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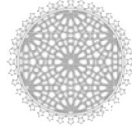
The journal focuses on Aceh and Malay Archipelago heritage studies. As the first socio-scientific journal to focus on Aceh and Malay Archipelago heritage, Nahrasiyah: Journal of Aceh and Malay Archipelago Heritage will be of interest to scholars and students in various academic fields related to the topics.

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Mandailing Ulama in Modern Malaysia: The Intellectual Network and Works of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Mandīfī

Syah Wardi^{1*} & Mohd. Yusri bin Jusoh²

Abstract: This article examines the intellectual network and manuscript legacy of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Mandīfī, a scholar from South Tapanuli, Indonesia, who dedicated his knowledge abroad in Malaysia and Saudi Arabia. The study employs a literature review approach with a historical perspective. Primary sources for this research consist of all works authored by the scholar, written entirely in Malay with Arabic script. The study demonstrates his dissemination of reformist ideas through religious education in both Malaysia and the Haramain, alongside the composition of numerous yellow books (*kitab kuning*). He fostered relationships with various scholars and attracted numerous students in both the Haramain and Malaysia. All his scholars are prominent figures in the Shāfi‘ī and Ash‘arī schools. Additionally, he propagated neo-Sufism by harmonizing between Shariah and Sufism. This study further corroborates Azyumardi Azra’s theory on the network of scholars.

Keywords: ulama, Mandailing, Malaysia, intellectual networks, Islamic manuscripts

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Introduction

Researchers have demonstrated a growing interest in the manuscripts of Nusantara scholars. Oman Faturrahman stated that Nusantara manuscripts have indeed begun to attract attention from domestic researchers, particularly those within Islamic state universities who have examined manuscripts from various regions in Indonesia.¹ Studies conducted by experts on Nusantara manuscripts have been published in numerous reputable journals. Their research encompasses manuscripts from scholars in Aceh,² Mandailing,³ Minangkabau,⁴ Jawa,⁵ Sulawesi,⁶ and Mindanao.⁷ However, this does not imply that the investigation of Nusantara scholars' manuscripts has been conclusively completed by these experts.

More specifically, the manuscripts of Mandailing scholars, an ethnic group in North Sumatra,⁸ Indonesia, have not yet received adequate attention. Existing studies primarily focus on the history of Islam in Mandailing,⁹ and the intellectual networks between Mandailing scholars and those from other regions.¹⁰ While researchers from Malaysia have conducted numerous studies on the thoughts of these scholars, there is still a lack of specific research on the intellectual network and manuscripts produced by Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Mandīfī.¹¹ Therefore, it is imperative to undertake a study on the intellectual network and manuscripts generated by this scholar.

Methods

This article examines two aspects: the intellectual network and manuscripts of Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Mandīfī. The study employs a literature review methodology, with Mestika Zed's literature research model serving as a reference.¹² The research problem is analyzed using a historical approach, applying Kuntowijoyo's historical research model in this study.¹³ The data sources for this research include all the works of the scholar under investigation, which serve as the primary sources for this study.¹⁴ In reviewing the biography of the scholar, the research findings of previous scholars on his life will be utilized.

This study also utilizes and supports Azyumardi Azra's theory on the network of scholars. According to Azra, scholars in Nusantara are involved in a cosmopolitan scholars' network centered in Mecca and Medina. They play a crucial role in disseminating ideas of reform through both teaching and written works. Simultaneously, they propagate neo-Sufism in the Nusantara region. Furthermore, this scholars' network involves intricate relationships among scholars from various countries. The two most significant features of scholarly discourse within this network are the examination of Hadiths and Sufi orders (*ṭarīqah*).¹⁵ This study argues that Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Mandīlī actively participated in spreading ideas of reform through teaching and written works, aligning with Azra's observations. He established connections with several scholars in Mecca and Medina and disseminated neo-Sufism.

