Model of strategies in developing Islamic thought through curriculum: a study of Sumatra Thawalib 1900-1942

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Abstract

This paper describes the models of strategies for developing of Islamic thoughts through curriculum discovered by Sumatera Thawalib. Sumatera Thawalib is the study centre of development of Islamic thought in Sumatera. The study uses a historical approach and covers the history during 1900 to 1942. The study centre is well known as part of modern Islamic movement. However, its strategy in thought development is not linear with the strategy of modern Islamic movement. In practical, Thawalib is in line with the model of neo-modern strategy. The developing of Thawalib Islamic thought does not necessarily lead Thawalib scholars to invalidate the works of classical scholars. However, the thought leads them to appreciate and posits the works of classical scholars as a guidance to scaffold students’ thought to be more rational and dynamic. Thawalib strategy has proven that it gives significant contribution to the development of reforming Islamic thought in Indonesia.

Makalah ini menjelaskan model strategi untuk mengembangkan pemikiran Islam melalui kurikulum yang dikembangkan oleh Sumatera Thawalib.

Keywords: Sumatera Thawalib; Development of thoughts; Neo-modern; Kaum Muda; Kaum Tua

Introduction

The period from 1900 to 1942 has a special significant contribution for the history of Islam in Southeast Asia. Deliar Noer contends that the recent role of Islam in Indonesia can be traced primarily from that period.\(^1\) During that period, an important event in Indonesia is the emergence of the reformation movement in the fields of kalam (theology) and fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) through formal educational institutions. This movement is driven by several factors including the syncretic nature of Islam in Indonesia, the inefficiency of religious education and the orientalists’ negative perspectives about Islam.\(^2\)

This paper focuses on the Sumatera Thawalib in Minangkabau. This area has been an important site for the dissemination of reformists’ ideas to other regions. The Padang Modernists or Youth Modernists emerge in

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Model of strategies in developing Islamic thought through curriculum: ... (Muh. Saerozi)

this area. Burhanuddin Daya argues that Sumatera Thawalib has contributed to the country and religion. Sidi Ibrahim Boechari appreciates Thawalib as an institution with a distinctive style that bring about significant modernization in Sumatra. Moreover, Arif subhan explicates that Sumatra Thawalib is an important and perhaps the most influential institution in reformation movement of Islamic education in Minangkabau. Similarly, Van der Plas in Taufik Abdullah recognizes Thawalib in 1928 as “a very high quality and contradictive education system compared with the old one. It is not based on learning by heart but on thinking and comprehension”.

The subject matters of Thawalib’s trademarks are kalam (theology), fiqh, tafsir, hadith, and Arabic grammar. This paper explores Thawalib’s strategy in developing textbooks curriculum used in teaching those subjects. The exploration is intended to answer the following questions; How Thawalib posits the classic textbooks in their curriculum? How Thawalib socialises the reformists’ thought in their curriculum? What model of strategies is implemented in developing Islamic thought through their curriculum? What are the implications of Thawalibs’ strategy?

To answer those questions, the writer uses primary, secondary and tertiary data including Thawalib magazines, textbooks, books of Thawalib leaders and other relevant books. According to Kuntowijoyo, this historical account will contribute to both scholarly theoretical discourse and

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3 Deliar Noer, Gerakan Modern..., 36.
7 Taufik Abdullah, School and Politics The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatra, New York: Cornell University, 1971, 58.
practical discourse of Islamic thoughts.\textsuperscript{8}

This study on Thawalib is not the first one. Burhanuddin Daya in his introduction chapter has enlisted some papers discussing different aspects of Sumatera Thawalib.\textsuperscript{9} However, this paper strives to contribute different information about Thawalib from the aspect of strategy models for development of Islamic thoughts through Thawalib’s curriculum.

