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Teungku Identity Development: The Role of *Dayah* Community of Practice

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Jarjani Usman[1], Syabuddin Syabuddin[1], and Faishal Zakaria[1]

Abstract

This study attempted to delve into the *teungku* identity development within the traditional dayah institutions in Aceh to examine how four teungku negotiated their participation and membership in their situated *teungku* community of practice. This narrative study approached the *teungku* identity construction from Lave and Wenger's theory of situated learning. Its overarching question was: how does the teungku identity develop within the *dayah* community of practice? The data were mainly from interviews of four *teungku*, the graduates of four different dayah institutions in Aceh. The findings showed that the identity of teungku was shaped and reshaped through several modes within the dayah community of practice: the learning process of up to grade 7, teaching junior students, serving communities (e.g., teaching and leading prayers), commemorating the death day of the dayah founder(s), and collaboratively resisting any other isms penetrating Aceh society. It can be deduced that the *dayah* communities of practice have played a significant role in *teungku* identity development. These dayah CoPs could go through either formal, less formal, or informal phases.

Keywords

teungku, identity construction, *dayah*, community of practice, narrative inquiry

Introduction

Identity has long been researched in many parts of the world, as it is considered crucial in understanding how one sees the world. Identity "shapes the ways human beings perceive and respond to the world they live in" (Atai & Ece, 2009, p. 21). Our identity affects our professional practice and development (Batista et al., 2014; Kanno & Stuart, 2011). Even though some early scholars believe that identity is relatively fixed, many authors (e.g., Gee, 2001; Wenger, 1998) have generally agreed that identity is fluid, socially constructed and reconstructed, and always negotiated.

Many frameworks have been developed to understand identity development. One such framework is the notion of community of practice (CoP) (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). CoPs commonly refer to groups whose members "share a concern or a passion for something they do and together learn how to do it better" (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 4). A CoP framework is used to study identity because it can facilitate efforts "to understand how newcomers seek integration, the extent to which they aspire to emulate practices, and how their identities can be influenced by the social experiences and support provided by members in the same CoP" (Teng, 2020, p. 4). A CoP is also influential in shaping people's professional identity in a variety of disciplines (e.g., Andrew et al., 2009; Dei & van der Walt, 2020; Howlett et al., 2016; Teng, 2020). Considering the efficacy of the CoP in understanding identity construction, we employ this framework to understand the role of *dayah* CoP in developing *teungku* identity in Indonesia's western-most province, Aceh. In this article, we use the term "*teungku*" and "*dayah*" for singular and plural contexts. *Teungku* are referred to as the religious teachers who are teaching Islam at or have graduated from dayah, a traditional Islamic boarding school in Aceh (see Birchok, 2019; Dhuhri, 2014; Usman, 2020; Kloos, 2017).

Even though the formally endorsed implementation of sharia law in Aceh began in the early 2000s (Kloos, 2017), Islam and dayah institutions have existed in the province long before the Dutch colonial periods and during a series of kingdoms in Aceh (Hasjmy, 1981). The existence and sustainability of Islam had been inseparable from the presence of dayah institutions and teungku in Aceh societies. Dayah, which is also called pesantren in other parts of Indonesia, has been an alternative educational institution that shapes the

[1]Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry, Banda Aceh, Indonesia

Corresponding Author:
Syabuddin Syabuddin, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry, Jl. Syekh Abdurrauf, Darussalam, Banda Aceh, Aceh 23111, Indonesia.
Email: syabuddin@ar-raniry.ac.id

identity of teungku through CoPs. More importantly, dayah or pesantren and *teungku* have played a crucial role in providing free Islamic education. Many young Acehnese Muslims and those from outside of the province can opt to study in dayah.