Results and Discussion

1. A Short Biography of Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Mandīlī

'Abd al-Qādir bin 'Abd al-Muṭalib al-Indonesi al-Tapanūlī al-Mandīlī was born in the village of Sigalapang, Penyabungan, Mandailing Natal Regency, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia, in the year 1910 CE.¹⁶ He attended a Dutch school up to the fifth grade. At the age of 14, he moved to Kedah. He studied at Pondok Panjang Rong in Pendang, Kedah, under the guidance of Tuan Guru Haji Bakar Tobiar. Here, he learned to read and write Jawi and studied the Arabic language. Subsequently, he relocated to Pondok Air Hitam, where he studied under Tuan Guru Haji Idris bin Lebai Yusuf. In this boarding school, he studied various Arabic texts, primarily guided by Lebai Dukun, focusing on works such as *Matan al-Ajrumiyyah*, *Muttammimah*, and *Matan Alfiah Ibn Mālik*. After mastering the Arabic language, he continued his studies at Pondok Gajah Mati in the Pendang District of Kedah. This boarding school was established by Tuan Guru Haji Ismail Cik Dol and later expanded by Tuan Guru Haji Wan Ibrahim bin Haji Wan Abdul Qadir (1894-1968). Abdul Qadir delved into religious studies at this institution, particularly focusing on *naḥw*, *ṣaraf*, *balāghah*, *uṣūl al-dīn*, *fiqh*, *uṣūl al-fiqh*, *taṣawwūf*, *ḥadīth*,

mu'amalah, *al-ḥadīth*, and *tafsīr*. Additionally, he served as a teacher at this boarding school.¹⁷

‘Abd al-Qādir al-Mandīfī studied and taught at Pondok Gajah Mati for ten years. Afterward, he decided to migrate to Mecca with the goal of deepening his religious knowledge under renowned scholars in Mecca, particularly with his elder brother, Pak Cu Him, known as Tuan Guru Wan Ismail bin Wan Abdul Qadir bin Wan Mustafa al-Fatani, or more commonly known as Pak Da Eil.¹⁸ Besides his studies, he was granted permission to teach at Masjidilharam. He passed away on Tuesday morning, the 20th of Rabiul Akhir 1385 H, equivalent to the 17th of August 1965 CE, in Mecca al-Mukarramah.¹⁹ He was laid to rest in the Ma’la Cemetery in the city of Mecca.

2. ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Mandīfī and his Intellectual Networks

‘Abd al-Qādir al-Mandīfī departed for Mecca in the year 1936 and resided there until his passing in 1965. During his time in Mecca, he studied under various esteemed scholars, including Pak Da Eil Fatani, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Daghastanī, Shaykh Ḥasan Sa‘id Yamānī, Shaykh Muḥammad al-‘Arābī bin Tabani bin al-Ḥussin al-Waḥīdī al-Maghribī, Shaykh Muḥammad Nūr bin Sayf, Shaykh al-Sayyid ‘Alawī bin ‘Abbās al-Mālikī, Shaykh Zakariyyā’ ‘Abdullāh Bīlāh, Shaykh Ḥassan Muḥammad al-Mashshāt, Shaykh Muḥammad Yāsīn ‘Isa al-Fadānī, Shaykh ‘Abdullāh Bahjī, Shaykh Muḥammad Ahyāth bin Muḥammad Idrīs, Tuan Guru Hussin Abdul Ghani al-Falimbani, Shaykh Abdul Rahim al-Kalantani, and ultimately Shaykh Daud al-Kalantani.²⁰

Nor Azlinah Zaini and Che Zarrina Sa‘ari stated that the teachers of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Mandīfī include Tuan Guru Wan Ismail bin Wan Abdul-Qadir bin Wan Mustafa al-Fatani, Shaykh al-Kabir al-Sayyid Bakrī Shatha’, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Daghastani, Shaykh Ḥasan Sa‘id Yamānī, Shaykh Muḥammad Nūr bin Sayf, Shaykh Muḥammad al-‘Arābī bin al-Tabani bin al-Ḥussin al-Waḥīdī al-Maghribī, Shaykh al-Sayyid ‘Alawī bin ‘Abbās al-Mālikī, Shaykh Zakariyyā’ ‘Abdullāh Bīlāh, Shaykh Ḥassan Muḥammad al-Mashshāt, Shaykh Muḥammad Yāsīn ‘Isa al-Fadānī, Shaykh ‘Abdullāh Bahjī, Shaykh Muḥammad Ahyad bin Muḥammad Idrīs, Tuan Guru Hussin Abdul

