

Bukhari Iskandar and His Work of Islamic Education in Labuhanbatu

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Abstract: This research aims to investigate the ideas, contributions, and involvement of Bukhari Iskandar in Islamic education in Labuhanbatu. Using a qualitative approach, this study employed in-depth interviews with Bukhari Iskandar's colleagues to gather relevant data. This research indicates that Bukhari Iskandar is influential in advancing Islamic education in Labuhanbatu. His innovative ideas, including a contextual approach to religious learning, information and communication technology, and character education, have brought about positive changes in teaching and learning religion. Bukhari Iskandar's contributions are also evident in developing a comprehensive Islamic education curriculum, intensive teacher training, and the writing and publishing of quality books. The findings of this study provide a deep understanding of the efforts made by Bukhari in strengthening religious education, enhancing teaching quality, and expanding access to Islamic education in the region.

Keywords: Bukhari Iskandar, Contextual Approach, Islamic Education

A. Introduction

Islamic education has an important role in shaping and developing religious understanding and Muslim character. One of the figures who has a significant role in Islamic education in Labuhanbatu is Bukhari Iskandar. In this context, there are several background problems that need to be identified to understand the relevance of research on this character and his work in Islamic education in Labuhanbatu. Lack of research on Bukhari Iskandar: Although Bukhari Iskandar is known as a figure who made a major contribution to the field of Islamic education in Labuhanbatu, research that specifically focuses on his work is still minimal. Therefore, this research will serve as a relevant scientific contribution in uncovering the role and contribution of Bukhari Iskandar in Islamic education in the region. Bukhari Iskandar's influence on local Islamic education. Islamic education in Labuhanbatu has unique local characteristics and is different from other regions. In this case, the role of Bukhari Iskandar as a respected figure in the local Islamic education community in Labuhanbatu must be studied in depth. This research will reveal the values, approaches, and educational methods introduced and applied by Bukhari Iskandar, as well as their impact on the development of Islamic education in Labuhanbatu.

Islamic education in Labuhanbatu is faced with various challenges that affect the smoothness and quality of the educational process. Therefore, through this research, it will be examined how Bukhari Iskandar faced these challenges and contributed to advancing Islamic education in Labuhanbatu. This research will also help identify efforts that can undertake to address these challenges and improve the quality of Islamic education in the region. Likewise, the situation in Labuhanbatu Regency, North Sumatra Province, in the development of the area and its people cannot be separated from the role of the figures in the area according to their character. From all aspects of life in the community of Labuhanbatu Regency, researchers conducted a study of figures related to education, because education is one of the aspects that play a role in building the character of a responsible society (Jaenullah, Ferdian Utama, 2022). Character study is a very in-depth study that is carried out systematically and critically regarding the history of the character, original ideas or ideas, as well as the socio-historical context related to the character to be studied (Dini, 2022). An educator also has a very important role in influencing his environment, both the classroom environment, school/madrasah, village, sub-district, district or region and even influencing areas on a national and international scale. The scope of influence on the area is in accordance with his work (Cotton, 2007).

By conducting a character study means that it will systematically examine the history of figures, original ideas or ideas of figures and their sociohistorical context, this is very useful to motivate, stimulate the community to do better, thus it will be able to accelerate development in the region. The more figures studied, the more choices of ideas in developing the region (Morse, 2020). Therefore, the study of character studies is a very important thing in developing the region. First, the integrity of the character. This can be seen from the depth of his knowledge, leadership, success in the field he is in, to have a distinctiveness or advantage compared to people of his generation. The integrity of the character can also be seen from the point of his moral integrity Secondly, monumental works. These works can be in the form of written works, real works in physical and non-physical forms that benefit the community or community empowerment, both contemporaries and afterwards. Third, the contribution (service) or influence is seen or felt in real terms by the community, either in the form of thoughts. The contribution of figures can also be seen from their leadership and example until their character is recognized, idolized, exemplified, and considered to provide inspiration for the next generation (Syahrin Harahap, 2014).

