (by Daud Fatani), *al-Mukhtasar* and *Siratal Mustaqim* by ar-Raniry, *Ghayatut Taqrib fil Irthi wat-Tas'shib* and others. In addition, the king of Brunei's concern for his people towards Islam can be seen from the king's desire for all his people to be able to read the Qur'an. Because of this policy, the king of Brunei spent so much money to publish the Qur'an in handwriting written by special people who understood the Qur'an better.

In fact, a large company in Egypt has issued 150,000 exslampers to schools in Brunei. The King of Brunei also emphasized the teaching of the Malay language with Jawi script and rumi script, as a goal to further strengthen the relationship between the Malay state and Islamic cultural heritage (Bani, 2008). Judging from the teaching system of Brunei in terms of language, Brunei has also used a western-style education system which means that on the one hand Brunei teaches Islamic education, but on the other hand teaches a western-style education system and the schools established by the British are still running even though Brunei has gained independence.

b. Islamic Education System and Curriculum

Brunei's Islamic education system is organized by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Department of Curriculum Development, grade level, purpose and ability level of students. For Arabic schools and special religious schools, the curriculum is more detailed than that of public schools. Similarly, there are concrete differences between primary and secondary schools and higher education/universities. It's just that teaching methods and delivery techniques are left to the teacher's policy according to his experience as long as they do not deviate from the curriculum and available content/materials, time and schedule that has been set.

Hj. Mohd. Jamil al-Sufri said that for higher education, the teaching of Islam is made a special subject which is also an in-depth study of a law and understood the purposes of teaching Islam so that they can practice the teaching as a way of life and become a guide when studying other sciences, especially science. In formulating the meaning and principles of the Brunei Islamic education curriculum, there is a view of Mohd. Athiyah, said: "Modern education today requires Islamic education, namely idealistic education that is spiritual, moral and religious. This makes us learn for science and scientific delicacy". Thus we are free from collapse, crime and poverty, colonialism and poverty, as well as wars with all the disasters they cause. In order to get together, enjoy an eternal life, live together, help each other and in a democratic and happy atmosphere (Sufri, 1999).

The Islamic education system, because Islam is the official religion of the government is attached to the state philosophy of MIB (Malay Islamic Monarchy), the Sultan of Brunei is the head of the country's religion, he does not distinguish between Malay and Islamic learning. The professionalism of teachers is a concern followed by large salaries and promising facilities and In Brunei Islamic education is not separated from Malay education.

Based on several discussions and resolutions from the many conferences held, Muslim scholars strongly propose to adopt an integrated education system. To ensure success in its implementation, it must be done after careful and precise analysis and planning. Brunei Darussalam embarked on this approach to address the current scholastic problem. Dualism in education can result in failure in producing in a balanced manner.

The strengthening of Islam as the state religion is in accordance with the consensus of the MIB (Malay Islamic Monarchy) philosophy. The material/content of the curriculum is in accordance with the policy of combining religion and science. Religious education in Islamic countries/Brunei is more emphasized so that education forms human beings with morals, morals and noble personalities. The goal of education in Brunei Darussalam is the formation of human beings who are moral and religious and master high technology.

The Islamic religious education curriculum in Brunei has undergone changes with different patterns from the historical journey of the Brunei country concerned, both when Islam came, the colonial period and the independence period. From the results of the research obtained, the history of Islamic religious education in Brunei includes from; First, after Islam came to Brunei, its education was inseparable from

Islamic religious material with a method to produce the next scholars as replacements for the previous scholars. Second, after the arrival of the colonizers, Islamic religious education taught experienced dualism between the religious curriculum and the British curriculum, but the British curriculum did not receive a warm welcome from some Bruneian people, so it was carried out with various methods such as introducing schools in mosques, other places and then with a fine system for people who did not send their children to school. Third, after Brunei became independent from the British colony but the independence was inseparable from the role of the British, the education in Brunei was inseparable from the influence of the educational curriculum of the British.

