FROM TRADITION TO TRANSFORMATION:
Decontextualization of Dayah in Aceh's Millennial Context

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Abstract: His study investigates factors contributing to the decontextualisation of *dayah* as an Islamic educational institution in Aceh. Qualitative research methods, including observation, interviews, and document review, were used to collect data and gain insights into this phenomenon. This study highlights three findings: first, an authoritarian relationship between *teungku* (Islamic scholars) and students hinders meaningful connection and engagement; second, the use of hierarchical teaching methods further reinforces this disconnection, limiting opportunities for collaboration and active learning; third, outdated facilities present challenges in modernising and adapting *dayah* institutions. By addressing these factors, *dayah* institutions can effectively restore their connection with Acehnese youth and foster a comprehensive and contemporary Islamic education. It is recommended that *teungku* in Aceh integrate technology into their teaching methods, ensuring relevance and appeal to the young generation. This study also shows the need for *dayah* institutions in Aceh to adapt to the evolving educational landscape and embrace technological advancements. This research contributes to the discourse on educational transformation in Aceh by providing insights into the challenges and potential strategies for revitalizing *dayah* institutions in the face of a changing educational milieu.

Keywords: decontextualization, Islamic traditional learning, dayah, Aceh's millineal

Introduction

The current millennium has witnessed an unprecedented pace of technological advancement and information proliferation within education.[1] In this dynamic landscape, *dayah* educational institutions, representing traditional Islamic schools, face an urgent need to navigate the precarious balance between upholding tradition and embracing innovation.[2] Various studies suggest that the rapid development of information and communication technology has necessitated a comprehensive modernization of teaching approaches to align with the evolving requirements of the technological milieu.[3] However, Mashuri highlighted a notable limitation in the adaptability of *dayah* institutions in renewing their approach to teaching and learning, impeding their ability to keep pace with the advancements in information and communication technology.[4] This obstacle arises from the need to carefully align the traditional pedagogical practices of *dayah* with the possibilities offered by technology, considering the needs and dynamics of Islamic education. Consequently, the importance of adaptability emerges as a crucial factor in maintaining the relevance and effectiveness of *dayah* education in the contemporary era. Based on direct observations conducted during the data collection process, it is evident that Islamic boarding schools still encounter significant obstacles in striking a balance between preserving the traditions of Islamic teaching and embracing innovation, leading to a situation described in this article as the decontextualization of traditional Islamic education.

Decontextualization, as defined by Riviere and colleagues,[5] refers to the extraction of abstract principles without considering current contexts. It can occur as a result of various factors, including a desire to preserve tradition and identity, apathy towards change, and rejection of new ideas perceived as threats.[6]

However, decontextualization can hinder positive transformation and necessitate consistent efforts and reforms to address it effectively.[7] By contextualizing traditional Islamic education, integrating technology, adapting teaching methods, and aligning curricula with contemporary demands, *dayah* institutions can bridge the gap between tradition and innovation, ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of Islamic education in the modern era. Overcoming decontextualization challenges and embracing positive transformations are essential for the young generation's sustained development of religious education.

The literature highlighting the transformation and modernisation of Islamic education in Aceh and other parts of Sumatra highlights the role of intellectuals such as Abu Teupin Raya,[8] Sheikh Ali Hasan Ahmad Ad-Dary,[9] and Rukun Nasution[10] in contextualising traditional knowledge and modern issues. Previous scholars have shown that conventional Islamic educational institutions can adapt to the challenges of modernisation and globalisation, such as integrating information technology, developing contemporary curricula, and expanding educational networks.[11] In the context of Dayah Salafiyah, for example, despite facing global cultural influences, the institution has managed to maintain its traditional identity while continuing to innovate and contribute to the development of Islamic character and understanding in Indonesia.[12] By highlighting the important role of leaders and innovation in the education system, this study underlines the balance between religious values passed down through generations and the need for modernisation to maintain relevance in a changing global context.