Character traits usually consist of three dimensions, namely the physical dimension, the social dimension and the psychic dimension. To form a living character, these three dimensions cannot be separated or appear individually (Seijts, Gandz, Crossan, & Reno, 2015). Physical dimensions are usually age, maturity level, gender, posture, facial description and other specific physical characteristics. The social dimension is a description of social status, position, religion or ideology, social activity and ethnicity or nation. The psychic dimension includes mentality, moral measures, intelligence, temperament, desire, feelings, intelligence and special abilities (Waluyo, 1994; Bolier et al, 2013). In line with what was conveyed by some of the

experts above that education figures play an important role in shaping the future of the younger generation. Here are some reasons why education figures are important to the younger generation (Bahodirovich, 2021; Agyei, 2015):

- 1) Provide inspiration and motivation: Education figures can provide inspiration and motivation for students and pupils to reach their potential. They can be a good example for the students and help them understand the importance of learning and having critical thinking.
- 2) Develop skills: Education figures can help students and pupils to develop their skills, such as the ability to speak, solve problems, and think creatively. They can also help students understand how those skills can be applied in real life.
- 3) Encourage inclusivity: Education leaders can help promote inclusivity and reject discrimination. They can help students understand the importance of respecting differences and accepting everyone, even if they are different.
- 4) Improve the quality of education: Education leaders can help improve the quality of education by offering innovative and creative solutions to existing problems in the education system. They can also help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of education by integrating new technologies and methodologies.
- 5) Shaping character: educational figures can help shape the character and morale of students and students. They can help shape ethical values and help students understand the importance of sticking to good principles.

Overall, educational figures play an important role in shaping the future of young people and ensuring that they have the skills and values necessary to succeed in life (Bond, 2019). Of the many figures in Labuhanbatu Regency, researchers will take one of the figures whose work in the world of education in Labuhanbatu Regency is quite important, namely Buya Doctor Haji Bukhari Iskandar who is always referred to as Buya Bukhari Iskandar He started his career as a religious teacher at Elementary School / Ibtidaiyah (SD / MI) and then became a teacher at SMP / MTs, High school / MA in several schools / madrasah and college in Labuhanbatu. During his work in the field of education, he was known as an educator who had a high dedication and commitment to improving the quality of education. Thus, it can be said that he has a very big role in building schools / madrasahs and colleges in Labuhanbatu Regency.

Although many people already know about Buya Bukhari Iskandar and his work in the field of education, researchers believe there is still little information available about his biography and work in education in Labuhanbatu. Therefore, researchers believe that this research is very important to find out how the biography and work of Bukhari Iskandar in education as an effort to influence the development and build of education in Labuhanbatu Regency. This research is expected to provide an overview of how an educator figure or figure can influence the development of education in a region and make a major contribution to improving the quality of education. In addition, the results of this research are also expected to be a source of

reference for the younger generation who want to serve in the world of education or follow in the footsteps of Buya Bukhari Iskandar in his work in the field of education.

B. Methods

The research method of this character study uses qualitative research methods with approaches such as Interviews with Bukhari Iskandar, Brother, Sister, Wife, Children, Son-in-Law, Teachers, Students, Co-workers, Leaders and His Subordinates. Furthermore, observation, and study of documents to obtain information about the figure who is the object of research. which aims to gain a deeper understanding of the character. The steps in conducting this research are as follows (Creswell, 2003; Williams, 2007):

1. Determination of research objectives of the study are clearly and specifically set, so that researchers can obtain the expected research results. The purpose of research can be in the form of gaining a deeper understanding and motivation about the biography, his work in education, and the life experience of the character.
2. Determination of research methods, researchers choose research methods that are in accordance with the purpose of research and the characteristics of the object of study. Methods that can be used in this study include interviews, observations, and document studies.
3. Data collection is done using techniques such as interviews, observation, and documentation studies. Researchers must prepare well before conducting interviews with the closest figures and relatives.
4. Data analysis, after the data collection is complete, the next step is to conduct data analysis. Data analysis is carried out using analytical techniques such as content analysis, narrative analysis, and grounded theory analysis.
5. Drawing conclusions, after the data analysis is complete, the researcher must draw conclusions from the results of the research that has been done. Such conclusions should be based on facts and data found during the study.
6. Data verification and conclusions, after drawing conclusions, researchers must verify data and conclusions by confirming the figure who is the subject of research. This verification can be done by sending research results to figures to confirm or asking for input and corrections from characters.

