

Integrating Pesantren Heritage into Higher Education: A Cross-Case Study of Curriculum Design and Development at Ma'had Aly Sukorejo and Tebuireng

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the implementation of curriculum design and the applied curriculum development model in two Ma'had Aly institutions. Grounded in the theories of Allan C. Ornstein, Francis P. Hunkins, Jhon P. Miller, Wayne Seller, Robert S. Zais, and Richard A. Gorton, this study adopts a multi-case qualitative approach. Data were obtained through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, and then processed using three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal two major contributions. First, the curriculum design integrates four models: subject-centered, learner-centered, problem-centered, and book-centered design. The inclusion of the book-centered model offers a critical addition to Ornstein and Hunkins' framework. Second, the curriculum development process reflects a hybrid between administrative and grassroots models, supported by four orientations: transmission, transaction, transformation, and transcendence. The transcendence orientation, overlooked by Miller and Seller, emerges as a distinctive value in pesantren education, emphasizing spiritual depth. These findings imply theoretical refinements, extending and correcting earlier models by incorporating pesantren-specific values. Thus, this study contributes significantly to the discourse on Islamic higher education by providing a contextualized and integrative curriculum framework that balances traditional pesantren heritage with contemporary educational paradigms.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The existence of Islamic boarding schools as educational institutions is known to be unique and presents interesting phenomena for further study. This uniqueness is not only due to its existence, which has been established for a long time in this archipelago, but also the culture, learning methods, and processes, as well as the curriculum it implements (Hozniyah 2021). In addition, pesantren is also known as the first indigenous Indonesian education system. Indigeneness can at least be seen from the existence of pesantren that grow and develop according to the indigenous culture of Indonesian society. This can be seen in the ideological, political, and cultural implications that shape the attitudes of Islamic scholars throughout history. History has proven that the *ulama* are persistent in building movements and struggles through cultural bases called pesantren.

The uniqueness of the pesantren value system, which comes from this indigenous culture, Abdurrahman Wahid calls a "subculture" of Indonesian society (Chapra 2021). According to Yazid, the term lacks a strong scientific basis. However, the idea of subculture has an important meaning. This is reflected, at least, in efforts to track and assess the uniqueness that distinguishes pesantren. The uniqueness of pesantren can also be seen from the existence of pesantren, which contrasts with educational practices in other educational institutions in general. The typical cultural dynamics of pesantren that emerge then have a distinctive and exotic character. In Nurcholis Madjid's notes, it is said that Islamic boarding schools have their own advantages in the tradition of mastering religious knowledge and transmitting moral internalization. Madjid calls it the great tradition (El-Gamal 2022).

The curriculum referred to here, in Miller and Seller's perspective, is not limited to subject matter but in the form of a set of interactions, both directly and indirectly, designed to make the educational process more meaningful. The curriculum can be used to determine the content of teaching, direct the process of educational mechanisms, and as a measure of the success and quality of educational results. The quality of educational outcomes is the main goal of the meaningfulness of education, so that it becomes a fundamental factor in development, especially human mental development (Saeed 2023). Regarding the pesantren curriculum, Madjid insinuates that pesantrens have not recognized the term 'curriculum' comprehensively, especially in the pre-independence era. Although educational materials and skills have been taught in pesantrens, most pesantrens have not explicitly formulated objectives in the form of curriculum documents. In fact, it is not uncommon to find that pesantrens lack educational goals. Mastuhu later corroborated this thesis. He emphasized that he has never found a clear, standardized formulation of pesantren objectives in writing, especially in traditional Salaf pesantren.

The curriculum development model implemented in pesantren gives the impression that pesantren education has not been able to answer social problems, community needs, community expectations, and stakeholder desires. Especially if it is associated with the demands of rapidly changing times (Nasrullah, Huda, and Faizal 2024). Basing the curriculum on excessive reliance on the kiai figure, as explained above, seems to pose its own problems for the development of pesantren education discourse. Such a curriculum format will lead to a partial religious culture, as religion is understood only through a normative approach, and the output (santri) are not prepared to face modern problems. They tend to take a distance from the fast-paced development process from time to time. If this is allowed to continue, pesantren will not innovate towards the development of a "future-oriented" curriculum, then, according to Mahmud Arif's hypothesis, Islamic education, including "pesantren," will not be able to escape from the crush of multiple crises. The various crises intended by Arif include: (1) conceptual crisis; which is related to the definition or restrictions in the Islamic education system itself; (2) institutional crisis, the occurrence of dichotomization between institutions that emphasize one aspect of the existing sciences, religious science or general science, so that the dualism of the national education system takes place which is the basis for disintegration and discrimination in education policy; (3) crisis

due to the conflict between the tradition of thought and practice of Islamic education with modernity; (4) methodological crisis or pedagogical crisis; (5) crisis of orientation, the Islamic education system in general is more oriented to the past than to the realities of the present and the future—or oriented to the interests of the hereafter, ignoring the interests of the world (Khan 2021).