So far, researchers have approached the study of *dayah* from three distinct perspectives. First, *dayah* is widely recognized as a traditional institution that fosters students' moral development.[13] As an educational institution, *dayah* offers comprehensive character-building programs aimed at nurturing children's character.[14]

The implementation of character education extends into both formal and non-formal settings, with schools assuming responsibility for monitoring learning outcomes and fostering positive attitudes among students.[15] Second, scholars examining *dayah* tend to focus on its community impact.[16] Hamdan's research illustrates the inseparable connection between *dayah* and community life, highlighting its central role in propagating religious teachings and promoting Islamic values.[17] Through the transmission of Islamic teachings, *dayah* actively contributes to shaping the Islamic ethos within the community. This dissemination encompasses various activities such as *dakwa'* (Islamic preaching) and *majlis ta'lim* (religious study groups), which extend beyond students and involve the wider community. Consequently, local communities strongly feel the presence of *dayah*, and the religious knowledge acquired from *dayah* brings about transformative changes in their way of life. Third, researchers have extensively studied *dayah* as an educational institution from a historical perspective, tracing its origins and development over time. This historical inquiry has provided valuable insights into the trajectory and growth of dayah institutions. However, these studies often overlook the sluggish response of Islamic boarding schools in adapting to contemporary teaching technologies, leading to a disconnect between their roles as centres for the development of Islamic knowledge in society. By considering this perspective, this article aims to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by these traditional institutions, the extent to which traditional education influences the needs of modern society, and the efforts undertaken by dayah institutions to contextualize traditional Islamic education.

This literature review analyzes the challenges faced by *dayah* institutions in adapting to technological changes in teaching methods and highlights the importance of addressing these

challenges to meet contemporary societal needs. The article explores the strategies employed by *dayah* institutions to integrate technology, adapt teaching methods, and harmonize curricula with the demands of the modern era to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of Islamic education in today's context. To contextualize traditional teaching methods, various aspects of *dayah* institutions, including the learning system, administration, student development, teaching methods, and facilities, need to be revitalized. However, many *dayah* institutions maintain traditional practices such as an authoritative relationship between *Teungku* (religious leaders) and students, hierarchical teaching methods, along with outdated facilities. This resistance to change is influenced by sweeping social transformations that have reshaped the landscape of Islamic education in Aceh. As a result, parents, driven by diverse perspectives and changing societal demands, are exploring alternative Islamic education institutions for their children.[18]

Fan & Xiangming[19] state that to successfully contextualize traditional teaching, various aspects such as the learning system, administration, student development, teaching methods, and facilities must be renewed. Using this theory, we argue that many *dayah* institutions continue to uphold traditional practices, maintaining an authoritative relationship between *Teungku* (religious leader) and santri (students), employing hierarchy teaching methods, and relying on outdated facilities. The decontextualization of dayah in Aceh's Islamic education in the millennial era is inseparable from the broader social transformations that have reshaped the landscape of Islamic education. The diverse perspectives and evolving demands of modern life have compelled parents to explore alternative religious educational institutions for their children. By elevating the quality of research in this domain, this study endeavours to provide valuable insights into the challenges faced by dayah institutions in the millennial era.

Moreover, it aims to pave the way for the formulation of targeted action plans that can effectively address the issue of decontextualization, ensuring the continued relevance and effectiveness of dayah education within the contemporary milieu.

This paper aims to rectify the gaps found in previous studies, which have disregarded the development of *dayah* institutions in the millennial era and their capacity to adapt to the swift progress in information and communication technology. Furthermore, it intends to address the lack of attention given to the transformation of *dayah* in meeting the specific needs and interests of younger generations. The overarching objective of this study is to comprehensively examine the multifaceted dynamics within *dayah* institutions and focus on the intricate student-teacher (*teungku*) relationship that permeates both the teaching process and students' daily lives. Additionally, it seeks to conduct an in-depth analysis of the teaching and learning methodologies employed in *dayah* institutions while critically evaluating the adequacy of the infrastructure facilities available within these institutions and how they align with the demands of the millennial era. By scrutinizing the prevalent phenomenon of decontextualization in Acehnese *dayah* institutions, this paper aims to enrich our understanding of *dayah* within the contemporary context.

Methodology

This article is grounded in a qualitative approach, employing observation and interviews as primary data collection methods. The research process involved on-site visits to *dayah*, allowing for direct observation of the teaching and learning processes as well as an assessment of the infrastructure. In addition, interviews were conducted with current and former students of this *dayah*, providing diverse perspectives and important observations. To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the situation, current

students were selected as informants due to their firsthand knowledge of the *dayah* they attend. Their experiences and perspectives provide crucial information about the teaching methods, curriculum, and overall learning environment. Similarly, former students, as alumni of Dayah schools, provide a retrospective viewpoint, reflecting on their past experiences and the impact they experienced.

