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Comparison of Islamic Education According to the Perspectives of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan and K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari: Historical Roots and Curricular Implications

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ABSTRACT

Islamic education in Indonesia was significantly shaped by early twentieth-century reform movements led by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan and K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari. This study aims to analyze comparatively the relationship between intellectual genealogy (sanad) and the curricular structure formulated by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan and K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari. It addresses the analytical gap concerning the limited examination of how historical-sanad foundations shaped institutional curriculum design. Using a qualitative historical-comparative approach and content analysis, this research examines primary sources such as Adabul 'Alim wal Muta'allim and early Muhammadiyah statutes, supported by relevant secondary literature. The findings show that Ahmad Dahlan developed an integrative and modern school-based curriculum combining religious and general sciences for social transformation, while Hasyim Asy'ari reinforced a pesantren-based curriculum centered on classical scholarship, sanad continuity, and moral formation. The study demonstrates that these curricular differences are causally rooted in their distinct epistemological orientations and interpretations of religious authority. It concludes that the research successfully establishes a systematic link between intellectual genealogy and curricular construction, contributing a historical-genealogical framework for understanding the complementary diversity of Islamic education models in Indonesia.

1. Introduction

Islamic education in Indonesia in the early 20th century faced the sharp dualism between the secular Dutch colonial education system and the isolative traditional pesantren education system (Febriana & Firmasari, 2021). The ethical policy implemented by the Dutch East Indies government gave rise to Western-style schools (Gubernemen) that were modern in methodology but secular in substance,

while on the other hand, Islamic boarding schools persisted with the tradition of *tafaqquh fiddin* but tended to close themselves off from general knowledge (Yasmansyah & Iswantir, 2021). The response to this situation gave rise to two major currents of Islamic educational reform, represented by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan through Muhammadiyah (1912) and K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari through Nahdlatul Ulama (1926), each offering different epistemological constructs and institutional models in response to this dichotomy.

K.H. Ahmad Dahlan responded to this challenge by adopting a modern classical system that integrated religious and general knowledge, a breakthrough that was considered “unusual” for *santri* at the time. Meanwhile, K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari, although responding to modernization, preferred a more conservative path by preserving the traditions of Islamic boarding schools and the *sorogan-bandongan* system to maintain the purity of *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah* scholarship (Wijayati & Habibi, 2021). These two figures not only laid the foundations for the organization but also formulated the educational philosophy that shapes the face of Islam in Indonesia to this day.

However, understanding the differences between these two figures requires more than just looking at their teaching methods on the surface; it requires an in-depth analysis of the historical roots and scientific traditions that shaped their worldviews. Just as the difference in curriculum between Muhammadiyah Madrasah and Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School is not merely a technical matter of “using tables and chairs or sitting cross-legged,” but rather a manifestation of the epistemological clash brought about by their teachers in Mecca and the discourse of renewal in Cairo (Hakim et al., 2020). This aligns with the definition of curriculum according to Law No. 20 of 2003 in Rahma's journal (2023), which defines a curriculum as a set of plans and arrangements regarding objectives, content, and learning materials, as well as methods used as guidelines for organizing learning activities to achieve specific educational goals (Rahma et al., 2023). Therefore, this research is important to dissect how this intellectual genealogy has transformed into fundamentally different curriculum structures.

Various studies have examined the educational thinking of these two figures from a variety of perspectives. Research on character and moral education emphasizes the relevance of their ideas in responding to the moral crisis among students. (Ulum et al., 2022). Second, studies that highlight the aspect of religious moderation as a pillar of diversity, in line with the results of research by Zaidan et al. (2025), which affirms the relevance of their thoughts in strengthening religious tolerance and harmony in Indonesia. Third, examining from the perspective of thought and showing that both organizations have actively contributed to the expansion and equal distribution of quality education, as well as the improvement of character and good morals (Muttaqin, 2017). Fourth, studies that link their thoughts with the spirit of nationalism. As confirmed in Nurhadi's research findings, which found that although both figures responded to the context of colonialism, Dahlan offered the concept of progressive Islam while Asy'ari displayed the spirit of cultural Islam. This difference is relevant in responding to the dichotomous problem between nationalism and religion (Nurhadi, 2017).

