

Spiritual Education of Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari's: Implications for Religious Character Education

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Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari is a scholar who has extensive and in-depth knowledge, he gives a lot of thoughts and views in educating the people; until now his thoughts remain in the local, regional, national and even international community. The view of Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari: Education is a learning process to educate the community, so that people avoid ignorance. This article aims to describe the perspective of spiritual and religious education of Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari. The method used is descriptive qualitative with the hermeneutic method. The results found that the focus of Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari's education was to overcome the weakness of faith, and to make a prosperous society physically and mentally, save the world and the hereafter with a group and assembly learning system, observance of worship, building self-awareness through strategy and education bil hal, bil lisan and bil kitab.

Key words: *Spiritual Education, Religious Education, Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari.*

Introduction

Humans are given the freedom to choose and determine their actions in using HIS gifts properly and correctly for the sake of better preparation for their future. This freedom makes humans to have the responsibility to manage themselves, families, societies, and nations. Humans also have *Word Vision* in managing various sources, both human resources or natural resources, for their present and later wellbeing and prosperity. Here, a human is a creature whose hopes or expectations, according to Tilaar, (2012), and has a future. The existence of humans with expectations in this world is essentially with creative expectations.



Each human has the thought and ability to solve his present and later life problems by empowering his given thought by Allah SWT. Thought is a means to respond life phenomena properly and accordingly to *sunatullah*, it is a mental function to think and reason as well as to create notions so they could find solution and rational answers toward a current or later problems. Schunk, (2012) explained that the emergence of thinking processes through thought and ideas are products of creative thinking activities.

Creativity and productivity of humans will emerge naturally as long as such an individual wants to learn and think for his better life and the days to come. Learning is a thinking process producing behaviours, attitudes, and innovative and creative masterpieces (Sanusi, 2015). For learning and thinking, the human seeks knowledge through various learning sources, such as teachers, books, schools, *majelis*, and the library. Learning sources could be textbooks, research reports, articles, experts, the professional publication (daily, weekly, and monthly), Internet, audiovisual media (TV, video, audio cassette), and environments (nature, society, culture, art, technique, industry, and economy) (Rohman & Sofan, 2013).

During learning promotion and critical thinking processes to educate, there is a certain system and education strategy. In an educational system, it is regulated by the constitution and regulation the (National Educational System Constitution number 20 the Year 2003), about national education purposes; Chapter 2, Article 3, explains that national education is done to foster character and civilise national civilisation to educate the life of the nation. Then, it must develop learners' potencies to be a faithful human, to have *Taqwato* the Almighty, to have valuable characters, to be healthy, to be creative, independent, reliable, and to be democratic and responsible citizens. From the explanation, it could be interpreted that national education is conducted in an effort to educate learners and to create educated, faithful and *Taqwacitizens* toward the Almighty so they foster valuable characters. Chapter 4, Article 13, states that educational lines consist of formal (school), informal (family), and non-formal (society) educations.

Religious education actually focuses on applying educational patterns and methods by focusing on the search for truth that is absolute, in order to avoid relative worldly knowledge (Ouellet, 1985; Warnick & Fooce, 2007). Religious education is often disputed or equated with the term spiritual education, because some people always consider it part of cultural values and products (Rossiter, 2011b, 2011a). Spirituality is more inclined to lead to emotional insights related to experiences relating to the world outside of humans, while religion is more specific to the human relationship with God (Reck, 2012; Yob, 2011). Religion is always identified with the identity or character of a religion in behaving and solving social problems (Tiew & Drury, 2012; Walshe & Teece, 2013). This refers to the religious education pattern of each religion which will give birth to a certain behavioural identity that reflects religious teachings.



Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari is a thinker and educator as well as a writer who is proven from his works. His famous works in educating society are the *syabilalmuhtadin* book. This book can still be learned and used as a reference as well as used as a *word vision* for society, especially Borneo citizens even Singaporean, Malaysian, Filipino, and Thai. The greatest works of his thought and point of view: to educate society within an educational perspectives which are *output* and *outcome* from his studying in Mecca and Medina for 30 years. He learned with the experts in various science disciplines. Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari learned *Tasawuf* with his teacher, Saiyidul 'Arif Billah Syekh Muhammad bin Abd. KarimAs - Saman Al Madani (Daudi, 2003). His creativity and productivity in educating society are works and point of views conducted by him. They are important to review within the educational perspective because various perspectives and thoughts conducted by him are full of educational values, as efforts to educate family and society. Therefore, the values could be transferred through generations as preparations in facing life to be much better and to bring a gifted life, *rahmatanlilalamin*, both in this world and the days to come, physically and mentally.

Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari is a theologian with intelligence and perspective as well as care toward the development of society and faith in a certain believed religion. Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari was born in LokGabang, son of both a pious woman and man named queen Aminah and Abdullah, Thursday evening, at 3 in the morning, Shafar 15, 1122 Hijria, or Thursday, March 19, 1710 AD. Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari studied for 30 years in Mecca and Medina. He also learned in Egypt (Daudi, 2003). During learning, he studied many sciences, such as *fiqh*, theology, *tasawub*, and *tariqat*. Dealing with *tariqat*, he is famous by Syamarniah tariqat. He learned with Syekh Seman Al Madani in Medina who is famous in Banjar as a theologian due to taking it in order from a teacher to a teacher, and from theologians, such as Al Alamah Al Fadil Syekh Muhammad Zaini Bin Abdul Gani in Martapura, Syekh Akhmad Hodari in Melayu village, Martapura.

Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari learned various sciences from the real experts in their expertise, such as Alimul'allama Syekh Athailah bin Akhmad Al Mishry, Al Azhary in Mecca, Alimul'allamah Syekh Muhammad bin Sulaiman Al-Kurdie in Medina, Sayyidul'arif Billah Syekh Muhammad bin AbdKarim Al Qadiri, Al Hasani, Asy-Syahirbis-Samman Al-Madani in Medina. The works of Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari's thought and perspective are books, such as: *Usuluddin*, *Luqthatul'ajlan*, *Fara-idh*, *Tuhfaturraghibien*, *KazulMari'fah*, *SabilalMuhtadin*. *SabilalMuhtadin* book was written by Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari who spread and reviewed from various societies both local, national, and international, such as Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Philippines, Thailand, even Africa.

His debut in education to educate family, society, and kingdom in his era gave the meaning of life in family and society, such as by having *majelis* or recitation in a village around the

Martapura municipal area. Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari was given land to be used as a new village for a religious education centre. He also often preached from village to village as an effort to educate society to be faithful, strong, and correct persons (Daudi, 2003). Daudi also said that Syekh Muhammad Arsyad also went preaching to all levels of society, from the common level people to the nobles. He also provided education for both children, wife, and his inner family covering religion, reading, and writing. Thus, it could lead to the birth of several theologians and authors. It also improved society's condition of dealing with faith in the believed religion (Islam). Heretofore, for Banjar citizens, they tended to use Syekh Arsyad's book as guidance in socialising and religiously living, especially dealing with *fiqh*, *theology*, and *tareqat* (Samaniyah).

Education is an effort in developing and growing positive potency of the learners, such as psychomotor and affective aspects instead of focusing on the cognitive aspect only (Buseri, 2004). Education is really important to create a competitive generation and to strengthen character or *aqidah* in living a more challenging life which is full of faith challenges and stupidity as well as reliable skills. If they are weak in education, the impacts will lead to poverty, stupidity, weak faith, and corrupted character. Education is essentially a life maturing process. It is expected to be able to understand the meaning of life by focusing on character fostering and logic, mentality, character, and faith maturity for a better life quality (Mulyasana, 2011). Education provides intelligence changes as the principle of individuals to act in a family, community, and general society. Education is an effort to make people aware of how to act (Tilaar, 2015). Thus, it creates dialectics toward action objectively and totally in a society in which the individual lives.

Educational systems that build religious character must be built on an appropriate ecological and environmental basis (Conroy, 2016; Philip Barnes & Felderhof, 2014). Public belief or belief in the values of a teaching becomes the basis for determining the choice of values such as what must be taught in every process, and material and educational curriculum (Hand, 2015; Yilmaz & Gurler, 2014). Humanist values are also an important reason to determine whether the values taught will have a large influence on change and development, and even preserve local wisdom (Aldridge, 2015, 2018). This is important because this kind of disruption is the skill of making choices the key to success (Zamroni, Hanurawan, Muslihati, Hambali, & Hidayah, 2020).

