



## The Evolution of Islamic Educational Institutions in North Sumatra Indonesia

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### Abstract

This article explores the transformation of Islamic educational institutions in North Sumatra, Indonesia, focusing specifically on pesantren and madrasahs. This article used a qualitative approach that integrates historical, social, and philosophical analysis to examine changes and developments in the Islamic education system. The findings reveal that the evolution from traditional educational institutions to modern ones significantly impacts Islamic education approaches and practices, including management, learning strategies, and curriculum development tailored to contemporary educational needs. The discussion highlights the importance of pesantrens and madrasahs within Indonesia's national education framework and how these institutions adapt to the challenges of the times. The conclusion emphasizes the critical role of Islamic educational institutions in shaping and maintaining Indonesia's cultural and religious identity while providing education relevant to modern demands. This research offers insights into how Islamic educational institutions in North Sumatra endure and thrive amidst social and educational changes.

**Keywords:** Islamic Education, Islamic Schools, *Pesantren* in North Sumatra.

### Abstrak

*Artikel ini mengeksplorasi transformasi lembaga pendidikan Islam di Sumatra Utara, Indonesia, dengan fokus khusus pada pesantren dan madrasah. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, penelitian ini menggabungkan analisis historis, sosial, dan filosofis untuk mendalami perubahan dan pengembangan dalam sistem pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa evolusi dari lembaga pendidikan tradisional menjadi institusi modern memiliki dampak signifikan pada pendekatan dan praktik pendidikan Islam. Hal ini termasuk dalam aspek pengelolaan, strategi pembelajaran, dan pengembangan kurikulum yang sesuai dengan kebutuhan pendidikan kontemporer. Dalam pembahasan, penelitian ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya pesantren dan madrasah dalam kerangka pendidikan nasional di Indonesia, dan bagaimana institusi-institusi ini beradaptasi dengan tantangan zaman. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini menekankan pada peran kritis lembaga-lembaga pendidikan Islam dalam membentuk dan mempertahankan identitas budaya dan agama di Indonesia, sekaligus menyediakan pendidikan yang relevan dengan tuntutan zaman. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan tentang bagaimana lembaga pendidikan Islam di Sumatra Utara tidak hanya bertahan tetapi juga berkembang dalam menghadapi perubahan sosial dan pendidikan.*

**Kata Kunci:** Pendidikan Islam, Sekolah Islam (Madrasah), *Pesantren* di Sumatera Utara.

## INTRODUCTION

During their early stages, *pesantren*, or Islamic boarding schools, were intricately intertwined with the historical progression of Islam in the Middle East during the Middle Ages.<sup>1</sup> This Pesantren encompassed various aspects such as teaching methods, curriculum design, and institutional frameworks.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, pesantren have now become an indispensable component of the educational system across the Indonesian archipelago, assuming different names and spreading throughout the country.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, the growth of pesantren reflects the development of Islam in Indonesia. As time passed, madrasahs and Islamic schools emerged as further manifestations of the evolving Islamic education system in the country.<sup>4</sup> Hence, delving into the origins of pesantren also encompasses the historical context of madrasahs and Islamic schools, given that all three educational institutions share a common focus on the study of Islam.

During the early 20th century, Indonesia witnessed the emergence of classical-style madrasahs (Islamic educational institutions).<sup>5</sup> Groundbreaking research conducted by Mahmud Yunus revealed that the Madrasah Adabiyah (Adabiyah School) in Padang was the first of its kind to boast classrooms equipped with desks, tables, and blackboards. Established by Sheikh Abdullah Ahmad in 1909, the Madrasah Adabiyah held the distinction of being the pioneer madrasah not only in the Minangkabau region but throughout Indonesia. Its operation spanned until 1914 when it transformed into HIS Adabiyah, marking the advent of the first Islamic elementary school (HIS) in Minangkabau that integrated Islamic studies into its curriculum.<sup>6</sup>

The development of madrasahs in Indonesia can be attributed to two influential factors: the momentum of Islamic reform movements and responses to the educational policies of the

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<sup>1</sup> Difa Ilwa Dilia, Rony Rony, and Anis Trianawati, "Pengaruh Ta'zir Terhadap Akhlak Santri Putri Pondok Pesantren," *At-Tadzkiir: Islamic Education Journal* 1, no. 1 (2022): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.59373/attadzkiir.v1i1.1>; Badrudin Badrudin et al., "The Implementation of Pesantren Financing Based on Agribusiness Social Entrepreneurs," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 9, no. 1 (January 30, 2021): 17–38, <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v9i1.504>; Ani Aryati and A. Suradi, "The Implementation of Religious Tolerance: Study on Pesantren Bali Bina Insani with Bali Hindus Communities," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 10, no. 2 (May 30, 2022): 471–90, <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v10i2.646>.

<sup>2</sup> S Nizar, *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2010); Imam Syafe'i, "Pondok Pesantren: Lembaga Pendidikan Pembentukan Karakter," *Al-Tadzkiyyah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 8, no. 1 (May 16, 2017): 61, <https://doi.org/10.24042/atjpi.v8i1.2097>.

<sup>3</sup> Muhammad Turhan Yani et al., "Advancing the Discourse of Muslim Politics in Indonesia: A Study on Political Orientation of Kiai as Religious Elites in Nahdlatul Ulama," *Heliyon* 8, no. 12 (December 1, 2022): e12218, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e12218>; Siti Aisyah et al., "Kiai Leadership Concept in The Scope of Pesantren Organizational Culture," *Tafkir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education* 3, no. 1 (2022): 40–59, <https://doi.org/10.31538/tijie.v3i1.106>.

<sup>4</sup> A Mukhlis, "Sejarah Lembaga-Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Nusantara (Surau, Meunasah, Pesantren Dan Madrasah)," *Al Iman: Jurnal Keislaman Dan Kemasyarakatan* 1, no. 1 (2017): 117–38.

