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## ADOPTING SURAU EDUCATIONAL CONCEPT AS A LONG DISTANCE LEARNING MODEL

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### **Abstract**

*One of the current issue in global education has changed to the paradigm of local wisdom concept. This trend was caused by the failure of “modern” concept of education which is not able to humanize the human. For several years educators have conducted teaching and learning process in formal schools but some of them still failed in educating their students. The failure of modern concept of education has made many researchers to do research in local wisdom concept because this concept was considered as an alternative to answer the question. Years ago Minangkabau people were educated in surau as an informal school. Many great persons have been produced in surau. The concept of education in surau is very interesting because learners are educated in three main subjects namely religion, culture and the knowledge of social life aspects. These subjects become a basic knowledge for learners so that they are being well-prepared in facing this life. This article tries to propose the concept and how to apply the concept of surau in modern life. The concept will be applied in a model of long distance learning of surau. Informational technology will have significant role to apply this concept where all learners can learn as if they were in surau. Long distance learning has helped many people in learning. It has no reason for modern people not to learn in surau because surau has been created in their home.*

**Key Words:** Adopting, *Surau*, Long Distance Learning, Local Wisdom

### **Introduction**

*S*urau is a non formal education in Minangkabau. It had been known since the era of Islam came to Minangkabau. Many great persons had been produced in *surau* and some of them had been well known widely in national and international forum. Let's take several examples, Mr.Dr.Mohammad Hatta, H.Agus Salim, Mr.Mohammad Yamin, Prof.Dr.H. Mahmud Yunus and many others who had ever followed education in *surau* in their life. It seems to us that *surau* had made them being “humanized” person who have given significant contribution to this country.

Minamoto (1994) states that achievements of Minangkabau people beginning in the 14th century, Minangkabau people settled outside West Sumatra, spreading their influence to Java, Sulawesi, the Malay peninsula, Thailand, Brunei, and the Philippines. The Minangkabau tradition of actively pursuing education has resulted in Minangkabau people reaching a prominence out of proportion to their small numbers in Indonesia. Many Minangkabau are politicians, writers, *ulama*, scientists, film producers, and businessmen.

Many Minangkabau people held prominent positions in the Indonesian and Malay nationalist movement. From 1920 to 1960, political leadership in Indonesia was dominated by Minangkabau such as Mohammad Hatta, a former Indonesian Prime Minister and Vice President; Muhammad Yamin, a former Indonesian government minister; Indonesian diplomat Agus Salim, a former Indonesian government minister; Sutan Sjahrir, a former Indonesian Prime Minister and a founder of the Socialist Party of Indonesia; and Muhammad Natsir, a former Indonesian Prime Minister and a leader of Masyumi, a major Islamic political party. Rasuna Said, an Indonesian nationalist political leader, became the first female minister in the Indonesian government.

Minangkabau writers Marah Roesli, Abdul Muis, Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana, Idrus, and Hamka, and poets Muhammad Yamin, Chairil Anwar, and Taufik Ismail have made significant contributions to modern Indonesian literature. During the 16th century, Minangkabau traders were active in the medieval Malay kingdom, traveling to Aceh, Kedah, Siak, Johor, and Malacca. Today, Minangkabau businessmen are prominent in the restaurant, media, healthcare, and textile industries. In this era Minangkabau undergone the golden era.

But nowadays the existence of Minangkabau people have decreased every year. Only few of them have good position in national governance and other field of the social life. What might cause the problem? And what will be the best solution for this case? And who should do this? They are big questions to be answered!

Based on some experts opinion that the decrease of the human resources is dominantly caused by their education. Good education will give significant contribution to human life because they need to be educated before facing the real life. If the human have good education so that they will have a good foundation for their life.

Gearhart (2010) concludes that education helps reduce poverty by preparing individuals to contribute productively in work environments. A minimum level of completed education is often required for obtaining a job. People who are more highly educated tend to earn more money on average than those with lower levels of education. Learning about real-world transactions, such as investments and retirement planning, helps people avoid financial struggles and poverty.

Then disease prevention is a benefit of education that affects humanity. Teaching people how to avoid dangers and risks for contracting diseases is important for halting the spread of diseases. Health is also impacted by education through the knowledge of dietary requirements. Consuming recommended amounts of nutrients is beneficial for maintaining and improving health. Knowing what to do in accidents or emergency situations is another way that education contributes to health.

