

Dakwah in Multicultural Societies: Pursuing Dakwah through Innovating Madrasa Education in Singapore

Mohd Amin Bin Kadir*

* Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang

KEYWORD

Pursuing Dakwah
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ABSTRACT

Muslim as minorities has a special place in a secular state like Singapore where freedom of religion is encript in the Constitution. *Dakwah* through education will result in character-in-action that able to transforms a person with sounds values like kindness, gratitude, tolerance, respect, empathize, and reflexivity. In multicultural society there is a need for every Singaporean to safeguard the social fabric to allow the community to live in peace and harmony. Working together towards similarities and iron out differences through frequent dialogues will reduce communal tensions. The *Madrasa* in Singapore has move forward from its humble beginning, adapting to changes and take bold steps for it's to stay relevance. The practice by Muslims is not exclusive but rather inclusive and sensitive about other religions practice as not to create religious conflict. The product of *madrasa* was given the option to pursue higher learning of different disciplines so that they will be the asset to the state, bringing Singapore to greater heights.

Alamat Korespondensi:

Mohd Amin Bin Kadir,
Department of Islamic (Religious) Education
Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang (UMM)
E-mail: mohd.amin@yahoo.com

INTRODUCTION

Cultural diversity is mainly being adopted by most countries in removing boundaries of disintegration and intolerance belonging to several cultural or ethnic groups towards harmonious societies. This diversity requires the involvement of effective policies, community leaders, and state government as key feature of governance. The lack of ability and capability in managing diversity will cause disaster to the societies. As Kymlicka (1995) points out the danger it will cause. This diversity gives rise to a series of important and potentially divisive questions. Minorities and majorities increasingly clash over such issues as language rights, regional autonomy, political representation, education curriculum, land claims, immigration and naturalization policy, even national symbols, such as the choice of national anthem or public holidays. Unknowingly to many, religious difference, co-existence of other religion, perception of believers towards other faith, ignoring differences, unwilling to work on similarities, intolerance, and diversity will have impact on the practice of multiculturalism. According to PEW Research Center, 2014, the most religiously diverse countries and territories that rank top are (1) Singapore, (2) Taiwan, (3) Vietnam, (4) Suriname, (5) Guinea-Bissau, (6) Togo, (7) Ivory Coast, (8) South Korea, (9) China, (10) Hong Kong, (11) Benin, and (12) Mozambique. In the case of Singapore, using the Religious Diversity Index of the religions Christians (18%), Muslims (14%), Unaffiliated (16%), Hindus (5%), Buddhists (34%), Folk Religion (2%), Other Religion (10%), and Jews (<1%).

Singapore as a secular state pays much attention to its tripartite community involvement involving the people, community leadership and the role of the state. Singapore being safe, multicultural society should never be taken for granted, recalled National Development Minister Khaw Boon Wan citing the ongoing turmoil in Cairo, Egypt. He also sees the need to inculcate the youth with the right character that will bring the country to the next leaps achieving greater heights.

The Background of The Problem

Singapore has a population of 5,399.2000 as of 2013 comprising Singapore Citizens 3,313.5000, Permanent Residents 531.2000, and Non-Residents 1,554.4000. In terms of ethnic distribution as of 2013, Chinese 74.2%, Malays (mostly Muslims) 13.3%, Indians 9.9% and others 3.3%. Singapore despite it was a secular state with a population of 5,399.2000 while the Malays comprises of 13.3%, there are six full-time *madrassa*, namely, *Madrassa Al-Irsyad*, *Madrassa Wak Tanjong*, *Madrassa Aljuined*, *Madrassa Al-Maarif*, and *MadrassaArabiah al-Islamiah* that have been instrumental in producing Islamic scholars. There are also seventy-one mosques actively in operations in Singapore. These are Islamic institutions serve as a platform conducting *dakwah* to the Muslims and Non-Muslims. Beside the *madrassa* and the mosques, other Islamic voluntary organizations also serve the same role.

It is of utmost important to exercise reflexivity in engaging different ethnics as it may cause religious conflict. Ethnic relations have always remains top agenda in the government list as it will turn into sensitive issues if not managed cautiously. Typically, incidents involving such issues seemingly affect relations between the Chinese ethnic majority and the Malay ethnic minority. The primordial sentiments associated with ethno-religious identity remain a powerful force in ethnic as well as state-society relations, according to Narayanan (2004). Singapore has witness bad experience involving the incidents in the Maria Hertogh Riots in 1950, Prophet Muhammad Birthday Riots in 1964, detention of Nanyang Siang Pau Editors in 1971, Istana Kampung Glam and Malay Heritage Centre issue in 1999, Tudung issue in 2002, and Jemaah Islamiah arrests in 2001 and 2002 (Narayanan, 2004). The social fabric will be torn apart due to the ripple effect of communal tensions or ideological contestations when there is lack of respects, misrepresentation, being monolithic, distort, and lacking of dialogue.