<sup>5</sup> Fachrudin Azmi, Yusuf Hadijaya, and Ahmad Syah, "Management System of Sunnah Islamic Boarding School in Shaping Character of The Students," *Nidhomul Haq: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 1 (March 21, 2022): 39–52, <https://doi.org/10.31538/ndh.v7i1.1955>; Kardi Kardi et al., "Challenges of Online Boarding Schools In The Digital Era," *At-Tadzkiir: Islamic Education Journal* 2, no. 1 (March 8, 2023): 37–51, <https://doi.org/10.59373/attadzkiir.v2i1.11>.

<sup>6</sup> Mohammad Al Farabi, "Modernisasi Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia: Kasus Adabiyah School," *Islamijah: Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 1, no. 3 (October 31, 2020): 248, <https://doi.org/10.30821/islamijah.v1i3.7838>; Ahmadi Lubis, "Sekolah Islam Terpadu Dalam Sejarah Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Penelitian Sejarah Dan Budaya* 4, no. 2 (July 17, 2019): 1077–95, <https://doi.org/10.36424/jpsb.v4i2.60>.

Dutch East Indies.<sup>7</sup> Islamic organizations in Java, Sumatra, and Kalimantan also played a significant role in nurturing the growth of madrasahs, initially conceived as a reformist alternative to *pesantren* (traditional Islamic boarding schools).<sup>8</sup> Mas'ud's observations suggest that the emergence of madrasahs during the 20th century was a response to the limitations inherent in the contemporary *pesantren* system, which predominantly focused on the dissemination of fundamental religious knowledge (*fardlu 'ain*).<sup>9</sup>

During the late 19th century, North Sumatra witnessed the emergence of modern and formal Islamic educational institutions, including madrasahs, *pesantrens*, *maktab*, and *kuttab*. Among these, Madrasah Maslurah holds a significant place as one of the pioneering madrasahs established in 1892 within the Sultanate of Langkat. Its establishment was motivated by Sultan Musa's vision to promote intellectual and religious growth among the noble children and elite of the Sultanate in matters of faith.<sup>10</sup>

Beyond the boundaries of the Sultanate of Langkat, the Maktab or Kuttab Al-Jam'iyatul Chalidiyah was founded in 1941 in the Stabat Duchy under the patronage of Tengku Amir Hamzah.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, renowned scholars such as Syaikh Ismail Abdul Wahab and Ustaz Abdul Hamid Mahmud established madrasahs in Tanjung Balai.<sup>12</sup> Scholarly works shed light on the notable figure of Hasan Maksu, who made substantial contributions to Islamic education in North Sumatra, as elucidated by Rozali.<sup>13</sup> Hasan Maksu had a wide range of students from diverse regions, and he served as an esteemed teacher for many years, delivering religious teachings both at his humble mosque (*langgar*) and the magnificent Al-Mahsun Mosque in Medan. These teachings consistently attracted the attention of parents and young individuals alike. Consequently, under the auspices of the Al-Washliyah organization, Hasan Maksu and his colleagues established the Al-Washliyah Islamic educational institution in the city of Medan.<sup>14</sup>

Several writings have addressed the presence of Islamic educational institutions in North Sumatra; however, they have not thoroughly examined the dynamics of Islamic education transformation in the region from historical, philosophical, sociological, and economic

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<sup>7</sup> Muhamad Afrizal Sholichuddin, Nicky Estu Putu Muchtar, and Rizky Dwi Ratna, "The Relationship of Islam and The State in Contemporary Islamic Political Discourse in Indonesia," *Dirasab International Journal of Islamic Studies* 1, no. 2 (October 29, 2023): 78–88, <https://doi.org/10.59373/drs.v1i2.11>.

<sup>8</sup> Azyumardi Azra, *Pendidikan Islam: Tradisi Dan Modernisasi Menuju Milenium Baru* (Jakarta: Logos Wacana Ilmu, 1999).

<sup>9</sup> Sunhaji Sunhaji, "Between Social Humanism and Social Mobilization: The Dual Role Of Madrasah In The Landscape Of Indonesian Islamic Education," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 11, no. 1 (July 9, 2017): 125–44, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2017.11.1.125-144>.

<sup>10</sup> D Arifin, *Sejarah Kesultanan Langkat* (Langkat: Yayasan Bangun Langkat Sejahtera, 2013).

<sup>11</sup> L Dayanti, "Dinamika Sistem Pendidikan Islam Pada Madrasah Tsanawiyah Al-Jam'iyatul Chalidiyah Stabat Tahun Ajaran 2018/2019," in *Undergraduate Thesis* (Medan: Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, 2019).

<sup>12</sup> Aliva Humairah Br. Ginting and Andi Prastowo, "Pengembangan Kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam Pada Madrasah Berbasis Riset Di Yayasan Madrasah Pendidikan Islam (YMPI) Tanjung Balai," *PEMA (JURNAL PENDIDIKAN DAN PENGABDIAN KEPADA MASYARAKAT)* 1, no. 1 (August 3, 2023): 44–52, <https://doi.org/10.56832/pema.v1i1.51>; Yushar Tanjung, "Jejak Islam Di Tanjungbalai," *MUKADIMAH: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sejarah, Dan Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 4, no. 1 (2020): 74–83, <https://doi.org/10.30743/mkd.v4i1.3716>.

<sup>13</sup> Muhammad Rozali, "Kontribusi Syaikh Hasan Maksu Dalam Bidang Pendidikan Di Sumatera Utara," *JUSPI (Jurnal Sejarah Peradaban Islam)* 1, no. 2 (October 31, 2017): 277, <https://doi.org/10.30829/j.v1i2.1208>.