Foucault (1980) has argued that every society has its regime of truths. In the dayah context, the truth and knowledge are believed to be derived from Allah (God) and are authoritatively transferred by *teungku*. In Acehnese society, Islamic sources' exegesis is frequently deemed invalid if a teungku does not do it. In this regard, there is a famous Acehnese maxim that says, *"agama bèk tatirè-tirè, tapi tameugurè"* (In the matter of Islamic religion, you should not imitate, but learn from teachers). This way of seeing the world has significantly affected the ways of thinking of Acehnese society for a long time. Teungku, mainly the senior ones, are highly respected throughout their life. They are ulama or Islamic clerics who hold the authority of knowledge and knowledge transferring. It is not uncommon to find that what teungku says and does are regarded as truths and taken for granted or rarely challenged. Teungku frequently receives invitations to perform a wide range of roles in Acehnese society, ranging from religious rituals, social activities, to political events. These phenomena had somehow become traditions for a long time; these might have started long before Indonesia gained its independence.

There has, indeed, been a saying that equates respecting teachers (and teungku) as that respecting our parents. The proverb reads, *"Ayah ngon ma seureuta gurè, ureueng nyan ban lhè beuna taturot. Meunyo na salah, meu'ah talakè, peumiyup ulè tacom bak teuot"* (Jarjani, 2015, p. 20). It literarily means "father, mother, and the teacher are the three persons we must obey. If we wronged them, we must apologize by bending down our heads to kiss their knee." The maxim indicates that teungku, as the teachers, are highly respected and placed in such a high position.

Some scholars had previously researched dayah institutions in Aceh, and pesantren in other parts of Indonesia (e.g., Kloos, 2016; Mundiri & Zahra, 2017; Nasution et al., 2019; Silahuddin, 2016; Srimulyani, 2007, 2013, 2015; Suyanta, 2012; Syafe'i, 2017; Ulum, 2018; Zarkasy, 2006; Zuhriy, 2011). Some of the studies focus on the women authority in dayah (e., Kloos, 2016; Srimulyani, 2007, 2013, 2015), some investigated the role of dayah on character building of students (e.g., Syafe'i, 2017; Ulum, 2018; Zarkasy, 2006; Zuhriy, 2011) as part of crucial aspect one needs to have to become a *teungku*. So, we still lack a comprehensive understanding of how teungku identity is constructed, deconstructed, or reconstructed through the dayah CoP. Drawing on the framework of CoP as part of the social learning theory proposed by Wenger (1998, 2018); this study attempts to fill this gap by researching how the dayah CoP helps shape and reshape teungku identity development. Uncovering how teungku identity is constructed and maintained in dayah can pave the way for understanding how they develop their professionalism.

Literature Review

Dayah and teungku

Dayah is a unique traditional Islamic boarding school in Aceh Province where students forge their identities to gain *teungku* community membership. Semantically, *dayah* stems from the Arabic language, namely *zāwiyah*, meaning "study lodge" or "circle" (Husin, 2009, p. 134). Dayah is similar to *pesantren* in other parts of Indonesia (Dhuhri, 2014). In practice, dayah and pesantren uphold basically an identical curriculum that focuses on Islamic studies and uses formal Arabic as the language of instruction (Daulay, 2019). This is perhaps why many people in Aceh mention the terms dayah and pesantren interchangeably.

Like pesantren, dayah is where students study Islamic knowledge and skills beneficial for living Islamic faith and worshipping Allah (Raihani, 2010). As indicated above, dayah is the oldest type of educational institution in Aceh. It had existed since the 16th century (Rosidi, 2006; Srimulyani, 2007) before the public schools appeared in Aceh (Hasjmy, 1981). In fact, the Dutch colonial established the first public schools in the early 20th century for educating their children, who then lived in the Dutch East Indies (Indonesian archipelago prior to independence). The children of local elites who could benefit the Dutch colonial were also allowed to study there (Ricklefs, 1981).

In contemporary Aceh, two types of dayah exist: traditional and modern ones. In the traditional dayah, students are allowed to enroll throughout the year, regardless of age. Once registered, the students (called *santri*) would be placed in appropriate grades where they would learn by using books in Arabic and Jawi language (Malay language written in Arabic scripts) Islamic teachings (Dhuhri, 2014). They would study Islamic teachings all day and night based on the curriculum set by the dayah. The learning systems are classical, involving rote memorization approaches, and every student needs to fully master his or her grade lessons before being promoted to the next grade. They mostly use classic books, locally called *kitab kuning* (or *kitab kunèng* in Acehnese language) or the yellow books to study Quran, Islamic jurisprudence, Islamic monotheism, classical Arabic, or Islamic mysticism.