Statement of the Problem

In view of *dakwah* in multicultural societies in Singapore, institutional renewal of *Madrassa* and Mosque religious education plays a crucial part in the formation of social cohesiveness as the state recognize the freedom of religion. Under the Singapore Constitution, Article 15, it was spelt out as:

Freedom of religion

1) Every person has the right to profess and practise his religion and to propagate it; 2) No person shall be compelled to pay any tax the proceeds of which are specially allocated in whole or in part for the purposes of a «religion other than his own; 3) Every religious group has the right: a) to manage its own religious affairs; b) to establish and maintain institutions for religious or charitable purposes; and c) to acquire and own property and hold and administer it in accordance with law; 4) This Article does not authorise any act contrary to any general law relating to public order, public health or morality.

The Malay political leaders have been instrumental in spearheading and shaping the direction and objectives of *madrassa* education, identifying its problems and making attempts to resolve them with the overall aim of making them relevant within the context of Singapore's development (Noor Aisha, 2006).

DISCUSSION

The Significance of Institutional in Strategizing *Dakwah*

Institutional often regarded as the soul of an institute, school, and tertiary of higher learning. It is the underlying factors that shape the organization and was done consciously, systematic and strategically. These include the values, organizational behaviors, attitudes and beliefs, leadership style and behavior, institutional culture and norms of behavior, power, politics and conflict, and informal groupings. To some extent, institutions consisting of governance structures, social arrangements, norms and rules. It can also be regarded as ways of thinking organization. In short, an institutional is not an organization.

According to Hassan Langgulung (1992), institution is a regulatory system while association is behavior of a group of people abides by the regulatory. In other words, institutional is an abstract comprising of concept and not physically seen as an object or a building. Code, norms, ideology and etc. are all part of institutional, be it in the forms of written, material supplies, and organization symbol. In the context of Islamic school it has to abide to the fundamental of the teaching of Islam. Over the years there has been a massive renewal of religious components due to globalization, social evolution, progressive economic development, and the presence of multi-religious ideologies. The need to renewal is to embrace uncertainty and be certain of the complexity of the region couple by the domestic factors, changes in nature climate and unpredictable aggressive global forces that influence human beings needs.

Evolution Institution of Learning

Islam's religious history runs concurrently with the history of Islamic institutions. The formation of this institution and its development are often associated with religious movements, legal and theological. Seen from education point of view, it was very obvious Prophet Muhammad has educated the companions from the shackles of *jahiliyyah*, spiritual and intellectual darkness which includes the culture of silence and structural poverty. In terms of politics, the Prophet Muhammad had taught independence to those who feel being oppressed by the authority or people with power. Prophet Muhammad reminded the people of their rights and responsibilities so that they become literate in politics, which continue to participate in the decision-making process involving the society and state, enabling them to become courageous people knowing of their rights.

During the early period, mosque was seen an ideal venue for education to take place. Mosques initially start of as a place for congregational prayers in the form of worship in Islam. During the Prophet Muhammad's period, in the year of 632 (CE) he and his companion migrated (*hijrah*) from Mecca to Medina and during this journey he stop over at Quba to build a mosque (known as Quba Mosque) and upon reaching Medina, he too build a mosque there and was named Nabawi Mosque (meaning, mosque of the Prophet). This shows the importance of mosque in Islam. The mosque in Medina served as a focal point for private and public worship and plays the role of informal instruction of the believers in the religious law and related matters. At Nabawi Mosque the structure of learning is non-formal. An expansion to this mosque was an annex building known as *Kutab as-Suffah* which provide systematic and structure formal education and also served as teacher training college for the Muslims and this include the *sahaba* such as Abdullah bin Rawahah, Ubadan bin Somit, and Abu Ubaidah al-Jarrah.

Madrassa Education during the Early Days in Singapore

In Singapore, *madrassa* are known as Islamic Religious School. The term *madrassa* was used extensively during the twentieth century and mostly are located around the areas of Kampung Glam and Rochore Road. During this period in 1905, *Madrassa As-Sibyan* was known as the first *madrassa* and its proximity within the Sultan Mosque. The existence of this *madrassa* is link to an Indonesian religious teacher where he first taught Islamic materials in 1901 in his home at Bussorah Street. The focus on the learning mainly centered on learning the Qur'an. Learners from children to adults will recite Qur'an in the presence of the teacher by rote learning without understanding it. At any point of time the teacher will correct the mistake recited by the learners and only the learners able to recite it correctly and to the satisfaction of the teacher; the learners are allowed to move on to the next verse. It is worth to highlight that producing good Muslim is to inculcate good values as the core objectives of the Islamic education. Quran classes are mainly conducted in mosques and *surau* (a small attap house used by the villagers for religious purpose but not for Friday prayer congregation), teachers home or students home.