<sup>14</sup> Dja'far Siddik and Rosnita Rosnita, "Gerakan Pendidikan Al-Washliyah Di Sumatera Utara," *Ulumuna* 18, no. 1 (November 8, 2017): 59–80, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujs.v18i1.143>.

perspectives. A comprehensive and in-depth study is required to explore the transformation of Islamic education models in North Sumatra from the 19th to the 20th century and to ascertain their contributions to national education. Mastuhu underscores the significance of Islamic education in adapting and redefining itself to meet the challenges and developments of the era.<sup>15</sup> It is essential for all stakeholders to consistently promote education that is progressive and responsive to changes, including within Islamic schools in North Sumatra.

## METHOD

The method of historical research is a systematic, critical, and structured approach used to conduct historical research. There are four stages in the method of historical research: heuristic (collection of historical sources), source criticism, interpretation of sources, and historiography (writing).<sup>16</sup> According to Kuntowijoyo, history is a presentation of human life in the past that is studied using scientific methods. In the context of research, Kuntowijoyo states that historical research is a process of understanding, collecting, and interpreting historical data through critical and reflective analysis, to gain a better understanding of past events or phenomena. He emphasizes the importance of conducting historical research systematically and meticulously, relying on authentic primary sources, and considering the historical, social, and cultural contexts in which the events occurred.<sup>17</sup>

When conducting historical research, a researcher must pay attention to the accuracy and reliability of historical sources, as well as consider the social and political context at the time the historical sources were created. Additionally, a researcher must possess the ability to analyze and interpret historical sources. Therefore, a systematic and structured method of historical research will yield valid and trustworthy research results. This research relies on various previous studies, including books, journals, theses, and dissertations that discuss the development of Islamic schools in Indonesia, particularly in North Sumatra.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Periodization of the History of Islamic Educational Institutions in North Sumatra

#### *Islamic Education Institutions Before Independence*

During the colonial era, the field of Islamic education encountered numerous challenges stemming from Dutch policies that restricted religious instruction and prioritized schools with a general curriculum.<sup>18</sup> These policies were shaped by various Dutch interests as a colonial power, such as acquiring knowledge in general sciences and Indonesian society, addressing the

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<sup>15</sup> Moch. Tolchah, "The Political Dimension of Indonesian Islamic Education In The Post-1998 Reform Period," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 8, no. 2 (December 3, 2014): 284–98, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2014.8.2.284-298>.

<sup>16</sup> S Kartodirdjo, *Pendekatan Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial Dalam Metodologi Sejarah: Cet. II*, ed. S. Pusposaputro (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Ombak, 2019).

<sup>17</sup> Kuntowijoyo, *Metodologi Sejarah: Cet. V*, ed. M. Yahya (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2021).

<sup>18</sup> K. H. (Ina) Ter Avest and M. (Marjoke) Rietveld-van Wingerden, "Half a Century of Islamic Education in Dutch Schools," *British Journal of Religious Education* 39, no. 3 (September 2, 2017): 293–302, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2015.1128391>; Nathan John Franklin, "Islam and the Dutch in the East Indies: Oppression or Opportunity?," *The European Legacy* 25, no. 5 (July 3, 2020): 572–87, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10848770.2020.1760467>.

demand for domestic labor, and garnering favor from the native populace through educational services. Notably, the educational system implemented during the colonial period was primarily driven by the interests of the colonial government rather than the welfare of the oppressed individuals.<sup>19</sup>

After the conclusion of Dutch colonial rule, Japan assumed control over Indonesia. Japan exhibited a comparatively more lenient approach towards Islamic education, allowing for its unrestricted development.<sup>20</sup> However, with the eruption of World War II, Japan resorted to violence against the Indonesian people, subsequently impeding the progress of Islamic education in the country due to the strong influence of Japanese indoctrination and military discipline.<sup>21</sup>

According to Steenbrink, the early 20th century in Indonesia witnessed significant changes in Islam driven by four key factors. Firstly, there was a growing inclination to reestablish the Quran and hadith as the foundation for evaluating religious and cultural traditions. Secondly, the national movement against Dutch colonization played a pivotal role in shaping the transformations. Thirdly, Muslims actively sought to strengthen social, economic, and public organizations as well as individual interests. Finally, reforms in Islamic education emerged as a crucial element in the changing landscape. While other contributing factors existed, these four factors played a significant role in propelling the changes within the Indonesian Muslim community during the colonial era.<sup>22</sup>

The process of educational reform in Indonesia is closely intertwined with the emergence of individual and collective movements for reform within the nation.<sup>23</sup> Scholars such as Deliar Noer (1990) highlight the influential role of individual reformists, including Sheikh Thaher Jalaluddin, Sheikh Muhammad Djamil Djambek, Haji Rasul, Haji Abdullah Ahmad, Syekh Ibrahim Musa, and Zainuddin Labai El Yunusi. Moreover, prominent Islamic organizations such as NU, Muhammadiyah, Persatuan Ulama, Persatuan Islam, Sarekat Islam, Jami'at al-Khair, al-Irsyad, and Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah actively advocated for the reform movement. These reform efforts were also influenced by the ideas of Middle Eastern

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<sup>19</sup> S Rofi, *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Deepublish, 2017).

<sup>20</sup> Ahmad Kamaludin and Iskandar Iskandar, "Islamic Fanatism and Terrorism Cases in Indonesia the Perspective of Islamic Criminal Law," *El-Masblabah* 12, no. 2 (December 31, 2022): 153–63, <https://doi.org/10.23971/el-mashlahah.v12i2.4397>; Sholahuddin Al-Fatih et al., "Academic Freedom of Expression in Indonesia: A Maqashid Sharia Notes," *El-Masblabah* 13, no. 2 (December 31, 2023): 203–24, <https://doi.org/10.23971/el-mashlahah.v13i2.7573>.