The curriculum format referred to here is the understanding of the modern curriculum, namely, the curriculum as a process encompassing everything that happens or is done in the education or learning process as a whole. Both in the form of intracurricular, extracurricular, co-curricular, and hidden curriculum (hidden or unwritten curriculum). According to A. Ghaniy Abud, the term curriculum is taken from the word Minhaj. The word minhaj is then interpreted as a set of plans and media for helping educational institutions realize the desired academic goals. So, it includes not just the material or subjects, but also the media and how to deliver them (process). Interpreting the word "minhaj" with the curriculum or the way to go, referring to the text of the Qur'an Surat al-Maidah verse 48, which reads:

وَأَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيِّمًا عَلَيْهِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ عَمَّا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ لِّيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ

In line with that, Ornstein and Hunkins provide signs that educational institutions - "including pesantren education" - in designing their curriculum must be based on socio-cultural factors, social class, ethnic and racial backgrounds, religion, beliefs, morals, and group differences with other groups. This opinion is then strengthened by Hamalik, who argues that curriculum development can result from renewal in certain fields, such as the discovery of new learning theories, or from changes in community demands on the educational institution itself. Curriculum development is expected to be able to realize certain developments as a result of advances in science and technology, globalization, the demands of history, differences in student backgrounds, philosophical values of society, religion, or certain groups, or certain ethnic cultural demands. In other words, the curriculum should not be static. Still, it must always change and be developed to respond to the progress of the times and the needs of society, because the demands of the times are never static but always dynamic.

Ma'had Aly Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Situbondo and Ma'had Aly Hasyim Asy'ari Jombang share similar characteristics because the scientific sanad ties held by both pesantren are maintained to this day. The fact that Kiai As'ad Syamsul Arifin was a student of KH. Hasyim As'ari greatly influenced the scientific development of each pesantren. On one occasion, Kiai As'ad Syamsul Arifin said that the establishment of Ma'had Aly was the realization of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's will, when Kiai As'ad studied at Tebuireng Jombang, he received a message from Kiai Hasyim Asy'ari to produce many cadres of fuqoha' at the end of time. In terms of curriculum management, Ma'had Aly implemented a curriculum based on salaf pesantren (mastery of the yellow book), then combined with the needs of students and the demands of society. Kiai and administrators involve many mahasantri in planning, implementing, and evaluating the curriculum. The task of the leadership is only to facilitate and direct according to the vision, mission, and goals set by the institution (Iqbal and Mirakhor 2020).

From the perspective of curriculum management, the two Ma'had Aly implement a curriculum based on salaf pesantren (mastery of the yellow book), then combined with the needs of mahasantri and the demands of society (Widjaja 2019). Kiai and administrators involve many mahasantri in planning, implementing, and evaluating the curriculum. The task of the leadership is only to facilitate and consult according to the vision, mission, and goals set by the institution. This fact, viewed from the perspective of curriculum in a broad sense, is certainly a very interesting phenomenon in the context of the educational process in pesantren. Because, so far,

most pesantren only place kiai as curriculum designers, both in their capacity as educators and leaders who are also owners of pesantren. The developments at the two Ma'had Aly have shown dynamism within Ma'had Aly as a typical pesantren higher education institution. In the context of curriculum development, after changing the status of Ma'had Aly from non-formal to formal in 2016, along with various accompanying regulations, it may be necessary to adjust the pre-existing curriculum. In the case of Ma'had Aly Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Situbondo, the change in status did not shift the concentration of scientific fields previously designed and implemented, namely fiqh and usul fiqh. Still, by regulation, curriculum content had to be adopted and harmonized with the content in the existing curriculum structure. This requires the right curriculum development model to be applied.