The interviews followed the snowball method,[20] which involves using unstructured questioning to gather in-depth responses and gather rich qualitative data. This approach allows for a more open and flexible dialogue, enabling participants to share their experiences and perceptions. The data collected through observation and interviews underwent systematic analysis. Initially, the data were condensed by categorizing and organizing it based on relevant variables. Subsequently, conclusions were drawn from the analysed and validated data, ensuring the trustworthiness of the findings. By utilizing this rigorous qualitative research methodology, this article aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities within *dayah* schools. The integration of observation and interviews offers a multifaceted perspective, capturing the intricate dynamics of the teaching and learning processes as well as the lived experiences of students. Ultimately, this research contributes to a deeper knowledge of the subject matter and informs strategies for enhancing the quality and effectiveness of education within *dayah* institutions.

Results and discussion

According to Roberts decontextualization often occurs when educational systems resist the shift from traditional to digitally-based modern education.[21] However, the impact of this transition on teaching development is not universally perceived as positive.[22] Decontextualization in educational systems refers to the reluctance

of institutions to embrace digital modernization, resulting in an inability to respond to contextual changes.[23] Consequently, these institutions are deemed incapable of adapting to the demands of the contemporary landscape. The implications of decontextualization for educational institutions are significant. First, there is a noticeable decline in student and parental interest, reflecting a growing disconnect between traditional educational practices and the expectations of students and their families.[24] Second, the failure to address modernization challenges exacerbates social issues, such as increased juvenile delinquency, which underscores the need for contextual adaptation.[25] Third, decontextualization limits educational institutions' opportunities to thrive in a competitive landscape, hindering their growth and development.[26]

In this section, we examine the challenges faced by *dayah* institutions in contextualizing traditional Islamic education while remaining relevant in the contemporary era by analyzing the relationship between teachers and students, teaching models, and the adaptation of technology in learning practices. In the next section, this article explores the impact of these factors on the relevance and effectiveness of education provided by Islamic boarding schools today. This holistic approach aims to bridge the gap between tradition and innovation in education, ensuring a cohesive and effective learning experience for students.

The Authoritarian Relationship Between *Teungku* and Santri in Dayah

The authoritarian behaviour of *teungku* (religious teachers) towards students in *dayah* threatens the existence of the institution. This behaviour arises from the persistent propagation of the ideology of "*teumerka ngon teungku*" (disobedience to the teacher) among students. Furthermore, the dominance of *teungku* within dayah reinforces their authoritarian behaviour. The autocratic

behaviour of *teungku* in dayah can be observed in three forms: First, *teungku* is regarded as the absolute source of religious knowledge. As Muhammad Wali, a student from a dayah, stated:

"*Teungku* in *dayah* is a person who has a lot of religious knowledge. *Teungku dayah* has read many books, because *Teungku* has been a *teungku* in *dayah* for a long time, like our *teungku* (whom we call "abu") here who has read tens of books. Just imagine, *teungku* has been in *dayah* for 10 years, and on top of that, *teungku* teaches in *dayah*. That's why when it comes to religious knowledge and reading books, we never doubt the ability of our *teungku* here," said Muhammad Wali, a santri from a *dayah* in Aceh Tamiang, during an interview on June 3rd, 2021.

The quoted excerpt above explained the large role of *teungku* in shaping authoritarian learning patterns. As the authors observed when making observations, there is a hierarchical atmosphere, where santri only receives knowledge passively during the learning process. This is also similar to the statements of other informants who saw the dominant teaching methods in dayah, such as *halaqah* (one-way method), where *teungku* provided material while the *santri* listened. However, according to Wali, a former *santri*, this method succeeds in preserving the tradition of religious learning. Muhammad Wali added that the halaqah is carried out to position the teacher as a guide in understanding broad Islamic knowledge so that students avoid misunderstandings.

Similarly, Teungku Imran from *dayah* in Aceh Tamiang conveyed a similar observation. In an interview conducted on July 12, 2021, he recalled his initial experience at Abu Mudi's dayah and expressed his admiration for the knowledge of *teungku*. He remembered how impressed he was by the thick religious texts *teungku* brought with them and the depth of their knowledge during lessons. However, Teungku Imran also noted the hierarchical

nature of the relationship between teacher and student, mentioning that students were often too afraid to question or challenge *teungku*'s opinions for fear of being wrong.