The system, according to Ludwing (Rochaety, Potjorini, & Yanti, 2005) is defined as the most correlated and influential elements within a certain environment. System can be defined as a set of several influential components that have each function from one to another and have the same objectives (Murtono, Santoso, Utamningsih, & Hartani, 2020; Rohman & Sofan, 2013). The system is a process to achieve objectives by the support of each component of a system along with its roles and functions. Thus, the process of a system will run



effectively, efficiently, and productively. Education, seen from this system perspective, is an educational system that has several components of the system, levels, and channels. The components are teacher, students, media, materials, methods, and evaluation. Dealing with the educational level, they are primary, middle, and high schools. Meanwhile, dealing with channels or scopes, they are formal, informal, and non-formal educations. Formal education is promoted on certain locations regularly, systematically, within a manner of levels, periodically. Informal education is the first and primary education given within a family is next (Ahmadi & Uhbiyati, 2015). Non-formal education is an education in society.

In achieving an educational purpose, there is a need for serial activity through strategies with a certain supportive system to achieve the purpose optimally. To achieve educational purpose well, there is a need for a better-formulated strategy (Kurniawan & Hamdani, 2000). The educational process to achieve educational purposes had dominant influential factors in managing the strategy, they were: planning, coordinating, controlling, and evaluating the strategies in realising the conducive situation and condition to promote learning (Anwar, 2016). Conducive situations will encourage students actively in developing their potencies, such as spiritual, emotional, character, intelligence, valuable behaviour, and skills needed personally, socially, and nationally and could develop well based on their growing stage. Thus, their lives will be better, useful, and meaningful for both in this world and the days to come. Strategy *is a process that combines major interrelated activities: strategic analysis, strategy formulation, and strategy implementation* (Dess & Miller, 1993). It is also in line with John Andrew Pearce and Ricard Benjamin Robinson (Kurniawan & Hamdani, 2000) that strategy is a review of decision and action to achieve purposes.

The most concerning elements of an activity to be more effective, efficient, and productive in achieving the purpose of education are purpose, policy and plan, which are the stages of activity. Dess & Miller (1993) in his book Strategic Management wrote that there were several elements: (a) *goals*, (b) *policies*, and (c) *plans*.

Method

This hermeneutic research reviewed several manuscripts of the books written by Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari; the articles were written by previous scholars, and the books were written by Judges of Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari which and were crosschecked by an interview with the judges who still live in DalamPagar village, Martapura. The reviewed sources were from books written by Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari; literature reviews, articles of the previous scholars, and interviews with the judges as well as the surrounding features who were considered reliable and eligible concerning with the field, were made by Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari.

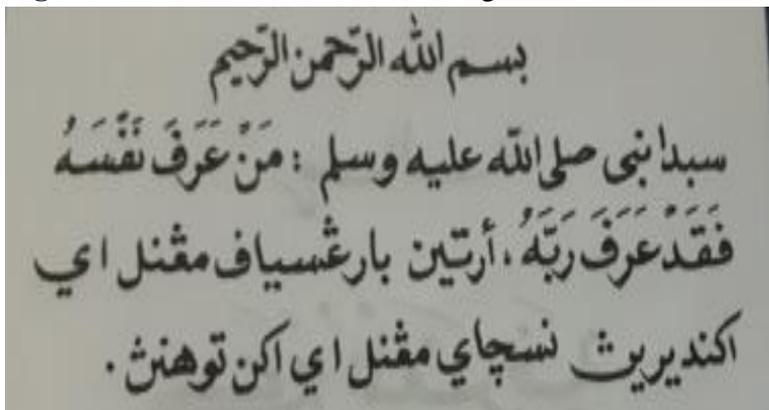
The data was obtained from several kinds of literary works both written directly by Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari (books), previous scholars' studies, and interview results. The data were grouped based on the purposes to reveal what had been done to the educational system, and the strategy perspective of Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari in educating the society (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; William R. Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2001). The grouped data were reviewed comprehensively both by using literature and comprehensive interviews. Then, they were interpreted to get the meaning, so the content of the values describing the strategies to educate society could be obtained.

