

Al-Ittihadiyah's Gait In The Field of Education in North Sumatra (Study of The History of Islamic Education)

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ABSTRACT

Al-Ittihadiyah is one of the oldest Islamic mass organizations (Ormas) in Indonesia, especially North Sumatra. Since its establishment on January 27, 1935, Al-Ittihadiyah has established its role as an Islamic organization engaged in education, da'wah, and social activities. This study attempts to analyze the progress of Al-Ittihadiyah in the field of education in North Sumatra. The focus of this study discusses these objectives from the historical aspect of Islamic education. This type of research uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method. Sources of data and study materials are obtained from relevant and credible scientific literature, based on research (scientific articles). The results of this study indicate that Al-Ittihadiyah's role in education in North Sumatra (formerly part of East Sumatra) is very large. This is indicated by (1) the initial policy of the establishment of Al-Ittihadiyah which was based on unifying efforts between the ulama and scholars in North Sumatra; (2) Al-Ittihadiyah education council which focuses on the establishment of Islamic (educational) colleges under the auspices of Al-Ittihadiyah (starting from Kindergarten level to High School level/equivalent); and (3) Establishing higher education institutions.

Keywords: *al-ittihadiyah, gait of Islamic organizations, education*

ABSTRAK

Al-Ittihadiyah merupakan salah satu organisasi massa (Ormas) Islam tertua di Indonesia, khususnya Sumatera Utara. Sejak didirikan per tanggal 27 Januari 1935, Al-Ittihadiyah memantapkan peran sebagai Ormas Islam yang bergerak di bidang pendidikan, dakwah, dan sosial. Penelitian ini berupaya menganalisa kiprah Al-Ittihadiyah dalam bidang pendidikan di Sumatera Utara. Fokus kajian ini membahas tujuan tersebut dari aspek sejarah pendidikan Islam. Adapun jenis penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kepustakaan. Sumber data dan bahan kajian diperoleh dari literatur ilmiah relevan dan kredibel, berbasis penelitian (artikel ilmiah). Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa kiprah Al-Ittihadiyah dalam bidang pendidikan di Sumatera Utara (dulu bagian Sumatera Timur) sangatlah besar. Hal ini ditandai dengan (1) Kebijakan awal pendirian Al-Ittihadiyah yang didasarkan pada upaya pemersatu antara kaum ulama dan cendekia di Sumatera Utara; (2) Majelis pendidikan Al-Ittihadiyah yang berfokus pada pendirian perguruan (pendidikan) Islam di bawah naungan Al-Ittihadiyah (mulai jenjang TK hingga jenjang Sekolah Menengah Atas/ sederajat); dan (3) Mendirikan lembaga pendidikan tinggi.

Kata kunci: *al-ittihadiyah, kiprah ormas Islam, pendidikan*

A. INTRODUCTION

Education is an "investment" in the future (Rasyid, 2015; Widiansyah, 2017: 207-215). The establishment of educational institutions in the community, embodies the philosophical value that the nation's children are assets that determine the nation's future. Furthermore, the ideals of independence will be realized through efforts to educate the nation's children (Atmanti, 2005: 30-39; Kadir, 2015: 135-149).

Implementing these goals, the government through the ministry of education facilitates the establishment of formal educational institutions, both state (managed by the government) and private (managed by the community through educational foundations). On this basis, people who care about education work together to form, establish, and manage educational foundations as an effort to provide a "container" for the nation's generation to learn optimally (Muttakin, 2017; Haq, 2017: 26-41).

During the Dutch colonial period, people were often pitted between intellectuals and the 'alim ulama'. In fact, Islam teaches the concept of "unity of knowledge" (wahdatul 'ulum), so it is believed that both are integral and interconnected (Fridiyanto, 2019: 149-155; Zebua, *et.al.*, 2022: 39-48). The final orientation of Islamic education is to form a complete human being who reflects noble character and rahmatan lil 'alamin in society (Nasution, 2016).

Islamic educational institutions respond to this separation by acquiring formal education based on Islam in the community. This is the basic reference for the establishment of madrasas (as schools plus Islamic material), the polarization of Islamic boarding schools that apply the madrasa curriculum, to integrated Islamic educational institutions. This shows how much hope and participation the community has in preparing adequate learning facilities for the nation's generation, especially the Muslim community (Hasnida, 2017: 237-256).