However, most of these studies tend to stop at the descriptive-normative level and focus on intellectual products or value implications without systematically tracing the causal relationship between intellectual genealogy and the initial curriculum design applied during the institutionalization phase of the two figures' education. In other words, there is an analytical gap in the aspect of the transformation of intellectual transmission into concrete curriculum structures that distinguished the Muhammadiyah Madrasah and the Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School in the early period of their establishment.

Based on this gap, this study positions itself not merely as a comparative study of thought, but as a historical-causal analysis that traces how the scientific sanad and intellectual networks of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan and K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari transformed into fundamentally different curriculum constructions. Therefore, this study aims to comparatively analyze the relationship between intellectual genealogy and the structure of the Islamic education curriculum formulated by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan and K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari in the early stages of establishing their educational institutions.

2. Methodology

This study uses qualitative research with a Historical Comparative Study approach. This approach was chosen because the researcher not only compares two objects (the thoughts of two figures), but also traces the development of these thoughts in space and time (the historical context of the early 20th century). As explained by Sartono Kartodirdjo, the historical method is used to reconstruct the past systematically and objectively in order to establish facts and draw strong conclusions (Saputra, 2020).

The data sources in this study are divided into two categories. The first is primary data, which refers to the original works and founding documents of the two figures. For K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, the data refers to the early Muhammadiyah Statutes and transcripts of his speeches. For K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari, the main references are the book "Adabul Alim wal Muta'allim," which contains his views on educational ethics, and the Qanun Asasi Nahdlatul Ulama (Basic Law of Nahdlatul Ulama). Secondly, there is secondary data, which includes authoritative biographical literature and supporting literature that serves as a supplement and comparison in analyzing Islamic education from the perspectives of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan and K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari. These sources include scientific works in the form of journals, articles, and previous research results that are relevant to the research theme.

The data collection technique in this study was conducted through a literature study method, namely by examining various books, literature, notes, and reports related to the research problem (Sugiyono, 2020). Data were collected by reading, reviewing, and analyzing scientific journals, books, and articles from previous relevant studies. Data was collected through a process of systematic identification, classification, and documentation of texts containing the educational ideas and curriculum structures of the two figures. The data collection process was carried

out continuously by searching and exploring library sources, both printed and digital, that were related to the focus of the study on the importance of exemplary methods in moral education.

To maintain data validity, this study applies internal and external source criticism. External criticism is used to ensure the authenticity and credibility of documents, while internal criticism is used to assess the consistency of content, writing context, and possible historical bias in the text. The collected data was analyzed using historical analysis and content analysis methods. The analysis steps refer to the stages of the historical method according to Faizal Arifin, namely: (1) Heuristics and Source Criticism to verify the authenticity of documents; (2) Comparative Content Analysis to contrast curriculum patterns; and (3) Historical Interpretation to interpret data findings in the context of historical causality (Arifin, 2023). Through this technique, researchers can identify patterns, themes, and meanings contained in the data, so that the analysis results obtained are more systematic and comprehensive.

3. Results and Discussion

The History and Academic Lineage of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan

Family Roots and Early Education in Kauman

K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, born Muhammad Darwis in 1868 in Kauman, Yogyakarta, was a figure deeply rooted in the Javanese Islamic scholarly tradition (Mu'thi et al., 2015; Anis, 1968). He came from a family of scholars who served at the Grand Mosque of the Yogyakarta Palace, a religious institution that had long been the center of Islamic scholarly authority in the palace environment (Darban, 2001). His father, K.H. Abu Bakar, was a Khatib, and his mother, Aminah, was the daughter of K.H. Ibrahim, who served as Penghulu Kraton Yogyakarta (Nugroho, 2009). He received his early education directly from his father, focusing on the Qur'an and the basics of religious knowledge, which he then continued by studying fiqh with K.H. M. Saleh and nahwu with Kyai Haji Muchsin. This background shows that before the era of renewal, Darwis was firmly rooted in the pesantren tradition and the religious structure of the Javanese palace. Unlike the rural Islamic boarding school tradition in East Java, the Kauman environment placed Ahmad Dahlan in an academic setting that was closer to state authority (the palace) and urban social dynamics. From the outset, this position shaped an academic orientation that was more open to social change and the needs of modern society.