On 4th February 1908, *Madrassa Al-Iqbal* was officially opened and located at No. 107, Selegie Road and was owned by an Egyptian by the named Othman Affandi Ra'fat and the patron for the *madrassa* is known as Raja Ali al-Ahmadi. The *madrassa* integrate the education system adopt from the Egypt and the West. Running into financial difficulties, the *madrassa* lasted only 18 months after its operation and shifted the *madrassa* to Riau. It was later named as Ahmadiyah School and located at Pulau Penyengat and became the sole property of the government thereafter. Four years later in 1912, a trader named Syed Mohamed bin Ahmed bin Abdul Rahman Alsagoff built a *madrassa* known as *Madrassa Alsagoff* located in Jalan Sultan. The school was then expand to cater to the demand of the Muslim students from all races and not confined to the Arabs only and was officially opened in 1913 by the Governor of the Straits Settlements. There was paradigm shift to include English and Malay in the Instructional programme.

In 1927, a trader named Syed Abdul Rahman bin Junied bin Aljunied built a *madrassa* and named *Madrassa Aljunied* on the waqaf land. The intent of the waqaf land was initially to serve as a burial ground but the permission was turned down by the British. The instructional medium focusing only on Arabic and Malay language was not taught. The fluency of the students to communicate and read in Arabic has made this *madrassa* became famous not only in Singapore but in Southeast Asia. In 1936, the *madrassa* set up special classes to prepare lectures and missionaries. In 1938, the *madrassa* started to accept students studying in government school and open up classes for them in the afternoon. In 1932, *Madrassa Al-Khariah* was co-founded by Syed Abu Bakar Taha Alsagoff, the first principal of *Madrassa Aljunied*. He felt the need to have a *madrassa* in the eastern part of Singapore as most *madrassa* center in town. The establishments of this *madrassa* came from the donations of the Muslim community. This *madrassa* only provide elementary level education and was located in front of Kampung Wak Tanjung mosque in Paya Lebar and later shifted to Still Road in 1937. In 1936,

the establishment of Madrasa Al-Maarif by As-Syeikh Muhammad Fadlullah Suhaimi and was located at 14 Tanjong Katong Road. The madrasa was rebuilt through kind donation of Arab philanthropist by the named Syeikh Omar Bamadhaj who bought a piece of land at Ipoh Lane. This madrasa only accept girls unlike other madrasas. The subjects taught in this madrasa differ than other madrasa that include, English, Malay, Domestic Science and Mathematics, and the medium of instruction is English. The madrasa curriculum has similarities with government schools.

Madrasa Wak Tanjong Al-Islamiah was built in 1955. In 1987 and in 1993, a major fund-raising was launched to redevelop the madrasa into a new modern building which is located at 589 Sims Avenue. Madrasa Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiah was founded in 1947, formerly located at 67-6 Hindhede Road and registered in 1960 by Mr Basri bin Ahmad. Muis took over the ownership in 1991. It shifted and resided temporarily at a former Bukit Panjang Primary School at 17 Km Woodlands Road where the lease expired in 1996. It is now at another leased building at No 9, Winstedt Road. During the early days, there was huge demand for madrasa as parents felt the obligation of sending their children to acquire Islamic education for them to practice religious belief. There are around 50 madrasa during the peak period and many are in the form of informal village seminaries with 1 or 2 teachers teaching basic religious knowledge (Mukhlis Abu Bakar, 1999) and slowly it started to decline with only 6 madrasa till today.

The resettlement of villagers into staying in high rise building when the government wanted to develop on the occupying land of the villagers and the social pressure influencing the parents to send their children to state school adopting the secular education system has led to the decline in madrasa. Madrasa was seen as a last resort if the children cannot make it in the state school which make madrasa was not a preferred school by parents wanting their children to be equipped religious education. The stigma by the Malay community is that students who studied abroad after finishing their studies will end up being a religious teachers or working with government institutions dealing with Muslim affairs such as Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS) or Register for Muslim Marriages or Syariah Court.

Madrasa Education Policy

The mushrooming of educational information has steep-up the competitiveness among global countries on how school works in every nations. It was a norm the existence of borrowing of ideas or copying of ideas from one country to other country to raise the stake of education. This has a profound effect on the nation educational policy. In terms of concept, the term policy has a wide meaning given that the issues it has to embrace and the complexity of analyzing the policy. One common approach is to conceptualize policy as a programme of action, or a set of guidelines that determine how one should proceed given a particular set of circumstances (Les Bell and Howard Stevenson, 2006). According to Winch and Gingell (2004: iv), quoted by Edi Subkan in one of his article,

Education policy is based on ideas about human nature, about justice and about the purposes of education. These ideas are often not clearly articulated and can sometimes be hard to find behind the political rhetoric of pragmatism and the search for „what works“, as if policymaking were neutral exercise like fixing a broken engine. But education is at least partly about the overall aims that society has for itself and how these aims are realised in practice. It cannot, therefore, be a neutral technical exercise, but is invariably a deeply political, ethical and cultural one, bound up with the philosophical thinking that underlies the formation of educational policy.

