



Research Article

The Dynamics of Islamic Education in the Nusantara during the Colonial Period and Its Relevance in the Modern Era

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Abstract. This study examines the dynamics of Islamic education in Indonesia from the colonial period to the modern era by emphasizing its historical continuity and transformation. The study aims to analyze the conditions and characteristics of Islamic education during the colonial period, colonial policies and their impacts, as well as the transformation of modern Islamic education and the integration of adab values with critical thinking. This research employs a qualitative approach using library research. Data were collected from relevant books and scholarly articles and analyzed descriptively through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that prior to colonial intervention, Islamic education had developed independently through institutions such as pesantren, surau, and dayah, with a strong emphasis on moral formation and religious

knowledge. During the colonial period, particularly under Dutch rule, Islamic education faced pressure through discriminatory policies that led to educational dualism. Under British rule, changes were relatively limited, while during the Japanese occupation, initially accommodative policies shifted toward mobilization for war purposes. These dynamics contributed to the emergence of modern Islamic education through the development of madrasah, the integration of religious and general sciences, and the reform of teaching methods. In the contemporary context, the main challenge lies in the imbalance between adab values and critical thinking skills. Therefore, integrating both aspects becomes essential in developing Islamic education that is adaptive, character-oriented, and relevant to current demands.

Keywords: Islamic Education, Colonial Period, Transformation, Adab, Critical Thinking

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a strategic role in shaping the civilization of a nation. Prior to the arrival of colonial powers in the Nusantara, the educational system had developed with a strong religious orientation through traditional institutions such as pesantren, surau, and madrasah (Rohmadi, 2018). Islamic education at that time emphasized spiritual development, moral formation, and mastery of Islamic sciences such as Qur'anic exegesis, hadith, fiqh, and Sufism (Norvaizi & Khoiri, 2025).

This development underwent significant changes with the arrival of colonialism in the Nusantara. The presence of European powers, particularly the Dutch through the VOC in the early 17th century, as well as the Japanese occupation in 1942, created new dynamics in the trajectory of Islamic education in Indonesia (Aji et al., 2025). Dutch colonial policies tended to be discriminatory and restricted Islamic educational activities through strict regulations (Raya, 2018), while the Japanese initially adopted a more accommodative approach, although it remained driven by wartime interests (Amin, 2019).

Changes in the educational system during the colonial period also influenced the direction of character formation within society. Education functioned not only as a means of knowledge transmission but also as a medium for shaping values and identity (Hasnida, 2017). The dynamics of Islamic education during the colonial period cannot be separated from the efforts of Muslim communities to preserve religious values while responding to external challenges (Rohani et al., 2022). However, studies on Islamic education in the colonial period often remain limited to historical descriptions and rarely connect these dynamics to developments in the modern era (Nasution et al., 2025). In fact, the pressures and transformations during the colonial period marked the beginning of the modernization of Islamic education, characterized by the emergence of madrasah and the integration of religious and general sciences (Hakiemah & Khumaini, 2021).

In its contemporary development, Islamic education faces new challenges. One of the main issues is the imbalance between the cultivation of adab values and the development of critical thinking skills (Irwan et al., 2024). Traditional Islamic education emphasizes adab as the foundation of character, while modern education demands analytical skills and openness to multiple perspectives. This imbalance may

produce learners who are morally grounded but lack analytical capacity, or intellectually capable but deficient in ethical conduct (Rohmadi, 2018).

Based on this background, this study explores the continuity and transformation of Islamic education from the colonial period to the modern era in Indonesia. It examines the conditions and policies of Islamic education during the colonial period and their impacts, while also highlighting the importance of integrating adab values and critical thinking in contemporary educational practices.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach using a library research design. This approach was chosen because the study focuses on the historical and conceptual analysis of Islamic education in Indonesia, particularly from the colonial period to its transformation in the modern era. In addition, this research examines the integration of adab values and critical thinking as part of the development of contemporary Islamic education. The data sources consisted of primary and secondary data. The primary data were obtained from Rohmadi's (2018) book entitled *Lintasan Sejarah Pendidikan Islam Indonesia*, which was used to trace the historical development of Islamic education in Indonesia. Meanwhile, the secondary data were derived from scholarly journal articles relevant to the research topic and accessed through Google Scholar, including studies on Islamic education during the colonial period, the transformation of modern Islamic education, and the integration of adab values and critical thinking.