Another typical characteristic of dayah is the separation of male and female students during the teaching–learning process. When the most senior teungku or dayah leader(s) delivers a high-level lecture, male and female students might be allowed to gather in the same classroom, but some curtains or blinds would be in place to not be able to see each other. Also, they live in different dorms, usually nonadjacent to each other. In many cases, the female teachers teach

female students, and they only interact among themselves, with little to no contact with their male counterparts.

Meanwhile, at the modern Islamic boarding schools, students, who usually start at secondary and senior high levels, would study secular and Islamic subjects. Like dayah, modern Islamic boarding schools separate male students from female students, but the schools observe both the government-mandated curriculum and the dayah curriculum. As a result, the students would typically require to take "secular" subjects, such as science, math, or languages, during the day and head to night classes for Islamic studies. Besides, students are required to communicate in either English or Arabic language in or outside the classroom.

Conception of Identity

According to Wenger's (1998) social learning theory, which was developed based on Lave and Wenger's (1991) seminal work, learning is a crucial part of identity development. Learning is becoming or learning shapes one's identity. There are many definitions of identity; but, it generally refers to our understanding of who we are and who we think other people are (Danielewicz, 2001; Wenger, 1998). In this regard, Crow and Møller (2017) argued that "identities are not simply who we say we are but reflect the motivation, drive, and energy connected to our actual practices" (p. 751). Informed by these definitions, this study argues that our identity is influenced by and influencing our motivation, drive, and energy. For instance, we are motivated to invest our time and energy in learning to use an online platform because of our identity as lecturers. On the contrary, our motivation to engage in online learning activities reshapes our identity.

Who we are is not static or changeable due to several factors. The first factor is closely related to the sense or perception of ourselves, and our roles are subject to change over time (Norton, 2016; Preece, 2016). The second one is the influence of social contexts (e.g., social network) on our identity (Lave, 1996; Wenger, (1998). Lave (1996) and Wenger (1998) maintain that identity reciprocally develops within the social contexts. In further explaining the reciprocal relationship between the individual and society, Burke and Stets (2009) use the metaphor of two sides of the same coin, meaning that the "self reflects society" (p. 37). Goodson (1991) and Lave (1996) also point out that the social context's nature is equally important in shaping and reshaping identities and the social context itself. Hence, it is crucial for us to join or interact with a specific social context if we want to change our identity. We may have more than one identity as we engage in various social settings during our lives.

Likewise, recent studies also indicated that professional identity is "an ongoing and dynamic process which entails the making sense and (re)interpretation of one's own values and experiences" (Flores & Day, 2006, p. 220). It evolves and develops over time through interactions and participation in various social contexts. We may construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct our identities as we interact with others and participate in any given context (Wenger, 1998). Wenger (1998, 2010) also observes that our current identity involves our past experiences, relationships, and practices, and it orients us into the future. Identity development can occur across communities at different levels and involves negotiations of meanings or practices that individuals face in their social interactions. Besides, Coldron and Smith (1999, as cited in Beijaard et al., 2004) found the influence of agency in professional identity development, which means that a person needs to actively play roles in their professional development process.

Furthermore, Wenger (1998) argued that identity development involves not only engagement but also imagination and alignment. In this regard, Smith (2006) states, "perhaps the most salient feature of Wenger's theory in terms of identity is his description of three modes of belonging and sources of identity formation (becoming) engagement, imagination, and alignment"(p. 619). Smith elaborates that engagement is the group members' participation in meaningful activities and interactions, and imagination is the members' disposition that requires a willingness to explore, take risks, and make connections to build new images of the world and ourselves. Meanwhile, alignment is about a process of coordinating perspectives and actions and finding common ground from which to act.

Nevertheless, identity development does not happen smoothly. It needs five psychological processes influential for developing identity: a sense of appreciation, a sense of connectedness, a sense of competence, a sense of commitment, and a future career trajectory (Van Lankveld et al., 2017). First, a sense of appreciation refers to the feeling of being appreciated by society. Second, a sense of connectedness is the feeling that what is learned connects to what other people in the community know. Therefore, sharing knowledge with other group members is crucial. Third, a sense of competence is the feeling of being recognized as competent by others. Fourth, a sense of commitment is also vital in identity development because this sense can motivate the person to keep improving and dedicating his knowledge to his field. Last, imagining future careers can strengthen one's identity. For example, this is related to what learners desire and aspire as their future careers, professional memberships, or entitlements.