C. Results and Discussion

Labuhanbatu

Labuhanbatu is a regency located in North Sumatra Province, Indonesia. Geographically, this regency is located in the northern part of Sumatra Island. With an area of about 9,322.5 m² square kilometers, Labuhanbatu Regency has diverse and interesting geographical characteristics, (source of the official website of Labuhanbatu Regency: <https://labuhanbatukab.go.id/index.php/profil>) The location of Labuhanbatu Regency is in the north of Sumatra Island, which makes it directly

adjacent to Asahan Regency and the Strait of Malacca to the north. This border provides direct access to vast waters and is an attractive potential for fisheries and maritime trade. In addition, the waters around Labuhanbatu can also be used for the shipping sector. To the east, Labuhanbatu Regency borders Rokan Hilir Regency (Riau). These boundaries provide connectivity with neighboring regions and facilitate social, economic, and cultural exchanges between local communities. The eastern region of Labuhanbatu also has several small hills that beautify the natural panorama of the area. To the west, Labuhanbatu Regency is bordered by Toba Samosir Regency and North Tapanuli Regency. This restriction facilitates access to the center of government and the center of economic activity in the region. as the largest city in North Sumatra, it has good connectivity with land transportation. This connectivity provides benefits for Labuhanbatu Regency in terms of trade, investment, and cultural exchange. The area of Labuhanbatu Regency is generally dominated by lowlands, with several small hills scattered in parts of the East and West. These geographical conditions provide a wealth of diverse nature, including fertile agricultural land, tropical forests, abundant rivers, and other natural resources. This potential can be utilized for the development of the agriculture, plantation, forestry, and natural tourism sectors.

The Brainchild of Bukhari Iskandar

In this interview, I had the opportunity to sit with a teacher mother who was familiar with Bukhari Iskandar's educational journey in the past. This teacher mother had a personal experience with Bukhari when she pursued the First Religious Teacher Education (PGAP) for 4 years at Al Washliyah Aek Kanopan, Labuhanbatu from 1970 to 1973. This teacher gave insight into Bukhari Iskandar's character, passion for learning, and dedication when he was young. The teacher began by describing Bukhari Iskandar as a bright and dedicated student from the beginning. Bukhari was always motivated to learn and achieve high achievements. He is a diligent figure and is always eager to absorb new knowledge.

During the First Religious Teacher Education at Al Washliyah Aek Kanopan, Bukhari Iskandar was known as an active and enthusiastic student. The teacher shared that Bukhari was always present in every learning activity and actively participated in class discussions. He eagerly inquired, digested information, and shared his opinions with classmates. The teacher stressed that Bukhari focused not only on the academic aspect, but also on the development of religious and moral values. Bukhari actively participated in religious activities at school, such as recitation, Quran recitation, Speech Competition, and social activities. He showed a strong commitment to religious education and set a good example to his classmates. In addition, the teacher explained about Bukhari's involvement in various extracurricular activities at the school. Bukhari was active in study groups, and various social activities. She not only focuses on classroom learning, but also strives to develop social and leadership skills. The teacher also highlighted Bukhari's humility and humility. Despite his talent and outstanding academic achievements, Bukhari remained unpretentious and not

arrogant. He is always ready to help his classmates who have difficulty in understanding the material and give positive encouragement to them. During the interview, the teacher also gave concrete examples of Bukhari Iskandar's spirit of learning. He recalled one incident in which Bukhari faced difficulties in understanding the concept of speech material. However, Bukhari did not give up easily. He approached teachers for additional explanations, asked classmates for help, and even took extra time to study outside of class hours. Bukhari showed remarkable perseverance and persistence in overcoming these learning barriers.

The teacher concluded that Bukhari Iskandar's educational journey at Al Washliyah Aek Kanopan was a clear proof of his strong spirit of learning and high dedication. Bukhari not only achieved academic success, but also developed a positive attitude, social skills, and deep religious values. Bukhari has proven that with hard work, perseverance, and tireless passion, one can achieve one's educational dreams and be an inspiration to others. In this interview, Bukhari Iskandar's older brother Mudrikah and Ghuftron Iskandar's younger brother share their stories about Bukhari Iskandar's educational and professional development journey from childhood to the present. They told about the educational institutions that Bukhari lived, his emphasis on religious education, and his commitment to developing his academic and professional career. They begin by talking about the beginning of Bukhari Iskandar at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Maktab) Al Washliyah in West Ledong from 1963 to 1969. They described that Bukhari, from an early age, had a strong desire to get a good education and based on Islamic values. They recalled how Bukhari diligently followed the lessons and tried to be an outstanding student.