The stories of Muhammad Wali and Teungku Imran illustrate the significant intellectual respect and authority that teungku holds within *dayah* system. This reverence, while rooted in respect for *teungku's* religious expertise, also reinforces a hierarchical learning environment. The fear of questioning or challenging *teungku* underlines the authoritarian dynamic in the classroom, where students may feel restricted from critically engaging with the material. This contributes to a passive learning culture in which knowledge is transmitted from top to bottom, and students may not develop independent critical thinking skills. Respect for *teungku* authority, while fostering reverence for religious knowledge, may inhibit intellectual exploration and dialogue in the learning process.

Second, the interview with *teungku* Imran revealed that *teungku* in *dayah* possess a good understanding of religious knowledge, and their expertise impresses the santri, making them feel both amazed and fearful of *teungku*'s authority. This is further demonstrated by the fact that the santri are unable to challenge or interrupt *teungku* during their lessons. As Ijal, a santri from *dayah* in Bireun, stated:

"I have only been studying in this *dayah* for about three years. During my time here, I have never seen my classmates or myself dare to challenge what *teungku* teaches us. We don't even dare to interrupt *teungku* while they are speaking."

Ijal's statement shows that in the understanding of the santri, the word "*teungku*" is something that cannot be denied or questioned. This is in line with what Muhammad, a santri from a *dayah* in Aceh Tamiang, stated in an interview:

"We, santri in this *dayah*, always uphold the *adab* (respectful behaviour) with *teungku*, both during and outside of studying. If we want to ask something during class, we have to wait until *teungku* finishes teaching. We cannot interrupt or contradict *Teungku's* words because we are afraid of being disrespectful."

This interview result indicates that the behaviour of the *santri* in *dayah* is highly respected when they are with *teungku*. The authority of *teungku* in *dayah* shapes the obedience of santri, which can be seen when they want to ask something. Even the fear of the *santri* towards *teungku* is to the extent that they believe that *teungku* can harm their lives. The interviews show how teungku are so respected that *santri* are afraid to challenge their teachers' arguments. Respect for *teungku* is rooted in the cultural and religious norm of *adab* (respectful behaviour), which governs interactions between students and teachers. This hierarchical dynamic reflects the power of *teungku*, which is legitimised by the teaching not to challenge the teacher's opinion. The interviewees' fear shows how entrenched these norms are, with students believing that it would be disrespectful, or even spiritually dangerous, to challenge their teachers.

However, this dynamic may have implications for the learning process, as the rigid authority of the *teungku* inhibits critical engagement. This limits opportunities for critical thinking and dialogue, essential for deeper understanding. Ultimately, this dynamic reinforces traditional hierarchies and limits opportunities for intellectual exploration among students. Third, the authority of *teungku* can also be found in the belief that what *teungku* says is the truth, as stated by Ihsan, a santri from a *dayah* in North Aceh:

"If we do not believe what *teungku* says, we will be doomed because *teungku* has knowledge that we do not have. They understand halal and haram and are obedient to Allah. If we

want to live a good life in this world and the afterlife, we must heed the words of *teungku*."

Ihsan's statement shows that the santri obey what *teungku* says because *teungku* is a role model for them in their religious lives. Even the santri understand that if they do not obey *teungku*, it has an impact on their lives, as *teungku* has *karamah* (God's blessings). This is in line with what Murdhani, a santri from a *dayah* in North Aceh, stated:

"If I want to receive blessings from *teungku*, I must obey everything they say. If I contradict or disobey them, the knowledge I have learned will not be blessed. When I learned the Kitab Ta'lim Muta'alim with *teungku*, I was taught to respect and obey my teacher. I even consider *teungku* in *dayah* as a replacement for my parents while I am studying here."

Murdhani's statement shows that *teungku* in *dayah* provides lessons on obeying *teungku* because *teungku* is the source of religious knowledge and learning. Furthermore, *teungku* in *dayah* is considered a substitute for the santri*'s* parents who are left behind in their hometown. Therefore, *teungku* in *dayah* must be respected by the santri. From the above discussion, it can be understood that santri who attends education in *dayahs* in Aceh highly respects *teungku*. This is because *teungku* in Aceh has authority in terms of knowledge, and their words cannot be contradicted during learning. Additionally, the words of *teungku* are the truth because of their *karamah*.