The encouragement of literature development

Prior to the 20\textsuperscript{th} Century, Indonesian religious education is carried out under the leadership of Kyais, modin or Lebai (religious leaders). They will conduct religious gatherings in Langgar or Surau (a place to offer prayer that is smaller than a mosque), in the mosque or in their own house. The themes of these gatherings are congruent with their traditional religious understanding. According to Hurgronje, students firstly learn to read Qur’an. Their study focuses mainly on reading and memorizing Qur’an instead of understanding its content or meaning.\textsuperscript{10}

Having finished reading the Qur’an, some of them will move on to study classical books. This study takes place at langgar or pesantren (religious boarding school).\textsuperscript{11} At this level, the first lesson for students is Arabic language as this language is used in the classical books.

Students will spend around six months to six years or more on their study of Arabic grammar depending on the Kyai and students’ capacity.\textsuperscript{12} Hurgonje says that students learn Arabic grammar in order to understand important books on Islam, including books of law (fiqh).\textsuperscript{13} After the

\textsuperscript{9} Burhanuddin Daya, Gerakan Penbaharuan..., 14-15.
\textsuperscript{11} Mahmud Junus, Sejarah Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia, Jakarta: Mutiara, 1957, 41.
\textsuperscript{12} Karel A. Steenbrink, Pesantren..., 14.
\textsuperscript{13} C. Snouck Hurgronje, Kumpulan Karangan..., 35.
students are considered to have accomplished their study of Arabic grammar, they move on to study books of fiqh, tawḥīd (theology), ṭūsūl al-Dīn (fundamentals of religion) and tafsīr (Quranic exegesis). These subjects are prerequisites for taking other supplementary subjects such as Sufism, hadīth, hisāb (mathematics), or fałaq (astronomy). Those Islamic books written in Arabic are perceived to be more authoritative than those written in Malay.

In Java, Pesantrens tend to use classical Arabic books while those in Minangkabau prefer books written in Malay. Surau/langgar (a place to offer prayer that is smaller than a mosque) in Malay areas use books written by Malay scholars. The difference is in the level of understandability since there are many productive scholars in Aceh who write about Islam in Malay before the 20th century. Some of their works are translation versions of Arabic books but some others contain compilations from multiple books. Teaching on Islamic jurisprudence tends to refer to the literature of the Syafi‘i school but not refer to the works of al-Shaf‘i.

The Competence of the Kyais in Arabic is gained from their educational background in Arabic. Some of them even pursue their education in Mecca which is the center of Islamic education in the 19th century. At that time, Mecca is the center of trans-national Islamic study. Azyumardi

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14 Karel A. Steenbrink, Pesantren..., 14.
15 C. Snouck Hurgronje, Kumpulan Karangan..., 21, 29.
16 Sidi Ibrahim Bukhari, Pengaruh Timbal Balik..., 73.
18 Deliar Noer, Gerakan Modern Islam..., 11.
19 Karel A. Steenbrink, Pesantren..., 18. The tradition of Indonesian Muslims visiting the Hejaz for pilgrimage or study began in the 17th century. Some lived in Mecca for several years, and some eventually settled there. After the mid-19th century, the number of pilgrims from Indonesia increased rapidly. In 1852 some 413 people went on pilgrimage, and the number increased to 12,985 in 1853 to 1858. See M. Shaleh Putuhena, Historiografi Haji Indonesia, Yogyakarta: LKIS, 2007, 127.
Azra asserts that in beginning of the 17th century, scholars in Mecca and Medina come from a big number of countries. Scholars and students come from peripheral regions including Indonesia, Africa and China. 

In the second half of the 19th century, the tradition of Indonesian Muslim visiting Hejaz remains. Some of them spend their time establishing a sense of brotherhood with Moslems from other countries. As result, they become well known scholars in and outside their home country. They are also believed to have competency both in Islam and in politics.

Among them, there is Syeikh Ahmad Khatib (1860-1916 AD) from Minangkabau. He follows al-Syafi’i in fiqh and theologically he is an Ash’arite. However, he is against the tarekat (Sufi path). Khatib allows his students to read Muhammad Abduh’s writings including al’Urwah al-Wuthqā magazine and Tafsīr al-Manār.