In accordance to education practice by all nations, the adoption of education policy is a must. Education policy is understood as the provision or grammar rule that was decided and made by individual or group as basic requirement and serves as reference in education practice which is complex. The outcome of the policy need not only to be understood and implement, but also need to be analyzed, research, assessed, evaluated and to developed further. Analyzing and evaluating educational policies must be viewed from multidimensional approach and make a paradigm shift towards social implications, cultural, political, economic, psychological and other. This is because education policy consisting of basic philosophical-ideological-theoretical and on the other aspect it occupies a clear sociocultural context.

The Muslim minorities in Singapore in advancing its Islamic education actively review its process guided by its policy through Islamic Religious Council of Singapore or officially known as Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS). This was made possible when the parliament passed the Administration of Muslim Law Act (AMLA) in 1966. All the madrasas come under the Education Act. Under section 87 and 88 of the Administration of Muslim Law Act, the control of Muslim Religious Schools shall be vested in MUIS. MUIS initiated the Singapore Madrasa Education System comprises of the followings:

Philosophy of Education

An integrated effort to impart and acquire knowledge, skills and an internalisation of Islam based on the Qur'an and Sunnah in order to create a spiritually, intellectually and physically vibrant Muslim with a clear understanding of Islamic worldview. An integrated effort to impart an understanding of the modern world, and life skills needed to be ahead in this new competitive environment. An integrated curriculum designed to impart awareness of the student's responsibility as future religious leaders striving for excellence for one's own self and society for the attainment of the best of this world and the life hereafter. It is an education based on the following principles and beliefs:

That al-Qur'an and al-Sunnah (al-Wahy) and human reasoning (al-'Aql) are strong foundation for knowledge and learning. The development of the holistic man (al-Insan al-Kulli), spiritually, morally, intellectually and physically. That Islam is a mercy to mankind and strives for the attainment of success and happiness in this world and the hereafter. On the integration of knowledge. That each child is unique and endowed with potentials, having different inclinations and abilities. In keeping abreast of the latest development in education, Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) formed a Madrasa Strategic Unit under its umbrella to oversee these core areas such as: *Madrasa Curriculum*. This is an active effort to bring madrasa education to move with the changing times. The curriculum involves development of these materials:-Syllabus, Student Textbooks and Activity Books, Teachers' Manual, and Resource Kit. *Teachers' Upgrading and Development*, Madrasa Strategic Unit provides opportunities for academic and professional development of *asatizah* (religious teachers), as well as enrichment programmes. This is achieved via the comprehensive Teachers' Training Road Map. *Overseas Students' Welfare & Development*, A secretariat under Madrasa Strategic Unit looks into the development and welfare of those who study Islamic Studies at institutes of higher learning overseas. This secretariat is called the Student Resource Development Secretariat (SRDS). *Top Scholars Program*, To provide an early start to scholarly development, Muis started the Muis-Madrasa Student Scholars Program to the top 10% of Secondary 3 madrasa students. *Administration & Research*, To provides national assessment and coordination and policy research. Madrasa Strategic Unit coordinates the Primary 1 madrasa intake, administers and facilitates the following national examinations:-Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE). *Administration of Madrasa Fund*, Madrasa Strategic Unit administers Madrasa Fund via the Capitation Grant, Top-up Allowance for Asatizah (religious teachers) and Resource Grant for use of Audio Visual Aid, Library, National Education and Co-curricular Activities. This existence of MUIS with statutory power to oversee the welfare of the Muslim community as a minority through the Administration of Muslim Law Act (AMLA) under Singapore Constitution which explained the establishments and function of MUIS as follows:

Establishment and Functions of Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura

As from 1st August 1999, the Majlis Ugama Islam, Singapura, shall continue in existence. It shall be the function and duty of the Majlis: a) to advise the President of Singapore in matters relating to the Muslim religion in Singapore; b) to administer matters relating to the Muslim religion and Muslims in Singapore including any matter relating to the Haj or halal certification; c) to administer all Muslim endowments and funds vested in it under any written law or trust; d) to administer the collection of *zakat* and *fitrah* and other charitable contributions for the support and promotion of the Muslim religion or for the benefit of Muslims in accordance with this Act; e) to administer all mosques and Muslim religious schools in Singapore; and f) to carry out such other functions and duties as are conferred upon the Majlis by or under this Act or any other written law.

It has been a concern for many Muslim countries or Muslim authority overseeing the Islamic School as to whether the school management framework met the guidelines as stipulated in the Islamic Education World Congress 1980, quoted by SamsulNizar (2013) as follows:

"Islamic education aims to achieve overall growth of the human personality in a balanced way, through the training of the soul, intellect, rational human beings, feelings and senses. As such, education should meet the development of human beings in all aspects; spiritual, intellectual, imaginative, physical, scientific and language, both individually and collectively. As such, education should encourage all aspects of human life towards a better person and shape individuals to be submissive to the teachings of Allah."