Data was collected through a documentation study. The researcher identified, classified, and organized relevant literature according to the focus of the study, namely the condition of Islamic education during the colonial period, colonial policies and their impacts, the transformation of modern Islamic education, and the integration of adab values and critical thinking. This process was conducted systematically to ensure that the collected data were relevant and supported a comprehensive analysis. The collected data were then analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis based on the data analysis model proposed by Moleong (2019), which consists of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The analysis was carried out by systematically presenting the data, interpreting the meaning of each finding, and connecting the data to identify patterns of change and continuity in Islamic education. During the data reduction stage, the researcher selected and focused on information relevant to the objectives of the study. Subsequently, the data were presented in the form of structured narrative descriptions to clearly illustrate the relationships among the findings. The final stage involved drawing conclusions and conducting verification to ensure the consistency and validity of the research findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Condition and Characteristics of Islamic Education in Nusantara during the Colonial Period

In the early phase of colonialism, the presence of the Portuguese and Spanish in Nusantara did not significantly pressure Islamic education. Their activities were more

focused on trade and the spread of Christianity, particularly in eastern Indonesia such as Maluku. However, their presence began to introduce patterns of foreign intervention in society, including in religious and educational aspects. This condition marked the beginning of changes that later developed more extensively in the subsequent colonial phases. In line with this, the arrival of Western nations in the East was driven by economic interests. In Indonesia, the arrival of Europeans was marked by the Dutch presence in 1596 under the leadership of Cornelis de Houtman, who landed in Banten. However, this initial interaction did not go well, as their behavior provoked resistance from the local community, leading to their expulsion (Irwan et al., 2024). This fact shows that from the beginning, colonial presence had created social tensions that influenced various aspects of life, including education.

Amid this situation, Islamic education had already developed independently within society. Its development occurred through a process of adaptation to existing local cultures. In Java, *pesantren* emerged from the transformation of Hindu-Buddhist religious institutions. In Minangkabau, *surau*, which previously functioned as a social space within customary traditions, transformed into centers of Islamic education. Meanwhile, in Aceh, *meunasah* functioned as both educational institutions and centers of religious activities for the community (Hasnida, 2017). This process indicates that Islamic education had strong roots in the social structure of society. This condition was further strengthened by the existence of *pesantren* as the oldest Islamic educational institution in Indonesia. *Pesantren* did not only serve as places for learning religion but also functioned as centers for character development and social life. Rohmadi (2018) explains that *pesantren* played a role in shaping a comprehensive understanding and practice of Islamic teachings by emphasizing moral values in daily life. Its characteristics include the presence of *kiai*, *santri*, mosques, dormitories, and the use of classical Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*) as primary references. In addition, *pesantren* also functioned as centers of social and cultural activities within the community (Nasution et al., 2025).

In terms of learning, the Islamic education system at that time was flexible and not bound by formal time limitations. The duration of study was determined by the students' ability to understand the material and the approval of the *kiai*. The material taught focused on religious sciences using classical texts. The learning methods included *sorogan*, *wetonan*, memorization, and others. Evaluation was not conducted through formal certification, but based on direct recognition from the teacher regarding the students' competence (Rohmadi, 2018). This pattern indicates that Islamic education emphasized depth of understanding and character formation rather than administrative formalities. Thus, although colonial intervention in the early phase was not yet strong, Islamic education had already developed a well-established system rooted in society. This condition became an important foundation for the continuity of Islamic education when facing greater pressures in the subsequent colonial period.

Colonial Policies and Their Impact on Islamic Education in Nusantara

Entering the dominant colonial phase, particularly during Dutch rule, Islamic education began to face more systematic pressure. The presence of the Dutch since

the era of the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie was not only oriented toward economic interests but was also driven by imperial and missionary objectives. In carrying out this mission, the colonial government often showed a repressive attitude toward Muslim communities, including educational activities in surau and pesantren, which were considered potential threats to colonial power (Cahyanti, 2021). This condition placed Islamic education in a situation of sustained pressure from the early phase of Dutch dominance. In line with this, the education system established by the colonial government was designed to support its power interests. Education was not directed toward broad intellectual development but was instead focused on producing low-cost labor that could be utilized within the colonial administrative structure. Thus, education functioned as a tool to maintain political stability and fulfill the economic needs of the colonizers (Cahyanti, 2021). Colonial education aimed to provide labor for the Dutch government and VOC interests at minimal cost. This indicates that education was used as an instrument of both social and economic control.