Literature also suggests that not all people who have invested their time and energy in the process of identity development develop a new identity. As cited in Usman (2020), Morrison's (2013) longitudinal study on the trajectories of identity formation of 14 early career teachers found that only eight developed emergent teacher identity. These eight teachers developed their teacher identity because they were hopeful and optimistic about their future careers and believed the teaching jobs suit them. Meanwhile, one of them showed a distressing identity as she could not cope with the tensions in her teaching job, which she eventually left. Another teacher exhibited tenuous teacher identity due to the complex tasks she had to deal with daily.

CoP

In the social learning theory, the community is also an integral part of learning and identity development (Wenger, 1998, 2018). Wenger (1998) further explains that it integrates four main components: meaning, practice, community, and identity. By definition, he defines learning as experience, and practice refers to learning by which mutual involvement happens. Community refers to learning by belonging to a group that facilitates task achievement and peer member participation. Finally, identity is seen as the impacts of learning experiences on the members and their capacity to appropriate. This definition aligns with Sfard's (1998) conception of learning as "a process of becoming a member of a certain community" (p. 6).

The notion of communities of practice (Farnsworth et al., 2016; Snyder & Wenger, 2010; Wenger, 1998, 2000, 2010; Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015) was first coined by Lave and Wenger (1991) in their seminal book *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Communities of practices (CoPs) might be interpreted differently and used in many different fields, but they can roughly refer to "groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis" (Wenger et al., 2002, pp. 4–5). According to Bouchamma and Michaud (2011), CoP members' "shared knowledge and interests are what brings them together and are also the basis of their problem solving and learning experiences which they need to deal effectively with work-related changes and challenges they may face" (p. 406). Therefore, members need to collaboratively construct their professional identity within this community (Wenger, 1998).

In a given CoP, the experienced and novice members with shared interests must collaborate through dialogs, problem-solving, resource-sharing, and so on. Wenger (1998) maintains that the new members take on a new identity as they become valid members of a CoP in which collaborative learning happens. Therefore, it needs to have an ability to bring together individuals with a shared "perspective on the world" (Wenger, 1998, as cited in Roberts, 2006, p. 625), which thereby necessitates good leadership in a CoP. However, Wenger (2010) reminded that rejection or acceptance of a person's involvement in a CoP might happen, which then impacts his or her identity development. Of the causes is if their practices and experiences in the community are considered irrelevant. As such, they will develop the identity of marginality. However, if their practices and experiences are relevant, they will get accepted in the community. In this way, they will develop a central identity.

Moreover, in the CoP, learning is situated, meaning that learning is situated in their role as a community member (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Concerning this, Lave and Wenger (1991) state:

> learning viewed as situated activity has as its central defining characteristic, a process that we call legitimate peripheral participation. By this, we mean to draw attention to the point that learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and that mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the socio-cultural practice of a community. Legitimate peripheral participation provides a way to speak about the relations between newcomers and old-timers and about activities, identities, artifacts, and communities of knowledge and practice. It concerns the process by which newcomers become part of a community of practice. (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29)

In the situated learning, the newcomers achieve a gradual acquisition of knowledge and skills in the domain. During the learning process, they gradually move from novices to experts. That is why social interactions within an authentic context are crucial for the beginners in a CoP in which they embody their beliefs and behaviors. They become more active in the community when beginners move from the community's periphery to its center. Lave and Wenger (1991) argued that during the learning process or interactions in the periphery, the novice persons negotiate and renegotiate their identities. It is through such means they become full members of the community. Previous studies (e.g., Teng, 2020) indicate that a CoP plays a significant role in shaping professional identity. Because teungku play substantial roles in Islamic teachings and other communal engagements in Aceh society, understanding how their identity develops over time is deemed crucial.