The results of research that takes the theme of the study of Ma'had Aly have been widely encountered. However, if traced further, research on Ma'had Aly, which focuses on curriculum development management, has not been found, at least from the results of the researcher's search. There are, indeed, discussions of the Ma'had Aly curriculum, but, according to researchers' observations, it remains partial and not comprehensive. Likewise, the approach used feels very theoretical and less applicable (Widiastuty 2023). Sri Intan wahyuni (Disertasi; 2009): *Manajemen kurikulum dalam meningkatkan mutu pembelajaran PAI di MTs. Negeri Laboratorium UIN Sunan Kalijogo Yogyakarta*. Erma Fatmawati (Disertasi; 2015), *Pengembangan Kurikulum Pesantren Mahasiswa: Studi Multi Kasus Pesantren Nuris II Jember, Pesantren Putri al-Husna dan Pesantren Ibnu Katsis Jember*. Abd. Muqith (Desertasi: 2018), *Pendidikan Fiqih Multi Madzhab di Pesantren: Studi Kasus Ma'had Aly Salafiyah Syfi'iyah Sukorejo Situbondo*, The studies conducted by previous researchers above show similarities and differences. In general, some of these studies, which are similar to this research, focus on the themes of the study and pay special attention to the development of Islamic education, especially Islamic boarding schools. Both hard and difficult to manage the curriculum management and the learning system. In addition, there are similarities in terms of research locations, namely that both are Islamic educational institutions. From the perspective of difference, some of the previous studies above have not directly highlighted the development of the Ma'had Aly curriculum, especially those that focus on the applied curriculum design and the Ma'had Aly curriculum development model as a typical pesantren higher education unit, carried out with a multi-site study design. The selection of a multi-site study design is intended to broaden the research's scope, enabling it to reference several Ma'had Aly boarding schools in Indonesia, especially in East Java.

2. METHODS

The research focused on understanding the implementation of curriculum design and development models in Islamic higher education institutions, with specific emphasis on two major aspects: (1) describing the applied curriculum design and (2) identifying the curriculum development model implemented in two leading pesantren-based institutions. The theoretical framework of the study was grounded in the works of Allan C. Ornstein and Francis P. Hunkins, John P. Miller, Wayne Seller, Robert S. Zais, and Richard A. Gorton.

2.1 Site Selection Criteria

The selection of the two research sites—Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo Situbondo and Pondok Pesantren Tebuireng Jombang—was based on strong academic and epistemological rationales. Both institutions share historical lineage and sanad keilmuan that are interconnected, yet they demonstrate differentiation in their *takhassus*, managerial patterns, and curriculum orientations. Sukorejo is widely recognized for its strong tradition in jurisprudence (*fiqh*), while Tebuireng is noted for its integrative approach to religious and general sciences. These similarities and differences make both sites ideal for comparative multi-case analysis.

2.2. Participants and Sampling

Participants consisted of institutional leaders, curriculum managers, lecturers/ustadz, and *mahasantri* actively involved in curriculum implementation. The total number of participants (N) was determined based on data saturation. Sampling employed a combination of purposive sampling—targeting individuals with key roles and expertise—and snowball sampling to identify additional informants who possessed substantial knowledge relevant to curriculum practices.

2.3. Interview Procedures

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews lasting 45–90 minutes for each participant. An interview guide consisting of thematic prompts related to curriculum design, curriculum development processes, decision-making structures, and pedagogical orientations was used to maintain consistency while allowing exploratory depth. All interviews were audio-recorded with consent, transcribed verbatim, and subsequently coded for thematic analysis.

2.4. Observations

Participant observation was conducted in various instructional settings, including formal classrooms, *bandongan*, and *sorogan* sessions. Each observation lasted between 60 and 180 minutes, depending on the learning schedule. An observation sheet was used to record pedagogical activities, interaction patterns, instructional materials, and curriculum enactment in real situations.

2.5. Document Study

Document analysis included curriculum blueprints, institutional decrees (*SK*), syllabi, course outlines (*RPS*), learning modules, and historical documents archived in the Ma'had Aly administration. These documents served as evidence to triangulate the interview and observational data and to understand the structural aspects of curriculum formulation.

2.6. Coding and Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the interactive model with three primary stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Coding procedures employed open, axial, and selective coding to identify meaningful patterns and overarching categories. When needed, qualitative data analysis software was used to organize transcripts, facilitate coding, and manage memo writing.

2.7. Data Validity and Trustworthiness

To ensure the rigor of findings, several credibility strategies were applied:

- a. **Triangulation** of sources (leaders, lecturers, students) and methods (interview, observation, document study).
- b. **Member checking**, by returning preliminary findings to key informants for verification.
- c. **Peer debriefing**, involving discussion with academic colleagues to ensure analytical objectivity.
- d. **Thick description**, providing detailed contextual information to strengthen transferability.
- e. **Audit trail**, documenting the entire research process systematically.