To strengthen this dominance, the colonial government implemented various systematic and structured educational policies. During the administration of Governor-General Johannes van den Bosch, education policy was directed toward supporting Christianization through the provision of Christian religious instruction in schools. In addition, a supervisory institution known as Priesterraden was established to monitor religious activities, including Islamic education (Cahyanti, 2021). Supervision of Islamic education was further intensified through various regulations. The colonial government issued the Teacher Ordinance of 1905, which required official permission to conduct religious teaching. This policy was reinforced by the Teacher Ordinance of 1925, which limited the authority of kiai to teach without government approval. Furthermore, in 1932, the Wild School Ordinance was enacted, granting the government authority to close educational institutions that did not have official permits (Cahyanti, 2021). These policies clearly restricted the development of Islamic education and narrowed its operational space.

On the other hand, the colonial government also developed a more modern and structured Western education system. This system included various levels of education with curricula oriented toward general knowledge and administrative skills. Since the VOC period, education had been directed toward business interests and was tightly controlled by the colonial government (Ridhotullah et al., 2024). Unlike in the Netherlands, where religious institutions were given freedom, in Indonesia the education system was directly controlled by the colonial authorities. In practice, the colonial government established various types of schools such as Hollands Inlandsche School for indigenous elites, Europeesche Lagere School for European children and certain groups, and Meer Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs as a higher level of primary education (Norvaizi & Khoiri, 2025). However, access to these institutions was highly limited and discriminatory. The majority of the indigenous population did not have equal opportunities to access formal education. This condition reinforced social inequality in the field of education.

The impact of these policies can be seen in the emergence of educational dualism in Indonesia. Western education developed as the official system oriented

toward secular knowledge, while Islamic education continued independently with a focus on religious sciences. This condition created a clear separation between religious and general education (Aji et al., 2025). Islamic educational institutions such as pesantren, dayah, and surau were not formally recognized and were often positioned as informal institutions. In addition to dualism, colonial policies were also discriminatory. Differences in treatment were evident in the language of instruction, educational facilities, and supervisory policies. Colonial schools used Dutch and received full government support, while indigenous education used Malay and was placed under strict supervision (Aji et al., 2025). The colonial government deliberately limited the quality of education for indigenous people so that it would not be equal to that provided for Europeans (Irwan et al., 2024). As a result, Islamic educational institutions experienced marginalization and were often regarded as centers of resistance against colonial rule (Raya, 2018).

Despite facing strong pressure, Muslim communities demonstrated adaptive and progressive responses. Scholars began to realize that traditional educational systems needed to be reformed in order to respond to the challenges of the time. Rohmadi (2018) noted the emergence of awareness to develop a more structured education system through the establishment of madrasah that adopted a classical system. In the early 20th century, this transformation became more visible with the inclusion of general sciences into the Islamic education curriculum. Madrasah emerged as new institutions that integrated religious and general education within a more modern system (Cahyanti, 2021). This step served as a strategy to address educational dualism while improving the quality of Islamic education.

Several educational institutions that emerged during this period include Madrasah Adabiyah School in Padang, established in 1907 with a modern class system. In addition, Madrasah Diniyyah School, founded in 1915, implemented a classical system in its learning process. Muhammadiyah also established educational institutions with a similar approach, as did Sumatera Thawalib, which adopted a classroom-based system (Rohmadi, 2018; Hasnida, 2017). The emergence of these institutions marked the process of modernization of Islamic education in Indonesia. This development indicates an interaction between Islamic education and the Western education system. Some Muslim groups responded positively by adopting certain elements of the Western system without abandoning Islamic values (Hakiemah & Khumaini, 2021). This enabled pesantren and madrasah not only to survive but also to grow and adapt to the demands of the time. This process even encouraged the modernization of Islamic education without losing its identity and fundamental values (Aji et al., 2025).