Academic Lineage in Mecca

An important turning point in Muhammad Darwis' academic lineage occurred when he performed the Hajj pilgrimage and sought knowledge in Mecca twice, the first trip around 1890 and the second in 1903 (Nugroho, 2009). In Mecca, his scholarly lineage expanded from scholars in the Indonesian archipelago to prominent Middle Eastern scholars, strengthening his legitimacy as a scholar in the global Islamic tradition. Muhammad Darwis studied under Sheikh Ahmad Khatib al-

Minangkabawi, a grand imam at the Grand Mosque and a prominent Shafi'i scholar who was also the teacher of K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari, indicating a shared chain of transmission between the two founders of these major organizations. In addition, he studied fiqh under Sheikh Salaf Bafadal, hadith from the Shafi'i Mufti, and qira'ah from Sheikh Ali al-Misri (Sari et al., 2023; A'abadia & Huda, 2022). However, the important distinguishing point lies in how this sanad is operationalized. While some scholars in the archipelago position sanad as an instrument of legitimizing traditional authority, Ahmad Dahlan uses it as epistemic capital to reinterpret religious practices within society.

Contamination of Modernist Thought and Reform

His second stay in Mecca (1903-1905) was a decisive period for the birth of the idea of renewal or tajdid (Amir & Rahman, 2025). In addition to deepening his knowledge of classical studies, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan also engaged in many dialogues and read the works of Islamic reformers around the world, such as Muhammad Abduh, Jamaluddin al-Afghani, and Rasyid Ridha, as well as reading the magazines al-Manar and al-Urwat al-Wutsqa (Amir, 2022). This influence made him aware of the need to cleanse Islam of superstition, heresy, and myth, and to combine religious knowledge with general knowledge. While in Mecca, he also received a certificate from Sheikh Sayyid Bakri Syatha, which confirmed the change of his name to Haji Ahmad Dahlan. Upon his return to Indonesia, he brought with him a large amount of religious literature as capital for his preaching (Abdullah, 2015).

From this description, it can be understood that even though he did not have a Western educational background, he still opened space for the development of rationality in Islamic teachings. This rational orientation cannot be separated from the influence of the reform movement, which is understood as ideas, schools of thought, and systematic efforts to adjust religious teachings to be relevant to the new context that emerged along with advances in science and technology (Nasution, 2003). Here we see a shift in the orientation of sanad from merely transmitting knowledge to serving as a means of criticizing local religious practices that are considered incompatible with rationality and modern progress. This approach gradually shifted the role of the ulama from guardians of tradition to agents of social transformation.

The Transformation of Scholarship into a Pragmatic Movement

Like most Indonesian santri (Islamic students) at that time, the books studied by Kyai Dahlan were those used as references by Ahlusunnah wal jamaah in the science of Aqaid, the Madzab Syafi'i books in the science of fiqh, and those by Imam Gazali in the science of Sufism. However, upon his return from Mecca, after meeting several reformist figures, he began to read books with a spirit of renewal (Mahsum, 2014). Upon his return to his homeland, the knowledge acquired by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan did not stop at the level of pure scholarship, but was translated into practical movements and real deeds. He was known as a pragmatic figure with the motto "talk less, work more" (Ali et al., 2016).

This idea of reform was realized through the renewal of the direction of the qibla, and most monumentally, the establishment of modern schools that adopted Western systems such as desks, chairs, and structured curricula. However, these schools were filled with religious and general knowledge, which became the hallmark of Muhammadiyah education (Husna et al., 2023). This educational model then became the hallmark of the Muhammadiyah education system and a milestone in the modernization of Islamic education in Indonesia (Setiawan, 2025). Compared to traditional scholars who emphasized the reproduction of knowledge in Islamic boarding schools, Ahmad Dahlan shifted the center of scholarly practice to the public sphere through modern schools, organizations, and social services. This orientation became the foundation for the establishment of Muhammadiyah in 1912.