Education promotes peace and diplomacy, and understanding people with cultural differences has positive effects socially. Learning about various countries and cultures gives many people a greater appreciation for life. The ability to understand multiple perspectives improves problem-solving and decision-making skills. Through contributing to personal development and growth, education helps to build character.

The next question that should be answered is what kinds of education we should have in this modern era? One of the best answers is to learn from our local wisdom education because it had showed us the successful education process in the past. As Minangkabau people we must learn from *surau* educational concept because it was known an informal education for Minangkabau people. It is very cultural based education. But the next questions will come to our mind such as “is it possible for us to learn in *surau* now? Is *surau* still relevant now? How can we go to *surau*?”

In this modern technology we can bravely declare nothing impossible. In this paper I will share the ideas for “bringing” *surau* to your own home which is often called long distance learning model where every people can learn by their own way, their own style and time for learning.

### **Surau Educational Concept; Between Fact and Reality**

Haviz (2015) states the presence condition of Islamic non-formal education in West Sumatera are in insufficient condition whether in its governance, management or organization. This fact is supported by Rasyid’s statement in 2012. The main reasons for these chaos are because (a) No inventory of the number of students and number of units, the condition of the facilities, methods, curriculum and quality of teachers including the ability as well as the quality of its graduates; (b) The absence of a clear hierarchy and qualifications and controlled properly and appropriately; (c) Since the past 10 years, not all mosques and prayer rooms that applied classification and specification of *Madrasah Diniyah Awaliyah(MDA)*, *Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah(MDT)*, *Taman Pendidikan al-Quran(TPA)* and *Taman Pendidikan Seni Al-Quran(TPSA)* because of the limitations of teachers, students and the learning time; (d) any difference in understanding the types of Islamic non-formal education in West Sumatra and (e) No parent organization as the control, monitor and evaluate the entire education of *al-Qur'an* in West Sumatra.

Based on the explanation of the results and discussion above, it was concluded that *surau* and *madrasah Minangkabau* of West Sumatra, Indonesia is considered as a part or a form of Islamic non-formal education institutions. The results also showed that the profile of *surau* and *madrasah Minangkabau* of West Sumatra Indonesia which has been converted under the minimum service standards that have been established by government regulations. The first four of these standards include, management and organization, covering aspects of identity, vision and mission, as well as management. Second, the curriculum includes, instructional planning, implementation of learning, evaluation of learning, teachers / educators and students. Third, media and learning resources covering infrastructure, facilities and instructional media. Fourth, funding and accountability.

Haviz also suggested one of the efforts that can be done to overcome this problems is to empower *surau* and *madrasah*. Many programs can be done to optimize the role of *surau* and *madrasah*, for example, by empowering the religious social activists, conducting training methods of learning and other activities. Empowerment will also restore the role of social institutions that have been lost in *Minangkabau*, because of the change of the role of traditional structures (*panghulu*, *manti*, *malin* and *dubalang*) in strengthening the role of religion in *Minangkabau*.

### **Long Distance Learning**

What is Distance Learning? Rouse (2005) states distance learning, sometimes called e-learning, is a formalized teaching and learning system specifically designed to be carried out remotely by using electronic communication. Because distance learning is less expensive to support and is not constrained by geographic considerations, it offers opportunities in situations where traditional education has difficulty operating. Students with scheduling or distance problems can benefit, as can employees, because distance

education can be more flexible in terms of time and can be delivered virtually anywhere.

There are several popular distance learning technologies include: Voice-centered technology, such as CD or MP3 recordings or Webcasts Video technology, such as instructional videos, DVDs, and interactive videoconferencing Computer-centered technology delivered over the Internet or corporate intranet. Studies indicate that distance learning can be as effective as the traditional format when the methods are appropriate to the teaching tasks, there is student-teacher interaction, and the teachers provide students with appropriate and timely feedback.

Distance learning is a way of learning remotely. It can be defined as a method of studying specifically designed for students who are separated from teachers or assistants by physical distance. Distance learning is carried out by means of the Internet and web technologies.