Previous Studies on teungku Identity Development

As mentioned previously, there is little literature on the identity development of dayah's teungku due to the dayah CoP. However, partial findings related to *teungku* or *ustadz* identity development exist in the studies conducted by Mundiri and Zahra (2017), Syafe'i, (2017), Ulum (2018), Nasution et al. (2019), Usman (2020), Zarkasy (2006), and Zuhriy (2011). Of which is the crucial role of teungku dayah *(ustadz)* in mediating the process of teungku identity development (Nasution et al., 2019). The students participate in the learning process where curriculum and pedagogy are designed, implemented, and evaluated in the same patterns introduced by the teungku CoP. In these matters, the authority of *teungku* plays an important role. Their predecessors have decided what the students need to learn and how their learning should be held and evaluated.

Moreover, in shaping the teungku identity, the students need to learn and complete learning from the selected textbooks, locally called *kitab kunèng*, written by the "*ulama mu'tabarah"* or credible ulama (Mundiri & Zahra, 2017). The textbooks have carefully been selected to be used in dayah or

pesantren to keep the writing on the Islamic teachings on a clear scientific hierarchy in the *Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaah* lineage or prevent false ideas on religious matters (Nasution et al., 2019). Besides, the students are required to practice the values in the textbooks in their daily lives.

For shaping the identity of *teungku*, they receive training to live modestly in dayah (Nasution et al., 2019). It is important to note that dayah institutions train students to be independent and be responsible for fulfilling their daily needs, ranging from cooking to washing clothes to managing their time during their study in dayah (Syafe'i, 2017; Ulum, 2018; Zarkasy, 2006; Zuhriy, 2011). In this way, they learn how to live modestly, help each other, and abide by the rules. Even some of them make a living by working outside of dayah. In other words, they build their modest characters.

Senior students are also allowed to serve as the teachers in dayah (Nasution et al., 2019). They commonly receive some tasks of teaching their juniors. However, while teaching their juniors, they regularly study with the most senior *teungku* in dayah, called *abon* (i.e., father) or other similar Arabic words. In this way, they improve their professionalism in teaching and will be prepared for managing their own dayah upon graduating from the study.

However, these studies only provide some parts of the trajectory of identity development of teungku (see Usman, 2020). That is why this study is significant in extending the existing studies on dayah.

Methodology

This study is qualitative by nature, which uses a narrative inquiry strategy. A narrative inquiry is "a way of understanding experience" involving a "collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20). Narrative inquiry is relevant because of its potential for exploring lived experiences (Kim, 2016), which in this study aims to understand the life stories of teungku in their CoP. According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000, as cited in Creswell, 2009), narrative inquiry is "a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher studies the lives of individuals and asks one or more individuals to provide stories about their lives" (p.13). Through the use of narrative inquiry, this study would shed light on the experiences of *teungku* and illustrate how they shape and transform their professional identities.

The data emanated from the interviews with four *teungku*-s graduating from four different dayah institutions, after receiving their consent. Pseudonyms *Teungku 1, Teungku 2, Teungku 3*, and *Teungku 4* are used to replace the four teungku names for confidentiality. The interviews were conducted face to face and by phone, depending on their geographical distance. At the time of the research, the interviewees were already serving their communities. They were purposively targeted because they had indicated high commitments to the society as the members of the teungku community.

During the interviews, the respondents narrated their individual experiences and illustrated how they shape and transform their professional identities (Schultz & Ravitch, 2013). The narratives restore remarkable memories and experiences that reveal how they saw themselves as teungku and how they constructed their professional identity. We recorded all the events that significantly contribute to their identity development. Through these processes of the narrative interview, we tried to understand how teungku identity shaped and how they differ from one another (Clandinin & Huber, 2010). In so doing, we immersed ourselves in the teungku' stories in order "to feel and connect to what they were saying, capturing reflections or just writing memos that reflect the mental dialogue occurring between the data and [us]" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 168). The interview data were transcribed, coded, and then analyzed by retelling and restoring them into a narrative chronology (Fraser, 2004).

In analyzing the data, we first read the four *teungku'* narratives and underlined anything important because our goal was to immerse ourselves into their stories, trying to feel and connect to what they said. We also attempted to capture reflections or write memos (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). After that, we discussed emerging ideas discovered in these narratives and determined some initial categories.