Hierarchy Learning Method

Learning in Islamic boarding schools (*dayah*) uses the top-down/one-way teaching method, which maintains the traditional practices of dayah education in Aceh as a religious education institution in the millennial era. However, many santri (students)

feel bored with the top-down/one-way teaching method used by *teungku* (religious teacher) in delivering lessons. Santri feels that *teungku* only reads and interprets the Islamic texts (kitab kuning) to deepen their knowledge of religion. The evidence that the teaching method used by *teungku* is boring can be seen in three aspects. First, the learning materials do not meet the interests of the santri. As stated by Faturrahman, a santri from East Aceh:

"*Teungku* teaches according to what he wants, there is no reference to what learning materials will be delivered, just any Islamic texts that we know. Our *teungku* teaches by just reading and interpreting the kitab, and sometimes the explanation is also limited. What is often done by *teungku* is just reading and interpreting. Sometimes, they read a few pages of the text and interpret it even though they haven't finished reading it."

Faturrahman's statement shows that *teungku* teaches by simply reading and interpreting the kitab, and in determining the learning materials, there is no curriculum or target to be achieved from the learning process. The teaching model used is the one-way learning model, where *teungku* reads the kitab and explains it. Faturrahman's statement is supported by Muhammad Khalidi, a *teungku* in Aceh Tamiang:

"When I teach, sometimes many santri fall asleep. I think they are tired from helping their parents in the fields during the day, and at night they study in *dayah*. That's why sometimes they fall asleep in class. Sometimes, some fall asleep because they don't understand, and don't want to disturb their classmates, so they just prefer to sleep. I sometimes give warnings and admonitions to those who fall asleep."

Muhammad Khalidi's statement shows that the dynamics of santri who follow the learning process in *dayah* are very diverse, some fall asleep during the class, while others still

follow *teungku*'s teaching. These data highlight the absence of a formal curriculum, where *teungku* arbitrarily select religious texts for teaching, leading to an unstructured and uninteresting learning environment. This lack of coherence made *santri* passive recipients of knowledge, as the learning process lacked clear educational targets or opportunities for intellectual participation. The lecture-based one-way teaching model, largely focussed on reading and interpreting Islamic texts, reflects a traditional didactic approach that limits critical thinking and enquiry. Although partly due to external factors such as physical fatigue, Muhammad Khalidi's observation of students falling asleep during lessons underscores the broader issue of detachment resulting from monotonous teaching methods that fail to stimulate intellectual curiosity. The rigid hierarchical structure of *dayah*, which reveres the authority of *teungku* and prioritises memorisation, further limits opportunities for student engagement and critical discourse, thus perpetuating intellectual passivity.

The absence of a structured curriculum raises substantive questions about the pedagogical purpose of *dayah*, indicating the need for comprehensive reform. Introducing a well-defined curriculum that bridges traditional Islamic education with modern subjects such as ethics, critical thinking and social sciences could enhance student engagement and intellectual development. A shift towards student-centred pedagogy, which prioritises interactive and participatory learning, can foster a more dynamic educational environment. Incorporating contemporary teaching methods, such as group discussions, peer learning and critical reflection on religious texts, will encourage *santri* to actively engage with the material, fostering critical thinking skills and intellectual autonomy. The challenge for *dayah* lies in balancing the preservation of a rich religious tradition with the evolving pedagogical demands of modern education. By providing pedagogical training for

teungku and integrating interactive teaching methods, *dayah* can create a more responsive and effective learning environment, aligned with cultural values and students' intellectual aspirations.

Second, the attitude of the students towards receiving lessons is indifferent when the teacher delivers the subject matter. As conveyed by Mawardi, a santri from *dayah* in West Aceh, stated:

"When I was reciting, I noticed many of my fellow students sleeping. Most of them slept because they didn't understand the material being presented. Some also fell asleep because they were bored with the teaching method used by *teungku.*"

Mawardi's statement indicates that in receiving learning materials at the Islamic boarding school, the students do not take it seriously. This can be seen in the students who slept due to boredom with the learning process. Mawardi's statement is in line with what Murdhani said:

"When I attend classes, I often sit a little far from my teacher, sometimes behind a friend. Sometimes, I sit with my close friends behind me and when my teacher explains, I talk to my friend because sometimes we get bored studying and need a break. If our teacher knows that we are talking, he rebukes and reminds us that we may even be punished, such as being required to read the book that *teungku* was reading on that day."