Findings and Discussion

Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari's Point of Views

An individual's word vision deals with how the individual responds to the challenges of the word by all of his attitudes, behaviours, and perceptions with life principles. Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari's point of view about life deals with recognition toward the individual's God. It is done by self-recognition and adhering to do his command and to stay away to his prohibition as what is stated in his book - *KanzulMarifat* with theological principle coming from the prophet, Muhammad SAW's hadst: "*Man aranafsahupakatarabbahu*". This means anyone who recognises himself, will recognise his God. The results were:

Figure 1. Statement about Self-Recognition

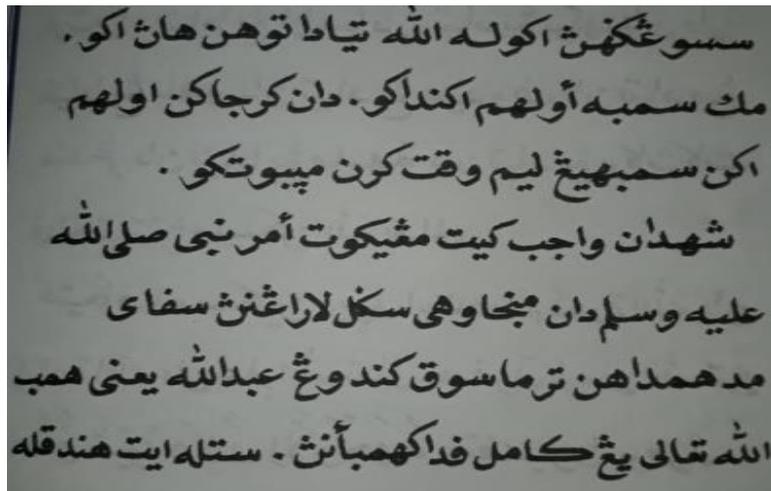


Based on figure 1, the means in the era when he delivered his theological values, Tanjung Rema society had *animism* beliefs. It is a belief upon something, such as tree or location which can provide advantages and disadvantages toward humans instead of believing in Allah SWT. Dealing with belief, the realisation covers providing or giving meals, based on the judge participants' information. In the *Kanzul Marifat* book, written by Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari, it states three things to be understood to recognise God: 1)

knowing what was initially created by Allah SWT, 2) refraining himself from both dominations, will, science, life, hearing, vision, speech, and 3) believing that Allah SWT always knows everything.

Syekh Muhammad Arsyad also reminded the obligation to follow every command and to recognise the prohibition of Allah SWT and His prophet, such as:

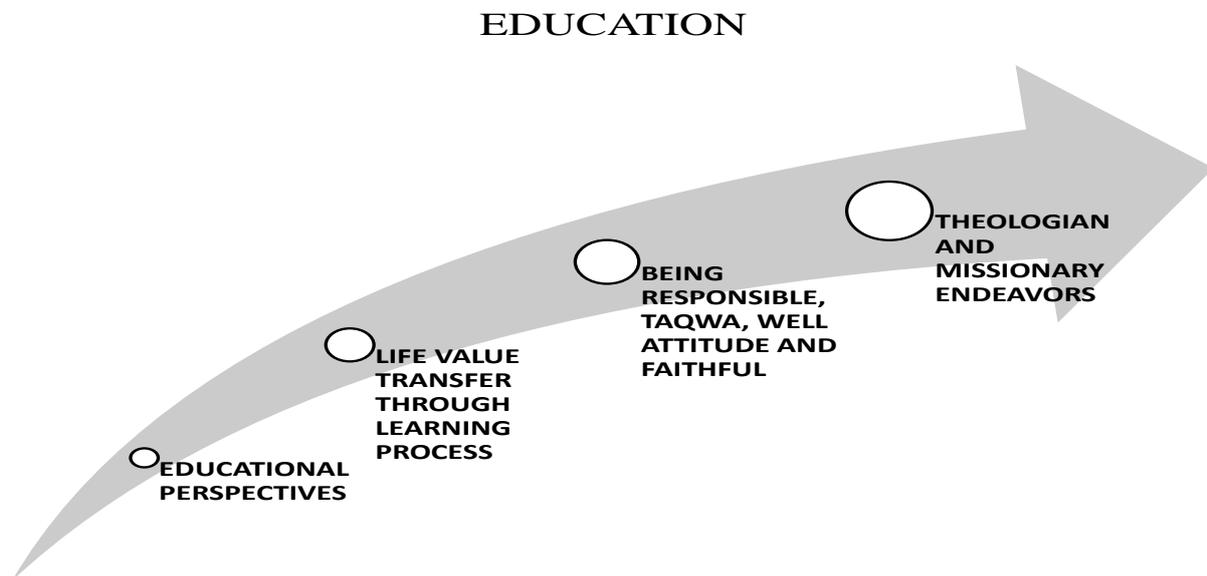
Figure 2. Reminder to Keep Praying/Worshipping