Islamic Mass Organizations (Ormas) in Indonesia seek to contribute to the formation of Islamic colleges, both madrasas, schools, and Islamic boarding schools. One of them is the Islamic organization Al-Ittihadiyah, which was founded in East Sumatra on January 27, 1935. As one of the oldest Islamic organizations, Al-Ittihadiyah contributes to the struggle for the nation's independence, and prioritizes its charitable efforts in the fields of education, da'wah, and social work (Soiman, 2019).

Al-Ittihadiyah's gait in the field of education is quite slick. This can be seen from the establishment of significant Islamic madrasas (colleges), as well as the initial goal of its establishment, namely to unite the people, especially intellectuals and scholars who were

"fought against each other" by the Dutch colonialists. Most recently, Al-Ittihadiyah established the (first) higher education institution in the North Labuhanbatu area, named the Al-Ittihadiyah North Labuhanbatu School of Tarbiyah Sciences (STIT) in 2017.

Indeed, academic studies on the Islamic organization Al-Ittihadiyah, have been widely studied from various aspects by previous researchers. These include pre-reform ideology and movements (Rasyidin, 2018: 50-90), higher education curriculum (Assingkily, 2020: 62-77), learning at Al-Ittihadiyah institutions (Mardianto & Assingkily, 2021; Tamba, *et.al.*, 2020: 18-22; Mujib & Firmansyah, 2021: 1-11; Jusmiati, 2018; Isroiya, 2016: 29-54; Heny & Widodo, 2021; Haidir & Hizbullah, 2020: 187-195), education reform movement (Soiman, 2019: 200-217), Al-Ittihadiyah's response to radicalism (Nasution & Rasyidin, 2019: 1-35), development of da'wah (Ulwani, *et.al.*, 2021: 10-20; Rangkuti, 2018), leadership and management Al-Ittihadiyah educational institutions (Syafaruddin & Lubis, 2021; Faiqoh, 2019; Syafaruddin, *et.al.*, 2020: 311-334), education financing (Siahaan, *et.al.*, 2022: 152-161), non-profit activities academics (Lavenia, 2019: 13-16), organizational existence (Asrul, *et.al.*, 2019), and the development of Al-Ittihadiyah educational institutions (Mukmin, 2017: 1-23).

Observing the description above, information is obtained that relevant academic studies regarding the Islamic organization Al-Ittihadiyah have been studied around the themes of ideology, movement, the field of organizational business charity, learning and activities of educational institutions, to financing education at Al-Ittihadiyah educational institutions. The scientific distinction with this research lies in the effort to analyze the work of this organization in North Sumatra (since East Sumatra), based on the historical study of Islamic education approach. Summarized in the research title, "*Al-Ittihadiyah's Gait in Education in North Sumatra (Study of the History of Islamic Education)*".

B. METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method. The main sources of research were taken from books and scientific articles about the work of the Islamic Organization of Al-Ittihadiyah in the field of education in North Sumatra based on the historical study of Islamic education. Meanwhile, other sources are obtained from the final project (thesis, thesis, or dissertation), scientific proceedings, and other research. This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method. The main sources of research were taken from books and scientific articles about the work of the Islamic

Organization of Al-Ittihadiyah in the field of education in North Sumatra based on the historical study of Islamic education. Meanwhile, other sources are obtained from the final project (thesis, thesis, or dissertation), scientific proceedings, and other research (Assingkily, 2021). Furthermore, the validity of the data will be systematically tested using research data materials and sources.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. *Al-Ittihadiyah: Islamic Organization to Unite the Ummah*

The initial policy of the establishment of Al-Ittihadiyah was based on unifying efforts between the ulama and scholars/intellecuals in North Sumatra (formerly part of East Sumatra). This is based on preventive measures from the community against the rampant system of fighting against each other carried out by the Dutch colonial government. The Muslim community responded to this by establishing an Islamic organization known as Al-Ittihadiyah (Hayati, 2018: 133-144).

Al-Ittihadiyah etymologically (language), means unity (in a broad context, it is interpreted as unifying the ummah). This organization was founded by the scholars of East Sumatra, especially KH. Ahmad Dahlan (from Langkat), alumnus of Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt. The organization was founded on January 27, 1935 AD to coincide with 21 Shawwal 1353 H in Medan, North Sumatra (formerly part of the East Sumatra region). Established as an effort to unify the people both in terms of ethnicity and intellectuality.

