The Existence of the Yellow Book in the Digital Era: Study in Dayah Aceh

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Abstract

The existence of the yellow book is very important for Islamic boarding schools or Dayahs in Aceh. Every religious lesson must use the yellow book as the main reference for teachers in teaching. The yellow book has been used for centuries in the study of Dayah. However, the existence of internet media in the current digital era has an effect on learning patterns in the Dayah environment. The yellow book as a learning resource in the Dayah faces the challenges of the digital era media that is able to answer various people's problems quickly. In the digital era, the public and students can access information related to Islamic teachings via the internet quickly, cheaply, and easily. The purpose of this study is to find out and describe the existence of the yellow book in the digital era (study in Dayah Aceh). This research is field research with a qualitative descriptive method. The results show that the yellow book still exists in the current digital era and remains a mandatory reference in the Dayah curriculum, but the progress of the digital era continues to color the pesantren curriculum treasures with the finding that Guree Dayah uses the Maktabah Syamilah feature as a supporting reference. Furthermore, in responding to advances in information technology, Dayah utilizes the internet as a medium of da’wah and socialization of Dayah as well as reviewing legal issues encountered by the public on the internet by referring to the yellow book.

Keywords: Yellow Book, Digital Era, Dayah Aceh

Abstrak


*Kata Kunci : Kitab Kuning, Era Digital, Dayah Aceh

INTRODUCTION

The development of Information Technology today brings a change in society. The birth of various kinds of media at this time makes the behavior patterns of society generally experience a shift in both culture, ethics, and norms that exist today. The digital lifestyle is a phenomenon in today's millennial society. This explains that the digital lifestyle is a lifestyle revolution (even living culture) due to the increasingly rapid development of Information and Communication Technology by using digital equipment, work can be done more efficiently in terms of saving costs and also time, and can be more effective because the main goal Digital lifestyle is faster than ever.

Technological advances have infiltrated everywhere, including in the corners of Islamic boarding schools. One of the characteristics of the ulama and the Santri as a means of connecting the ulama in the chain of spreading Islamic knowledge and being used as a reference in various problems is the yellow book. The treasures of Islam in Indonesia cannot be separated from the existence of the yellow book or the Turats book written by previous scholars.

Turats as an accumulation of intellectual traditions of classical Islamic scholars is a storehouse of answers that respond to the complexities of past problems. Meanwhile, on the other hand, the community, especially students who are educated in Islamic boarding schools, are a generation that is dealing with the complex challenges of modern and contemporary problems. For the
Santris, answering various kinds of modern and contemporary problems by ignoring Turats is nothing but intellectual arrogance, however, subjugating modern and contemporary realities under the confines of Turats often creates ambivalence (contradictory feelings).

Today’s Islamic boarding schools, especially Islamic boarding schools in Aceh, are in a dilemmatic position in the gap between turats, modernity as well as contemporary issues. The impact of digital transformation certainly has positive and negative values for the world of education in traditional and modern Islamic boarding schools, one of which is by maintaining the existence of the yellow book in the digital era by adapting it to contemporary issues and reviving turats so that it can be applied and relevant to the contemporary context.

This research is a spontaneous research from the researcher without any intervention from any party. However, after the researcher traced the previous research, the researcher found several studies that were almost the same with the title raised with a different research focus. The previous research can be used as material for consideration and comparison with the problems studied. The previous studies are: The first, Thoha (2019) describes a portrait of the use of the yellow book at STAIN Pamekasan and STAI Al-Khairat Pamekasan. As a result, the use of the yellow book as a reference for Islamic studies differs between the two PTKI. STAIN Pamekasan, with a large number of study programs (18 study programs) the use of the yellow book is relatively small, because the majority of students do not have the basic competence of mastering the yellow book. Likewise, the pattern of lectures and mastery of scientific works by lecturers that do not require the use of yellow book references also causes low student interest in studying them. This is different from STAI Al-Khairat. Students are familiar with the use of the yellow book since the first semester. In addition to having the necessary competencies in studying the yellow book, the support from the lecturers and the climate of competition between students from several Islamic boarding schools also led to the high use of the yellow book. The second, Amrizal (2017) described that the Darun Nahdhah Islamic Boarding School in Bangkinang, Darel Hikmah and Babussalam in Pekanbaru were Islamic boarding schools with the typology of khalafiyah. These Islamic boarding schools have fully integrated the classical system and schools into Islamic boarding schools. These Islamic boarding schools have included general knowledge in their
educational curriculum, even from the very beginning. The study of classical books is no longer prominent, some are even merely complementary, but turn into subjects or fields of study. With each character and uniqueness, these three pesantren have made changes related to the tradition of studying the yellow book; Darun Nahdhah Islamic boarding school has changed its curriculum in order to adapt to policies outside of itself, namely IAIN Pekanbaru requires a State Madrasah Aliyah diploma.