<sup>21</sup> U. Abdullah Mu'min, "Construction of Islamic Character Education Values Based on Local Wisdom in Culture Kasepuhan and Kanoman Palaces," *Tafkir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education* 4, no. 2 (June 13, 2023): 305–18, <https://doi.org/10.31538/tijie.v4i2.391>; Kabiru Aminu Garba and Abubakar Yakubu, "Afterlife as Motivation for Later Life Education among Elderly Women: Evidence from Bauchi Emirate North-Eastern Nigeria," *Tafkir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education* 3, no. 2 (June 24, 2022): 119–34, <https://doi.org/10.31538/tijie.v3i2.164>.

<sup>22</sup> Karel A. Steenbrink, *Pesantren Madrasah Sekolah: Pendidikan Islam Dalam Kurun Modern*, ed. A. Mudatsir and EBA, trans. Abdurrahman (Jakarta: Dharma Aksara Perkasa, 1986).

<sup>23</sup> A Aziz, Iswanti, and Zulmuqim, "Reformasi Pendidikan Agama Islam Di Madrasah," *Journal on Teacher Education* 3, no. 3 (2022): 466–73, <https://doi.org/10.31004/JOTE.V3I3.5104>; Irja Putra Pratama and Zulhijra Zulhijra, "Reformasi Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia," *Jurnal PAI Raden Fatah* 1, no. 2 (January 1, 1970): 117–27, <https://doi.org/10.19109/pairf.v1i2.3216>.

intellectuals and originated from various regions, illustrating the diverse nature of the reformist discourse in Indonesia.<sup>24</sup>

Islamic education has a longstanding presence in North Sumatra, dating back to the introduction of Islam to the region. Initially, this form of education was informal and took place within places of worship.<sup>25</sup> As time passed, the Muslim community began constructing mosques, which served as the earliest hubs for Islamic education. Initially, children would receive their education within the mosques, but eventually, separate schools called pesantren were established outside the mosque premises. One notable Islamic educational institution in North Sumatra is the Musthafawiyah Pesantren in Mandailing Natal Regency, also known as Pesantren Purba Baru. This pesantren was established on November 12, 1912, by Sheikh Musthafa Bin Husein Bin Umar Nasution Al Mandily.<sup>26</sup>

During the colonial era, Pesantren Purba, originating from North Sumatra, continued to thrive within the Muslim community, albeit largely detached from the administrative structure of the colonial government. Pesantren Purba adhered to the principle of traditional isolation, consciously rejecting the influence of Western modern thought and exclusively focusing on the study of Islamic religious disciplines. According to Sabaruddin (2015), the primary goal of Islamic education was to preserve and uphold the teachings of past scholars as documented in their books, with a particular emphasis on nurturing and preparing future scholars or kyai.<sup>27</sup>

Historically, pesantren adopted a defiant position against the colonizers and imparted an anti-colonial political ideology to its students, rejecting the Western cultural influences infused into their religious education. During that period, pesantren placed a strong emphasis on Islamic teachings while consciously steering clear of the modernizing influences propagated by the West. As a result, the colonial government viewed pesantren as institutions designed to train individuals in matters of faith and patriotism, shaping them into resilient contributors to the nation-building process.

**Table 1.** Islamic educational institutions (*pesantren*) in North Sumatra that were established before independence.

Name of Pesantren	Year of Establishment
Musthafawiyah Islamic Boarding School, Purba Baru (Mandailing Natal)	1912
Al-Mukhtariyah Islamic Boarding School, Sungai Dua (Padang Bolak)	1932
Syekh Muhammad Dahlan Islamic Boarding School (Sibuhuan)	1938

Source: Data processed by the researcher, 2022.

<sup>24</sup> Deliar Noer, *Gerakan Modern Islam Di Indonesia, 1900-1942* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1990).

<sup>25</sup> Muallim Lubis, “Kontribusi Syaikh Abdul Wahab Sei Lumut Terhadap Pendidikan Islam Di Sumatera Utara,” *Ta’allum: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 10, no. 2 (December 29, 2022): 191–219, <https://doi.org/10.21274/taalum.2022.10.2.191-219>.

<sup>26</sup> R Haryanto, “Pemberdayaan Santri Pondok Pesantren Musthafawiyah Di Era Globalisasi (Studi Kasus Pondok Pesantren Musthafawiyah),” *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan* 9, no. 2 (2017): 16–32, <https://doi.org/10.35445/ALISHLAH.V9I2.15>; A Pulungan, *Pesantren Musthafawiyah Purbabaru Mandailing: Bangunan Keilmuan Islam Dan Simbol Masyarakat* (Medan: Cipta Pustaka Media, 2020).

<sup>27</sup> Mohammad Kosim et al., “The Dynamics of Islamic Education Policies in Indonesia,” *Cogent Education* 10, no. 1 (December 31, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2172930>.

### ***Islamic Educational Institutions during the Old Order Era***

The development of Islamic education in Indonesia has experienced fluctuations throughout its historical trajectory, particularly during the colonial era when the country was under the control of various foreign powers. In the Old Order Era, the advancement of Islamic education in Indonesia was significantly influenced by the active engagement of Islamic community organizations, Islamic educational institutions, and prominent figures in the field of Islamic education. Generally, the progress of Islamic education in Indonesia during that period was shaped by educational institutions that consistently prioritized the dissemination of Islamic knowledge, such as pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) and madrasahs. The Ministry of Religious Affairs, established on January 3, 1946, played a pivotal role in diligently promoting Islamic education throughout Indonesia, with a specialized division dedicated to addressing religious education matters actively participating in these endeavors.<sup>28</sup>