In the subsequent phase, namely the period of British rule, there were no significant changes in the Islamic education system. The administration under Thomas Stamford Raffles focused more on administrative stabilization. Raffles was known for his interest in local culture and society, but his policies were not specifically directed toward educational reform, including Islamic education (Rohmadi, 2018). As a result, Islamic educational institutions continued to operate as before without major intervention or structural support. This condition indicates that

the British phase was transitional and did not produce fundamental impacts on Islamic education.

Changes occurred again during the Japanese occupation in the context of World War II. In the early stage, Japan adopted a more accommodative approach toward Muslims to gain political support. This policy was implemented through the establishment of religious institutions involving ulama, increased attention to pesantren, and the provision of opportunities for Islamic education, including the establishment of Islamic higher education institutions and religious organizations (Amin, 2019). In addition, Japan abolished the educational dualism previously imposed by the Dutch and replaced it with a simpler system. The use of the Indonesian language as the medium of instruction also expanded access to education for the population (Aji et al., 2025; Iskandar & Ansori, 2022).

However, these policies were pragmatic and changed according to wartime needs. Japan began to direct education toward mobilization and propaganda purposes. Learning activities were often disrupted as students were involved in military training and forced labor (Aji et al., 2025). In this situation, Islamic education continued to demonstrate strong resilience. Pesantren were able to survive because they were not fully under the direct control of the Japanese government (Amin, 2019). Thus, colonial policies during the Dutch, British, and Japanese periods had complex impacts on Islamic education. On the one hand, they resulted in restriction and marginalization. On the other hand, these conditions encouraged adaptation, innovation, and transformation within the Islamic education system in Nusantara.

Transformation of Modern Islamic Education in Indonesia

Islamic education in Nusantara during the colonial period faced dual pressures, namely structural discrimination from Dutch policies that only opened formal schools to aristocrats and indigenous elites, as well as the limitations of the traditional pesantren system, which focused on mastering classical Islamic texts through sorogan and bandongan methods. This condition triggered the awareness of Islamic reformers to reshape indigenous education (Syaifuddin et al., 2019). Driven by the spirit of liberation from colonialism and the aim of educating the nation, new educational concepts began to emerge that combined faith and intellectual advancement. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan became a pioneer by integrating religious and general sciences into a single educational system, which later became the foundation of modern Islamic education in Indonesia (Syaifuddin et al., 2019). This transformation was not an instant change but the result of a long process of adaptation to colonial pressures as well as a proactive response to the demands of modernity and independence.

These changes became more concrete in the institutional aspect of education. A shift occurred from unstructured traditional pesantren to madrasah and formal schools with classical systems, modern administration, and integrated curricula. Modernist organizations such as Muhammadiyah, Al-Irsyad, and Persis were at the forefront of adopting the Dutch school model while incorporating religious education proportionally (Putri & Yuliza, 2025). Muhammadiyah schools began to use desks, chairs, blackboards, and chalk, while teaching a combination of pesantren and Western educational materials (Syaifuddin et al., 2019). Integration into the national

education system further strengthened the position of madrasah and Islamic schools, leading to the establishment of Islamic higher education institutions such as Universitas Islam Indonesia and UIN, which integrate Islamic sciences with modern science. Modernization is also evident in institutions such as Pondok Modern Gontor, which developed an integrated educational system combining religious knowledge, foreign languages, and general sciences in a balanced manner (Rubai et al., 2025). This indicates that institutional modernization does not eliminate Islamic identity but rather strengthens it within a broader context.

Along with these institutional changes, transformation also occurred in the curriculum. A curriculum that was initially dominated by religious sciences (*ulum al-din*) gradually evolved into an integration of religious and general knowledge. This reintegration is understood as an effort to reunify religious knowledge with science and technology within a comprehensive framework, while eliminating the dichotomy between revelation-based knowledge and empirical knowledge (Rubai et al., 2025). Modern Islamic education curricula no longer focus solely on teaching the Qur'an and rituals but also include science, technology, mathematics, social sciences, and entrepreneurship. Educational objectives have also shifted from purely religious understanding to the development of competencies relevant to modern life (Suryaningrum et al., 2024). In practice, interdisciplinary approaches are developed to ensure that different fields of knowledge are interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

These curricular changes were followed by transformations in teaching methods. Traditional methods such as *sorogan* and memorization began to be complemented by classical systems and active learning methods such as discussion, question and answer sessions, presentations, and problem solving. In the *sorogan* system, students learn individually in front of the *kiai*, whereas in modern education, classroom interaction becomes more dynamic and collaborative (Jalaludin, 2026). The learning approach has also shifted from teacher-centered to student-centered, where students become active participants in the learning process. The use of methods such as project-based learning and higher order thinking skills has become increasingly common (Putri & Yuliza, 2025). Evaluation methods have also become more structured through written examinations, portfolios, and competency-based assessments. In addition, the use of digital technology has become part of the learning process, although it still faces challenges related to technological literacy (Jihan et al., 2025).