Some students of Syeikh Ahmad Khatib follow Muhammad Abduh thoughts but others do not. For those who disagree with Syeikh Ahmad Khatib’s thoughts are known as Kaum Muda (the Young Group). Most of them come from West Sumatra including Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah (HAMKA) and Haji Abdullah Ahmad. For those who are in line with Syeikh Ahmad Khatib are called Kaum Tua (the Old Group). They become the defenders of traditional Islam (the Islam adat). Kaum Tua and Kaum Muda have the same idea concerning the urgency of education and freedom but they are different on how to purify tawhīd (the oneness of God) which literature to accept and the role of ijtihad. Eventually, those differences affect the educational literature.

21 Burhaduddin Daya, Gerakan Pembaharuan..., 7-8.
23 HAMKA, Pengaruh Muhammad Abduh Di Indonesia, Djakarta: Tintamas, 1961, 10.
Kaum Muda indirectly are influenced by Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida with regard to educational reformation. They are also indirectly influenced by Jamaluddin al-Afghani regarding the anti-colonial political movement. However, Kaum muda (the Young Group) do not adopt entirely the Middle Eastern reformers’ thoughts. They have consideration to local coalitions to develop movement strategies. Therefore, they modify the movement’s format. They also continue the transmission through Al-Imam magazine in Singapore and al-Munir in Padang. Among them, there are the founders of Sumatera Thawalib such as Haji Abdullah Ahmad (1878-1933) in Padang Panjang, Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah (1875-1945) in Padang Panjang, Haji Muhammad Thaib Umar (1874-1920) in Batu Sangkar and Haji Ibrahim Musa (1884-1963) in Parabek.

Strategy models of Thawalib

The main goal of Thawalib is to help students’ progress and become knowledgeable and skillfull for the shake of their prosperity both in this world and hereafter. The subject matters taught at Sumatera Thawalib related mainly to religious knowledge. According to Mahmud Junus, the textbooks of Thawalib are carried out gradually from the lowest to highest grades. The adjustment in teksbooks reflects Thawalib strategy for reforming Islamic thought. In order to highlight the significance of the change in curriculum, my analysis will base on Brockelmann’s “Geschichte Der Arabischen Literature,” published in 1938, as an addition to Mahmud Junus’ information.

27 Taufik Abdullah, School and Politics..., 61.
28 Mahmud Junus, Sejarah Pendidikan Islam..., 75, 153. HAMKA, Ajahkan..., 41.
In order to find strategy models of Thawalib, the writer adopts theory models of Islamic thought stated by Muhamimin.\textsuperscript{29} According to Muhaimin there are four different models of Islamic thoughts. The first one is the Salafist textualist model. It tries to understand textually the Quran and Sunnah without regard for the concrete situations or the dynamics of Muslim communities in either contemporary or classical era. The second one is the traditionalist madhhab-based model that utilizes a classical Islamic thought but it does not consider the socio-historical or cultural life of each community. The third one is modernist model which considers mainly the socio-historical and cultural conditions and challenges faced by contemporary Muslim society, while neglecting the classical Muslim intellectual heritage. The fourth one is the neo modernist model which tries to utilize the classical Muslim intellectual heritage while at the same time accommodate the needs and challenges of the modern world.

In this paper, those models are modified to be strategy models for development of Islamic thoughts through education curriculum. The first models is textual salafiyah strategy which tries to encourage students to understand textually the Quran and Sunnah, without regard for the concrete situations or the dynamics of Muslim communities in either the contemporary or classical era. As the consequence, the literature of traditional Islamic surau and modern are applied in the curriculum. The second model is traditional madzhabiyah strategy that encourage students to utilizes classical Islamic thought but it does not consider the socio-historical or cultural life of each community. As result, traditional Islamic literature surau becomes guidance while modern Islamic literature is left out. The third model is modern strategy which encourage students to consider mainly the socio-historical and cultural conditions and challenges

faced by contemporary Muslim society, while neglecting the classical Muslim intellectual heritage. As the consequence, traditional literature surau is taken out from curriculum. The fourth model is neo-modern strategy which encourage students to try out the classical Moslem intellectual heritage while at the same time accommodate the needs and challenges of modern world. As the consequence, the relevant traditional Islamic literature surau is applied meanwhile modern Islamic literature is implemented gradually.