This study has different problems from the two studies mentioned above. The problem that the researcher raised was research on students which became the core issue where the students were directly involved as parties who felt the effects of studying the yellow book in the Dayah in Aceh. The study of the yellow book is still considered necessary to answer the problems of the people in the digital era. Contemporary problems can not be separated from the arguments and syarah (detailed discussion) contained in the yellow book (classical book or Turats). The yellow book can be a basis, reference, and comparison with science or contemporary problems that occur in the digital era. The focus of the second problem is the object of research in the Acehnese days, in contrast to the research of Muhammad Thoha who chose universities as research objects.

In terminology, the yellow book is understood as a book written in Arabic without a vowel, used as a teaching resource in Islamic boarding schools (Aziz, 2014, p. 43). Indirectly, people who study the yellow book must be equipped with qualified Arabic knowledge. In the course of time, the yellow book was also slowly printed using white paper.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

The research method used field research with a qualitative method with observations (Given, 2008, p. 341), interviews, and documentation techniques. Observations of this study were carried out to observe directly the activities of Dayah Aceh in learning the yellow books. This study aims to obtain a clearer, more complete, and possible description and information for researchers to make observations. Therefore, the authors set the research location, namely at Dayah Tanooh Abee Aceh Besar, Dayah Buket Eqra West Aceh, Dayah Istiqamatuuddin Darussalam, Dayah Darussalam Labuhan Haji, Dayah Darul Ihsan Pawoh at South Aceh, Dayah Ruhul Fatayat Aceh Besar and several dayah in southwest of Aceh.
The author's interview is used to find out the information directly from the subject who is the teachers and students of Dayah Aceh. The research subjects in this study were the learning of yellow books in the digital era. In addition, this research also requires information about the obstacles in caring for the learning methods of the yellow book in this digital era. Therefore, the subject of this study is very necessary in order to explore the information needed by the author to complete this research.

RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Dayah is a legacy of the civilization of the ulama and the Acehnese people who exist to carry out their role to this day. For the community, dayah is a source of reference in solving life problems in relation to Islamic rules, especially regarding matters of worship and muamalah. However, the presence of advances in information technology turned out to be able to color the existence of the yellow book in the dayah.

The Yellow Book in Dayah Aceh

Islamic boarding schools in Aceh are better known as Dayah. Dayah comes from the word Zawiyah which means corner or corner of the mosque. Historically the word Zawiyah was first known in North Africa during the early growth of Islam there. The zawiya referred to at that time was a corner of the mosque which became the halaqah of the Sufis in exchanging experiences, making remembrance and spending the night in the mosque. During the growth of Islam in the archipelago, precisely during the Peureulak kingdom, it was known that there were places to study and discuss religious teachings, one of the famous places at that time was Zawiyah Cot Kala. Zawiyah is the first religious education institution in the archipelago referring to the history of the Islamic kingdom of Pereulak. In the treasures of Islamic education in Aceh, the term Zawiyah later changed to the term Dayah (Kemenag Aceh, 2022).

The existence of dayah in the midst of society is very interesting for the community. This is closely related to the consistency of the dayah in preserving the dayah curriculum. There are several yellow books that are used as learning resources, including for the science of Fiqh using the Matan Taqrib, Al-Bajuri, and I’anat ath-Thalibin books. For Nahwu lessons, use the books of Jurumiah, Kawakib al-Mutammimah, and Alfiah Ibn Malik. In addition, for Balagah
lessons, we use the Balaghah al-Wadhihah book, for Tafsir lessons we use the book of Tafsir Jalalain and Ibn Kathir’s Tafsir, and the book of Matan Sullam for Mantiq lessons. For Hadith lessons, we use the Matan Arbain, Majalisusaniah, and Mustalah Hadith books. As for the science of morality using the book of Tafsir Akhlak and the book of Akhlak al-Banin. The books are taught to the students in stages. Maintaining this consistency is not an easy matter, of course, given the rapid development of the era and the development of the dayah is a necessity. Where the world of dayah (pesantren) has introduced a very precise rule, namely an expression: "al-muhafadzah 'ala al-qadim ash-shalih wa al-akhdz bi al-jadid al-ashlah" good and continue to explore new cultures that are more constructive). The above rule is a strong legality for all reconstruction efforts (Mashuri, 2013).