The transformation of teaching methods has also influenced the relationship between teachers and students. In traditional education, this relationship is hierarchical and sacred, with the *kiai* as the primary source of authority. In modern education, however, this relationship has become more dialogical and open. Teachers are no longer the sole source of knowledge but act as facilitators guiding the learning process (Rubai et al., 2025). This change creates space for students to ask questions, engage in discussions, and express opinions more freely. A learning environment that encourages curiosity and critical thinking has become a defining characteristic of modern Islamic education. At the same time, teachers are required to continuously

develop their pedagogical competence and digital literacy to fulfill this role effectively.

From this shift in relationships, a new demand has emerged in education, namely the development of critical thinking skills. This becomes a key distinction from colonial education, which tended to be dogmatic. Reflective learning principles are grounded in hadith, which emphasize that knowledge does not arise solely from mechanical learning but from processes of thinking and reflection (Rubai et al., 2025). Students are encouraged to examine, compare, and construct logical arguments based on both textual evidence and reasoning. This ability is increasingly important in the digital era, where the flow of information is rapid and not always reliable. Therefore, students need the ability to evaluate information critically and make ethical decisions (Jihan et al., 2025; Parhan et al., 2022). Thus, modern Islamic education does not only produce graduates who understand subject matter but also individuals who can think independently and adaptively.

Overall, the transformation of Islamic education in Indonesia demonstrates significant development from the colonial period to the modern era. Changes in institutional structures, curriculum integration, modernization of teaching methods, shifts in teacher-student relationships, and the growth of a critical thinking culture have made Islamic education more relevant to contemporary needs (Rubai et al., 2025; Putri & Yuliza, 2025). However, this development also brings new challenges. In the era of digitalization, Islamic education faces issues such as technological literacy gaps, moral degradation, and unequal access to education (Jihan et al., 2025). In addition, younger generations tend to be more engaged with digital media than with deep spiritual values, which raises the risk of identity crises (Parhan et al., 2022). Therefore, modern Islamic education must continue to innovate while maintaining a balance between progress and Islamic values, as well as strengthening collaboration among families, schools, communities, and the government (Amrullah, 2024).

Integration of Adab Values and Critical Thinking in Islamic Education

The transformation of modern Islamic education from the colonial period to the contemporary era has brought significant progress, but it has also generated fundamental tensions. On one side, the pesantren tradition places adab as the highest value, including respect for teachers, obedience, and recognition of the hierarchy of knowledge. In the thought of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, adab functions as an ontological foundation that precedes and governs the entire structure of the educational system, where the loss of adab leads to epistemological disorientation and disorder in the understanding and application of knowledge (Ramadhan et al., 2025). On the other side, modern education promotes rationality, openness, and critical thinking as responses to the complexity of the times. The Qur'an itself encourages the use of reason through tafakkur, tadabbur, and ta'addul as forms of devotion to God (Utami et al., 2025). These two poles are often positioned separately, whereas a comprehensive Islamic education requires their integration. Without adab, critical thinking risks producing arrogance and the loss of academic ethics. Conversely, without critical thinking, adab may turn into compliance that hinders innovation.

To understand the urgency of this integration, it is necessary to examine the differences between traditional and modern Islamic education. Traditional education emphasizes adab, obedience, and hierarchical relationships between teacher and student, with teacher-centered learning and methods such as sorogan and memorization. In contrast, modern Islamic education emphasizes rationality, analysis, and dialogical relationships through student-centered learning. These differences should not be opposed, but rather understood as complementary strengths and limitations. Tradition excels in character formation, while modernity excels in developing critical reasoning. In this context, the critical philosophy developed by Immanuel Kant offers a balanced framework through rational reflection that still considers empirical experience (Haikal et al., 2024). This approach shows that critical reasoning can develop alongside the strengthening of values.