Furthermore, Brother Mudrikah and Sister Ghuftron talked about Bukhari's educational journey at SD Negeri Ledong Barat, Asahan from 1963 to 1969. They explained that Bukhari continued to show his dedication in learning and achieving proud academic results. Bukhari was praised by his teachers for his intelligence and perseverance in the pursuit of knowledge. They also discussed Bukhari's further education in the religious field. Bukhari took the First Religious Teacher Education (PGAP) for 4 years at Al Washliyah Aek Kanopan, Labuhanbatu from 1970 to 1973. Furthermore, he continued his education in State Religious Teacher Education (PGAN) for 6 years in Medan from 1974 to 1975. In this education, Bukhari deepened his religious understanding and prepared himself to become a qualified religious teacher.

In addition, Bukhari also emphasized the importance of character education in the context of Islamic education. According to him, character education should be an integral part of the religious education process. Bukhari teaches values such as honesty, modesty, tolerance, and social care through hands-on experience, case studies, and role models. He argued that building a strong and moral character is an inseparable part of the purpose of Islamic education (Khaidir, 2020). The ideas proposed by Bukhari Iskandar provide new insights into relevant, adaptive, and holistic Islamic education. Its contextual approach and use of ICT as an educational aid open up new opportunities in conveying religious messages to the younger

generation (Kristianto, Susetyo, Utama, Fitriyono, & Jannah, 2023). In addition, the emphasis placed on character education provides a strong moral foundation for students in living their lives.

The idea of Bukhari Iskandar is one of the figures who has an important role in the development of education in Labuhanbatu Regency. Bukhari Iskandar, an educator and leader in Islamic educational institutions, has contributed his innovative and progressive ideas to improve the quality and accessibility of education in the Kabupetan area of Labuhanbatu. In addition, Bukhari Iskandar also fought for improving the quality of education in Labuhanbatu Regency. He realized that the quality of education is an important key to producing a competent and qualified generation. To that end, he encouraged the development of relevant curricula, strengthened teacher training and development, and improved educational facilities and resources. By making changes and improvements in the education system, Bukhari Iskandar hopes to provide adequate and relevant education in accordance with the demands of the times. In addition to his contribution in the development of formal education, Bukhari Iskandar also championed non-formal education and skill development by initiating the Tahfiz hut, MIS Tahfir el-surya bukharly. He realized that not all students have the same interests or abilities in formal education, so it is important to provide diverse educational alternatives. Through skills training and talent development programs, he hopes to provide opportunities for students to develop their potential in areas such as art, music, sports, and entrepreneurship.

Bukhari Iskandar's contribution

In this interview the researcher interviewed Bukhary Iskandar's colleague, namely: Leli Hasanah Lubis, et al. revealed the traces of Bukhari Iskandar's contribution in Islamic education in Labuhanbatu, I met a colleague who has worked closely with Bukhari for many years. This colleague provided an in-depth look at the important role played by Bukhari in advancing Islamic education in the area. The colleague began by describing Bukhari Iskandar as a highly dedicated figure and has extraordinary passion in improving the Islamic education system in Labuhanbatu. He explained that Bukhari has always had a clear vision and a strong commitment to improve the quality of Islamic education and expand its access to the community. During their work trip together, the colleague saw firsthand how Bukhari Iskandar was involved in various projects and initiatives aimed at improving Islamic education in Labuhanbatu. He explained that Bukhari has been very vocal in advocating for change and taking concrete steps to realize his vision. One of Bukhari Iskandar's main contributions was the establishment of various Islamic educational institutions in Labuhanbatu. The colleague underlined the establishment of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah El Surya Bukhary, MTs Al-Bukhary, SMK Al-Bukhary, and Al-Bukhary Tarbiyah College. These institutions not only provide quality education, but also integrate Islamic religious values in their curriculum.

In addition to establishing educational institutions, Bukhari is also involved in perfecting relevant curricula and keeping up with the times. The colleague explained

that Bukhari always strives to present innovative teaching methods and utilize the latest educational technology. He conducts training for teachers to be able to utilize technology effectively in the learning process. The colleague also highlighted Bukhari's role in strengthening the link between Islamic education and society. Bukhari is actively involved in the local community and collaborates with other stakeholders, including parents, religious leaders, and community leaders. He held an open dialogue and appreciated input from various parties to build an inclusive Islamic education that was responsive to the needs of the community. In the conclusion of the interview, the colleague affirmed that Bukhari Iskandar had brought significant changes in Islamic education in Labuhanbatu. His contribution in the establishment of educational institutions, curriculum improvement, the use of technology, and the building of strong relationships with the community have had a tremendous positive impact (Susilawati, 2021). And after conducting interviews with several parties related to the title of the research that the researcher has done with a discussion about the contribution of Bukhari Iskandar, the researcher discussed the contribution that has been given by Bukhari Iskandar in the world of Islamic Education in Labuhanbatu Regency. Our interview revealed the importance of Bukhari's role and positive impact in advancing the field of Islamic Education in Labuhanbatu.