Distance learning is often associated with the term E-learning. The term E-learning is one of many terms containing the prefix 'E-' that is frequently mentioned in recent times.

Vize (2002) proposed several different definitions of E-learning, depending on various professions and experiences of people who use them. These definitions are often classified into two groups: a) technical definitions with emphasis placed on technology (the "E" part of the name), e.g. "*E-learning is any form of learning, teaching and education that is supported by the use of computer technology, with emphasis on computer networks that are based on Internet technologies.*" b) pedagogical definitions with emphasis placed on education, that is, teaching and learning ("learning" part of the name), e.g. "*E-Learning is an interactive or two-way process between teachers and students with the help of electronic media where emphasis is put on the learning process while the completion of the process is performed by means of media.*"

Distance learning has greatly improved in the past few years, mainly through the development of computer networks, particularly the development of Internet hypermedia services WWW. Nowadays, the term distance learning is very often replaced with the term On-line learning, which emphasises a special form of E-learning or E-education.

One of the greatest advantages of distance learning is that it allows continuous learning and professional development. Students independently decide on time, place and pace of learning. Furthermore, students have at their disposal a large number of subjects and different study programmes. Thus, it may be said that the advantages of distance learning are:

*First, own pace;* Students can go through learning materials at their own pace and as many times they want. They can go faster through simple lessons and take more time for more complex and demanding lessons. *Second, place for learning;* Depending on media used for distribution of learning materials through a distance learning system, students can learn in places that best suit them. Thus, students can be at home or at work and access information available via the Internet, send and receive e-mail messages, etc.

*Third, way of learning;* Everyone has their own way of learning. Some students prefer active, while others prefer passive learning. Lectures via distance learning allow different degrees of interaction between teachers and students, and among students as well. Some students study independently by reading materials, making notes and

performing required tasks. Some students learn better if they participate in discussions with other students by using e-mails, teleconferencing or videoconferencing. Some students prefer multimedia elements such as graphics, animation, and sounds while learning. Thus, the most appropriate courses for them are the ones realised through the WWW services and the Internet.

*Fourth, practical work with various technologies;* Distance learning system relies on various technologies, such as computers, CD players, VCRs, etc. Therefore, students acquire knowledge and skills on the usage of these technologies as well.

*Fifth, independent learning;* in addition to all materials for learning, distance learning students are encouraged to independently explore new sources of information. They gather more information in order to gain knowledge in a particular area, or to successfully cope with a particular skill. Students are usually very motivated and want to solve tasks. *Sixth, time;* The advantage of distance learning is studying in your own time. Students can study 24 hours a day, because they have access to teaching materials via distance learning system seven days a week.

*Seventh, Communication with teachers and assistants;* New technologies enable high quality and fast communication with teachers and assistants, especially by means of audio and video recordings of lectures, e-mails, telephone, etc. The biggest challenge or problem with E-learning is assuring students to enrol in on-line study programmes, to actively participate in the teaching process and to successfully complete their studies. This type of study greatly depends on different technologies (besides the fact that making of e-learning contents takes too much time).

### **Building Surau at Your Home**

Peters (1998) suggests that we have to realize that distance education requires different learning and teaching behaviours. The students have to develop and get used to and even internalize a new approach as they have to organize their learning independently and as they have to take over many responsibilities from their teachers. They must be active not only in performing their learning tasks, but also in interpreting and critically reflecting what they are doing when they learn. Otherwise they can never improve their learning without external intervention. If they are not active themselves – nothing will happen. Adults in employment and with a family find it often very difficult to maintain the motivation for such a learning behaviour.

Further more, the teachers have to plan everything beforehand very carefully as they have to construct the artefacts mentioned which must be able to perform the teaching functions required. Later they must keep themselves informed and become fully conscious of what is going on in the teaching learning process in which possibly thousands of students are involved. They must acquire relevant data about the progress of this process. And they should evaluate it constantly. Nowadays, they are expected to present some of their teaching contents, for instance, in form of hypertexts and hypermedia.

The concept which is going to be applied for long distance learning is adopting surau educational concept not to rebuilt or revitalize surau as the real building. The concept must be transferred into a new model because of the limitation and the difference of of life for every people now. The concept should be able to accessed by every body in a separated place. We call it as a long distance learning. We must record

all of the subjects learnt in surau into a form of DVD or video or any kinds of material for long distance laeraning.