At the outset, the official regulations on religious education in public schools were established through Law No. 4 of 1950 on Education and Law No. 20 of 1954 on Education. These legislative acts affirmed that religious instruction should be included in the curriculum of state schools while granting parents the autonomy to decide whether their children would partake in such instruction or not. The implementation of religious education in state schools was jointly regulated by the Ministry of Education, Teaching, and Culture in collaboration with the Ministry of Religious Affairs.<sup>29</sup> Throughout the Old Order Era, Islamic education in Indonesia witnessed substantial advancements compared to the colonial period. This progression is discernible through the proliferation of Islamic educational institutions and organizations engaged in the realm of Islamic education, actively contributing to the cultivation of a new generation that espouses a profound Islamic ethos, thus serving as the bedrock for the nation's future.<sup>30</sup>

Towards the end of the Old Order era, specifically in 1965, Muslims began to recognize the crucial role of education in fortifying Islamic values, leading to the establishment of multiple Islamic organizations. Subsequently, the Ministry of Religious Affairs unveiled plans to implement a diverse Islamic education program, encompassing various types of institutions. These included Indonesian Classical Islamic Boarding Schools, which provided residential facilities and private education with a primary focus on religious teachings and worship. Additionally, Diniyah Madrasahs offered supplementary education to general students aged 7-20 in primary and secondary schools. Private madrasahs provided a blend of secular and modern religious education. State Islamic Elementary Schools (MIN) served as public six-year elementary schools, featuring a student-teacher ratio of 1:2. Students would then proceed to

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<sup>28</sup> Yusuf Olawale Uthman Owa-Onire, "The Interpretation of Islamic Education: Perceptions of Modernist and Classical Thinkers on The Qur'anic Exegesis," *Tajkir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education* 3, no. 1 (February 9, 2022): 77–91, <https://doi.org/10.31538/tjje.v3i1.129>; Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi, "Imam Zarkasyi's Modernization of Pesantren in Indonesia (A Case Study of Darussalam Gontor)," *QIJIS (Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies)* 8, no. 1 (June 30, 2020): 161, <https://doi.org/10.21043/qijis.v8i1.5760>.

<sup>29</sup> Luthfi Khairul Fikri, Wahyu Wibisana, and Munawar Rahmat, "Perkembangan Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) Di Sekolah Dasar Tahun 1945-1966," *TARBAWY: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education* 2, no. 2 (November 5, 2015): 172, <https://doi.org/10.17509/t.v2i2.3454>.

<sup>30</sup> Muh. Aidil Sudarmono, "Tinjauan Sejarah Pendidikan Islam Masa Orde Lama," *KREATIF: Jurnal Studi Pemikiran Pendidikan Agama Islam* 18, no. 1 (August 4, 2020): 17–26, <https://doi.org/10.52266/kreatif.v18i1.359>.

receive secondary education at MTSN or an additional seventh year, accompanied by religious teacher education. New experimental approaches were also introduced, incorporating basic skills training within the eight-year MIN program, providing comprehensive education to students. Furthermore, theology education at the university level was conducted at IAIN, commencing in 1960, with two faculties located in Yogyakarta and two in Jakarta.<sup>31</sup>

The transformations witnessed in Islamic education are an integral part of its historical evolution, often spurred by societal events and circumstances.<sup>32</sup> Factors such as Dutch colonization, the presence of the Indonesian Communist Party, the forces of globalization, and the diverse characteristics of Indonesian society have all acted as mirrors and influences, shaping the course of Islamic education's development. Furchan's exploration of Islamic education history raises thought-provoking questions concerning the role of madrasahs alongside pesantren in supporting Islamic education in Indonesia. These questions revolve around the extent to which madrasahs contribute to enhancing the quality of Islamic education versus simply increasing student enrollment numbers.<sup>33</sup> However, any uncertainties regarding the transformation of Islamic education can be addressed through the availability of qualified human resources, thus fostering synergy in the process of Islamic education's evolution across all its dimensions.<sup>34</sup>

According to Yunus (1995), it was recorded that in 1930, the al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah organization was founded in the city of Medan by Muslim intellectuals hailing from Maktab Tapanuli. This organization established two types of madrasahs that offered a combination of religious and general education, alongside madrasahs with a primary focus on religious subjects. The madrasahs were categorized into various types, including Tujhiziah (2 years), Ibtidaiyah (4 years), Tsanawiyah (2 years), Qismul 'ali (3 years), and takhsus (2 years). Initially, the madrasahs emphasized religious studies, but subsequently, some madrasahs integrated religious and general subjects. Despite the inclusion of general subjects, religious education remained the primary focus in the majority of madrasahs, aiming to cultivate a generation well-versed in Islamic knowledge.<sup>35</sup>

Al-Washliyah emerged as a reformist organization in North Sumatra, with its concerns spanning across education, preaching, social affairs, economics, and politics. The organization actively engaged in various endeavors to promote Islam in Indonesia, including the establishment of educational institutions and the promotion of righteous conduct and the

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<sup>31</sup> Sudarmono.

<sup>32</sup> Dian Dian et al., "Nurcholish Madjid's Perspective About Thought of Religious Pluralism," *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 3, no. 2 (December 18, 2022): 139–48, <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v3i2.242>.

<sup>33</sup> Nur Syahid, "Transformation Islamic Education in Indonesia," *Journal Intellectual Sufism Research (JISR)* 3, no. 2 (May 27, 2021): 27–34, <https://doi.org/10.52032/jisr.v3i2.99>.

<sup>34</sup> Faisal Kamal, "The Transformation of Islami Boarding Schools as Institutions of the 21st Century," *PARAMUROBI: JURNAL PENDIDIKAN AGAMA ISLAM* 1, no. 2 (December 20, 2018): 17–30, <https://doi.org/10.32699/paramurobi.v1i2.524>; N Syarifuddin, "Madrasah Sebagai Bentuk Transformasi Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia," *Al-Ibrah: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Keilmuan Islam* 2, no. 2 (2017): 25–54, <http://ejournal.stital.ac.id/index.php/alibrah/article/view/29>.