One of Bukhari's major contributions was the development of a comprehensive Islamic education curriculum. He is dedicated to crafting a curriculum that covers all important aspects of understanding Islam, including theological understanding, worship practices, morals, and character development. The curriculum is designed with a holistic approach, integrating academic understanding with practical experience and application in everyday life. Bukhari has also been active in training and inspiring teachers in educating, especially in Labuhanbatu. He realized the importance of preparing qualified and skilled teachers to deliver religious material in an effective manner. Bukhari provides intensive training to teachers, helping them develop innovative teaching skills and interactive learning approaches. In this regard, his contribution helps improve the quality of Islamic religious teaching and provides a better learning experience for the students.

Bukhari Iskandar's contribution is also seen in his efforts to expand access to Islamic education. He is committed to ensuring that every individual has the opportunity to obtain a quality religious education, regardless of social or economic background. Bukhari Iskandar was active in establishing Islamic educational institutions in Labuhanbatu and encouraged active community participation in supporting Islamic educational institutions. Interviews with several related parties about Bukhari Iskandar provide a clear picture of the outstanding contribution he has made in the world of Islamic Education. Through curriculum development, teacher training, book writing, journal publishing, and accessibility initiatives, Bukhari has played a significant role in enhancing understanding, experience in advancing Islamic education in Labuhanbatu. One of Bukhari Iskandar's main contributions is his efforts in making it easier for people to get education at a cost that is affordable for all people, especially for the middle to lower economy. He realized that every individual has the

same right to get quality education, without exception. In order to realize this vision, Bukhari Iskandar has built Islamic Education Institutions ranging from Raudhatul Athfal (RA) to Higher Education levels and developed a comfortable educational infrastructure for students. With the existence of Islamic Education Institutions, children in Labuhanbatu Regency now have better access to education.

In addition to focusing on academic aspects, Bukhari Iskandar also pays special attention to character development and moral values in education. He believes that education is not only about the mastery of knowledge, but also the formation of a good personality. Therefore, he advocates the implementation of a holistic educational approach, which includes the development of social skills, ethical values, and environmental awareness. Bukhari Iskandar also encourages various extracurricular activities, such as art, sports, Scouting and social activities, which can help students in developing character and life skills. In addition, Bukhari Iskandar also saw the importance of collaboration between the government, educational institutions, and the community in an effort to improve education in Labuhanbatu Regency. He invited all parties to work together in identifying educational problems and finding solutions together. Bukhari Iskandar is active in holding meetings, discussion forums, and cooperation with various related parties, such as educational institutions, foundations, companies. This interview illustrates clearly how Bukhari Iskandar has been an inspiring leader and driver of change in Islamic education in Labuhanbatu. Through his vision, commitment, and passion, Bukhari has created an educational environment that is inclusive, innovative, and relevant to the needs of the community. His contribution will continue to provide long-term benefits for Islamic education and community development in Labuhanbatu.

D. Conclusion

The ideas proposed by Bukhari Iskandar, the contextual approach in religious learning, the utilization of information and communication technology, and character education, show important innovation and relevance in facing the challenges of religious education in modern times. This holistic and inclusive approach creates space for students to understand and apply Islamic teachings in the context of daily life, motivates them in the learning process, and helps build good character. Bukhari's contributions to comprehensive Islamic education, teacher training, as well as the writing and publishing of quality books, have helped to improve the quality of teaching and provide valuable resources for teachers and students. His efforts to widen access to Islamic education also demonstrate his commitment to inclusivity and equality in education. Bukhari Iskandar's work as an educator and leader in the world of Islamic Education in Labuhanbatu. His dedication in spreading Islamic values and knowledge to the younger generation has had a huge positive impact. Bukhari Iskandar's ideas, contributions and work in the world of Islamic education in Labuhanbatu have reflected a strong vision to improve the quality of religious education, bring innovation and relevance to the learning process, and encourage inclusiveness and equality of access.

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