In order to produce a "balanced" human being, there must be an integrated concept, the kind of education that guides and trains people's minds, bodies and souls based on Islamic values and revelation (the Qur'an and the Sunnah). This aims to produce human beings who are devoted to Allah SWT (Maimun, 2008). Islamic education emphasizes the following concepts: (1) Lifelong education; (2) The total development of the potential of the soul, soul and body is integrated and sufficient in three aspects - cognitive, effective and psychomotor; and (3) the ability to carry out duties as a servant of God and as a caliph on earth, and knowledge and noble deeds in achieving happiness in life in this world and the hereafter (Omar, 1991).

This model is also practiced in Brunei Darussalam in the application and implementation of integrated education, paying attention to the teaching and learning process of materials, teacher education and the environment. All these aspects include theology and general knowledge (knowledge expressed and acquired), fardu kifayah and fardu a'in. In other words, integrated education is inseparable from worldly knowledge and knowledge about the hereafter. The product of integrated education is human beings who are intellectually, emotionally, spiritually and physically balanced

According to Mahmud Saedon Haji Awang Othman (1998), Islamic education is an integrated education based on and led by the Qur'an and Al-Sunnah. The integration of Islamic education requires four domains to be embraced into knowledge-based, physiological, civic and spiritual education. He further emphasized that integrated education ignores dualism in science and education while the principles of Islamic education prioritize the importance of acquiring useful knowledge. Knowledge that is considered obscure should be carefully analyzed in adhering to the Islamic perspective and amended, if necessary.

Efforts to implement this integrated education system are running smoothly in Brunei Darussalam because the leaders are very supportive and have made progress in this field by adhering to the philosophy of Malay Islamic Monarchy or in Malay called "Malay Islamic Monarch" (Mansurnoor, 2008). In Brunei Darussalam, where the majority of the population is Muslim, worldly knowledge must be well coordinated with religious knowledge and not differentiated between the two. This is justified for this country, making Islam its official religion, by adopting Islam in its education system like other countries that struggle to produce citizens in accordance with national aspirations. A good example of such a case is

its doctrine that exists in Communist and Western countries. It is time for Brunei to look for alternatives to the current education system in the face of global challenges. Brunei Darussalam eventually adopted an education system that is the "Integrated education system" after considering many aspects. The integrated education system is considered the best education system since then, because its implementation refers back to Islam, namely the Qur'an and Al-Hadith.

The strong existence of Islamic education in Brunei Darussalam is supported by the position of Islam as the official religion of the country supported by the philosophy of "Malay-Islam-monarchy". The strengthening of Islam as the state religion and the king as the head of religious affairs is assisted by the Minister of Religious Affairs and strengthened by the consensus of the MIB (Malay Islamic Monarchy) philosophy based on SPN-21 Brunei, substantially influencing the vision, mission and objectives of the curriculum presenting PAI as an important material in Brunei Islamic State Education.

Religious education in this Islamic country/Brunei is more emphasized so that education forms human beings with morals, morals and noble character. This is in line with the goal of Brunei Darussalam education is to form human beings with morals and religion and master high technology. The PAI curriculum in primary and secondary education is expected by the kingdom to strengthen the foundations of religion and direct graduates to PTU and PTA. At the higher education level, the government hopes that its curriculum can produce charismatic scholars and scholars. On the other hand, the material/content of the curriculum is in accordance with the royal policy that combines religion and science. Some subjects such as mathematics and geography are taught by teachers using English.

D. Conclusion

In 1984, the educational curriculum in Brunei underwent changes by requiring students to master Malay and English and continue their education to higher education at the University of Brunei Darussalam which was established in 1985. The education system set by the government for the people of Brunei consists of three parts, namely the bilingual system in all schools, the concept of Malay Monarchy (MIB) and vocational education. Malay is used to teach Malay subjects, Islamic religion, physical education, painting and carpentry, while English is used to teach subjects such as science, mathematics, geography, history and English. Education is more emphasized on technical, vocational, trade, carpentry and mechanic membership. The education period in Brunei is at the primary level for 7 years, the junior secondary level for 3 years, the upper level for 2 and 2 years pre-university. The length of the study period is known as the A7-3-2-2 pattern. Brunei Darussalam eventually adopted an education system that is the "Integrated education system" after considering many aspects. The integrated education system is considered the best education system since then, because its implementation refers back to Islam, namely the Qur'an and Al-Hadith.

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