<p>| Table1 |
| Strategy models for development of Islamic thoughts in educational curriculum |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy models</th>
<th>Traditional Islamic surau literature</th>
<th>Modern Islamic literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Textual Salafiyah</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Madhhabiyah</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neo-modern</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on those 4 strategy models, Thawalib well known as a modern Islamic movement in Indonesia actually does not devote to the modern strategy model in its thought development. Surprisingly, Thawalib does not follow salafiyah traditional strategy model. Those facts are characterised in Thawalib curriculum used traditional literature in the subjects of fiqh, kalam, Tafsir, Hadits, dan bahasa Arab. For example, The fiqh curriculum in grade 1 to 3 is based on the Syafi’ie school. It is like in any other pesantren prior to 1900. Grade one uses Matan Taqri’b by Abu Syuja’ (d. ± 600/1203). Grades two and three refer to the commentary Fath al-Qarib by Al-Ghazi (W. 918/1512) which students can study less than one year.  

30 The book of Fath al-Qarib has the same content with the book of Taqri’b, but its explanatory is broader. It includes the explanatory of the content of Hadis. See Abu Syuja’ Taqrib, Pekalongan: Raja Murah, N.A., 3.
In grade 4 to grade 7, there is the book of *Fatḥ al-Muʿīn* by Zainuddin al-Malabari (d. 982/1574) and *al-Muhadhdhab* by Ibrahim Ash-Shirazi al-Fairuzabadi (d. 476/1083). The *tawḥīd* curriculum in grade 1 to 3 is based on the work of Sunni-Asy'arie scholars, namely *Matan Sanusi* by Abu Abdillah as-Sanusi al-Hasani (w. 895/1490) which deals with the foundations of faith including the necessary and impossible attributes of God. Thawalib teaches *tawḥīd* to students after they understood the *fiqh* book *Fatḥ al-Qari*. In grade 4 to 7, the *tawḥīd* curriculum has previously been based on *matan Sanusi* and then on *Syarḥ Sanusi* by Abdallah Muhammad at Telemsani. For students in grade 5, these books are replaced by a famous book, *Ḥusun al-Ḥāmidiya li al-Muḥāfaẓa ‘ala ‘Aqā’id al-Islāmiyya* by Husaya at-Tarabulusi (d. 1909) and *Umm al-Barahin* by Abu Abdallah as Sanusi al Hasani (d. 895/1490). The *tafsir* curriculum in grade 1 to 3 is based on *Tafsīr Jalālayn* by Jalaluddin al-Mahallī (d. 864/1460) and Jalal

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31 *Ḥusun al-Ḥāmidiya* (*Ḥusun al-Ḥāmidiya li al-Muḥāfaẓa ‘ala ‘Aqā’id al-Islāmiyya*) is a work on *ṣifat*, prophecy, miracles of prophets, the angels, and life after death by the moderate modernist and rationalist writer Husayn (b. M. al-Jasr) Efendi at-Tarabulusi (d. 1909). The author was renowned as editor of a journal in which he attempted to reconcile Islam with modern science and philosophy. Martin Van Bruinessen, “Kitab Kun ing, Book in Arabic Script Used In The Pesantren Milieu”, dalam *Bijdragen Tot De Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde*, Deel 146, 2e en 3e, 1990, 252