Following the step, we read and discussed other participants' narratives and a progressive refinement and expansion of the preliminary categories. In this step, we looked for compelling threads in all the written narratives and decided to preserve some excerpts that vividly represented each category and to verify their exclusiveness.

Findings

The findings suggest that the identity of the four dayah alumni was constructed in somewhat similar ways even though they graduated from different dayah. After analyzing the respondents' narratives, six themes were generated as in the following.

Studying and Boarding in dayah

The four respondents' interview data indicate that spending years to board and study in *dayah* is a must for every dayah student, regardless of gender. The dormitory and learning classroom for male and female students were separated. These students would typically reside in their respective dorms for 9 years to focus on learning and learn to be self-reliant. It is important to note that not all students could stay in the dayah for 9 straight years. Some might withdraw after several years due to various personal reasons, such as losing financial supports or being psychologically disconnected from families and loved ones. Also, senior students would be

able to directly study with the dayah leader, locally called Abu or Abon, only when they reached grade 9.

By staying in the dayah, they learned life skills. For instance, they learned how to live together peacefully and live a humble life. They would call and be called "teungku" when socializing with each other. They also learned how to cook by themselves. That is why most dayah graduates have excellent cooking skills. By staying in the dayah, the students first engage in the dayah CoP through which they develop *teungku* identity. Concerning this, Wenger (1998) stated that engagement in a community's activities is a crucial part of identity development.

In some dayah, students are generally not allowed to participate in public schools while studying at the dayah. They have to commit their lifetime and energy to study and practice "pure" Islamic teaching. This was agreed by all the participants, *Teungku 1*, *Teungku 2*, *Teungku 3*, and *Teungku 4*. They reasoned that attending public schools while being a dayah student might prevent a student from attaining the pure Islamic teachings, which are desirable for most Muslims in Aceh. These respondents are representative because they can narrate the common practices in their institutions, respectively. Some dayah ulama have publicly expressed their resentment against public schooling and college education because they believe that "liberal" and critical views, usually developed by modern education, might corrupt Islamic studies offered in those more modern educational institutions. Such resentment discourse has long been perpetuated. It is not surprising for a traditional dayah ulama to doubt the religious "fatwa" offered by university-based Islamic scholars.

Participating in Community Activities as the dayah Students

Besides studying at dayah, it is also mandatory for students to attend a wide range of community services, ranging from rituals to social activities. Among them are attending burial rituals and postburial ceremonies of Muslim society. In Acehnese society, praying rituals after having buried the deceased are not necessarily finished. There are many traditions carried out days after the burial, usually from Day 1 to Day 7. In many parts of Aceh, postburial praying rituals and ceremonies are even held on days 10, 30, 40, and 100. These praying rituals were also performed on every yearly death anniversary. In such praying ceremonies, the presence of male teungku is central because they are viewed as the only valid individuals to lead such postburial services. Therefore, teungku or dayah students also receive invitations to lead prayers for the deceased days and nights.

Teungku and dayah students enjoy such a high privilege because they are deemed to have in-depth knowledge of Islamic praying and have practiced solemn submission to Allah. They have also believed to have pure souls because they consistently prevented themselves from doing forbidden things. Thus, their prayers for the deceased's soul are regarded as very likely to be accepted by Allah.

Teaching and Preaching in dayah

Every student must dedicate his or her time teaching in dayah, which is an integral part of the students' activities. However, teaching is only assigned to those who have been studying in a higher grade. For instance, the students who have studied in grade nine are mandatory to teach first- to third-year students because they have mastered all the lessons in these lower grades. Teungku 1 even argued that, in some big dayah institutions where many students are enrolled, only those ninth-graders were tasked with teaching more junior students. However, teaching lower-grade students is not without a challenge. Teungku 2 said that junior students might commonly challenge their senior teungku (e.g., concerning their Islamic knowledge and wisdom) during the teaching and learning process. If these senior students can cope with such challenges, they will keep teaching there. If not, they may withdraw from being a teacher at dayah, and another *teungku will replace him or her*.