From the findings in the book, interviews, and observation results of the point of view, they could be interpreted as that education is something fostering awareness about responsibility toward the Creator, Allah SWT, by doing His command and staying away from His prohibitions so they will be free from stupidity, character, and faith digressions. It is in line with national education purposes as written in Constitution, Number 20. The year 2003, about National Education System, Article 3, “National education functions to develop capability and foster character as well as a dignified civilisation to educate the national life, to develop learners’ potencies to be faithful and *Taqwa* individuals to the Almighty, to have valuable characters, to be reliable, creative, healthy, independent, knowledgeable, and democratic plus responsible citizens. It also goes for educational research findings”. Education creates faithful, knowledgeable and good deed humans, plus providing an opportunity for each human to do activities based on the religion guidelines (Qamariyah, 2016; Wajidi, 2016).

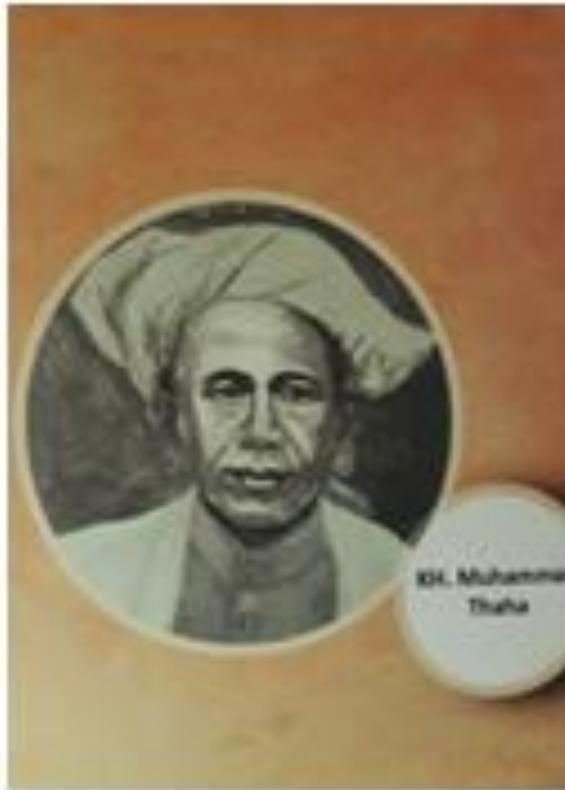
For a clearer explanation of Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari’s point of view, it could be interpreted as follow.

Figure 3. Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari's Point of views



His point of view about education is life value transfers by believing to Allah SWT and His prophet, Muhammad SAW, through the learning process or habituation in conducting His command and keeping away from His prohibition as written in *KanzulMarifat*. Through this theological value transfers, a process of fostering new behaviour of a student or society realises into responsibility dealing with his position as a creature of Allah SWT. Thus, in worship, he only has one intention to do His command and His prophet's commands. The result of this education and learning process done by Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari was the emergence of several religious figures and societies, such as Syekh Abdul SyamAdTambilahan, and KH. Muhammad Thaha (BanjarBaru Museum), whose valuable teaching could be observed in the present day within the behaviours of society, such as Syekh Muhammad Zaini bin Abdul Gani. He was known as *guru sekumpul*. During giving a sermon, he always reminded his congregation to remember the *datu's* message or to imitate his behaviours.