Madrasa Education System

The madrasa existed as early as in 1912 and was built by rich Arab businessman by the name Syed Mohamed Alsagoff in which the madrasa was named Madrasa Alsagoff. These scholars are actively involved and to some extent holding key appointments in the religious sectors such as Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS), Registry of Muslim Marriages, Syariah Court, mosques and madrasas in Singapore as well as the region.

MUIS is the highest authority taking charge of Islamic matters and development of Muslim in Singapore led by a Muslim Minister in-charge of Muslim Affairs.

The madrasa are comparable with public school in which the curriculum includes subjects such as English, Mathematics, Science, and Mother Tongue besides the religious subjects. These subjects are made compulsory, in which the madrasa students at Primary 6 (year six) will be sitting for national exam, called Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) together with other students from national school. PSLE was first introduced in 1960 with four official languages, namely English, Chinese, Malay, and Tamil. It was used as a platform to select and placing Primary Six students (12 years of age) in secondary schools. (Tan Yap Kwang, et. al, 2008) Moving forward, the madrasa students are allowed to join public school based on their results or continued their study in madrasa.

At Secondary 4 (year 10) mostly at age 16 or 17, they are allowed to take the national exam called, Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (GCE _O' level) examination and is held annually in Singapore administer by Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board (SEAB). The examinations (including the setting-up of questions papers, science practical exam, and English oral) are mainly set by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), while Mother Tongue subjects such as Chinese, Malay and Tamil and Combined Humanities (Social Studies) are set by the Singapore Ministry of Education (MOE). The GCE _O' level examination (introduced in 1950s as part of British educational reforms) is of equivalent to the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examination taken by students in the United Kingdom. Based on the GCE _O' level results, madrasa students can opt to study at Singapore Polytechnics which offer various courses ranging from nursing to engineering or business management; upon completion of the course, they will be awarded with a diploma. For those who are keen in academics, they may continue their study either joining the Junior College or stay put at the madrasa of their choice to take the more in-depth and academically rigorous Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (GCE _A' level) examination at year 12 or 13 (mainly at age 18 or 19).

More interestingly, the *madrasa* adopt dual examination system, beside the national examination, the students will take the *madrasa* examination, called *TsanawiRabi'* and move on to *'Aliyyah*; continue their higher learning education normally at Middle-East Universities, such as Al-Azhar University (popular among the *madrasa* students), Madina University and etc. The GCE _A' level certificate is a qualification recognized internationally, valued and sought after by universities and employers. It allows Singaporean students to gain entry into local and overseas universities to further their education.

Madrasa in Singapore

There are two types of madrasa that exist in Singapore. The madrasa is to cater full-time and part-time students who wish to study Islamic education. The madrasa that cater to full-time students are privately funded and manage by board members. Mosque Madrasa is meant for part-time student who study in the public school and it is under the purview of Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS). MUIS will appoint a Mosque Management Board to oversee the running of the mosque including the mosque madrasa. As of 2014, there are six madrasas that accept full-time students in Singapore, namely, Madrasa Aljunied, Madrasa Al-Irsyad, Madrasa Alsagoff, Madrasa Al-Maarif, Madrasa WakTanjong, and Madrasa Arabiah. Those students graduated from these madrasas mainly will continue their further studies at higher tertiary institutions in the Middle-East. Beside Middle-East, there are also who pursue their studies in the local universities, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

The Madrasa of today has made a significant changes departing from the tradition. The orientation of curriculum in meeting the realities and demands from parents with greater exposure of different fields of knowledge and integrating academic subjects into curriculum has shape the attractiveness of madrasa education. Moving forward, the madrasa needs a strong school leaders and support from the community to advance them in facing challenges of globalization. The domain of knowledge works, thinking tools, digital lifestyles, and learning research are the four forces simultaneously creating the need for new forms of learning in the 21st century and supplying the tools, environments, and guiding principles required to support 21st century learning practices. (21st Century Skills, 2009). Through modernization and globalization, madrasas in Singapore boldly embrace the rapid changes in education landscape in reviewing its education system. The enthusiasm and courageous effort by the madrasas have the full support of the government as mentioned by the Minister for Communications and Information & Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs, Dr Yaacob Ibrahim in his speeches at the ceremony to present letters of participation to *asatizah* attending the overseas attachment programme at Darullfta, Cairo, on Tuesday 15 January 2013 at Madrasa Aljunied al-Islamiah as quoted by him,

We made a bold step to strengthen our full-time madrasa education when we introduced the Joint Madrasa System (JMS) in 2008. Madrasa Irsyad, Madrasa Aljunied and Madrasa AlArabiah came together for this forward-looking joint initiative with specialisation as a key strategy. With this move, Madrasa Irsyad offers primary-level schooling and acts as a feeder school to Madrasa Aljunied and Madrasa AlArabiah. Madrasa Aljunied offers the ukhrawi (religious) stream based on the Al Azhar University model, for those who are stronger in Arabic and Islamic studies. Madrasa Arabiah offers the academic stream, which provides an Islamic environment for students to pursue national curriculum subjects and eventually join the national post-secondary system. JMS allows students to be streamed according to their ability, aptitude and interest.