According to all participants, these teaching assignments are very crucial for the development of their teungku identity. By taking on teaching assignments, the seniors learn how to teach and strengthen their knowledge, through which they would eventually develop their professional identity. Acquiring teaching skills is highly needed as they would later teach others after they graduate from dayah someday. Teaching in their respective dayah is part of the senior students' contributions to their alma mater and of paying the utmost respect to their teachers, locally understood as *takzim keu gure* (respect and obedience to the teachers).

Besides teaching, students also need to learn to deliver religious preaching or sermons with good rhetoric and politeness while at the dayah. This particular public speaking skill is compulsory for the students to attain because, expectedly, they will spread Islam to their larger society (involving in da'wah activities), either before or after they graduate. These students would typically practice delivering sermons to each other after performing the five daily prayers. In addition to practicing their speaking skills, these practice sessions would allow the students to showcase their understanding and memorizations of Quranic verses, hadith, or other Islamic teachings. Here, they could also prove their mastery of formal Arabic language (*Fusha* or formal literary Arabic). Being successful at delivering sermons could translate into a teungku's successful da'wah activity later in life.

Participating in Community Activities as the dayah alumni

As already indicated, dayah alumni would be presented with ample opportunities to play major roles in their respective

communities. They would be typically invited to attend various community activities, ranging from social to worshipping activities. They could be asked to serve as preachers or *khatib* during regular Jumuah (Friday) prayers, preachers for events to commemorate the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), preachers at various social gatherings, and many others. They are also commonly invited to do praying for the newborns, newly weds, the sick, and newly built houses, new cars, the start of the rice planting season, and many other activities. To sum up, teungku's roles are indispensable for Acehnese Acehnese society.

Commemorating the Death of the dayah Founders

Commemorating the death days of the late founders of their dayah is another regular or annual activity carried out by the dayah students or alumni. According to Teungku 4, the alumni collaborate with active students in a dayah to do it. In case, more than one late dayah founder, they will commemorate all at once. It is part of their gratitude to their dayah founders for having dedicated their whole lives to build and develop dayah and educate students for free. Usually, the alumni and current students would gather at the dayah to participate in myriads of activities ranging from praying sessions to communal feasts. Through the commemoration event, the students and alumni could remember the dedication and sacrifice of their teachers. They could also utilize the opportunity to consolidate among themselves, refresh their commitment to people's development, and discuss society's issues. Thus, the annual event could strengthen their relationships as CoP members.

Resisting to Any Other isms Spreading in Aceh

In terms of Islamic teaching practice in Aceh, *teungku* would dearly defend their society, Acehnese society. They work together to keep preserving and practicing what they call "pure" Prophet Muhammad's tradition (*sunnah*), such as the so-called *ahlussunnah wal jamaah* (literally: the people of the sunnah and majority). This term is typically referred to as the Sunni group of Islam, which is currently making up the majority of the global Muslim population. As Aceh has been practicing Sunni Islam from early on, the teungku and dayah communities have been at the frontlines in defending the pure practice of *ahlussunnah wal jamaah*. Such aspiration has become a joint pursuit for the teungku.

Historically, the teungku and dayah communities were much involved in the fights against the Dutch and Japanese colonials. They actively joined the fights because they not only wanted to drive these colonials away from their motherlands but also wanted to make sure that the colonials did not mess with the Islamic faith. The fights against the invaders would be synonymous with defending Islam. Therefore, the teungku and dayah communities were active in waging holy wars against the Dutch and Japanese occupiers. That is why the colonials never really could conquer Aceh. There was always resistance.

In the contemporary Aceh, the teungku and dayah communities actively participate in efforts to curb the development of the non-*ahlussunnah wal jamaah* sects in Aceh. The teungku and dayah communities have been actively campaigning for the active implementation of Sharia Law. The Aceh Government finally passed Qanun Jinayat (Islamic Criminal Law) number 14 in the year 2014. The law stipulates, among others, violators should be caned in public place. This form of punishment has been carried out before the people, and the teungku and *dayah* communities welcome it as it could be a public deterrence, prompting others not to make the same mistakes. When the then Aceh Governor, Irwandi Yusuf, proposed that caning punishment be conducted inside the prisons to prevent minors from witnessing it, the teungku, dayah communities, and many religious organizations quickly rejected the proposal.