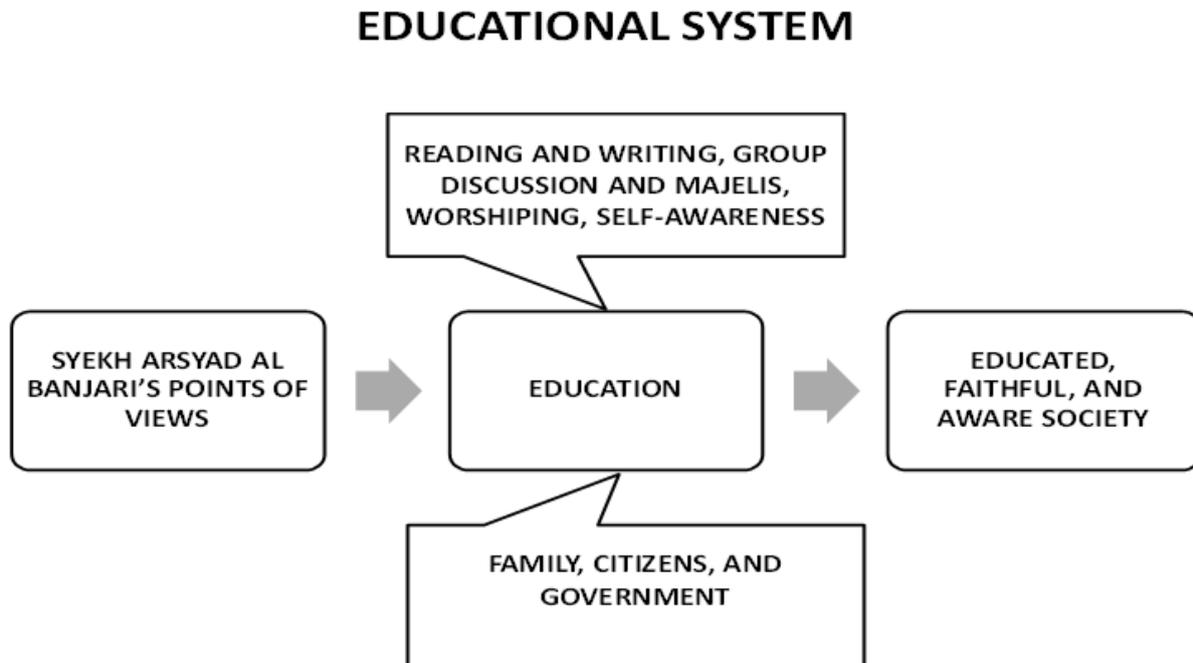
Figure 4. KH. Muhammad Thaha



Qadhi Jafri bin Qadhi Abdusshamad bin Mufti Haji Jamaluddin bin Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari, Qadhi Jafri passed away on Wednesday, Jumadil Akhir 16, 1334 hijr/April 20, 1916 AD. His mother named Hj. Markamahbinti H. Martaib, was a descendant of Dayak Bakumpai. As a religious figure and a daughter in law of Demang Bakumpai, her grave is in Qadhi' Jafricemetry.

Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari's Educational System

Figure 5. Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari's Educational System



His system given to DalamPagar society at that time consisted of several realisations:

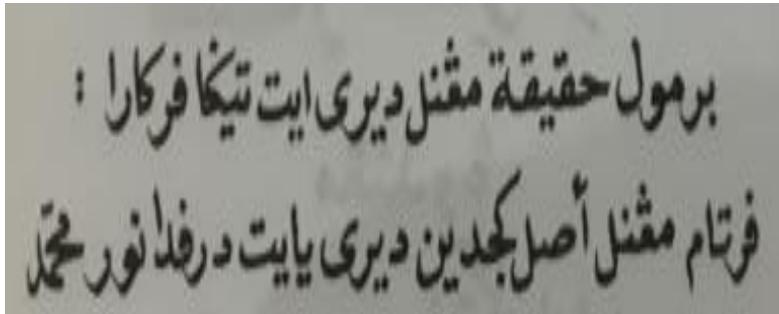
a. Reading - Writing Competencies

Reciting Al-Qur'an in every activity and religious behaviour for both obligated or *Sunnah* worships, such as praying, fasting, *zakat*, and pilgrim to Mecca are important. Thus, a student should be able to recite Al-Qur'an, to facilitate the learning done by Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari in DalamPagar village. Heretofore, reciting Al-Qur'an has been developing well from house to house or among educational institutions, such as Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari's Islamic boarding house in DalamPagar village.

b. Self-Awareness Competences

In this psychological education aspect, the learning process is done through instilling self-concepts, such as self-recognition and self-originality. Through these concepts done in the learning, Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari, one had developed a belief in Allah SWT.