Historical Implications and Conclusions of Sanad

Historically, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's scientific sanad is a unique blend of the scientific traditions of Javanese Islamic boarding schools and Makkah scholars with the spirit of Middle Eastern modernization. The continuity of the classical sanad through Sheikh Ahmad Khatib and Mufti Syafi'i gave him scholarly legitimacy, while the infusion of reformist thought gave him the impetus for *tajdid*. It was this dualism of sanad that gave birth to the Muhammadiyah organization in 1912, a movement based on the foundations of the Qur'an and Sunnah. However, it was implemented with a modern institutional strategy (Husna et al., 2023). For his great contributions to the nation and religion, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan was later awarded the title of National Independence Hero through Presidential Decree No. 657 of 1961 (State Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia, 1961).

History and Scientific Lineage of K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari

Family Roots and Jombang Islamic Boarding School Tradition

K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari, who was born in Jombang, East Java, in 1871, had very strong scientific roots from the Islamic boarding school tradition. He was a descendant of nobility and a scholar. His father, Kiai Asy'ari, was the founder of the Keras Islamic Boarding School, while his grandfather, Kiai Usman, was the leader of the Nglajang Islamic Boarding School (Rifai, 2009). He spent his early education at various well-known Islamic boarding schools in East Java, which were known for their *bandongan* and *sorogan* systems. At the age of 15, he studied at the Wonorejo Islamic Boarding School, the Gedang Islamic Boarding School, the Siwalan Islamic Boarding School, and the Bangkalan Islamic Boarding School (Wahdah, 2025). This tradition of moving from place to place is called *rihlah ilmiyah*, which shows Hasyim Asy'ari's enthusiasm for mastering various disciplines from the best scholars in Java (Hanum, 2024). Unlike Ahmad Dahlan, who grew up in an urban palace environment, Hasyim Asy'ari was shaped by a rural Islamic boarding school culture that emphasized continuity of tradition, submission to the authority of teachers, and religious and social stability.

Academic Lineage in Mecca

After completing his education in Java, K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari performed the Hajj pilgrimage and settled in Mecca around 1893 to deepen his knowledge. This period of study in Mecca was crucial in the formation of his sanad, during which he studied under great scholars from various schools of thought. Among his most influential teachers was Sheikh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi, an Imam of the Shafi'i school of thought at the Grand Mosque. Sheikh Ahmad Khatib was a central sanad connecting Hasyim Asy'ari with other scholars in the archipelago, including K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, indicating a meeting point in their sanad even though they later had different movement orientations (Khuluk, 2000). His studies continued in Mecca in the 1890s, where Hasyim studied under great scholars who were masters of hadith, fiqh, and adab.

Among his important teachers were figures such as Sheikh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi, a central figure for Nusantara scholars in Hijaz, as well as several other scholars who strengthened his hadith and fiqh sanad. This sanad relationship also became a meeting point with other Nusantara figures who studied or interacted with the Mecca network. Although he had the same teacher lineage as Ahmad Dahlan, Hasyim Asy'ari interpreted the lineage as a sacred chain that must be maintained, especially in the fields of hadith and Shafi'i fiqh. Thus, the lineage not only served an epistemological function, but also a normative and religious identity function.

The Influence of Sanad and Traditionalist Spirit

In addition to Sheikh Ahmad Khatib, Hasyim Asy'ari's scientific sanad in Mecca also included scholars who reinforced traditionalist tendencies and Ahlussunah wal Jama'ah (Aswaja). He studied under Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani (before Nawawi's death), Sheikh Mahfudz at-Tarmasi (hadith scholar), and Sheikh Abdul Hamid Darwish (fiqh scholar). His mastery of hadith sanad from Sheikh Mahfudz at-Tarmasi was very important, making Hasyim Asy'ari one of the leading hadith experts in the archipelago. Through these sanads, K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari gained legitimacy and responsibility to preserve turats (classical scientific heritage) and uphold the four madhhabs (especially Shafi'i) as a valid methodology of religion in Indonesia (Azra, 2013).