Joint Madrasa System (JMS) in Singapore

In 2008, madrasas in Singapore enter a new phase in creating history of meeting the 21st century skills by setting a new direction. The introduction of Joint Madrasa System (JMS) was formed to provide a holistic education system. The uniqueness of each madrasa involved as part of the Muslim Singaporean heritage still preserve on their past history, vision and mission. The intended curriculum is to provide a well-rounded and balance curriculum in both Islamic and modern sciences. Students will also be exposed on current contemporary issues in alignment with the curriculum. The intended curriculum is students-centred in equipping the needs of the students. All the six full-time madrasa came together to discuss on the JMS. Involvement of the madrasa as part of the JMS is on voluntarily basis. Out of the six madrasas, only three madrasa agreed to be part of the JMS.

In 2009, the three madrasas, namely, Madrasa Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiah, Madrasa Aljunied Al-Islamiah and Madrasa Al-Arabiah Al-Islamiah in their joint effort collaborate together within the JMS framework. Professional and education expert was employed to ensure the success and smooth transition of the three madrasas towards JMS. During the start-up, MUIS officials and key madrasa leaders often meet-up to provide support to JMS. Part of the progress made to JMS madrasas includes the following:

Curriculum Improvements

The JMS curriculum has been improved and pedagogies enhanced to facilitate students' learning in both religious and academic subjects.

Enhanced P3 Science Curriculum: (Al-Irsyad)

Development of English Language Skill Mastery Package (PSLE & O Level)

PSLE Intensive Revision Programme – Math & Science Buddies (Al-Irsyad)

Introduction of Social & Emotional Learning Programme (Al-Arabiah)

Infrastructure Upgraded

In addition, the upgrading of infrastructure at all three JMS madrasa has been put into place to support an enhanced curriculum that will benefit students through better facilities.

Additional classrooms at Madrasa Al-Irsyad

Fully-fitted Science Laboratory at Madrasa Al-Arabiah

Facilities upgrading works at Madrasa Aljunied in 2008-2009

Student Development

Students in the JMS madrasa are exposed to more character building and self-development opportunities. Students are challenged academically and groomed to develop into community-oriented individuals.

Arabic Debates: locally & overseas (Aljunied)

LEGO Mindstorms Robotics (P3-P4) (Al-Irsyad)

Creativity & Critical Thinking in Science & Invention (Al-Arabiah)

Pedagogies Enhanced

The learning of math and sciences is strengthened with intensive programmes specially developed and supported by a resource panel comprising senior educationists in Singapore.

Differentiated Instruction Learning Package (Al-Arabiah)

Cooperative Learning (Aljunied)

Problem Based Learning (Aljunied)

The JMS philosophy embodies an integrated and holistic learning of both Islamic and academics sciences, and still stay rooted to *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* and the rich Islamic tradition. It is evident from the philosophy of JMS that while the re-construct Islamic education is still rooted to *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*, it still embraces modernization and wanting to be the fore runner in *madrasa* education on par with Singapore education system. It is a balancing system taking into account the reality of a borderless globalization, parent's feedback, community aspirations and most importantly student's needs.

Management of Islamic Institutions

Management of Islamic Institutions is a process of managing Islamic institution involving the human resources in achieving the objective of effective and efficient Islamic Education. The essence of management are al tadbir (management) which derived from the word dabbara (manage).

Meaning: He manages and regulates (every) affair from the heavens to the earth; then it (affair) will go up to Him, in one Day, the space whereof is a thousand years of your reckoning (i.e. reckoning of our present world's time). (Sura As-Sajdah, verse 5)

The word *yudabbiru al amra* brings the meaning of manage. To ensure of its effectiveness and efficiency are subject to the following principles as spelt out as follows:

Planning:

Meaning: O you who believe! Fear Allah, and keep your duty to Him. And let every person look to what he has sent forth for tomorrow, and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Well-Acquainted with what you do. || (Sura Al-Hasyr, verse 18)

Organize:

Truth which is not organized will be defeated by the evil which is organized. (Ali bin Abu Thalib)

Professionalism:

If amanah is neglected, so wait till its destruction. Abu Hurairah asked, "How about putting that amanah, O Messenger of Allah?" He replied, "When a case handed over to people who are not experts, so wait till its destruction. (Al Bukhairi)

Reward:

Gives salary/wage to your employee before his sweat dries. (Ibn Majah)

Conflict Management:

Meaning: If you fear a breach between them twain (the man and his wife), appoint (two) arbitrators, one from his family and the other from hers; if they both wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation. Indeed Allah is Ever All-Knower, Well-Acquainted with all things. (Sura Al Nisa, verse 35)

Consistency:

Meaning: O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do? Most hateful it is with Allah that you say that which you do not do. (Sura Al Shaff, verse 2-3)