The declaration of the establishment of Al-Ittihadiyah was carried out at the Zelfstanding Jong Islamiten Bond (JIB) Building, attended by a number of scholars and educated people (a total of 200 people). The attendees agreed to name the Muslim community with the aqidah ahlussunnah waljamaah as a unifier (unity), namely Al-Ittihadiyah. In fact, more than 100 people in attendance stated that they were willing to become members of Al-Ittihadiyah. Then, not long ago, received the blessing of the Sultan of the Deli Kingdom in Medan, with the following organizational structure: H. Ahmad Dahlan (as General Chair), Lasimun (as Young Chair I), M. Nasir (as Young Chair II), Abd . Hamid (as Secretary I), M. Syarif Siregar (as Secretary II), and Abdul Malik (as Treasurer) (Siddik & Ja'far, 2017: 18-19).

Next, the board of commissioners of the organization is filled by OK. Amran, H. Azhari, Tasman, M. Ali, Abd. Hamid, and Ismail. The organizational advisors are Mr. Shaykh Hasan Maksum and Shaykh Abdullah Afifuddin. Then, the Honorary Chair of the

organization, namely the Sultan of Deli (T. Otteman Sani Perkasa Alamsyah) and Sutan Sulaiman.

As stated in the initial statutes of the organization, the efforts undertaken include; (1) strengthen friendly relations among Muslims; (2) strive for the establishment of Islamic college houses; (3) organize and adjust the list of lessons in the houses of Al-Ittihadiyah colleges and houses of colleges that join Al-Ittihadiyah; (4) expanding the syiar and propaganda of Islam by holding tabligh-tabligh, commemorating with proper ceremonies commemorative days in the Islamic religion; (5) and other businesses that must and are lawful (Conferentie, 1941: 16).

According to Bakar (1960: 15), the efforts of the Al-Ittihadiyah organization include; (1) strengthen ukhuwah Islamiyah; (2) realize and expand the knowledge of Muslims; (3) expand and regulate Islamic universities, madrasas, and places of worship; (4) cooperate with other associations (which are not contrary to the Articles of Association of Al-Ittihadiyah), especially those based on Islam; and (5) other businesses in the economic, social and other fields, which do not conflict with Islamic law and state law. Referring to the description, it is understood that there were 2 (two) initial focuses of the organization as a business charity sector, namely the field of education and Islamic da'wah, while in the subsequent period it was further expanded with additional economic and social fields.

2. Al-Ittihadiyah Education Council: Improving the Quality and Quantity of Al-Ittihadiyah College

Education is one of the main areas of charity for the Al-Ittihadiyah organization. In fact, the people of East Sumatra at that time felt the presence of Al-Ittihadiyah with its various educational programs. This was based on the Dutch colonial government's policy of discriminating against indigenous people in access to education.

In the management of the education sector, Al-Ittihadiyah formed an assembly called the Tarbiyah Council which focuses on dealing with the education sector. After the independence era, the tarbiyah assembly changed its name to the Al-Ittihadiyah Education and Teaching Council. This assembly is in charge of managing education, teaching, and training at every level of the management of Al-Ittihadiyah. The existence of the assembly aims to be a means to be able to achieve the goals of establishing Al-Ittihadiyah (Siddik & Ja'far, 2017: 48).

Six years from the early establishment of Al-Ittihadiyah, the tarbiyah assembly has not been able to do much in improving the quality and quantity of education in the East

Sumatra Region. This is due to the role of "citizens of Al-Ittihadiyah" who are still in the organizational consolidation stage and resolving internal organizational problems. In fact, the organization (Al-Ittihadiyah) has managed a number of educational institutions, but not all of these institutions are managed purely by the organization. Thus, the founding foundations of educational institutions still have a big role to play and consider themselves to own these educational institutions.