32 The contents of *Umm al-Barahin* include “...reached a high degree of systematization due to the introduction of philosophical elements on the doctrine of knowledge, the proof of God’s, existence, and the logical categories of *wujub* (necessity), *istiḥalah* (inadmissibility), and *jawaz* (admissibility) Omar Awang,, “The Major Arabic Sources Which Determinated the Structure of Islamic thought in Malay Archipelago Before the Nineteenth Century A.D. in Field of Law, theology and Sufism”, in Lutpi Ibrahim, *Islamika Esei-esei Sempena Abad ke-15 Hijriyah*, Kuala Lumpur: Sarjana Enterprise, 1980, p. 83. Mohd. Nor bin Ngah states that Ummu al-Barahin was renowned not only in Indonesia but also in Malaysia and some other countries. JD Luciani, PH. Wolff and Frederick J. Barny translated Umm al-Barahin into French, German, and English. See Mohd. Nor Ngah, “Some Writing of the Traditional Malay Muslim Scholars Found in Malay”, in Khoo Kay Kim, *Tamadun Islam di Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah, Malaysia, 1980, 10. According to Abdul Kadir Munysi (1796-1854), the book became a reference for religious study in Melaka. See Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munysi, *Hikayat Abdullah*, Vol. 1, Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Antara, 1974, 42.
ad-Din as-Suyuti (d. 911/1505). The hadith curriculum is based on *Arba‘in al-Nawawi* by Abu Zakariya an-Nawawi. This is the Sunni work which is not included in Seyyed Hossein Nasser’s list of Shi’ite hadith literature.33 Hadith is taught by rote memorization.34 Since the beginning, the book of grammar is based on the following books: *Matan al-Ajurumiyah* by Abu Abdallah al-Sanhaji b. Ajurum (d. 723/1323), *Mukhtasar* of Hamiduddin Ahmad al-Darirli al-Quhandisi, *Tamrīn al-Tullāb* by Syeikh Khalid Azhari, (d. 905/1500) and *Qaṣr al-Nadā* by Muhammad Yusuf Abdallah ibn Hisham (d. 761/1360). Instruction is elevated in grade 6 by the use of *Ibn Aqil* and *Talkhis*. *Ibn Aqil* is an Arabic grammar book written as a commentary on the *Alfiyah* of Ibn Malik. The Arabic declension curriculum for beginners uses *Matan al-Binā‘ wa al-Asas* by Mulla ad-Danqari followed by *Mukhtasar* of Hamiduddin Ahmad al-Darirli al-Quhandisi. Students in grade 2 are required to understand *Kailānī* by Abu Hasan ‘Ali Kailani as-Shafi‘i. The highest level of Arabic declension is in grade 5 which uses Taftazani’s book. The understanding of specific meanings in the development of Arabic literature is supported by Arabic sciences (*Ma‘ānī* and *badī‘*).

Thawalib does not use traditional madzhabiyah strategy in developing their thoughts because this institution uses modern literature and its development methods. For example, the subject of fiqh uses *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid* by Ibn Rushd and the subject of tawhīd uses *Risālah Tawḥīd* by Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905). Meanwhile, the subject of Tafsir uses *Al-Manār*, by Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida.

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The literature conjunction of neo-modern curriculum

Based on the previous explanation, the writer concludes that Thawalib does not devote to some strategy models of development of Islamic thoughts. They are including modern, textual *salafiyah* and traditional *madhhabiyyah*. Thawalib tends to develop the strategy model of neo-modern. It can be indicated from the use of traditional Islamic literature in Thawalib’s educational curriculum. That literature is as scaffolding which lead students comprehend modern thoughts in the field of fiqh, tauhid, tafsir and Arabic language. Some evidences are in the following:

*The subject of tawhid*

Having studied *Umm al-Barāhin*, they move into Ḥuṣun al-Ḥāmidiya by Husaya at-Tarabulusi (d. 1909) and *Risālah Tawhīd* by Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905). Unlike in pesantrens, in Thawalib consider *Umm al-Barāhin* and Ḥuṣun al-Ḥāmidiya as a preparation to the study a more rational subject, tawhīd, in the next higher class. This is an evident that Ḥuṣun al-Ḥāmidiya is more rational than *Umm al-Barāhin* and *Risālah Tawhīd*. Moreover *Risalah Tawhīd* is even more rational than Ḥuṣun al-Ḥāmidiya.35