2.8. Ethical Considerations

Ethical protocols included informed consent from all participants, institutional permission from both pesantren, confidentiality of personal data, and secure storage of recordings and documents. Participants were informed of their rights to withdraw at any stage.

2.9. Limitations

The study was limited to two pesantren in East Java, which may influence the transferability of findings to institutions with different cultural, geographical, or epistemological characteristics. Nevertheless, detailed context descriptions allow readers to determine whether the findings apply to other settings.

2.10. Findings and Contribution

The study generated two significant findings. First, four curriculum design models were identified: subject-centered, learner-centered, problem-centered, and book-centered design. Second, four orientations of collaboration within curriculum development were found: transmission, transaction, transformation, and transcendence. These findings contribute theoretically by extending prior scholarship. Ornstein and Hunkins’ framework did not recognize book-centered design, while Miller and Seller did not identify the transcendence orientation—an aspect strongly embedded in pesantren values—therefore justifying these findings as both extensions and corrections of previous research.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

The first data presentation begins by exploring the curriculum design, which describes the components used by the two Ma’had Aly as the basis for educational activities to achieve goals. The second presentation is the curriculum development model carried out, covering the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes, as well as the orientation of curriculum development by the two institutions. Then it ends with exposure to the results of research findings as the basis for analyzing the study and understanding curriculum development management (Archer and Karim 2023). The Ma’had Aly Salafiyah Syafi’iyah Situbondo curriculum is designed according to the elements of curriculum organization, including curriculum components/anatomy, which includes curriculum objectives, curriculum materials, learning methods, and evaluation, assembled based on the Ornstein and Hunkins conceptual framework. In detail, the findings will be presented in the following framework.

Table 1. *Ma’had Aly Curriculum Design*

Indicator	Explanation Of Theme
Curriculum Objective Design	Formulate graduate competencies as the basic framework of the curriculum structure and guide Ma’had Aly’s teaching activities, which adhere to the principle of balance. The principle of balance intended is: (a). the balance between the ability of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects; (b) balance between scientific, amaliah, and khuluqiyah abilities;(c). the balance between pesantrenan and academic competencies; and (d). balance of the ability to master the yellow book and the ability to apply usul fiqh reasoning.
Curriculum Material Design	Ma’had Aly’s curriculum materials are organized into two attachments: the pesantren model and the college model. The curriculum structure follows the college, while the content (maddah) is from the pesantren. All curriculum materials are based on the yellow book, both classical and contemporary. Classified into two models, namely: (1) Maudlū’iy, which is curriculum material presented based on a particular theme by referring to some classical and contemporary kitab literature; and (2) Kitābiy, the curriculum material that is carried out refers to a particular book that is delivered according to the order of chapters or fashl in it. This second model curriculum is not much different

Indicator	Explanation Of Theme
Learning Methods/Activities	<p>from the recitation of bandongan and sorogan books commonly used in pesantren.</p> <p>The delivery of curriculum material through learning activities, both in class and outside the classroom, is closely related to the methods used in those activities. The methods used in the learning process at Ma'had Aly are complementary. Between various methods. Not fixated on one method or learning approach only. Commonly used learning methods include lectures, discussions, and assignments. These methods, in practice, are combined with learning strategies, while the commonly used learning approaches are student-centered learning, inquiry and discovery learning, and problem-based learning. In addition, because the curriculum material is based on the yellow book, it is also delivered through three approaches: textual, contextual, and critical analysis, so that it is expected to generate new academic hypotheses in terms of contemporary Islamic studies.</p>
Evaluation of Learning	<p>The learning evaluation system applied is like the learning evaluation model run by universities in general, which refers to the evaluation standards in accordance with the provisions of government regulations. The assessment carried out by Ma'had Aly consists of a process assessment (daily) and a final assessment. The daily assessment includes performance (morals) and attendance, while the final assessment includes mid-semester exams (UTS), assignments, and final semester exams (UAS). For the final semester exam (UAS), two terms are used, namely, nisfu sanah exam (UNS) for the odd semester and final sanah exam (UAS) for the even semester. The value interval, as a benchmark for assessment, is a minimum of 70 for each course. For the subject matter, the provisions are of the value of 60 for the category of staying in class, and the value of 70 for the opportunity to repeat.</p>