<sup>35</sup> M Yunus, *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Mutiara Sumber Widya, 1995).

prevention of wrongdoings.<sup>36</sup> Al-Washliyah showcased a substantial commitment to educational development, as evident in its normative guidelines, such as the Articles of Association and Bylaws (AD/ART) of al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah. The AD/ART explicitly articulates one of Al-Washliyah's endeavors to achieve its goals, namely "upholding the teachings of Islam to create a society that is faithful, knowledgeable, trustworthy, just, prosperous, and blessed by Allah SWT, through the establishment of educational institutions and educational levels, as well as the regulation of education, teaching, and cultural excellence." Al-Washliyah considers education and teaching as obligatory for both men and women, and it pays considerable attention to the development of the education sector in Indonesia, particularly in North Sumatra. Over time, Al-Washliyah's establishment of Islamic schools has expanded and encompassed all regions of North Sumatra.

**Table 2. Islamic educational institutions in North Sumatra that have been established since the Old Order era.**

<b>Name of School</b>	<b>Year of Establishment</b>
Al-Washliyah Elementary School Bagan Asahan	1950
Al-Washliyah Elementary School 83 Gunung Saga	1961
Al-Washliyah Elementary School 84 Tanah Tinggi	1964
Muhammadiyah Private Elementary School 7 Rantauprapat	1949
Muhammadiyah Elementary School Aek Kanopan	1959

*Source: Data processed by the researcher, 2022.*

### ***Islamic Educational Institutions During the New Order Era***

The government during the New Order era took various measures to revamp religious education by improving the educational landscape of madrasahs. These initiatives involved the formalization and restructuring of madrasahs, leading to diverse madrasahs in North Sumatra striving to establish their distinct identities. The objective of this formalization process was to standardize selected madrasahs according to specific criteria determined by the government, with a primary emphasis on the direction of the newly established state madrasahs. The curriculum implemented in these state madrasahs tended to align with the educational levels and curricula followed in schools under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Culture.<sup>37</sup>

Islamic leaders vehemently advocated for the recognition of religious education and madrasahs as integral components of the national education system, as they perceived the government's treatment to be discriminatory. However, their reaction intensified following the issuance of Presidential Decree No. 34 of 1972, which was subsequently reinforced by Presidential Instruction No. 15 of 1974. These measures were viewed as detrimental, as they were believed to weaken and marginalize madrasahs within the national education system. Some

<sup>36</sup> Ali Marzuki Zebua, "Muhammadiyah Dan Al-Washliyah Di Sumatera Utara; Sejarah, Ideologi, Dan Amal Usahanya," *Islamika: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 19, no. 01 (September 22, 2019): 58–69, <https://doi.org/10.32939/islamika.v19i01.397>.

<sup>37</sup> S Bahri, "Modernisasi Pendidikan Islam Dan Partisipasi Sosial Politik Umat Islam Indonesia," in *International Conference on Islam, Law, and Society (INCOILS)*, 2021, 275–84.

Muslims even interpreted these presidential decrees and instructions as deliberate attempts to undermine the role and significance of madrasahs, institutions that have been cherished by the Muslim community since the colonial era.<sup>38</sup>

In 1975, significant progress was made through the issuance of three ministerial decrees (Ministry of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, and Ministry of Education and Culture), which aimed to establish parity between madrasah diplomas and school diplomas. This crucial decision was prompted by the realization of a growing disparity between the madrasah curriculum, primarily centered around religious subjects, and the more comprehensive curriculum of mainstream schools, which emphasized a broader range of knowledge. Consequently, the madrasah curriculum underwent revisions to incorporate 70% of the general education curriculum taught in regular schools.

Nevertheless, there was a strong demand within the Muslim community for their children, who were previously enrolled in madrasahs, to transfer to regular schools to gain access to a more advantageous general education that would improve their employment prospects. This indicates an increasing awareness among Muslims regarding the significance of diplomas in securing employment opportunities.<sup>39</sup> In response, the government undertook measures to fortify the structure of madrasahs, focusing on enhancing their educational levels and curricula. The objective was to ensure that madrasah graduates received comparable recognition to graduates from other educational institutions and had the opportunity to pursue higher education at schools and universities overseen by the Ministry of Education and Culture.<sup>40</sup>

During the late 1980s, a notable development took place in Indonesia with the emergence of integrated Islamic schools. This innovative concept was introduced by campus preachers from diverse fields in public universities throughout the country. Interestingly, Islamic education can be traced back to the efforts of Islamic activists within Indonesian universities, as they played a pivotal role in its inception. The rise of Islamic schools initiated by non-religious campus activists stands as a testament to the shifting mindset regarding Islamic values within the Indonesian Muslim community. Undoubtedly, this transformation was influenced by several contributing factors.<sup>41</sup>

In 1989, the enactment of Law Number 2 of 1989 on the National Education System mandated the inclusion of religious education in all types, levels, and educational pathways across Indonesia, extending beyond the confines of public schools. Consequently, religious education became a mandatory component in private schools as well as non-formal educational

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<sup>38</sup> H Yuningsih, "Kebijakan Pendidikan Islam Masa Orde Baru," *TARBIYA: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 1 (2015): 175–94.

<sup>39</sup> Yuningsih.

<sup>40</sup> Nur Chanifah et al., "Designing a Spirituality-Based Islamic Education Framework for Young Muslim Generations: A Case Study from Two Indonesian Universities," *Higher Education Pedagogies* 6, no. 1 (January 1, 2021): 195–211, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23752696.2021.1960879>; Nurul Annisa, A. Akrim, and Asrar Aspia Manurung, "Development Of Teacher's Professional Competency In Realizing Quality Of Human Resources In The Basic School," *IJEMS: Indonesian Journal of Education and Mathematical Science* 1, no. 2 (May 15, 2020): 156–60, <https://doi.org/10.30596/ijems.v1i2.4590>.