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35 Muhammad Abduh does not employ theological approach, but philosophical. The philosophical approach is obvious in his book *Risālah Tawhīd*, Cairo: Dar al-Manar, 1366 H, 62. *Risālah Tawhīd* emphasizes the urgency of reason. Abduh argues that following classical Ulama is stupidity. *Taqlid* (following ulama without understanding the reason) has been the biggest barrier for the progress of Islam.
Martin Van Bruinessen classifies Ḥūṣun al-Ḥāmidīya as the work of a “moderate modernist and rationalist writer.” Ḥūṣun al-Ḥāmidīya is a type of Sumatera Thawalib since it is not used in Java, Madura, or in PERTI madrasahs. This fact shows that Thawalib Risālah Tawhīd become the highest-level textbook on tawhīd. Harun Nasution contends that Muhammad Abduh’s theological ideas have much in common with Mu’tazilite theology. The power of reasons in Muhammad Abduh’s perspective has more density than among the Mu’tazilites. Such vision of Risālah Tawhīd is different from that of Ḥūṣun al-Ḥāmidīya which follows Sunni Maturidi theology.

Image 2
The development of tawhīd literature In neo-modern strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risālah al-tawhīd</th>
<th>Ḥūṣun al-Ḥāmidīya</th>
<th>Umm al-Barāhin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(post Mu’tazilah)</td>
<td>(Maturidiyah)</td>
<td>(Asy’āriyah)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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38 Mahmud Junus, Sejarah Pendidikan Islam..., 100.
The subject of the fiqh

When Engku Mudo Abdul Hamid Hakim lead Thawalib, he replaces al-Muhadhdhab with his own book written in Arabic; al-Durus al-Fiqhiyah al-Thāniyah al-Mubi̇n Mu’īn. It is more contextual.41 This replacement marks the beginning of reformation ideas in the field of fiqh by using a different book from the Sunni and Syafi’ie books commonly used in pesantrens and PERTI (Association of Islamic Education).42 The adjustment in fiqh literature in Grade 6 occurs more drastically than in any other Islamic school. Other schools use Syafi’ie books by Mahalli but HAKA replaces it with Bidāyat al-Mujtahid by Ibn Rushd who is a Muslim scholar and philosopher.43 Martin Van Bruinessen says that Bidayat al-Mujtahid is firstly used by Minangkabau reformers as a textbook in the 1920s.44

Image 3
The development of fiqh literature in neo-modern strategy

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41 Mahmud Junus, Sejarah pendidikan Islam, p. 153. The book of AlMu’in alMu’in is the continuation of the book of al-Durus al-Fiqhiyah, volume 1 by Zainuddin Labai who passed away before continuing his work to write the following chapters. The main reference of the book is Ibnu Taimiah. See Burhanuddin Daya, Gerakan Pembaharuan..., 212-213.
42 Mahmud Junus, Sejarah Pendidikan Islam..., 98.
43 Mahmud Junus, Sejarah Pendidikan Islam..., 153.
The subject of tafsir

Having studied *Tafsir Jalālayn*, the tafsir curriculum is elevated by using *Tafsir Khāzin* (*Lubab al-Ta‘wīl fi Ma‘ān al-Tanzīl*) by Ilauddin al Baghdadi (d. H 741). The reformation at Thawalib becomes even clearer by the use of *Tafsir Baidāwī* or *Anwār al-Tanzīl wa Asrār al-Ta‘wīl* written by Nasir b. Nashiruddin Abu Said Abdullah ibn Umar (d. 685/1286). This tafsir methodologically combines *tafsir bi al-ma‘thūr* and *tafsir bi al-ra‘y*. It has been argued that *tafsir Baidāwī* is a summary of *tafsir al-Kashshāf* by Imam Zamakhsari excluding its Mu‘tazilite aspects. In pesantren tradition, this *tafsir* is used by the Kyai [rather than by the students]. The reformation at Thawalib is also reflected in the use of *al-Manār* and *Al-Jawāhir* (the work of Tanthawi al-Jauhari). *Al-Manār* written by Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida aims to open the door of *ijtihad*, refute *taqlid*, empower arguments and help Muslims recover from their inferiority. *Al-Manār* presents commentary that is very rational and helpful in understanding Qur’an.