Strategize:

Meaning: And had your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed, all of them together. So will you (O Muhammad SAW) then compel mankind, until they became believers. || (Sura Yunus, verse 99)

Management is human activity plagued with human problems. It is crucial not just to understand the management techniques but how to manage people. People are the object of ensuring the success of management in facing challenges and uncertainty world market. Therefore human being should become the focus. Human being comprise of the body and the soul. Much has been done on managing the body of human being but managing the soul was neglected or ignorant. (Syed Othman Alhabshi, et. al, 1998)

Function of Management

Management experts describe the functions of management as follows: (Imron Fauzi, 2012): 1) Henry Fayol: Planning, Organizing, Commanding, Coordinating and Controlling; 2) Luther Gullich: Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Coordinating, Reporting and Budgeting; 3) Koontz and O'Donnel: Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Leading and Controlling; 4) George R. Terry: Planning, Organizing, Actuating and Controlling; and 5) The Ling Gie: Planning, Decision Making, Directing, Coordinating, Controlling and Improving.

Institutional Behaviour

It is crucial to seek knowledge of all aspects of behavior in organizational settings through the systematic study of individual, group and organizational processes. The primary purpose of such knowledge is to enhance organizational effectiveness and individual well-being. The world has changed rapidly and for an organization to remain competitive and usefulness is to adapt to the more rigorous and turbulent environments. Making changes and dramatic adjustments will enable an organization to sustain hence, increase its effectiveness in managing the organization. (James L. Gibson, et.al, 1990)

The institutional behaviour are accord to three disciplines namely, psychology (personality system), sociology (social system), and anthropology (cultural system). An Institution is a structured social entity comprising an arrangement of people to accomplish specific goals. Major influences on behavior in school are interrelated influences that involve individual which led to personality, skills knowledge and abilities; values;

needs and expectations. Whereas for group can be seen from the structure and functions, role relationship, group influences and peer pressure. As for school, it consists of vision, mission, goals and objectives, technology, structure, and leadership style. For the environment consists of social, cultural, physical, economic, political and government, unions and stakeholders.

Main Environmental Factors that Impinge on the School

It is important to have a better understanding the basic foundations of individual behavior in which will determine the effectiveness of the organization operations because organizational behavior follows principles of human behavior (James L. Gibson, et.al, 1990) and if emotions of individual behavior are not managing properly it will lead to decrease in the effectiveness of an organization as stated by Russel. (Emotions in Organizational Behavior, 2005)

Biographical characteristics can be track from the individual personal records such as age, ability, gender, marital status, and tenure. Age has always been the main considerations because employers believe performance declines with age. Countries such as Europe, Japan, America and Singapore have ageing workforce but they have lower turnover. The primary concerns of employing ageing workers are due to the perceptions that older staff/teachers have to be replaced in succession planning, most likely resistant to change because of force habit, less neither receptive to new ideas, nor productive and skills may be outdated. Perception is the process through which we select, organize, and interpret.

Personality

The unique and stable patterns of behavior, thoughts and emotions exhibited by individuals. The sum of total ways, in which an individual acts, reacts and interacts with others. A set of distinctive personal characteristics, motives, emotions, values, interests, attitudes, and competencies.

School Culture

School Culture is a system of shared values, assumptions and beliefs that guide teachers/staff behavior that differentiates one school from others. School Culture is the personality of an institution. It is the social glue that binds the institution together. Functions of School Culture is to defines institutional boundaries of which the perimeter can be extend to maximize its potential; creates a sense of identity to which the school community feel they belong to the organization hence create ownership; generates teachers/staff commitment and accountable in their action; enhances social stability that promotes harmony and work-love balance; provides standards of teachers/staff behavior and uphold integrity; and a control mechanism that shapes teachers/staff attitudes and values which become role-model and ambassador of the school.

Factors that influence on school culture normally will include the philosophy of the school founder, its history and traditions, school activities, advancement of technology, size of school, school population, external environment, goals and objectives, and location of school.

Institution Structure

A formalised structure is an important component of an institution. It is through this structure where we see people in the institution interact and engage in performing the tasks to achieve the institution goal. On how the tasks are being carried out depended on how the tasks was crafted and formally allocated, divided, grouped and coordinated. It has to spell out clearly to give directions as to who reports to whom as can be seen in the interactions patterns. Vertical structures normally would have many hierarchies where else horizontal structures have fewer hierarchies. An institution's structure mainly consists of three components namely, complexity, formalisation and centralisation. Complexity defines on the level of complex of specialisation within the institution and the levels of reporting structures. Formalisation shapes the behaviour of the people through its rules and procedures. Centralisation is the focal point of decision making from its hierarchies within the institution structure.

In choosing the best structure for an institution, the main consideration is to choose one that promotes effective work and minimises complexity. The structure must be flexible and adaptable that focusing on expertise and knowledge rather than authority and position. It is not just a top-down or bottom-up approach but a grapevine approach that allows employee to interact at all levels of hierarchies to achieve a common goals.