Many experts have been successful in recording and creating a new model of long distance learning. Based on several research it can be concluded that long distance learning could be in several ways below, they are:

- 1) **WBT – Web Based Training** is used by publishing the learning content on WEB site of the educational institution. The benefits of this method of the distribution of the learning materials are: quick distribution - students can access to the offered material through WWW, it is possible to include hypermedia materials, the service can be used by individuals or groups at the same time, the possibility of linking, multimedia contents, the simplicity of reproducing and publication of contents, the possibility of administrating the access, content interactivity etc.
- 2) **E-mail** is the simplest form of a synchronous interactivity and it mostly used as an appendix with the other forms of communication. The benefits of using the email: simplicity during the use, communication is private, enables a sufficient amount of time for thinking and answering.
- 3) **Mailing lists** are the service with very similar form of interaction, advantages and disadvantages as email, advantages of post lists, it also enables usage simplicity, the adaptability to the group work, enables the dividing of students and organizing into various smaller groups the students of which have more characteristics in common.
- 4) **On-line forums** as well as the lists enable the public debates, questions and answers are being sent, it is possible to open a new discussion group within the certain thematic area. This form of communication helps so that bit data banks do not take much space on our disks, it enables correspondence learning, by using file transfer, course material transfer and also helps create a bulletin board for the communication with the teachers or *guru in surau*.
- 5) **Internet Relay Chat (IRC)** is the synchronous communication based on textual messages through the Internet or Intranet in real time, and it enables connection between students with mostly equal knowledge, equality of students, the objectivity of evaluation and the possibility to recoup the missed content.

By designing *surau* as a model of long distance learning we also have to consider several characters of the long distance learning model in order to make it as open as possible and easy to be accessed. Vioreanu (1996) viewed that the 6 characteristics of openness are:

1. **Open Access:** check if there are specific requirements for entry into a programme of study. The most open institutions require no requirements to enter, i.e. they are open to all students. Next the accessibility may differ between the possibilities to recognize prior learning and work experience as relevant antecedents to end.
2. **Freedom of Time:** separation of teacher and learner in time or place, or in both time and place. You should check if indeed you can study whenever you want.
3. **Freedom of Pace:** Learners are not required to complete a programme of study within a specific time. Instead, learners learn at their own pace and make their own decisions about the learning path that is to be followed for their programme. However, some distance teaching institutions differ in the offers and some programs are more closely paced (consider our filter option study pace when narrowing down your options on our portal).

4. **Freedom of Place:** Learners are not required to fulfil a residency requirement at the host institution. Most learners do not (have to) leave their home or work place as they pursue a programme of study. (please employ our filter option presence requirements when narrowing down your options on our portal).
5. **Open Programming:** can you study at your own pace and place selecting the modules you want to study, and stacking those to a bachelor and graduate programs? Are there entry and exit points in the curriculum? Can you construct your own curriculum?
6. **Open to People:** check if a programme offered is open to all kind of people. Is it open to people abroad, open for the disabled, etc? Look at their services and how learning institutions have adopted the principle of equity of access for all. Again here you will find information in the detailed programme descriptions on our portal.

## Conclusion

In this modern era it is better for us to revitalize (adopting) the local wisdom concept especially in education. The local concept of education in Minangkabau is *surau* as a non formal education. Eventhough it was called “a traditional concept” for modern educators but it had been successfully educated great persons in any different areas or subjects. The basic education is in *surau* for young generation. The young generation must undergone *surau* education because they can learn at least three subjects namely religious, ethic and culture. When they have got the three basic educations they are able to continue to learn other subjects as well.

The new *surau* model will be in a long distance learning where every body can learn from any places and anytimes. To initiate and design the concept of *surau* in a long distance learning model is the big challenge for all educators and experts to serve the young generation with a complete media. When it is ready to be applied there is a must for young generation to access it through media from their home. They should not go to a real *surau* like Minangkabau people did in the past.

The concept which will be applied is in a model of long distance learning of *surau*. Informational technology will have significant role to apply this concept where all learners can learn as if they were in *surau*. Long distance learning has helped many people in learning. It has no reason for modern people not to learn in *surau* because *surau* has been created in their home.

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