K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari's educational thinking in the book *Adabul 'Alim wal Muta'allim* focuses on the formation of manners or ethics. In his explanations, he often begins with verses from the Qur'an, hadith, opinions of scholars, and wise poems, so that readers are encouraged to understand the meaning deeply and critically without lengthy direct explanations. Nevertheless, the ideas conveyed remain clear and focused. According to KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, the goal of education is to create a society with noble character. This is implied in the references to hadith and opinions of scholars that he quotes, one of which is a hadith about the obligation of parents to give their children good names, care, and ethics. Thus, the instillation of ethics is seen as the main foundation of education from an early age (Zuhri & Chanifudin, 2023).

Furthermore, morality is also linked to religion, where religion and morality are two closely intertwined and inseparable aspects. Morality essentially reflects a person's religiosity, as behavior that aligns with norms and values of goodness demonstrates a strong religious attitude (Sholekah & Khunaifi, 2026). While Ahmad Dahlan emphasized institutional rationalization and efficiency, Hasyim Asy'ari emphasized the internalization of ethics and morals as prerequisites for the legitimacy of knowledge. This difference reflects two paradigms of Islamic education: education as an instrument of social change versus education as a means of preserving values.

The Transformation of Scholarship into the Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School Institution

Upon his return to Indonesia, K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari founded the Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School in Jombang in 1899. This institution was established as a replica and centralization of the ulama education model he received in Mecca, which focused on the deepening of classical knowledge and the formation of morality (*adab*). His educational philosophy was codified in his famous book, *Adabul Alim wal Muta'allim*, which emphasizes student ethics towards teachers, the importance of intention, and the procedures for seeking knowledge, which later became the guidelines for the ethical curriculum in all NU Islamic boarding schools. Tebuireng not only became a center for *fiqh* and *hadith*, but also a bastion of Islamic culture in the archipelago.

KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's educational philosophy placed education as a means of shaping individuals to fulfill two main roles, namely as servants of Allah and caliphs on earth. The goal of education was to produce individuals who were pious, had noble character, and were able to live a balanced life in this world and the hereafter. Education is not only oriented towards the mastery of knowledge, but also towards the internalization of moral values and social responsibility. In terms of curriculum, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari emphasized the teaching of religious sciences as the main foundation, such as *tauhid*, *fiqh*, *tasawuf*, the *Qur'an*, and *hadith*. However, he did not reject general knowledge, even incorporating it into the Tebuireng Islamic boarding school education system, such as language, mathematics, and earth sciences, as preparation for students to carry out their roles in society. The educational methods used by KH. Hasyim Asy'ari were traditional *pesantren* method, such as memorization, *halaqah*, *sorogan*, and *bandongan*, which were combined with deliberation and guidance from senior students as future scholars. This method emphasizes the exemplary nature of teachers, discipline, and the formation of manners as the core of the learning process (Bahri et al., 2024; Nurmalahayati et al., 2025).

This aligns with Siska's opinion that the success of character education lies not in its ideal concept, but in its effective implementation in the field. This implementation encompasses the complete management cycle, from program planning to program implementation across various activities (Permadi & Achadi, 2025). Unlike the Muhammadiyah model, which adopted the modern school system, Tebuireng maintained the classical *pesantren* structure while selectively

accepting general knowledge. This strategy demonstrated an adaptive attitude without breaking the chain of classical scholarly tradition.

Historical Implications and the Establishment of Nahdlatul Ulama

The culmination of K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari's historical and scholarly lineage was the establishment of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in 1926. NU was founded as a direct response to defend the Aswaja tradition from the currents of purification and modernization that were considered a threat to the continuity of classical schools of thought and traditions. His scholarship and religious authority, supported by a solid chain of transmission, made him a central figure of Rais Akbar, who historically succeeded in consolidating traditional scholars and preserving the scientific methodology of Islamic boarding schools as an enduring contribution to Islamic education and civilization in Indonesia (Sukadri, 1985).