Ghani al-Falimbani, Shaykh ‘Abdul Rahim al-Kalantani, and Shaykh Daud al-Kalantani.²¹

Erawadi also noted that during his time in Mecca, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Mandīfī studied with several distinguished scholars. Among ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Mandīfī’s teachers were Wan Ismail bin Wan ‘Abd. Al-Qadir (Pak Da Ail Patani), ‘Ali Al-Mālikī, Ḥasan Muḥammad al-Mashshāt, Muḥammad al-Arābī bin Tabanī bin al-Ḥussain al-Wāḥidī al-Maghribī, Sayyid al-‘Alawī bin ‘Abbās al-Mālikī, Muḥammad Ahyad al-Indonesi, Ḥasan Sa‘id al-Yamānī, Muḥammad Nūr bin Saif, Yāsīn bin Muḥammad ‘Isa al-Fadānī, Abdullah Lahji, and Zakariyā’ ‘Abdullāh Bīlāh.²²

In addition to his studies, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Mandīfī served as a teacher in Masjid al-Haram for nearly 30 years. He taught at Masjid al-Haram in Bāb al-Mālik ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, a location situated opposite Rukn al-Yamānī and adjacent to Hajar al-Aswad. His teachings at this location occurred four days a week, spanning from Maghrib prayer to Isha prayer.²³ He also had disciples, including Tuan Guru Haji Abdul Rahman Sungai Durian-Kelantan and Tuan Guru Haji Umar Daud Meranti. One of his disciples, Shaykh Muḥammad al-Mandīfī, also became a teacher at Masjidilharam.²⁴

The data above reinforces the findings of Azyumardi Azra, indicating that Mecca and Medina continued to be the primary destinations for religious teachers and students since the 17th and 18th centuries, extending into the 20th century. According to Azra, the significant position of the Haramain has attracted numerous teachers and seekers of knowledge from various Muslim regions to come and settle there, thus creating a network of scholarship. There are two patterns in these networks: (1) intellectual networks between scholars of the Haramain and scholars from the Malay Archipelago, and (2) intellectual networks between scholars from the Malay Archipelago and their students from various regions.²⁵ Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Mandīfī, after years of studying in various Islamic schools in Malaysia, journeyed to the Haramain for pilgrimage purposes and to seek knowledge. Consequently, he resided there for almost 30

years, successfully establishing a scholarly network. As a religious student from the Malay Archipelago, he studied under several scholars in the Haramain. Moreover, he became a teacher at Masjid al-Ḥaram, and his students came from various regions. In essence, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Mandīlī actively engaged himself in the network of scholars in Mecca and Medina, serving as intellectual center in the Sunni world.

3. Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Mandīlīs Manuscripts

The study conducted by Sharifah Basirah Syed Muhsin and Che Zarrina Sa’ari reveals that Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Mandīlī produced works spanning the fields of Islamic theology, sufism, Islamic law, politics, hadith, education, and Islamic legislation.²⁶ A total of 24 books are attributed to him.²⁷ The following provides a concise overview of the magnum opus of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Mandīlī:

1. *Perisai Bagi Sekalian Mukallaf*. This work was completed on Tuesday, the 23rd of Jumadil Awal 1376 H/1956 M and represents a translated piece based on the text of Imam al-Tahawi (d. 321 H/933 M) regarding the creed of faith according to the Salaf school of thought.²⁸
2. *I’tiqad Orang Yang Percaya akan Quran dengan Turunnya ‘Isa ‘Alaih al-Salam Pada Akhir Zaman*. The translation of this book commenced on the 16th of Jumadil Awal 1378 H/1958 M and was completed on Thursday, the 2nd of Jumadil Awal 1378 H/1958 M.²⁹
3. *Risalah Pokok Qadyani*. This work discussed the deviation of the Ahmadiyya Qadiani teachings, established by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1840-1908 AD) in India.³⁰
4. *Senjata Tok Haji dan Tok Lebai*. This work was completed on Wednesday, the 10th of Ramadan 1368 H/6th July 1949 AD. The book addresses issues related to supplications during prayers, remembrance (zikir), sermons (khutbah), the method of reciting Yasin, Tarawih prayers, and Witr prayers.³¹