Murdhani's statement shows that students participating in the teaching and learning process at *dayah* talk to friends who sit close together. They even look for seats that the teacher cannot see. Students who speak while studying receive a reprimand and even punishment if the teacher finds out. Third, there is a passive attitude among students in learning, indicating a lack of learning spirit. As stated by Ihsan, a student from an Islamic boarding school in Aceh Tamiang:

"Sometimes when I study at *dayah*, I feel bored and uninterested because all we do is listen to our teacher read and interpret the book. That's why sometimes I attend class, and sometimes I don't. If I don't attend class, I either sleep or hang out with my friends in the *bilek* (room), or grab a cup of coffee at the nearby coffee shop."

Ihsan's statement highlights that students at the Islamic boarding school lack enthusiasm and often feel bored during the learning process. This is evidenced by their choice to sleep or socialize in the *bilek* (room) rather than attend class. This is consistent with what Sulaiman expressed:

"I taught at an Islamic boarding school for more than two years, but eventually lost my enthusiasm to teach there and left. There was no practical application in learning. We only learned to read the book and listen to the teacher's explanation. I become enthusiastic when there is practical learning, such as the lesson on washing the corpse. This type of practical learning not only generates enthusiasm but also enhances our understanding and knowledge."

From the above explanations, it can be inferred that students often lack the drive to participate actively in the teaching and learning process at Islamic boarding schools. Their passive attitudes are manifested through their tendency to sleep or socialize instead of attending class. Furthermore, the absence of practical application in learning has contributed to the lack of enthusiasm among students.

Outdated Facilities

Parents and students in the millennial era pay attention to the facilities and infrastructure owned by *dayah*, because with such facilities and infrastructure, they can live comfortably in *dayah*. In addition to comfort, facilities, and infrastructure are

also indicators of safety and health for the students. Salafiyah *dayahs* in Aceh do not pay attention to facilities and update them, resulting in the students leaving *dayah* because it becomes uninteresting and monotonous. Facilities that are not updated at *dayah* can be seen for three reasons: first, the facilities and infrastructure are insufficient to meet the student's needs: quantity. As expressed by Muharram of *dayah* in Langsa City:

"Our *dayah* was built through self-help and is not the responsibility of the state, so the buildings at our *dayah* are what they are. Sometimes we don't learn in class but in the 'balee' house on stilts. We sit in a circle and interpret the book on the floor of the *balee*, where sometimes our waists ache. Because we bend over on the floor for too long, without realizing it, we are in a position like people who are about to sleep on their stomachs."

Muharram's words show that *dayahs* in Aceh are built with private funds and funds obtained from community solidarity. Community solidarity takes the form of giving donations and grants to *dayah*. Muharram's words are in line with those expressed by Helmi:

"Our *dayah* buildings are still made of wood (boards) because these *dayahs* have only been established for about three years. The *bileks* where we live are made of planks. Only a few buildings are made of concrete by *teungku dayah*. Most of our learning places are still stages made of boards, with only one classroom made permanently."

Helmi's expression shows that *dayahs* grow and develop from something simple to a simple building made of boards. The plank-shaped building consists of a room building or study class. Second, facilities and infrastructure are not updated (outdated): quality. As said by Rusli, a student from Aceh Tamiang:

The place for studying Quran is only one type when it rains, we have to wait until the book dries - books on top of our clothes - at night the wind is very cold but we continue studying until late, the same goes for studying during the day in hot conditions, although there is a fan in the class. Sometimes we have to stay in a room with 10 people, even if it's cramped. We are not allowed to bring large wardrobes, and the common kitchen is not well-organized. We eat whatever is available, and although it may not be sterile and clean, it's not a big deal because we live in a *dayah* for our education.