The Digital Information Age and the Information Society

The convergence of communication technologies is characterized by the color digitization. The main point of the convergence process at the information technology level is digitization. Digitization is a process in which all forms of information whether numbers, words, images, sounds, data, or motion are encoded into bits (binary digits or commonly symbolized by representations of 0 and 1) that allow manipulation and transformation of data (bitstreaming). Digital technology is able to combine, convert or present information in various forms. Whatever content is displayed, bits can be explored as well as manipulated, including cropping the original information by subtraction or addition.

In the digital era, the spirit of democratization of information is so strong that it creates euphoria in human behavior using information, this has become the full attention of several studies on communication and the digital world. With the collapse of ownership of information centers; especially conventional mass media (mainstream) and also the emergence of e-government causes the flow of information to be so swift and unstoppable because everyone is free to create and use information. This is roughly according to Lon Safko’s opinion, that in the digital era anyone can become a producer of he has the information (Straubhaar, 2010).

Digitization has changed and transfigured media and communication technology. Automated telephone networks that were previously operated manually can now be operated by computer-intelligent network devices with
software capable of configuring intelligent networks with complex digital features. Several adages that have been put forward by observers of the development of modern communication show every human being that information is one of the constitutive elements in a society. The information society is a society that has socio-political economic activities through the process of production, consumption and distribution of information. The information society is characterized by a high intensity of exchange and use of communication technologies (Yuliana & Syahputra, 2022).

In the life of pesantren, studying the yellow book has become a kind of tradition that is very close, Martin Van Bruinessen calls the recitation of the yellow book a great tradition that has been going on for so long (Bruinessen, 2015; Muslim, 2018). The yellow book is the subject of study that has been taught and studied by students from generation to generation. Not much change was found in the method of studying the yellow book, even the name of the yellow book which originally referred to the yellow paper did not change at all even though currently the paper used was mostly white (Sugendal, 2021). The yellow book is also called the bald book because the script in it uses Arabic without a vowel (fathah, kasrah, dillam, breadfruit). Non-Arabs usually take a long time to learn how to read and understand the content in it through Arabic grammar; *Nahwu* (Syntax), *Shārīf* (inflation), *balaghah* (rhetoric) and *mantiq* (Aristotelian logic) (Sugendal, 2021).

Martin Van Bruinessen stated that the status of physical books among Islamic boarding schools still has a censorship body that determines which books are recommended (mu’tabaroh) and which are not. For example, the book by Ibn Taimiyah has been at the top of the list of forbidden books. This is because there are striking differences in views with Islamic studies and traditions. Before then appearing on the internet the sites shamela.ws and almeshkat.com with the project of digitizing the yellow book by Maktabah Syamilah. This software was originally published by the Salafi Wahabi (Sawah) da’wah network which made the Ahlussunnah feel compelled to research and be careful in reviewing the texts contained in it. However, the emergence of Maktabah Syamilah itself received appreciation from the santri community with a project whose purpose was to make it easier for Muslims to seek prayers from the yellow book (Sugendal, 2021).
In this digital era, it is not difficult for anyone to study religion. Through the internet anytime and anywhere you can learn religious sciences with the help of the Google search engine. Google (and eg, yahoo, ask etc.) is a great achievement that emerged in this century. Because whatever is written on the internet, Google can find it. Including one of them information about the religion of Islam. The Islamic texts can be read and downloaded in various formats, such as Pdf, Lit, Docx and the like. No exception, the yellow book manuscripts by previous scholars are also floating around on Google. But it must be realized that Google is not a khadim kiai who when someone intends to study religious knowledge can directly deliver to the destination, it could be that someone is sent to another place and accidentally learns a foreign book that they don't really want to learn or even Google takes someone to a book, which is intended but with different or falsified content, because Google is not a scholar, Google is only a search engine that is automatically analogous to all data in the world, without being able to sort out which data is wrong and which data is correct. Google cannot distinguish between the writings of scholars who are experts in the field of religious knowledge, and which are written by ordinary people and religion (Sugendal, 2021).