5. *Persediaan Tuan Khatib*. This work consists of 12 Friday sermons and several sermons for Eid, eclipse sermons, rain-seeking sermons, and marriage sermons. The book is 83 pages thick and serves as a guide for preachers giving sermons in mosques. It was completed in the year 1960 AD.³²
6. *Pembantu Sekalian Orang Islam Dengan Harus Membaca Quran dan Sampai Pahalanya Kepada Sekalian Yang Mati*. This work is a translation of the writings of Shaykh Muḥammad al-‘Arābī. The book was completed on the 21st of Sha’ban 1370 H/1950 M.³³
7. *Al-Khazā’in Saniyyah min Mashāhir al-Kutub al-Fiqhiyyah li A’immatinā al-Fuqahā’ al-Shāfi’īyyah*. This work began and was completed on the night of Monday, the 17th of Jamadil Akhir 1370 H/26th March 1951 AD. The book discussed the names of jurists (*fuqahā’*) and their titles, along with the names of their notable works.³⁴
8. *Al-Asad al-Ma‘ār li Qatl al-Tays al-Musta‘ār*. This work was written in the year 27 Zulkaedah 1377 H/1957 M. The book discusses issues of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) based on the perspectives of the four major schools of thought.³⁵
9. *Pemberian Yang Bagus Lagi Indah atau Hukum Ihram dari Jeddah*. This book discusses the laws and procedures for entering the state of ihram and performing the Hajj, referring to the understanding of the topic, as it has not been found previously.³⁶
10. *Pertunjuk Bagi Umat*. The translation of this book was completed during the time of Duha, on Thursday, the 13th of Zulhijjah 1376 H/1956 M, at Masjid Khif in Mina.³⁷
11. *Bekal Orang Yang Menunaikan Haji*. This work was written in the year 1953 AD. The book discusses prayers during Tawaf, Sa’i, and while in the plain of Arafat, as well as several other prayers while in Mecca during the pilgrimage (Hajj).³⁸
12. *Risalah Pada Menerangkan Makna Sabilullah yang Mustahiq akan Zakat*. This book examines the meaning of “fi Sabilillah” as mentioned among the eight categories eligible to receive zakat.³⁹

13. *Sinar Matahari Buat Penyuluh Kesilapan Abu Bakar al-Ashari*. This work was completed on the 4th of Syawal 1378 H/1958 M in Mecca. The book contains responses and refutations to the writings of Shaykh Abū Bakar Ash‘arī. It includes debates between the Younger Generation (*Kaum Muda*) and the Older Generation (*Kaum Tua*).⁴⁰
14. *Al-Madhhab atau Tiada Haram Bermadhhab*. The book was completed during the time of Zuhr on Tuesday, the 8th of Ramadan 1378 H/1958 M. This work was produced upon the request of Tuan Guru Haji Hasan Ahmad Patani and serves as a response to the writings of Ahmad Hasan.⁴¹
15. *Beberapa Mutiara Yang Bagus Lagi Indah atau Beberapa Masalah Yang Penting Lagi Mudah*. This work was completed during the time of Asr on the 9th of Zulkaedah 1379 H/1959 M. The book discusses questions and answers related to topics such as Islamic theology, hadith, Friday prayers, funeral rites, zakat, fasting, pilgrimage, financial transactions, marriage and divorce, medical treatment, food and clothing, adherence to schools of thought, and politics.⁴²
16. *Siyasah dan Loteri dan Alim Ulama*. This work was completed on the 8th of Syawal 1318 H/13th March 1962 AD in Mecca. The book discusses issues related to lotteries.⁴³
17. *Anak Kunci Syurga*. This work was completed on the 21st of Ramadan 1382 H. The book discusses various matters of individual obligations (*fardu ‘ain*) that encompass creed and laws related to worship.⁴⁴
18. *Islam: Agama dan Kedaulatan*. This work was written on the 19th of Rabiul Awal 1379 H/22nd September 1959 AD in Mecca. The book discusses Islam not only as a religion and belief but also addresses political issues.⁴⁵
19. *Pendirian Agama Islam*. This work was completed in translation on the 9th of Syaban 1376 H/1956 M in Mecca. The book discusses issues related to feudal, capitalist, socialist, and communist ideologies.⁴⁶
20. *Hadiah Bagi Pembaca Muslim*. This work is a translation and commentary on the book *Tuhfah al-Qari al-Muslim*. The book was completed on the 7th of March 1961 AD.⁴⁷