Strengthening Thought in School Curriculum

Thinking community depends on the ideals and vision of a progressive curriculum to develop a culture of thinking. The curriculum has a visionary idealism superior to polish and develop the intellectual potential of the students. Thinking community are the people who are knowledge able and have the capacity of higher order thinking to over come problem, develop and achieve success and be an as setto the community and national development. Understanding a country's education policy an help to set direction and purpose of education to be implemented. This is to ensure that students are also useful and meet the needs of the country.

In our current context that was adopted by most Islamic institution carry two types of knowledge that were taught in school and acquired by our students. First type of knowledge mainly focuses on humanities, social sciences, technical, and natural sciences which are closely link to the western form of civilization. These include the adoption of their intellectual framework, philosophy and background through western mentality. Second type of knowledge is known as Shar'i adopted by the Muslim. It can be subdivided into knowledge of objective and knowledge of means and both of this can come under the heading of al-ulum al-naqliyyah (transmitted knowledge). (SyakhTaha Jabir Al-Alwani, 2005) The successful implementation of a curriculum includes several aspects and this includes an Islamically-sound Mission and Vision, a Code of Ethics, and clear Goals and Objectives. The curriculum, in turn, has a direct influence on the education of a student. It is important to note that an Islamic Educational Institution is compatible with any form education, not strictly an Islam education. (Ali Abu-Rahma and Khadijah Abu-Rahma, 2013)

Obviously education curriculum has under gone many changes from the time of the Prophet until now. To plan or forma curriculum should take into account the planning, production, research and implementation. Dynamic nature of the curriculum requires adaptationat all times. The effectiveness ofthe curriculum depends on teachers who are major advocates of curriculum implementation. Educational institutions that wish to develop a curriculum must take into account many factor sand conditions that must be applied with an understanding of the role of curriculum.

Characteristic of High Performing Schools

A research⁸ was done in Washington, USA (Shannon, G.S. and Bylsma, P, 2007) in identifying the most prominent characteristic of a success school. It was noted that there are no single characteristic that determine the success of a school. In achieving success for a school is a long process that arouse within school commitment, affecting values, attitudes, beliefs, and instructional practices. Nevertheless, the researchers have identified nine characteristics that often found in the high performing school:

A clear and shared focus:

The focus is on achieving a shared vision and all understand their role in achieving the vision. The focus and vision are developed from common beliefs and values, creating a consistent direction for all involved.

High standards and expectations for all students:

Teachers and staff believe that all students can learn and meet high standards. While recognizing that some students must overcome significant barriers, these obstacles are not seen as insurmountable. Students are offered an ambitious and rigorous course of study.

Effective school leadership:

Effective instructional and administrative leadership is required to implement change processes. Effective leaders proactively seek needed help. They nurture an instructional program and school culture conducive to learning and professional growth. Effective leaders have different styles and roles, teachers and other staff, often have a leadership role.

High levels of collaboration and communication:

There is strong teamwork among teachers across all levels and with other staff. Everybody is involved and connected to each other, including parents and members of the community, to identify problems and work on solutions.

Curriculum, instruction and assessments aligned with state standards:

The planned and actual curriculums are aligned with the essential academic learning requirements Research-based teaching strategies and materials are used. Staff understands the role of classroom and mode of assessments, what the assessments measure, and how student work is evaluated.

Frequent monitoring of learning and teaching:

A steady cycle of different assessments identify students who need help. More support and instructional time is provided. Teaching is adjusted based on frequent monitoring of student programs and needs. Assessment results are used to focus and improve instructional programs.

Focused professional development:

A strong emphasis is placed on training staff in areas of most need. Feedback from learning and teaching focuses extensive and ongoing professional development. The support is also aligned with the school vision and objectives.

A supportive learning environment:

The school has a safe, civil, healthy and intellectually stimulating learning environment.

High levels of family and community involvement:

There is a sense that all have responsibility to educate students, not just teachers and school staff. Families, businesses, social service agencies and community organisation, education institutions all play a vital role in this effort.

These nine characteristics can also been found in madrasa, but not much attention was given to capitalise its strength or review it as area of improvements on this characteristic.

CONCLUSSION

To conduct audit regularly on Education Institutional to ensure its relevance and the direction took by the institute are in the right direction. The audit done must be a whole school approach. Allah said in Sura Al-Hasyr, verse 18, meaning: *O you who believe! Fear Allah and keep your duty to Him. And let every person look to what he has sent forth for tomorrow, and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Well-Acquainted with what you do.* In meeting the demands of today's world is full of advanced technology and the development of infrastructure that is so great. Demographic society has changed. The author argues in accordance with the principles of the formation and organization of Islamic education curriculum is integrated in nature, there is a need to reviewed and reorganized the curriculum of Islamic education institutions periodically. Managing inner soul should be given considerable attention for the development of mankind in integrating the intrinsic and extrinsic values.

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