Rusli's statement indicates that the facilities in the *pesantren* reflect simplicity by providing basic amenities. Students study in hot classrooms without fans. Sometimes, during rain, the learning area gets wet due to the open structure of the raised platform they study on. Rusli's statement is similar to that of Muharram, who said:

"We, the students at the Salafi *pesantren*, cook for ourselves. There is a shared kitchen provided, but cooking equipment such as stoves are either provided by the *pesantren* or we bring our own from home. Those of us who use the *pesantren's* stoves pay the *pesantren* a monthly fee of 50,000 rupiahs. Some of us even cook using firewood that we collect from behind the *pesantren*."

Muharram's statement shows that the *pesantren* students must provide for their daily needs themselves. Even their living necessities, such as cooking equipment and beds, must be brought from home. Students in the *pesantren* have to cook for themselves because there are no shared kitchens, like in modern Islamic boarding schools.

Thirdly, the supporting facilities, such as the Internet and sports fields, are inadequate. As Sofyan, a *pesantren* student from Aceh Tamiang, stated:

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"Our *pesantren* is a traditional one, so it is very basic and not like other schools. We do not have facilities like the Internet and computers, like in junior high and high schools. If we want to use the internet, we just use our phones. Our *pesantren* only provides dormitories and classrooms that are very basic, not luxurious like those in modern Islamic boarding schools."

Sofyan's statement shows that the pesantren's facilities are different from those in public schools, such as junior high and high schools, and even different from those in modern Islamic boarding schools. The pesantren's facilities are mostly just rooms and basic learning spaces. Hendra's statement also supports Sofyan's statement:

"The *pesantren* where we study does not have any additional facilities, like computers or Wi-Fi. Our *pesantren* only has dormitories, study areas, and a mosque. The study area is just a raised platform because our *pesantren* is small and on stilts. Some students live in the *pesantren*, while others commute. Our *pesantren* only teaches Islamic scriptures. There are no other facilities, and students are not allowed to bring phones. If we need to contact our parents, we borrow *teungku*'s phone."

From the above descriptions, it is evident that the *pesantren* only provides primary amenities such as living quarters, learning spaces, and a kitchen for the students to cook. The facilities that students need, such as cooking equipment and beds, must be brought from home, but they are not luxurious, only basic. Simplicity and self-sufficiency are fundamental values in *pesantren*. Learning spaces are only equipped for teaching purposes, and support facilities like computers and Wi-Fi are not available.

Moving Beyond Traditional Decontextualization

The article establishes a connection between the research findings and the existing literature concerning the decontextualization of traditional education in different regions.[27] This linkage enables an examination of the theoretical contributions provided by the current study. As previously mentioned, this study has identified three crucial patterns that serve as indicators of said decontextualization. These patterns highlight the challenges faced by *dayah* institutions in maintaining their relevance and attracting students in the current era. The first pattern indicates the decontextualization of *dayah* in Aceh through the authoritarian relationship between *teungku* (religious leader) and the students. Traditionally, *dayah* education has been characterized by a strict and hierarchical structure, with *teungku* exercising significant authority over their students. However, in the millennial era, where individuals seek a more participatory and egalitarian learning environment, this authoritative approach may deter students from choosing Salafi *dayah* as a place to learn the Islamic religion.[28] Students now prioritize institutions that foster an open and collaborative atmosphere, allowing them to engage actively in the learning process and express their perspectives.[29] Consequently, *dayah* institutions need to *reevaluate* and reshape their pedagogical approaches to foster a more inclusive and student-centred learning environment that accommodates the expectations and preferences of the millennial generation.

The authoritarian relationship of *teungku dayah* towards the students results in *teungku* becoming the absolute source of religious knowledge.[30] The authoritarianism of *teungku* during the teaching and learning process does not allow students to challenge or interrupt *teungku*. This can lead to an extreme point where what *teungku* says is considered absolute truth. Second, the hierarchy teaching method can be suffocating for

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students. This can be seen in their behaviour during the learning process, such as a lack of interest in the learning material, indifference towards *teungku* when they deliver the material, and a passive attitude towards learning (lacking a learning spirit). Third, the facilities are not updated. To prove that *dayah* facilities are outdated, quantity, quality, and supporting facilities (internet and computers) do not meet the needs of the students.