Many books by previous scholars have changed from the original writings and are distributed through print and internet media. So that learning Islamic science through Google, apart from the problem of the diversity of scattered book texts, the sanad or scientific backing that gives authentic legitimacy to science, also doesn't exist. But that does not mean that everything in Google is useless. It just needs accuracy and foresight in understanding the scattered texts of the book.

Regarding this development, it seems necessary to reconsider the classification of humans presented by al Kholil bin Ahmad that humans are divided into four; First, humans who have knowledge and do not know that they have knowledge are called negligent humans. Second, people who do not have knowledge and know that they do not have knowledge are called stupid people. Third, humans who have knowledge and know that they have knowledge are called intelligent humans, and fourth, humans who do not have knowledge and do not know that they have no knowledge then teach others, that is stupid. Therefore, there is nothing more needed in the face of ignorance (ignorance) than learning from people who are experts (Sugendal, 2021).
The Influence of the Digital Era on the Existence of the Yellow Book in Aceh Dayah

There are three kinds of dayah reactions in responding to advances in technology and information in relation to the existence of the yellow book, including:

Refuse/Avoid The Use of Technology and Information Media.

Some dayahs in Aceh avoid or refuse to use the technology and information media even to support the needs of the yellow book for the santri. There are several facts about dayah's reluctance to use various media in the digital era, including:

1. Dayah is a legacy of predecessors

   The dayah manager as the holder of the trust, manages the dayah as it was previously managed. In this case, the manager continues the mandate of the management as well as the preservation of the previous system, not making changes in any form. The founders of the salafi dayah in Aceh struggled to grow and advance the dayah by dealing with various problems of the dayah themselves, both related to students and facilities and infrastructure (Rahmah, 2016). The founders or predecessors of the dayah were deemed worthy of their mandate to be guarded considering their hard work and sacrifices, both physically and psychologically.

2. Dayah as a place for Sufistic studies

   Like the study of fiqh, Arabic and morals, the study of Sufism is also an inseparable part of dayah. Even some of the dayahs became the mecca for the community in carrying out Tawajjoh and Sulok activities. Through these two activities, the community is guided so that they can focus on worship, without involving worldly matters. Zuhudiyah's life is a form of both activities.

   Zuhud is an effort to worship Allah by reducing the portion of the world and increasing worship activities that are worth the reward. Zuhud for some dayah people covers all areas of life, both for personal life, even for social life, so that a prohibition is issued "not to preach/teaching the yellow book on social media because it can trigger a sense of pride which results in the appearance of riya" (Muhammadan, personal communication, 2021). In the Sufi world, riya’ is a disease of the heart that must be cleaned because it
can hinder the repentance process. For connoisseurs of zuhud, the use of information media and technology goes beyond the principle of simplicity in the teachings of Sufism.

3. Interaction in learning the yellow book has value

The yellow book learning process at the dayah is not just a transfer of knowledge. There is a kedayahan ritual obtained by students in the yellow book teaching and learning activities. To this day, the learning of the yellow book in dayah is still teacher-centered (Teacher-Centered Learning). Therefore, the teacher becomes the central figure in the yellow book learning class. Teachers are highly respected because apart from being a source of knowledge, teachers are also considered a source of blessing in knowledge for students in the dayah. Respect for the teacher is shown by the students at every meeting and farewell to the teacher by shaking the teacher while kissing the teacher's hand. This is a symbol of ta'dhim santri to the teacher.

The interaction as described above only applies in face-to-face learning. For some dayahs learning from sources other than physical books such as on the internet, both the Youtube application and the Maktabah Syamilah are difficult to accept because there is no interaction as learning from physical books in the dayah.

4. There is a risk of using the internet

In the digital era, through the internet, anyone can learn easily because it is not limited by time and place. However, apart from the ease of using the internet, the potential risks cannot be denied. Information in any form is very easily accessible so that content that is not good is also possible to be consumed. The age of the santri who are still in their infancy is not very good for them (Muhammadan, personal communication, 2021). Content that is not good can damage students' thinking so that it has an effect on behavior and concentration in learning.