21. *Tuhfah al-Qari al-Muslim al-Mukhtarah Mimma Ittafaqa ‘alaih al-Bukhārī wa Muslim*. This book is a collection of selected hadiths that are agreed upon by both al-Bukhārī and Muslim.⁴⁸
22. *Menakutkan dan Meliarkan daripada Memasukkan Orang-orang Islam Akan Anak-anak Mereka itu ke Dalam Sekolah Orang Kafir*. This book is a translated work based on the writings of Shaykh Ḥasan Muḥammad al-Mashshāt. The translation was completed on Wednesday, the 7th of Jamadil Awal 1378 H/19th November 1958 AD.⁴⁹
23. *Kebagusan Undang-Undang Islam dan Kecelakaan Undang-Undang Manusia*. This work was completed at the time of Zuhr on Wednesday, the 6th of Syawal 1380 H, corresponding to the 22nd of March 1961 AD. The book, spanning 143 pages, discusses issues related to Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh).⁵⁰
24. *Penawar Bagi Hati*. This book was completed on the 7th of Rajab 1378 H/1958 M. It is a Sufi book that discusses issues related to commendable and blameworthy virtues, as well as sins committed by a Muslim.⁵¹

The data above indicates that Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Mandīlī was a Nusantara scholar who upheld traditional Islam. He was a traditionalist scholar, not a modernist or reformist. Borrowing from Martin van Bruinessen’s analysis, as a scholar, firstly, he transmitted traditional Islam through teaching yellow books written by classical scholars, both when he was a religious teacher in Kedah and when he became a teacher in Masjidilharam. Secondly, besides teaching yellow books, as a traditional scholar, he also expanded the treasure of traditional Islam by composing his own books. He wrote in the Malay language but continued to use the Arabic script. In essence, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Mandīlī was a traditionalist scholar who preserved and, at the same time, enriched the tradition, and expanded the treasure of yellow book literature.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Mandīlī actively participated in disseminating reformist ideas through teaching and writing. He built intellectual networks with several scholars in Mecca and Medina, propagating neo-Sufism.

In the context of the topic of the network of Nusantara scholars, before going to Mecca, he established an intellectual network with scholars in Malaysia, where he studied in various traditional Islamic schools (*pondok*) that taught yellow books (*kitab kuning*) according to the traditional Islamic convention. After completing his studies and briefly serving as a religious teacher, he traveled to Mecca to learn from prominent scholars there. Therefore, in addition to being involved in a complex network of scholars, he also upheld the tradition of *isnād* in the Islamic intellectual tradition. Furthermore, he was granted permission to teach at Masjidilharam. Consequently, he successfully built a new intellectual network by becoming a teacher for students originating from various countries. Moreover, he was an exceptionally productive Nusantara scholar. He wrote dozens of books in the Malay language while still using the Arabic script. His various works undoubtedly contributed to the corpus of yellow book (*kitab kuning*) literature, broadly defined as works by scholars written in both Arabic and local languages using the Arabic script. From this perspective, he can be categorized as a traditional Islamic scholar, not a modernist. The rationale behind categorizing him as a traditional Islamic scholar, rather than a modernist, is rooted in the fact that he received religious education in various Islamic schools (*pondok*) in Kedah, Malaysia, studied yellow books (*kitab kuning*) there, apprenticed under scholars with clear chains of knowledge (*sanād*), taught several students in a traditional manner at Masjidilharam, and produced books in the Malay language using the Arabic script.

Endnotes

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