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46 It means that the tafsir based on logic and rationality, and not merely on other verses or hadith.
The development of tafsir literature in neo-modern strategy

Learning hadith

Students begin learning hadith with the Arba’în of al-Nawawi and then Jawâhir al-Bukhârî by Mustasfa M. Umara. The latter hadith is based on two sources, Ṣâḥîh Bukhârî by Abu Abdullah Muhammad al-Ja’fari (d. 256 H) and Al-Isâ‘îd fi Mukhtasar al-Irshâd by al-Ahmad al-Qasthalani al-Qahiri al-Shâfî (d. 923 H). The Arba’în contains 40 hadith whereas Jawâhir al-Bukhârî has 700 ones.51 Jawâhir al-Bukhârî is not popular among boarding schools and Surau/Langgar.52 Students at Thawalib also study Mustalâḥ Hadîth (technical terms regarding hadith) in order to understand the methodological aspects of hadith studies. Their textbook is Matan Baiquniyah by Taha al-Baiquni (d. 1080/1669 AD). At the end of hadith class, students are guided to study hadith from the primary sources, Ṣâḥîh Bukhârî and Ṣâḥîh Muslim.

Critical thinking

It is developed among students from the beginning of grade 5 including mantiq (logic) as one of subject matters. This is a new tradition which is different from the mainstream of pesantrens. Mantiq relates to philoso-

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51 Mustafa Muhammad Umara, Jawâhir al-Bukhârî, Mesir: Istiqamah, 1371 H, see mukaddimah.
52 Mahmud Junus, Sejarah Pendidikan Islam..., 100.
The Implication of neo-modern strategy

Neo modern strategy of Thawalib has two characters; realistic and evolutionary. Thawalib needs to be realistic because they have to confront four hardships. Firstly, the reality of major Moslems thoughts is traditional. Secondly, the reformist ulama have identical discourse between

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54 Muhammad Saghir Al-Akhdari, Matn Sullam Munauraq, Surabaya: Maktabah Assaqafiyah, NA., 2.
religious ideas and politic ones. Thirdly, traditional literature has been a strong foundation for surau in Sumatera. Lastly, modern Islamic literature still has a few followers and it is not widely recognised by Moslems. The realistic character of Thawalib lead to the evolutionary character in developing Thawalib’s thoughts.

The evolutionary character of Thawalib in developing its thought is different from Padri movement in Minagkabau which is revolutionary and radical. The radical character of Padri is inspired by wahhabi movement in taking down Mecca in the beginning of 1803. Padri replicates Wahhabi characters in their activities. They have no hesitation to deal with violence in confronting different religious and political views. Formerly, Padri have a conflict with local society. Simultaneously, they commit to have a war with Holland troops which nurture the local society (1821-1836).  

It is quite distinct that Padri characters is different from Thawalib ones. Thawalib critically debates the acts of bid’ah, khurafat and taqlid. However, they still use traditional Islamic literature as surau ulama do. The founders of Thawalib are not radical towards colonial authorities. Thawalib’s charge of persons such as Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah takes diplomatic format to confront colonial authorities. Abdullah Ahmad is very accommodative toward colonial policy. Therefore, Steenbrink recognizes him as “a modernisator becomes a hollandisator”.

This is the method how thought mission of Thawalib vastly spreads out in Sumatera and its surroundings. In Thawalib thoughts, they debate or even critically argue the parts of traditional religious understanding.

56 Karel A. Steenbrink, Pesantren..., 37.
However, some parts of traditional literature are still used as references. Traditional literature is capitalised by Thawalib to scaffold their students to comprehend the content of modern Islamic literature.