Figure 6. Self-Awareness Competencies by Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari in Self-Recognition



His Arabic - Malay written book was taught for his students. Among them, there was **Kanzul Marifat**, written in Arabic - Malay language and an Arabic letter to assert the explanation as to the principles and basic argumentation of Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari in his books.

Figure 7. Al-Qur'an with Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari's Handwriting



c. Learning Process

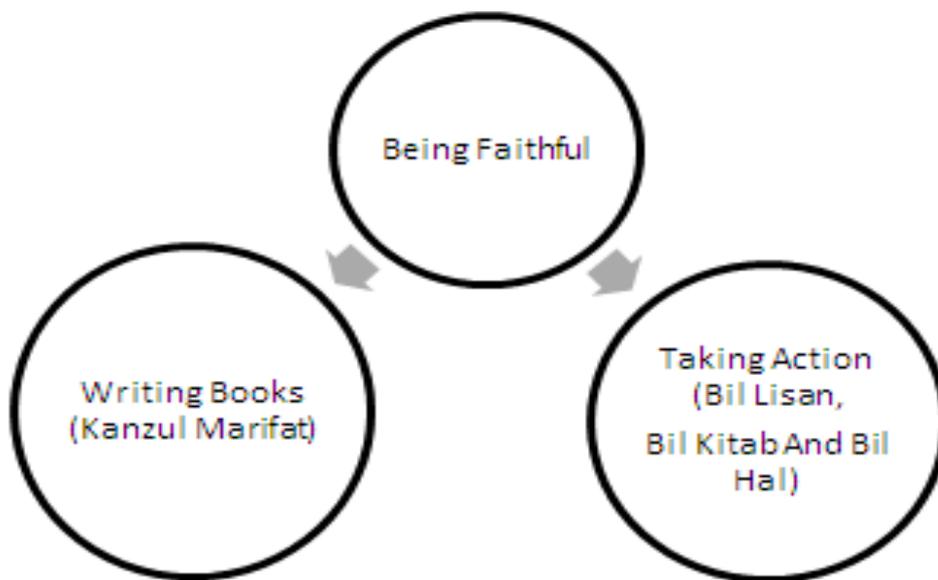
The learning process is done through Halaqah (group discussion) or *majelis* both in Mosques, Musalla, Praying place, or Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari's house, especially for his grandchildren, families, and friends, who might be used to stay for several days during learning with him.

d. Learning Materials

The emphasis of the learning process is to make the students obedient in praying so that they will be saved in this world and the days to come. The other emphasis is to realize *haram* and *Sunnah* laws which influence social life. Back then, when the people worshipped spirits on the giant trees by providing meals, made Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari write the book. It was to remind the people to not be trapped and misled in worship to Allah SWT.

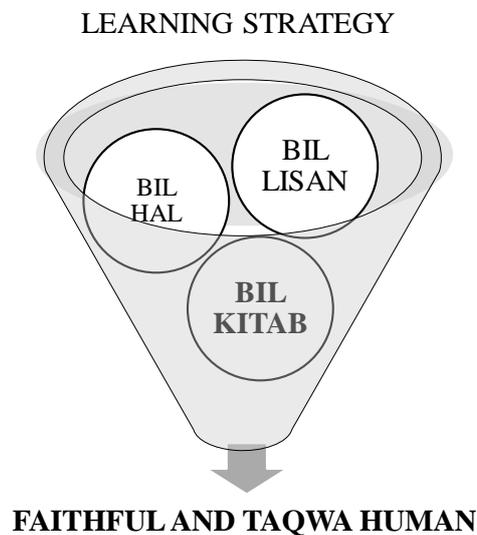
Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari's Educational Strategy

Figure 8. The Strategy Elements



The educational purpose by Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari is to foster faithful human activity toward Allah SWT, as delivered by the Prophet, Rasullullah Muhammad SAW. It was done by writing a book named *Kanzul Marifat*, during the era of a misleading age. Thus, for him, it was important to be corrected by learning the book and starting to recognise themselves. The behavioural strategy policies in conducting his educational mission were done on three learning models: 1) *Bil Lisan*, 2) *Bil Kitab*, and 3) *Bil Hal* as described below.