**Limiting the Use of Technology and Information Media**

Some of the dayahs who have a better system have succeeded in obtaining the predicate of type A. The success of some of the dayahs in obtaining the predicate A cannot be separated from the internal efforts of the dayah, especially the dayah teacher who doubles as a dayah operator. In this case, the teacher who carries out the task as the compilation team for the Dayah Accreditation Form is used to using the internet as a medium in completing their
tasks. Although in general the dayahs do not have internet and computer facilities, with private facilities the teachers in the dayahs are accustomed to using information media for personal needs and demonstrate their ability in the field of administration.

With private facilities, the teachers in the dayah also access dictionaries and even books on the internet related to the materials they teach to students and materials related to various legal issues that develop in people’s lives. The teachers access these books at Maktabah Syamilah to enrich and sharpen their knowledge of the books that are referenced in the dayah. These digital books function as a comparison and reinforcement for the books studied in the dayah, and even as a source of new knowledge for the teachers in the dayah.

The presence of internet facilities in the digital era presents a new reference for teachers in dayah. If previously they only used the yellow book in physical form, now they are also using digital books even if only for their own reading, not to be taught to students; if they used to study the books that became the dayah curriculum, now they add to their references with books that are relevant to their study. Cheap and easy access to books on the internet opens up opportunities for teachers in dayah to take advantage of the internet.

c. Accepting the use of technology and information media

The Salafi Dayah in Aceh makes learning the yellow book a characteristic of the dayah. It is undeniable that even though the whole dayah has a uniform curriculum, there are dayahs that have their own programs and methods in learning the yellow book (Idrus et al., 2020). Dayah Bukit Eqra, which is located in Tumpok Ladang Village, Kaway XVI District, West Aceh Regency, has a program so that students are able to read the yellow book independently within a period of three months. Likewise with the yellow book learning method at Dayah Bukit Eqra’, the leader of the dayah formulated a special method for his students by prioritizing direct language studies on the Mahalli book as the main book for students. The Santri Dayah Bukit Eqra’ do not learn the yellow book gradually like other dayahs because they can prove that students who are already able to read the Mahalli book will be able to read the Matan Taqrib and Bajuri books as books that should be studied before, even though the students have never studied them (Muhammadan, personal communication, 2021).

Innovation in teaching the yellow book is not only limited to the learning method, Dayah Bukit Eqra’ also uses the internet as a supporting medium in teaching. Through the internet, both teachers and students use the books in
Maktabah Syamilah as supporting books. These supporting books are used as comparison and reinforcement for the study of the Mahalli book as the standard book studied at Dayah Bukit Eqra’. In a Focus Group Discussion (FGD), Teungku Harmen Nuriqmar as the leader of Dayah Bukit Eqra explained that digital books are much cheaper and easier to carry anywhere and the dayah is left behind in Aceh because in general the dayahs in Aceh have not utilized technology and information media optimally (T. H. Nuriqmar, personal communication, 2021).

The three conditions mentioned above lead to a pattern related to the existence of the yellow book in the Acehnese dayah, namely the physical yellow book remains the main reference book in the teaching and learning process that occurs in the dayah.

**Dayah’s Efforts in Responding to Advances in Information Technology**

Advances in technology and information are both good news and bad news for the world of education, including dayah educational institutions in Aceh. Dayah made various efforts in responding to advances in technology and information, including:

1. Limiting and prohibiting students from using internet media, researchers find out that the students at Dayah Bukit Eqra Aceh Barat use android to access books whose discussion is related to the physical yellow book they are studying, after studying the android is stored by the leadership. Santri Dayah Darul Ihsan Aceh Selatan is facilitated by android by a special dayah party to contact parents via video calls to release longing for parents and several other dayahs in Aceh only facilitate students with cellphones without cameras and internet applications as a medium of communication (Muhammadan, personal communication, 2021).