Neo modern strategy of Thawalib also provides discussion spaces for youth and elder scholars to give respect to traditional literature of syafi’iyah and Asy’ariyah. Traditional literature correlates different Islamic perspective of youth. For example, it correlates the perspective of Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah in Thawalib Padang Panjang who tends to use “Dynamic madzhab” with Syeikh Ibrahim Musa Parabek who devotes to Syafi’i madzhab.

The Thawalib’s respect towards traditional curriculum brings significant impacts psychologically and sociologically to their students. For example, the students accustom with diversity of thought (ikhtilaf) and become more critical. They are familiar with the perspective of thoughts and the methodology process because they have learned the theories in the traditional and modern books such as Arabic language, ushul Fiqh, Tafsir and Hadits. Thawalib implicitly suggest that the ones must review traditional literature before they intend learning modern thoughts. The intensive review will lead to understanding and the conclusion of phenomenological perspective in the plurality of Moslem. A sample of the modern thought phenomena of Thawalib alumni is HAMKA. He is once put forward as the chairman of Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI). Another sample is Mahmud Junus who is productive writer in the field of Islamic education.

On the top of the strength of the neo modern strategy, the weaknesses remain. One of them is the obsessive generation toward the thoughts of Asya’ariyah and syafi’iyah although they have learned the thoughts of modern ulama such as Muhammad Abduh and Rasyid Ridla.
Conclusion

Sumatera Thawalib is designed as the center for the reformation of Islamic thought through da’wah and educational efforts. This institution contradicts to the “school traditionalists” in the fields of theology, fiqh, tafsir, hadith and Sufism in Indonesia. The thought of school traditionalists is crystallized in the form of nearly unconditional acceptance of and obedience to Syafi’i fiqh and Sunni As’arite theology.

In the beginning of the mid-19th century, the presence of students who has studied in Hejaz promotes the thought of the school traditionalists to be more rational and dynamic. In Hejaz, there is an emergence phenomenon of dichotomy between the old and the young groups or between the traditionalists and the modernists.

Methodological differences between the old and the young groups result in divergent views on Islamic disciplines. The differences occur between students and teachers regarding tradition, religious congregations, school preference etc. One example of a divergent view happens between the student; Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah and his teacher; Syeikh Ahmad Khatib. This difference, however, does not either lead the students to lose their respect to their teachers or the teachers to lose their affection to their students. Above all of those differences, they share a common ground; the urgency of education and independence for the glory of Islam.

Although Sumatera thawalib is well known as part of modern Islamic movement, their strategy is not in line with the thoughts of modern model or textual salafiyah. Thawalib tends to develop the strategy model of neo modern. It can be indicated from the use of traditional Islamic literature in Thawalib’s educational curriculum. That literature is as scaffolding which lead students comprehend modern thoughts in the field of fiqh, tauhid, tafsir, and Arabic language. Thought reformation of
Thawalib does not necessarily lead them to invalidate the works of classical scholars but lead them to appreciate those works and to posit the works of classical scholars as a guidance to scaffold students’ thought to be more rational and dynamic in methodological thinking. The one who is interested in rational thinking should study classical literature first. By doing so, students will achieve stronger and brighter a vision of rationality. The neo modernist strategy, according to Qadri Azizi, encourages students to move from the realm of “merely grasping the words,” which leads to blind obedience (taqlid), to that of “grasping the methods,” which gives them something to follow. The neo modernists can claim to follow a certain school but their loyalty will result methodology (manhaj) instead of opinions.

Neomodern strategy teach us the reality and the evolutionary for thought reformation. Such strategy is different from Padri strategy which is revolutionary and radical toward local society and Dutch colonial authority. In recent context, model of neo modern strategy is appropriate to Indonesian context which has a multi-cultural and pluralistic Muslim society. There are two key points in neo modern strategy; accommodating the characters of realistic and evolutionary, and preventing the characters of radical, evolutionary and violence.

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