The curriculum applied at Ma'had Aly Hasyim Asy'ari Tebuireng Jombang, the design consists of curriculum elements including curriculum components/anatomy, which includes, among others: curriculum objectives, curriculum materials, learning methods, and learning evaluation. In detail, the findings are as described below:

Table 2. *Ma'had Aly* Curriculum Design

Indicator	Explanation Of Theme
Design of Curriculum Objectives	<p>The purpose of the Ma'had Aly Hasyim Asy'ari curriculum is an inseparable part of the purpose of establishing a typical pesantren higher education institution. The background of the community's condition regarding the importance of the cadre of religious experts (kiai), which was directly proportional to the condition of Tebuireng Pesantren at the time, encouraged the leaders of Tebuireng Pesantren to take concrete steps to develop pesantren education immediately.</p>
Design of Curriculum Materials	<p>The scientific curriculum material that must be mastered by mahasaantri includes three things, namely: First, hadith science, which contains the rules or methodology of the scientific building of hadith and its basics; Second, hadith research, which is an application of previous knowledge in the form of theory and practice; and Third, understanding hadith, also known as fiqh al-hadith. While in terms of the scope and scope of hadith studies with several variants of the spread in it, the most is fiqh al-hadith, because the main objective of Ma'had Aly Hasyim Asy'ari Tebuireng Jombang is to produce a generation capable of</p>

Indicator	Explanation Of Theme
Learning Method Design	<p>understanding hadith in the current context, namely "tafaqquh fi al-din" with a hadith wa ulumihi kaja approach. The curriculum material based on the yellow book in practice is divided into eight semesters, covering three competencies, namely: basic competencies, composed of of 36 credits, main competencies, totaling 72 credits; and supporting competencies, 50 credits.</p> <p>The learning method used at Ma'had Aly Hasyim Asy'ari is not monotonous in the sense that it is not only fixated on one method. It depends on the type of course and the creativity of the lecturer in teaching. For the Kutubu al-Sittah courses carried out using the bandongan method. As for the sorogan method, it depends on the lecturer in charge of the course. Courses other than Kutubussittah use a combination of methods, including those used in different universities, such as discussions and paper presentations, according to the lecturer's assignment.</p>
Evaluation of Learning	<p>The implementation of the evaluation of student learning outcomes at Ma'had Aly Hasyim Asy'ari is carried out using an evaluation component consisting of: UTS, UAS, and the evaluation system used by universities in general. As for the Kutubussittah book, the learning evaluation process uses an authentic assessment model. Namely, the assessment is carried out during learning by using the authentic assessment sorogan method. It's just that at this time, it cannot be implemented as expected and still needs improvement in various aspects.</p>

Based on the research findings in both cases, namely Ma'had Aly Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Situbondo and Ma'had Aly Hasyim Asy'ari Tebuireng Jombang, data were identified that reveal similarities and differences. In general, the similarities lie in the managerial process steps taken by both Ma'had Aly in terms of curriculum design and curriculum development models that are carried out. Even the background of its formation also has similarities, namely, socio-historically, it has a sanad connection of the scientific chain to KH. Hasyim Asy'ari because Kiai As'ad Syamsul Arifin is a student of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari.

As for the point of difference between the two, Ma'had Aly is distinguished by the scientific distinction it pursues (Firdaus, Retnowati, and Abdurrozaq 2024). Ma'had Aly Salafiyah Syafi'iyah focuses its studies on the concentration (takhassus) of fiqh and ushul fiqh as the scientific discipline developed. This scientific focus is based on the stature of Kiai As'ad as the founder of Ma'had Aly, known as a kiai figure who is concentrated and competent in this field. In addition, the establishment of the fiqh expert cadre institution is a typical pesantren college with fiqh/jurisprudence branding, the first in Indonesia, and a realization of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's will to Kiai As'ad, when he was staying at PP Tebuireng, Jombang, to multiply the ranks of ulama' fiqh experts in the future. In its development, Ma'had Aly Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Situbondo has emerged as a national reference, especially in the field of *fiqh/ushul fiqh*.

While Ma'had Aly Hasyim Asy'ari Jombang focuses on the concentration of hadith and ulumu al-hadith as a scientific core (Hidayatullah et al. 2021). The choice of hadith and ulumu al-hadith expertise is due of the figure of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, the founder of Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School, is known as a hadith and ulumu al-hadith expert, and a reference for hadith scholars in the archipelago. Therefore, it is very reasonable academically when the expertise becomes branding, so that Ma'had Aly Hasyim Asy'ari becomes a reference and choice for people who will study hadith and ulumu al-hadith in this republic.