This situation is a form of policy from the Al-Ittihadiyah organization internally, where in addition to educational institutions that are purely founded and managed by the organization, Al-Ittihadiyah also opens opportunities for educational institutions established by the community to join under the supervision of Al-Ittihadiyah. The terms and conditions for joining are (1) following the curriculum (list of lessons) determined by the organization; (2) adjust the religious understanding of the teachers with the religious understanding of the organization; (3) every educational institution wishing to join must add the name Al-Ittihadiyah after the name of the educational institution; (4) each educational institution must submit a predetermined deposit of funds to the Al-Ittihadiyah organization's treasury (Conferentie, 1941: 17, 24, 51).

Considering that Al-Ittihadiyah was an Islamic organization that was starting to grow at that time, a number of educational institutions that were previously managed by the community finally agreed to join the Al-Ittihadiyah organization by accepting the conditions determined by the organization. Entering the age of 25, Al-Ittihadiyah has managed educational institutions, both madrasas and schools.

According to Bakar (1960: 17) who was once entrusted as Chairman of the Education and Teaching Council of PB Al-Ittihadiyah, in 1960 Al-Ittihadiyah already had 177 madrasas consisting of Madrasah Tajhizi Al-Ittihadiyah, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Al-Ittihadiyah, Madrasah Tsanawiyah Al-Ittihadiyah, and Madrasah Tsanawiyah Al-Ittihadiyah. Ittihadiya, and Madrasah Qismul 'Aly Al-Ittihadiyah, in addition there are also 5 units of compulsory education madrasah, and 5 units of religious teacher education (PGA). In addition, Al-Ittihadiyah manages 21 public schools, 3 units of junior high school, and 1 unit of high school. The total number of students attending madrasas and Al-Ittihadiyah schools is 25,000 students.

3. *Establishing a Higher Education Institution*

Management of higher education institutions helps accelerate the preparation of cadres or the nation's generation. In addition, the higher education level serves students (students) in equipping themselves to face the world of work, even providing employment

opportunities. On this basis, Al-Ittihadiyah from the beginning has prepared the establishment of higher education institutions under the auspices of the organization.

On December 31, 1958, the Executive Board (PB) of Al-Ittihadiyah formed a higher education foundation under the name of the Institute of Islamic Religion Al-Ittihadiyah. Established in Medan, to be precise on Jalan Gedung Arca (the area around) Medan Teladan Stadium. The figures who have been rectors of the institute are H. Zainal Arifin Abbas and H. Sayuti Noor. Then, 2 figures who had served as Dean of the Tarbiyah Faculty at the Al-Ittihadiyah Islamic Institute, namely Drs. Siregar and Prof. Dr. Dja'far Siddik, M.A. However, the university has closed due to no longer being able to manage it.

After a long time there was no higher education institution operating under the management of Al-Ittihadiyah. Right in 2017, Al-Ittihadiyah returned to the khittah of its struggle in managing Islamic educational institutions, especially higher education levels. In the North Labuhanbatu area, the North Labuhanbatu Al-Ittihadiyah High School (STIT AILU) was established with 2 (two) excellent study programs, namely Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Teacher Education (PGMI) and Early Childhood Islamic Education (PIAUD).

The operational permit of this institution was marked by the issuance of the Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education Number 3371 of 2017 concerning the Permit to Open the Al-Ittihadiyah Labuhanbatu Utara School of Tarbiyah Science (STIT). In addition, to improve the quality and scientific publications among the campus community, there are 3 (three) scientific journals and 1 (one) proceedings managed by STIT Al-Ittihadiyah Labuhanbatu Utara, namely Al-Fatih Journal, Bunayya Journal, and Yatalattof Journal.

Based on the description above, it is understood that in addition to managing primary and secondary educational institutions, Al-Ittihadiyah also manages universities, namely the Al-Ittihadiyah Islamic Institute as of 1958 (although it was closed), and the Al-Ittihadiyah Islamic College (STIT). North Labuhanbatu as of 2017. Thus, in the historical record of the establishment of Al-Ittihadiyah, it has managed 2 universities, with the status of 1 university which is still active until now.

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that Al-Ittihadiyah's role in education in North Sumatra (formerly part of East Sumatra) was very large. This is indicated by (1) the initial policy of the establishment of Al-Ittihadiyah which was based on unifying efforts between the ulama and scholars in North Sumatra; (2) Al-Ittihadiyah

education council which focuses on establishing Islamic (educational) colleges under the auspices of Al-Ittihadiyah (starting from Kindergarten level to High School level/equivalent); and (3) Establishing higher education institutions.

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