<sup>41</sup> H Andi and B Malla, "Kajian Sosio Historis Tentang Politik Kebijakan Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia," *INSPIRASI* 1, no. 14 (2014).

settings like skills courses.<sup>42</sup> The revision of the National Education System Law in 2003 reaffirmed the obligatory nature of religious education across all school types, preserving the pre-existing requirement.<sup>43</sup> Hence, following Indonesia's declaration of independence, there exist four primary forms of Islamic education catering to the religious instruction of Muslims in the country: pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), madrasahs, madrasah ibtidaiyah (Islamic primary schools), and state schools. Notably, public schools are often excluded from the classification of Islamic educational institutions by most observers.<sup>44</sup>

In general, the establishment of Islamic schools during the New Order period can be interpreted as a direct result of the government's growing emphasis on religious education, encompassing both madrasahs and conventional schools. This indicates a proactive approach towards the educational landscape in Indonesia, particularly during the last two decades of the New Order regime in the late 1980s and 1990s. Consequently, these initiatives led to the establishment of new madrasahs and schools bearing an Islamic identity in the region of North Sumatra.

**Table 3. Islamic educational institutions in North Sumatra, ranging from elementary to high school levels, that have been established since the New Order era.**

Educational Levels	Number of Islamic Educational Institutions during the New Order Era
Islamic Elementary Schools (SD)	31
Islamic Junior High Schools (SMP)	49
Islamic Senior High Schools (SMA)	23

*Source: Data processed by the researcher, 2022.*

### ***Islamic Educational Institutions in the Reform Era***

During the reform era, there was a particular focus on Islamic education in government policies, which introduced a range of alternative educational options. As a result, Islamic education attained equal standing alongside general education.<sup>45</sup> Notably, significant advancements have been made in Islamic education in North Sumatra. This progress can be attributed to more flexible government regulations concerning educational infrastructure, leading to the establishment of numerous Islamic educational institutions in the region. These institutions strive to enhance their resources to compete with existing madrasahs and public schools.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>42</sup> I. Z. Adibah, "Dinamika Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia Pada Masa Orde Baru (1966-1998)," *INSPIRASI: Jurnal Kajian Dan Penelitian Pendidikan Islam* 4, no. 2 (2021): 110–26.

<sup>43</sup> Nur Khotimah, Joko Sutarto, and Diana, "Provision and Implementation of Inclusive Education in Early Childhood Centers: A Comparative Case Study of Two Semarang-Based Institutions," *Golden Age: Jurnal Ilmiah Tumbuh Kembang Anak Usia Dini* 8, no. 2 (June 30, 2023): 99–108, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jga.2023.82-05>.

<sup>44</sup> Lukis Alam, "Kontestasi Kebijakan Pendidikan Islam Di Era Orde Baru Dan Reformasi," *Rubama : Islamic Education Journal* 3, no. 2 (October 9, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.31869/ruhama.v3i2.2223>.

<sup>45</sup> Amin Maghfuri, "Analisis Kebijakan Pendidikan Islam Pada Awal Era Reformasi (1998-2004)," *Tadbir: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 8, no. 1 (February 27, 2020): 14–26, <https://doi.org/10.30603/tjmpi.v8i1.614>.

<sup>46</sup> Muhammad Sholeh Hodidin, "Dinamika Politik Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia: Studi Kebijakan Pendidikan Islam Pada Masa Pra-Kemerdekaan Hingga Reformasi," *Jurnal Ilmiah Iqra'* 14, no. 1 (October 30, 2020): 15, <https://doi.org/10.30984/jii.v14i1.1035>.

Islamic schools in Sumatra share similarities with counterparts across Indonesia as they are part of the Integrated Islamic School Network (JSIT). These schools aim to integrate religious education from pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) with modern education provided in public schools, forming a cohesive system.<sup>47</sup> Unlike madrasahs, integrated Islamic schools employ an approach that not only combines general and religious subjects in the curriculum but also instills these values in the overall character of the students.<sup>48</sup> However, due to rising costs and the need for adequate facilities, most Islamic schools primarily cater to the middle-class Muslim population. Additionally, Islamic schools in North Sumatra play a significant role in the process of re-Islamization within Indonesian Muslim society. While this process was traditionally centered in mosques and through Quranic recitation (*tilawah*), it now takes place through Islamic education provided in schools (Interview with one of the founders of an Islamic school).<sup>49</sup>

During the reform era in North Sumatra, Islamic schools emerged as educational institutions that integrated two previously distinct forms of education: Islamic education and general education. To achieve this integration, Islamic schools implement a unique curriculum aligned with the Integrated Islamic School Network (JSIT). The primary objective is to shape the students' overall character, morality, competence, and skills.

### **Development, Characteristics, and Supporting Factors of Islamic Schools Growth in North Sumatra**

In line with the proliferation of Integrated Islamic Schools (Sekolah Islam Terpadu) across nearly every province and district in Indonesia, including North Sumatra, various groups have developed symbols to distinguish these educational institutions. While the term "Integrated Islam" has undergone modifications and alternate terminologies have been employed, the fundamental objective remains unchanged, with a curriculum aligned with the national education system overseen by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. The principle of integration is not limited to schools alone but extends to madrasahs as well, where some employ the term "integrated" alongside other symbols that bear striking resemblance to Integrated Islamic Schools.<sup>50</sup>

At present, the concept of integrated Islamic schools is gaining prominence as a prominent facet of Islamic education in Indonesia, particularly in North Sumatra. Nonetheless, the implementation of this trend exhibits variations. The integration of religious and general knowledge advocated by Integrated Islamic Schools serves as a symbol utilized for branding or

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<sup>47</sup> Lubis, "Sekolah Islam Terpadu Dalam Sejarah Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia."