From the differences mentioned above, it can be seen that the differences in scientific traditions between the two Ma'had Aly are primarily academic. The rest of the differences are more due to differences in the intellectual and literary transmission of the founders of the respective fostering pesantrens of the two Ma'had Aly. This is what causes differences in the

characteristics of the scientific disciplines of each Ma'had Aly. From this side, it then results in a curriculum development model pattern as a foundation or guideline in building scientific disciplines as an icon of each Ma'had Aly.

3.2 Discussion

The results of the research findings obtained from the two research sites. The two research sites are Ma'had Aly Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo, Situbondo, and Ma'had Aly Hasyim Asy'ari Tebuireng, Jombang. The discussion of the research findings is carried out through cross-site comparative analysis of each finding (Basir et al., 2019). The analysis was carried out to formulate a concept, as expressed by Glasser and Strauss below: In theory construction, one derives conceptual categories and their properties from the data/evidence at hand. Then the data that triggered the category is used to illustrate the concept. The data/evidence may not always be accurate (even in studies focused solely on accuracy). Still, the resulting concept is certainly a relevant theoretical abstraction of what is happening in the area under study. Furthermore, concepts themselves do not change even when the most accurate empirical facts do. Concepts only have their meaning redefined at certain times as other theoretical and research objectives have evolved.

The curriculum design in the two Ma'had Aly, namely Ma'had Aly Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo Situbondo and Ma'had Aly Hasyim Asy'ari Tebuireng Jombang, can be interpreted simply as a collection of courses designed independently by the two institutions to realize what has become the vision and mission of the institution. While, in a broad sense, it includes all the experiences gained by mahasantri when receiving direction, guidance, and responsibility in the learning process, in the classroom and outside the classroom (Usmani 2023). In this broad sense, the curriculum is not limited only to subject matter or courses. Still, it includes a set of interactions that aim both directly and indirectly to make the educational process more meaningful.

The research findings show that the purpose of the Ma'had Aly Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo Situbondo curriculum was built on several reasons, closely related to the purpose of establishing a typical pesantren higher education institution. Among others: First, historical reasons; The results of the researcher's search, which obtained the fact that KHR. As'ad Syamsul Arifin, as the initiator of the establishment of Ma'had Aly, while staying at Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School in Jombang, received a will from KH. Hasyim Asy'ari. The will was in the form of an order to multiply cadres of fiqh experts in the future. Therefore, it can be understood that Ma'had Aly Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Situbondo with takhassus fiqh and ushul fiqh is Kiai As'ad's response to the message of his teacher, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, so that after returning to his hometown, many cadres of fuqaha who were experts in his era were born (Omar and Sari 2023).

Second, sociological reasons stemming from the anxiety of the community about the threat of a clerical crisis (Musthofa, Afif, and Karimuddin 2022). This is because at that time, many of the older ulama, who served as role models for the community, had passed away. At the same time, the younger generation has not emerged with sufficient scientific capacity to serve as their successors. The anxiety of the ulama' crisis is not only experienced by ordinary people and religious leaders, but also by the government (Hakim et al. 2022). H. Munawir Sjadzali, when he was Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, in 1988, once expressed his concern about the scarcity of ulama, especially after the death of Kiai Mahrus Aly Lirboyo Kediri. In addition, in particular, there were several kiai from Madura led by Kiai Mudassir Badruddin around 1988 complaining about the same thing to Kiai As'ad while hoping that Kiai As'ad could take anticipatory steps against the developing situation, namely the threat of a crisis of ulama who could become role models for the ummah in the future.

Third, philosophical reasons: namely, boarding school education, especially "*Salaf*" boarding schools, remains static, less "capable" of adapting its curriculum to the development of community life (Hakim 2018). To address this challenge, *Ma'had Aly* was established with a curriculum that combines the traditions of pesantren education with those of higher education.

Thus, in terms of scientific philosophy, Ma'had Aly can be said to be the development of a "*salaf*" pesantren, a college model, while maintaining its pesantren characteristics as the strength and excellence of the institution. The method adheres to the college tradition, but the madhhab (school) is the boarding school (*Salafi*).