Comparatively, it can be asserted that Ahmad Dahlan and Hasyim Asy'ari were not in a binary opposition, but rather represented two different tajdid strategies. Ahmad Dahlan represented tajdid based on rationalization and modern institutions, while Hasyim Asy'ari represented tajdid based on the conservation of sanad and traditional ethics. Both contributed complementarily in shaping the face of modern Indonesian education and Islam. The following is a comparison table of Islamic education according to the perspectives of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan and K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari, presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison

Aspects	K.H. Ahmad Dahlan	K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari
Historical background	An early 20th-century Indonesian Islamic reformer who lived in the context of colonialism, the decline of Islamic education, and the challenges of modernity	A major traditionalist scholar of the early 20th century lived in the context of colonialism and efforts to maintain the authority of Islamic boarding schools and classical scholarly traditions.
Educational goals	To shape Muslims who are faithful, knowledgeable, moral, and capable of playing an active role in social and civilizational progress	To shape students who are morally upright, knowledgeable about religion, and preserve the traditions of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah
Main orientation	<i>Tajdid</i> (renewal) and social transformation through education	Preservation of classical Islamic scholarly traditions and strengthening of the authority of pesantren scholars
View of knowledge	Rejects the dichotomy of religious and general knowledge; all knowledge is worship if it brings benefit.	Religious knowledge is the top priority; general knowledge is accepted as long as it supports the strengthening of religion and morals.
Ideal curriculum	Integrative: the Qur'an, Hadith, morals, and general knowledge, such as mathematics, language, and science	Classical pesantren curriculum: the Qur'an, Hadith, fiqh, aqidah, tasawuf, and classical Islamic texts
Educational methods	Modern school system, graded classes, structured curriculum, evaluation, and active learning methods	Pesantren system: bandongan, sorogan, halaqah, and knowledge transmission based on books and sanad

Attitude towards reason	Reason is widely used to address social issues and the progress of the ummah.	Reason is used sparingly and is subject to the texts and opinions of the Salaf scholars.
Attitude towards modernity	Accommodative and selective: modernity is accepted if it is in line with Islamic values.	Selective and cautious: modernity is filtered so as not to damage the traditions and scientific authority of Islamic boarding schools.
Institutional form	Muhammadiyah schools and modern education-based organizations	Traditional Islamic boarding schools and Nahdlatul Ulama organizations (NU)
Long-term impact	Modernization and integration of Islamic education in Indonesia	Preservation and strengthening of pesantren traditions and the continuity of traditional Islam in the archipelago

Curricular Implications

Curricular Implications of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan

One way to improve education for quality is to organize its management, associated with the curriculum, it is commonly referred to as school-based management (Musdalifa et al., 2025). K.H. Ahmad Dahlan was once considered to have adopted a “kafir” system because he adopted a classical system in the form of classrooms with blackboards, tables, and chairs. He also created a structured curriculum that allowed for the integration of religious and general knowledge (Hasanah et al., 2024). The curricular implications of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan can be seen in the distinctive curriculum of Muhammadiyah, namely the ISMUBA curriculum (Al-Islam, Kemuhammadiyah, and Arabic). This curriculum is designed with the aim of shaping the worldview of students (I. P. Handayani & Achadi, 2023).

In the ISMUBA curriculum, there are Islamic Religious Education subjects that are the same as other madrasahs, namely Aqidah Akhlak, Fiqh, Tarikh or History, Al-Qur'an Hadith, and Arabic. In the Fiqh subject, Muhammadiyah takes its material based on the tarjih council (Khozin et al., 2024). In this curriculum, there is also a Kemuhammadiyah subject. Students learn about the history, organization, and ideology of Muhammadiyah. The aim is to foster leadership and understanding of modern organizations. This shows that in values education, Islam not only commands people to be good to themselves but also to others, thereby bringing about positive social change (Suyatno et al., 2019; Widayanti, 2019). In addition, the ISMUBA curriculum integrates religious and general knowledge. An example of this is natural events or phenomena, which are signs of the greatness of Allah SWT (Tarik, 2024). K.H. Ahmad Dahlan used the discussion or dialogue method in his teaching. In Muhammadiyah schools, teaching using the lecture method was reduced and replaced with this discussion method so that learning was not one-sided. This aimed to train students to think critically so that they would not fall into blind imitation (Hasanah et al., 2024).