2. Fostering students to be honest and trustworthy

3. Utilizing social media as a medium for da’wah and socialization media for dayah.

4. Reviewing legal issues encountered by the public on the internet by referring to the yellow book. In connection with the community action above, teachers in dayah reviewed the issue again by studying the yellow book together so that a common ground was found between the discussion on the internet and the yellow book (Muhammadan, 2021a). The Tengku-teungku in the dayah direct the public to be observant and thorough in receiving information, and to ensure its veracity by reviewing the yellow book.
The Existen of The Yellow Book

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The Obstacles Dayah Experienced in Maintaining the Existence of the Yellow Book in the Digital Age

Among the obstacles faced by the dayah in maintaining the existence of the yellow book, namely: 1) Weak Arabic language skills in understanding the yellow book; 2) Yellow book forgery, for the explanation the enemy of Islam never gives up in attacking Islam. One of the easiest ways for them to do in the digital era is to forge digital books. According to the teachers in several dayahs, the public should be careful about adopting knowledge in digital books because some digital books have been changed from the original (Muhammadan, personal communication, 2021). Even according to Teungku Harmen Nuriqmar, counterfeiting of books does not only occur in digital books, but also in physical books forgery (T. H. Nuriqmar, personal communication, 2021). The incessant enemy of Islam who falsifies the yellow book greatly threatens the existence of the yellow book as a reference for the people; 3) The expensive physical yellow book; 4) Natural disasters causing books from the collection of santri and dayahs to be destroyed (T. Sulthani, personal communication, 2021); 5) Negligence, in this case, the human error factor is very obvious, the books that are torn apart are often scattered around the dayah so that the students themselves unconsciously destroy the books that should be protected (Muhammadan, personal communication, 2021). To overcome this problem, the digitization of the book is very necessary. Books can be stored using digital platforms such as Google Drive or other storage platforms: 6) The lack of human resources in internet utilization. Although it seems ironic, the facts about the foreignness of the internet in the dayah environment are true (T. H. Nuriqmar, personal communication, 2021). 7) Level of Quality Intelligence and student interest, the limited ability of students to understand the yellow book hinders the existence of the yellow book in the future because the knowledge gained by students is not able to be transferred to the next generation; 8) The negative impact of the internet, dayah is worried about the learning style of the people who study on Youtube basically because not all the substances conveyed are in accordance with the principles of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaah and the Shafi’i school. The community should be like the students in the Meuguree Dayah / study directly with the teacher (Muhammadan, personal communication, 2021).
CONCLUSION

Based on the previous explanation, the researchers can write the following conclusions that the influence of the digital era on the existence of the yellow book in Aceh’s dayah. Dayah Aceh continues to preserve the study of the physical yellow book as a legacy of the pesantren tradition for centuries. This study succeeded in finding the answer that the yellow book still exists in the current digital era even though the development of information technology still influences the learning system in Dayah with the unique and interesting research findings, namely the improvisation of Guree Dayah by using the Maktabah Syamilah feature as a supporting reference for the materials learning that is not covered in the classic yellow book. Most of the dayahs in Aceh use the internet as a means for preaching and as a medium of socialization. This proves that the dayah in Aceh is quite open to current developments in technology and information. However, the researchers also found that there were dayahs who persisted with the classical learning tradition and kept away from internet media, namely Dayah Tanoh Abee Aceh Besar. The results of related research are very different from this study, as mentioned in the previous discussion that the research journal of Mohammad Thoha and Amrizal are research conducted at a higher education institution with student research objects. Meanwhile, this study places the Santri as the core issue because they are directly involved as parties who feel the effects of the study of the yellow book in the Acehnese days.

The obstacles faced by dayah in maintaining the existence of the yellow book in the digital era, among others: weak Arabic language skills, the existence of forgeries of the yellow book, the high cost of the physical yellow book, natural disasters, negligence in caring for the yellow book, the lack of human resources (HR) in Indonesia. The field of internet use and the weak level of intelligence quality of some students. The advantage of this research is that it has a fairly broad coverage, starting from the oldest dayahs such as the Tanoh Abee Dayah to the newly emerged dayahs, it also includes those that are known to the wider community and those that are not popular. Institutionally, dayah is not ready to use the yellow book facility in the digital era, but there is an initiative from Guree to utilize digital books that can be accessed via the internet. The drawback of this research is that it has not covered all of the dayahs in Aceh. Researchers only examined the areas of Banda Aceh, Aceh Besar, South Aceh and Southwest Aceh. However, the researchers plan to conduct follow-up research in the eastern region of Aceh at a later stage.
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