The explanation of the cause-effect relationship regarding the findings of the study on the decontextualization of *dayah* in Aceh as an Islamic educational institution in the millennial era reveals problems within *dayah* as an Islamic educational institution in Aceh. Three causes resulted in the decontextualization of *dayah* in Aceh as an Islamic educational institution in the millennial era. First, *dayah* in Aceh highly preserves and maintains old traditions in *dayah* culture from time to time.[31] Traditions that are always upheld by *dayah*, such as the sarong tradition, the use of *kitab kuning* as the primary source of learning, the relationship between *teungku* and the santri, and the teaching method.[32] Research conducted by Rizal[33] explains that *dayah* in Aceh uses *kitab kuning* as the main source of learning and *teungku's* leadership can shape the character of the santri. Reward and punishment are methods used to motivate santri in learning. Second, building *dayah* with the spirit of da'wah and worship, results in not considering financial and capital aspects when building *dayah*. This has implications for inadequate building facilities, dormitories, and other facilities.[34] Third, there are still many *teungku* in *dayah* who refuse to accept changes because they believe that the correct concept of *dayah* is the one that they learned.[35]

Quoting Fan and Xianming's theory which highlights the inability of traditional educational institutions to effectively contextualize education, stemming from their hesitance to align

with the preferences of the younger generation regarding educational perspectives, we have observed a similar phenomenon in Aceh.[36] Our research findings reveal that the process of decontextualization within *dayah* institutions in Aceh is attributable to their failure to present a fresh perspective that emphasizes the significance of the education provided by *dayahs* for the future of the Acehnese youth. In contrast to previous research, which posited that Islamic boarding schools in Aceh possess independent capabilities to develop educational programs in response to contemporary demands, the findings of this study diverge. Suyata's argument, asserting that this sense of independence strengthens the position of *dayahs* among modern educational institutions, necessitates critical examination, as it contrasts with our findings demonstrating that *dayahs* are currently grappling with difficulties in adapting to educational advancements.

This article underscores the imperative for a paradigm shift in perceiving the existence of traditional Islamic education, such as *dayahs*, which have traditionally relied on the independence factor as a foundation for sustaining their identity. Our research presents an innovative perspective, asserting that the preservation of traditional Islamic education necessitates embracing an open-minded stance in adapting to evolving educational methodologies. This imperative arises from the prevailing societal paradigm, wherein *dayah* institutions in the millennial era face challenges in effectively meeting the demands of modern life. However, parents' understanding of education in *dayah* is oriented towards pragmatism, getting a good job after finishing school. Students also have different perceptions of education in *dayah*, where they interpret education in *dayah* as colonial-like[37] and boring.[38]

Hence, it is imperative for leaders and administrators of *dayah* institutions to proactively develop policy responses that align with the advancements in science, technology, and culture.

These policy responses should encompass both curricular and infrastructural modifications, ensuring that *dayah* institutions maintain their status as representative religious educational establishments in the millennial era. Moreover, while implementing changes, it is crucial to preserve the distinctiveness of Salafiyah *dayahs*, safeguarding their unique heritage. This approach will enable the Acehnese *dayah's* legacy to endure, defying the risk of being eroded by the passage of time. By embracing necessary adaptations and preserving core traditions, *dayah* institutions can navigate the challenges posed by contemporary developments while remaining true to their heritage and values.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the notion that Islamic education must adhere to traditional practices to produce quality Islamic education is not always valid. The findings of this research indicate that Islamic boarding schools that strictly adhere to customs may experience a decline, and in some cases, even a loss of santri (students), due to the evolving nature of society alongside advancements in communication and information technology. The de-contextualization of *dayah* (Islamic boarding schools) in the millennial era is found to be influenced by three key factors: firstly, the authoritarian relationship between *teungku* (religious leaders) and santri; secondly, the top-down/ one-way teaching methods; and thirdly, the outdated facilities. Consequently, *dayah* institutions must adapt to the changing times while preserving their distinctive characteristics in Aceh. The study sheds light on the significance of Islamic boarding schools responding comprehensively to the demands of the contemporary era, encompassing aspects such as the role of *teungku*, teaching methodologies, and facility modernization. Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that this study has

limitations, as it focuses solely on observations from Aceh Tamiang, Langsa City, and East Aceh. Consequently, the data utilized in this research is restricted to santri and former Islamic boarding school students exclusively from these areas. Thus, further studies with a larger sample size are necessary to provide comprehensive policy recommendations for both Islamic boarding schools and the government. Furthermore, such studies can offer motivation and support for implementing necessary changes in these institutions.

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