Curricular Implications of K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari

K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari implemented a curriculum based on the stages or hierarchy of the books that were completed (Yuniari, 2021). It began with Nahwu-Saraf, often

referred to as the science of tools, as an introduction to other sciences. Then, usually using basic books such as *Safinatun Naja*. After that, Tauhid in Aqidatul Awam and finally Tasawuf or Akhlak in the book *Ta'limul Muta'allim*. Specifically at the Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School, which is the legacy of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, the curriculum requires memorization of *Kutubus Sittah* and in-depth study of the *Sahih Bukhari hadith*. In addition, students are required to memorize at least 240 selected hadiths and master the science of *Musthalah Hadith* and *Takhrij* (Khasani, 2024).

The learning methods used by K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari, which are still consistently implemented today, are the sorogan and bandongan or wetonan methods. The sorogan method is a learning method where students meet with the kiai one by one to read the book. The kiai will listen and correct the students' reading (Rahman et al., 2021). This has a significant impact on the students' level of understanding and mastery of Arabic. In the bandongan or wetonan method, the kiai reads and translates the book, and the santri listen and provide meanings or explanations in Sundanese for the book. This is a process of direct transmission of knowledge from the source, namely the kiai. The santri in this activity only listen, and usually ask questions if the explanation has been given (Salam et al., 2025). The statement above was emphasized by the Deputy Head of Curriculum for curriculum implementation based on the achievement of the Curriculum service strategy, because the Curriculum is the core of Education services and is a strategic tool for schools in implementing quality improvement (Intan et al., 2025).

The educational philosophies of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan and K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari differ fundamentally in their structural and methodological approaches. Muhammadiyah emphasizes social change and modern organizational cadre development through two-way discussion methods. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan pioneered reform through a classical system, integrating general knowledge and religious knowledge, as well as a systematic and structured ISMUBA curriculum to shape a worldview in line with the times. This aims to avoid blind imitation. Meanwhile, K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari had the idea of maintaining a strong pesantren tradition based on the stages of the book and strengthening the memorization of hadith. This was also supported by traditional methods to maintain the sanad of knowledge, namely through sorogan and bandongan. This tradition focuses on mastery of classical literature and proficiency in Arabic through intensive interaction between kiai and santri.

Academic Contributions and Contemporary Implications

Action Theology and Institutionalization of Science Integration by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan

K.H. Ahmad Dahlan introduced a novel approach to teaching tafsir. In Surah *Al-Ma'un*, for example, he not only provided cognitive material in the form of tajwid and understanding of meaning, but also required his students to implement what they had learned by seeking out the poor to give them charity. In today's world of education, this is a manifestation of the Project-Based-Learning model. He updated

the religious curriculum, which was originally only verbalistic, to become action-oriented (Tarik, 2024). K.H. Ahmad Dahlan is famous for his revolutionary thinking in the field of education. He practiced the integration of religious and general knowledge long before the Indonesian government formulated a national curriculum. This confirms that Islamic-based schools can teach science without discrediting their identity as Muslims (S. Handayani & Baidi, 2025).

The Codification of Aswaja and Religious Nationalism by K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari

Through his two fundamental works, namely the book *Risalah Ahlussunah wal Jamaah* and *Qanun Asasi*, K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari formulated the boundaries of Aswaja theology in the archipelago. Namely, Asy'ariyah or Maturidiyah in creed, the four Imams of the madhhab in Fiqh, and Ghazalian or Junaid in Sufism. This provides a strong academic foundation for traditionalists to confront purification movements (Khikmatun & Khobir, 2025). K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari also echoed the jihad resolution as political education. He taught that love for the homeland, known as *hubbul wathan*, is an obligation for every Muslim and is part of faith. He brought innovation to the science of fiqh by integrating nationalism into the structure of Islamic law (Yuniari, 2021). The academic contributions of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan and K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari show a dichotomy in strategy that is now beginning to converge. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan pioneered axiological theology with the integration of general knowledge and religion and the Project-Based Learning model, which gave birth to an academically competitive madrasah system. Meanwhile, K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari strengthened the theological foundations of *Ahlussunah wal Jamaah* and national religiosity, which preserve the *pesantren* tradition as the guardian of the nation's moral fortress.