Figure 9. Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari's Educational System



- a. Bil Lisan (By speech) is a learning strategy as an effort to achieve the educational purpose by missionary endeavour from one village to another village. It was done to instil religious belief orally as revealed in Madani reading. It was revealed that after he arrived from Mecca, the first thing he did was hold a recitation named DalamPagar. Then, it continuously became a very crowded village to study the Islamic religion. Many great theologians nowadays are from Banjar, the graduates of DalamPagar village. ¹
- b. Bil Kitab (by writing) is a learning strategy done by Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari to be used as a reference for social recitation studied within the family and social environment to comprehend religious matters and as an effort to achieve faithful and *Taqwah* human toward Allah SWT. It becomes a good life of character personally, in the family, and socially. The books written by him have been always reviewed and studied by Islamic students from various Islamic boarding houses or dormitories in Southern Borneo and around Borneo. Its event goes internationally, such as sabilal muhtadin which reaches Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Brunei. As revealed by AfrizaHanifa/Red: Damanhuri in her article posted on Repunlika.co.id, Thursday, 11 Ramadhan 1440 / 16 May 2019, it could be understood that the book does not only reach Borneo. It is also welcomed by Javanese citizens. In Jakarta, at that time named Batavia, Al-Banjari's educational system was accepted enthusiastically. ²
- c. Bil Hal (by doing) is learning strategy by providing example or practice, such as reading Al-Qur'an and learning how to pray, which are obligations of each Islamic person. It functions as the pillar of the religion and it makes Islam differ from any other religion.

¹ <https://www.bacaanmadani.com/2017/09/biografi-dan-peran-muhammad-arsyad-al.html>

² <https://www.republika.co.id/berita/dunia-islam/khazanah/13/07/18/mq3twd-muhammad-arsyad-albanjari-sang-matahari-agama-dari-kalimatan>

Implication to Religious Character Education Development

The spirit of religious education of Sheikh Arsyad Al Banjary gave birth to important values in the religious character of the Indonesian people, like the character of GUSJIGANG by Sayyid Ja`far Sodiq in Kudus (Zamroni, 2016) and RMP Sosrokartono with his spiritual education (Zamroni, Ristiyani, Ulya, Ismaya, & Ahsin, 2019). He also emphasised the personal construction of the Makrifat which always tried to put his trust in God in every problem that occurred. This spirit is the basis for the process of strengthening and developing religious character in the education system in Indonesia (Antonio, Laela, & Alhadi, 2020; Gilmore, 2018; Richards, Bartz, & O'Grady, 2009; Stern, 2018).

Cultural issues that often arise in the development of students' religious character serve as an important reference for developing an equitable education system (Espinoza & Maddix, 2018; L. J. Gallagher, 2018; S. E. Gallagher et al., 2017). The paradigm must be fundamental to the religious philosophy of the basic theory of what humans are capable of in terms of universal value, whatever religion is adopted (Gearon, 2018; Johannessen & Skeie, 2019). Therefore, the important teachings of Shaykh Arsyad Al Banjari that must continue to be explored and strengthened are democratic values, self-awareness and obligation as gods in relation to fellow beings, with the universe and with Allah SWT.

Shaykh Arsyad's educational patterns should not only be taught in the community environment within the fence, but must be generalised to be taught in the levels of primary, secondary to tertiary education (Okunoye, 2019). The next challenge is how to translate religion, not only as a ritual but truly pervasive in every day-to-day behaviour of the community both within the Fence and the Indonesian Nation in general (Adams, 2014; Hadisantoso et al., 2020; Paape, 2020). The next research is expected to be able to find educational reformulations that are in accordance with Shaykh Arsyad Al Banjary but capable of universal value for all elements of society.

Conclusion

Education is a learning process in educating people to avoid stupidity (illiterate) and weak faith, so human life will not be prosperous physically and mentally, and to be saved in this world and the days to come, by teaching the social skills to read and write, learn in a group and *majelis*, worship obediently, have self-awareness through Bil Hal, BilLisan, and BilKitab education. Subsequent research must be able to formulate a very strong character education system with religious values that have been taught by Shaykh Arsyad Al Banjary to be generally applicable to all Indonesians.



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