Discussion

The discussion in this section aimed to understand the identity development of *teungku* through dayah CoP based on Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning and the concept of legitimate peripheral participation and Wenger's (1998, 2010) social learning theory.

Wenger (1998, 2010) stated that one's identity develops through engaging in the learning process, formally or informally. In the context of dayah, all students at *dayah* institutions must actively involved in various formal learning and informal *dayah* activities, which helped them become *teungku*. They learn a series of *kitab kunèng*, written by credible ulama (Mundiri & Zahra, 2017) to equip themselves with correct knowledge on Islamic teachings. Besides, they need to experience living modestly, cooking by themselves, and earning money to survive while studying in dayah to shape strong characters (Syafe'i, 2017; Ulum, 2018; Zarkasy, 2006; Zuhriy, 2011). They also took part in many other activities in the society, such as leading the prayers for the deceased through which they develop leadership skills, which are important when they return to their society (Nasution et al., 2019). However, most of these activities, such as leading the prayers in the society, are usually carried out by male students. Here, Wenger et al. (2002) stated that learners' learning is achieved when they participate in the practices of CoPs, during which their identities are shaped and reshaped.

The CoP of dayah has a strong bond due to charismatic leaders' presence, either dayah leaders during their study in *dayah* or dayah graduates. What the charismatic *teungku* leaders say is powerful and is obeyed by all participants in the community (Nasution et al., 2019). Charismatic leaders are usually those who have moved to what Lave and Wenger (1991) call center or old-timers in the community. That is

why, when the charismatic *teungku* leaders declared wars against the colonials during World War I and World War II, all students and even people went to battle with high spirits. Similarly, when the charismatic *teungku* leaders declare to fight against other isms, which are believed not to be based on the school of *Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah*. This is also part of building students' character, in terms of *akhlak* or moral in Islamic society (Usman, 2020).

Another element of CoP is practice. They engage in learning many Islamic lessons at dayah, participating in teaching at *dayah*, gathering to remember the late dayah founders as part of identity development, and participating in community services. In this way, they build commitment to align with the practices in the dayah community (Nasution et al., 2019), which is a crucial part in the identity development (Wenger, 1998, 2010). By engaging in these activities, they might shape, revise, and strengthen their identities as *teungku*. However, as elucidated in Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning, this is part of building their identity in the periphery before moving forward to the center of the CoP. While being at the center, they can do all these activities smoothly and become leaders in the larger society. They then become old-timers (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Moreover, sharing information and networking with the members of dayah communities are among the most common practices. By being assigned to teach at dayah, they may experience real and complex teaching issues, which is crucial in building their leadership experiences. The literature has found that students with teaching responsibilities will develop practiced identities that can eventually revise their imagined identities (Xu, 2013). Also, they could experience a conceptual change regarding their teaching profession. Their attitude toward becoming teachers reflected more confidence and made students reconsider teachers' importance and responsibility as members of society (Villegas et al., 2020).

Conclusion

The findings on the identity development of the four teungku dayah to some degree extend previous research on identity development, even though many differences exist. Intriguingly, the CoPs of dayah in Aceh had lived hundreds of years before Wenger proposed theory, which has been practiced before the Dutch colonial invaded Aceh. That was why it was tough for the Dutch colonial to conquer Aceh.

The CoP of dayah falls into formal, less formal, and informal activities. The formal category of the students' teungku identity development started when they engaged in learning in dayah and participating in several activities of the teungku CoP. The less formal category happens when the students studying in dayah institutions involve in various activities in Aceh society, such as praying for the deceased. Meanwhile, informal activities include attending many social activities after graduating from dayah. Through such activities, they build their confidence and align with the common practices in the community. However, at first, they developed periphery identities and then gradually moved into the center.

Even though this study has attempted to delve into the lived experiences of the student teungku in their identity development, it only focused on the four respondents from traditional Islamic boarding schools. As more modern Islamic boarding schools are now striving alongside the traditional ones, further studies focusing on developing the identity of the student teungku in both traditional and modern Islamic boarding schools seem very logical. Such studies might yield more complex and exciting results of teungku identity development.

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ORCID iDs

Jarjani Usman https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3312-5825
Syabuddin Syabuddin https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6999-9375
Faishal Zakaria https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2359-705X

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