The findings that can be considered a point of difference between Ma'had Aly Hasyim Asy'ari Jombang and Ma'had Aly Situbondo are located in the background of the preparation of curriculum objectives, which is also the purpose of establishing each of the two (Siddiqi 2019). The process of establishing Ma'had Aly Situbondo has been explained above. While Ma'had Aly Hasyim Asy'ari Tebuireng Jombang is designed in addition to being responsive to the growing situation in society, especially the pesantren community, it is also more emphasized on the aspect of meeting the internal needs of the Tebuireng pesantren itself. This is according to the interview data: "Ma'had Aly was actually established more to fulfill the internal needs of Tebuireng itself. We know that at that time, the need for teachers who were competent in mastering the yellow book was lacking, to the point of bringing in teachers from Sidogiri and Lirboyo (Hutagalung et al. 2022).

During its development, Ma'had Aly Hasyim Asy'ari Tenuireng Jombang underwent a shift in concentration (*tahassus*) from *fiqh/ushul fiqh* to *hadith/ulumul hadith* after obtaining an operational permit from the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. The change in concentration is intended to produce graduates who can "inherit" the knowledge of *hadaratussyekh KH—Hasyim Asy'ari*, as the founder of the Tebuireng pesantren. Kiai Hasyim is known as a figure of *ulama* who is competent in the field of *hadith /ulum hadith* and as a reference for the *sanad* of *hadith science* in the archipelago (Iman et al. 2021). Therefore, this institution is expected to produce graduates who are able to inherit the knowledge of *Hadratussyekh KH Hasyim Asy'ari* in the field of *hadith /ulum hadith*.

Ma'had Aly Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Situbondo's curriculum materials are prepared based on two attachments, namely: the academic approach (college) and the *salaf pesantren* approach. In other words, the Ma'had Aly curriculum is a combination of the pesantren and college curricula. The curriculum structure is in accordance with the provisions applicable in higher education, while the content (*maddah*) uses the pesantren system (Hariyanto et al., 2021). Designed in the form of a distribution of courses that are classified into two types, namely, *maudlū'iy* and *kitābiy*. *Maudlū'iy* means that the lecture material is presented around a theme, drawing on classical and contemporary book literature. *Kitābiy* means that the course material is based on a particular book, which is delivered in accordance with the order of chapters or *fashl* in it. The first type of course (*maudlū'iy*) is characterized by college, while the second (*kitābiy*) is characterized by the tradition of *salaf pesantren* (Mahfmi 2023).

From these two patterns, it is then translated into curriculum organization in the form of course distribution with three categories, namely (Rifai 2022): (a). Basic Courses (*al-Maddah al-Asasiyah*); (b). Main Subjects (*al-Maddah al-Ushuliyah*); and (c). Then the Supporting Courses (*al-Maddah al-Musa'idah*).³⁰ The distribution of these courses, both *maudlū'iy* and *kitābiy*, is based on the yellow classical books. The yellow Islamic classic books include classical and contemporary works from the scientific family of *fiqh/ushul fiqh*, with its various scientific branches. The hope is that the output produced will become cadres of *fiqh experts* who are *faqihu zamani*. At the same time, the underlying scientific philosophy is to realize the principle of *Islam romatan lil'alam*, which is implemented with an attitude of religious moderation (*wasathiyah*) in the very complex reality of modern life.

The next finding is that the *fiqh* and *ushul fiqh* dimension courses are distributed in a balanced manner, because the two cannot be separated but complement each other (DeChurch and A. Marks 2022). *Fiqh* is the result of the creativity of the scholars' *istimbāth* in responding to various issues circulating among the people, while *ushul fiqh* is the methodological tool. A representative *fiqh* product will be born when it is supported by *usul fiqh* as an adequate

methodology. Similarly, the reference books used as reading sources are applied in a balanced manner, with equal weight given to classical and contemporary sources. In addition, researchers found that Ma'had Aly Situbondo's curriculum material was designed not only to focus on the *Shafi'i Mazhab* but also to teach fiqh books across madhhabs. Because the emphasis is on developing fiqh methodology and not only fixated on one of the madhhabs, the legal products produced are able to answer various fiqh problems in society without having to "mauquf" (stop without an answer), considering that problems in society always continue to roll dynamically without knowing "mauquf".