<sup>48</sup> Asroful Kadafi et al., "The Impact of Islamic Counseling Intervention towards Students' Mindfulness and Anxiety during the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Islamic Guidance and Counseling Journal* 4, no. 1 (January 31, 2021): 55–66, <https://doi.org/10.25217/igcj.v4i1.1018>; Nurmawati Nurmawati, Cheri Julida Panjaitan, and Khairul Amri, "Measurement of the Parenting Style of the Character of Millennial Students at State Islamic Higher Educational Institutions," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 10, no. 3 (September 30, 2022): 685–98, <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v10i3.712>.

<sup>49</sup> Parjiman Parjiman et al., "Rahmatan Lil Alamin Islamic Value Education Model Based on Muhammadiyah School Culture," *MUDARRISA: Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan Islam* 15, no. 2 (December 21, 2023): 269–90, <https://doi.org/10.18326/mudarrisa.v15i2.387>.

<sup>50</sup> Ahmad Sabri et al., "The Shift of a Surau to Be a Mushalla as a Non-Formal Education Implementation in The Regency of West Sumatra Agam," *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 5, no. 2 (May 12, 2022): 434–52, <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v5i2.2217>.

as a school logo, underscored by the idea of fostering "Unity in Islam" (Interview with a headmaster of an Islamic school in North Sumatra).

The community's desire to advance educational institutions, particularly schools, plays a pivotal role in the growth and development of schools across different regions in North Sumatra, particularly in areas with a predominantly Muslim population. These Islamic schools have exhibited their competence in both academic and non-academic realms, even recruiting staff from other private schools. Furthermore, they actively strive to compete with established public schools.

Despite the assurance of quality educational services, characterized by highly qualified educators, comprehensive facilities, foreign language proficiency, and the support of a child's social environment along with high parental expectations, these factors alone are insufficient to satisfy the urban Muslim community's longing to reflect their religious identity and incorporate appropriate learning methodologies. Therefore, the development of Islamic educational institutions becomes imperative to address these needs, particularly in the Sumatra Utara region, where the government's dominance has diminished, and a grassroots democratic system is taking shape.

Islamic schools in North Sumatra have demonstrated their similarity to general schools in terms of their institutional structure. From a practical standpoint, students from diverse backgrounds in Indonesia prefer schools over madrasahs or pesantrens. According to Suyatno, some Islamic schools use the term "integrated" to establish their identity as institutions that cultivate both scientific and technological knowledge, along with religious education. The term "integrated" itself signifies the convergence of science, technology, and Islamic sciences.<sup>51</sup>

The number of Islamic schools in North Sumatra experienced a significant increase during the Reform Era, in contrast to the periods of the Old Order and New Order when there was only one Islamic elementary school. In the Reform Era, the number of Islamic elementary schools expanded to eight, and at the junior high school level, it grew to eleven. Research indicates that there is no fundamental distinction between madrasahs and schools, except for their Islamic character, with madrasahs placing a stronger emphasis on Islam.<sup>52</sup> In this respect, Islamic schools resemble general schools, albeit with dissatisfaction among the Muslim community regarding the level of Islamic education offered in public schools. To address this concern, Islamic schools present a solution to fulfill the demand for Islamic education. Moreover, Islamic schools employ the term "integrated" to signify their simultaneous development of religious education and scientific knowledge.

The founders of Integrated Islamic Schools in North Sumatra embrace a broader concept that surpasses the mere integration of religious and general subjects within a singular educational system. This concept encompasses the idea of integration and unity, highlighting

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<sup>51</sup> Suyatno Suyatno, "Sekolah Islam Terpadu Dalam Sistem Pendidikan Nasional," *Al-Qalam* 21, no. 1 (January 9, 2016): 1, <https://doi.org/10.31969/alq.v21i1.213>.

<sup>52</sup> Muhammad Amin Fathih, Triyo Supriyatno, and Muhammad Amin Nur, "Visionary Leadership of The Head of Diniyah Madrasah in Improving The Quality Santri," *Nidhomul Haq: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 6, no. 3 (November 8, 2021): 513–25, <https://doi.org/10.31538/ndh.v6i3.1527>; M. Ali Haidar, Mizanul Hasanah, and Muhammad Anas Ma'arif, "Educational Challenges to Human Resource Development in Islamic Education Institutions," *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 3, no. 4 (2022): 366–77, <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v3i4.309>.

the Islamization of knowledge. Islamic education, with its longstanding existence, offers comprehensive human development by optimizing all facets of human capabilities. In contrast to secular education, which compartmentalizes the needs of the mind, soul, heart, and body, Islamic Schools emphasize the imperative of teaching, refining, and nurturing all aspects to their utmost potential. Consequently, Integrated Islamic Schools in North Sumatra are not solely concerned with the amalgamation of subjects but also prioritize the holistic aspects that are inherent in human beings.

## CONCLUSION

This research has unveiled a significant finding: Islamic schools in North Sumatra have substantially transformed curriculum and educational management approaches. This study's surprising aspect is how these schools have successfully integrated Islamic values into various non-Islamic subjects, a novel approach distinct from traditional Islamic educational institutions like pesantren and madrasahs. This study indicates a significant adaptation to the needs of the modern era without compromising the core Islamic values. In terms of scholarly contribution, this study confirms some previous findings regarding the evolution of Islamic education yet also challenges them by providing concrete evidence of how this adaptation is practically implemented in schools. Furthermore, the study contributes a new perspective on amalgamating the Indonesian national curriculum with Islamic values, introducing a concept of modern and inclusive Islamic education. However, the study has limitations, particularly regarding sample and location. Focusing on a few schools in North Sumatra may only partially represent the conditions across Indonesia. These limitations suggest the need for further research with a broader sample and a more diverse range of locations. Such subsequent research is expected to provide a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the evolution of Islamic education in Indonesia, which in turn could aid in formulating more accurate and effective educational policies.

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