Contemporary Implications: Policy Dynamics and Convergence

K.H. Ahmad Dahlan and K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari left behind educational ideas that continue to exist and thrive in Indonesia today. Their legacy has created complex dynamics in the current national education system. One implication in the field of education is the difference in paradigms brought about by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, who initially adopted the Dutch school model, and K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari, who remained steadfast with traditional Islamic boarding schools. Although the National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003 has legally discussed the equality of the two, in social reality and budget policy, there is a gap. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's idea succeeded in making madrasahs competitive Islamic schools in science, while K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari's idea preserved the traditional *pesantren* as a moral defense that is now increasingly sought after amid moral and character decline (Husamah et al., 2024; Rohman et al., 2025).

In addition, the policy related to the *Pesantren* Law No. 18 of 2019 has elicited different responses from Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. Nahdlatul Ulama welcomed this law because *pesantren* are the basis of NU education. This policy affirms the existence of NU. Diplomas from these *pesantren* are equivalent to formal school diplomas without having to follow the national curriculum (Nuraeni, 2021). Meanwhile, Muhammadiyah criticized the policy because Muhammadiyah

has a modern school education base. With this policy, Muhammadiyah believes that the state can intervene in its boarding school model, which could be marginalized by this legal definition that is considered very “NU-centric” (Setyawan, 2019). Unlike the Pesantren Law No. 18 of 2019, when the draft of the 2022 National Education System Bill removed the phrase *madrasah*, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama strongly opposed the policy. This confirms that there is common ground between the two groups. For Muhammadiyah, *madrasahs* are places and symbols of the struggle for the integration of knowledge, while for Nahdlatul Ulama, *madrasahs* are places that serve as bastions against moral and value crises (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat Republik Indonesia, 2022).

In addition to government policies that are influenced by the thinking of Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama, there is an interesting phenomenon in the 21st century, namely the convergence between the educational models of Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. Muhammadiyah has adopted the NU's distinctive boarding school system because it realizes that in-depth character education is less effective in full-day schools. Muhammadiyah established MBS or Muhammadiyah Boarding School as a solution for the in-depth character building of students (I. P. Handayani & Achadi, 2023). Meanwhile, Nahdlatul Ulama is now increasing the number of its formal schools and adopting a modern curriculum that is integrated with science and follows the Muhammadiyah managerial model. This can be seen in Pondok Pesantren Tebuireng, which not only recites and studies classical Islamic texts, but also has formal schools and universities (Sunawir, 2025).

The contemporary implications of the thinking of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan and K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari can be seen in the dynamics of government policy in its legislation. Although it sparked debate, the two remained united in defending the existence of the phrase *madrasah* in the National Education System Bill as a symbol of the struggle for values. This 21st-century phenomenon ultimately reveals a unique convergence. Both complement each other's fundamental ideas by strengthening the other's thinking in response to the challenges of the times. For example, Muhammadiyah has increased the number of dormitories to strengthen character, while Nahdlatul Ulama has increased the number of formal schools and science universities.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of historical-comparative analysis conducted in this study, clearly succeeded in proving the causal relationship between the scientific chain of transmission and the construction of the Islamic education curriculum formulated by the two figures. Islamic education paradigms of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan and K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari are rooted in their scholarly traditions, historical contexts, and epistemological orientations, which shaped each figure's vision of education. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan developed an integrative and progressive Islamic education through a modern school system with a structured curriculum that combined religious and general knowledge as a means of social transformation, while K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari reinforced pesantren-based education that emphasized the preservation of scientific

traditions, sanad, and the formation of manners as the core of the educational process. This finding confirms the success of the research in filling the analytical void of previous studies, which tended to be descriptive and normative, by showing that the differences in curriculum and learning methods inherited by Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama are not merely technical issues, but rather a reflection of the differences in worldview and intellectual genealogy of the two figures.

The contribution of this research lies in affirming the causal relationship between the historical roots of thought and the curricular implications of Islamic education in Indonesia. Further research is recommended to examine the implementation and convergence of these two educational models in the context of contemporary educational institutions. Thus, this study explicitly states that the research objectives have been achieved, namely the systematic identification of the relationship between the historical roots, scientific sanad, and curricular implications of the two figures, while also confirming its academic significance for the development of Islamic education studies in Indonesia.

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