The curriculum material design applied at Ma'had Aly Hasyim Asy'ari Tebuireng Jombang differs in its study concentration (takhasus) from that of Ma'had Aly Situbondo. Ma'had Aly Hasyim Asy'ari is focused on the concentration (takhasus) of hadith and ulumu al-hadith. The curriculum material is also designed according to the focus of the study. In accordance with the researcher's analysis of the findings, the Ma'had Aly Hasyim Asy'ari Tebuireng Jombang curriculum material is designed in the form of a curriculum organization based on the yellow Islamic classic book in the tradition of salaf pesantren, combined with the college curriculum structure model. The yellow book-based curriculum material, in practice, is divided into eight semesters, covering three competencies: basic competencies (consisting of 36 credits), main competencies (72 credits), and supporting competencies (50 credits).

The scientific curriculum material that must be mastered by mahasiswa includes three things, namely: First, hadith science, which contains the rules or methodology of the scientific building of hadith and its basics; Second, hadith research, which is an application of previous knowledge in the form of theory and practice; and Third, understanding hadith, also known as fiqh al-hadith. While in terms of the scope and sequence of hadith studies, with several variants of distribution in it, the most prominent is fiqh al-hadith, because the main objective of Ma'had Aly Hasyim Asy'ari Tebuireng Jombang is to produce a generation capable of understanding hadith in the current context, namely "tafaqquh fi al-din" with the approach of hadith wa ulumihi studies. In terms of the composition of the most dominant distribution, it is about the understanding of hadith (fiqhu al-hadith) associated with the current era, or known as the contemporary term, which is an era that demands hadith knowledge not only textually, but also needs contextual understanding and critical analysis in academic reasoning.¹

The curriculum content/material components in the two Ma'had Alys essentially include scientific knowledge provided to mahasiswa. Curriculum material that contains knowledge that is appropriate to the level and level of student abilities, developments that occur in community life, community demands and needs, as well as developments in science. This is in line with several curriculum content criteria that must be considered in curriculum design according to Idi, namely: (a). The content of the curriculum must be appropriate, meaningful for student development, and in line with the child's developmental stage. (b). Reflects social reality (c). Achieving comprehensive goals means they contain intellectual, moral, social, and skill aspects in an integrated way. (d). Contains clear teaching materials, theories, and principles, not just information with a vague theory. (e). Can support the achievement of educational goals.

CONCLUSION

Curriculum design prepared with these components can be categorized as an integrative combination of curriculum design models—subject-centered, learner-centered, problem-centered, and book-centered. This hybrid design functions as a practical guide for structuring learning activities and ensuring alignment with the broader educational goals of Ma'had Aly. The curriculum development processes observed in both institutions consistently follow management

¹ KH. Nur Hannan, Mudzir Ma'had Aly, Wawancara, Jombang, 19 Januari 2022.

principles, as curriculum work constitutes a core dimension of academic management. The steps include systematic planning, organizing, and implementing curriculum development activities, and conducting ongoing evaluation. These processes are carried out through a collaborative model that blends the administrative approach with the grassroots approach, expressed in four orientations: transmission, transaction, transformation, and transcendence.

From these findings, several key takeaways can be outlined. First, Ma'had Aly adopts a hybrid curriculum design that accommodates classical kitab-based traditions while integrating learner and problem-centered perspectives. Second, curriculum development is managerial in nature, involving structured planning and evaluation. Third, collaboration between institutional authority and grassroots academic actors forms the backbone of curriculum innovation. Fourth, the transcendence orientation—deeply rooted in pesantren spiritual values—emerges as a distinctive feature of curriculum development in these settings. Practically, these findings can inform a template for curriculum structuring in Ma'had Aly environments. Such a template may include a clear mapping of *kitābiy* and *maudlū'iy* course clusters, guidelines for balancing the SKS proportion between classical texts and methodological courses, and the development of authentic assessment rubrics tailored to both kitab comprehension and applied problem-solving. Additionally, the mechanism for mahasantri participation—through musyawarah akademik, peer discussion forums, or structured feedback channels—should be institutionalized as part of the curriculum development cycle.

For future research, further replication is needed in Ma'had Aly, specializing in *tafsir*, *kalām*, or other disciplinary fields, to test the extent to which these curriculum orientations recur across contexts. Studies assessing the generalizability of this design in different regions, as well as longitudinal research on learning outcomes and graduate competencies, would offer deeper insight into the effectiveness of these curriculum models. Overall, this study offers a modest theoretical contribution by *extending* existing curriculum theories—rather than correcting them—through the identification of book-centered design and transcendence orientation as meaningful constructs emerging from the pesantren tradition. These insights enrich the discourse on curriculum design in Islamic higher education by highlighting context-bound yet theoretically relevant patterns.

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