This tension becomes more visible in current educational practices. Problems arise when one pole is applied excessively. The decline of adab in academic interactions is increasingly evident, where students actively express opinions but often neglect ethical considerations in delivering criticism. On the other hand, overly dogmatic educational patterns still limit students' critical capacity and hinder their creativity (Hendrayadi et al., 2023). In practice, students are often positioned as passive recipients, making them unaccustomed to questioning learning materials (Hendrayadi et al., 2023). Conversely, there are situations where teacher authority is too dominant, restricting space for discussion. Both conditions indicate that the imbalance between adab and critical thinking directly affects the quality of learning.

Based on these conditions, the need to integrate adab and critical thinking becomes increasingly urgent. Islamic education cannot rely solely on adab without providing space for critical reasoning, as this limits students' readiness to face change. Likewise, education that focuses only on critical thinking without adab will produce individuals who lack moral orientation. According to al-Attas, the loss of adab is the root cause of epistemological disorientation in education (Ramadhan et al., 2025). Meanwhile, M. Amin Abdullah proposes an integrative-interconnective approach that enables dialogue between Islamic values and modern knowledge (Ramadhan et al., 2025). Therefore, the integration of adab and critical thinking is not merely an option, but a necessity in building a comprehensive Islamic education system.

This integration can be formulated through a model that positions adab as the foundation and critical thinking as a skill built upon it. In this framework, adab serves as an ethical basis guiding the use of knowledge, while critical thinking functions as a tool to develop and evaluate knowledge. Adab includes respect for teachers, ethics in discussion, and recognition of legitimate scholarly authority (Ramadhan et al., 2025). Meanwhile, critical thinking involves the ability to analyze, evaluate, and construct logical arguments (Utami et al., 2025). From a Qur'anic perspective, activities such as tafakkur, tadabbur, and tafaquh demonstrate that critical thinking is part of faith practice (Fikri & Munfarida, 2023). Thus, critical thinking in Islam does not contradict adab, but rather represents its application in the intellectual domain.

The implementation of this integration largely depends on the role of teachers or lecturers. Educators function not only as sources of knowledge but also as role models of adab and facilitators of critical thinking. Values such as adab, morality, and

ethics can be integrated into teaching strategies to enhance students' critical thinking skills (Usiono et al., 2025). Methods such as reflective discussion, case studies, and problem-based learning have proven effective in encouraging analysis while fostering respectful attitudes in expressing opinions (Usiono et al., 2025). Therefore, teachers must possess strong pedagogical and moral competencies to create a learning environment that is open yet value-based (Siregar & Nasution, 2025).

Furthermore, learning strategies need to be designed systematically to ensure effective integration. Structured discussions with clear academic ethics, the integration of moral values across all subjects, and assessments that cover both cognitive and affective aspects are essential steps. Students are trained not only to understand material but also to express their ideas respectfully and responsibly. The principle of *tabayyun* in Islam reinforces this approach, as it requires verification of information before drawing conclusions (Hendrayadi et al., 2023). In this way, critical thinking operates within a strong moral framework.

The practical application of this integration can be observed in classroom activities. Students who present criticism are guided to use respectful language, support arguments with valid data, and deliver constructive suggestions. Lecturers provide space for discussion while maintaining academic authority. In text-based learning, students not only comprehend classical texts but also analyze their relevance to contemporary contexts. This approach demonstrates that tradition and modernity can coexist harmoniously. The integration of critical thinking in Islamic studies has been shown to deepen students' understanding while strengthening their spiritual dimension (Habib et al., 2023).

Thus, the integration of *adab* values and critical thinking is a key element in developing modern Islamic education. This integration not only resolves tensions arising from educational transformation but also addresses contemporary challenges. *Adab* provides direction for the use of reason, while critical thinking adds dynamism to the development of knowledge. The balance between the two is essential to form individuals who are intellectually competent and morally grounded. An ideal Islamic education system is one that unites the strengths of the heart and the intellect into a coherent whole.

CONCLUSION

Islamic education in the Nusantara during the colonial period demonstrated strong resilience through well-established systems based on *pesantren*, *surau*, and *dayah*, despite facing discriminatory colonial policies that restricted its development. Colonial intervention, particularly under Dutch rule, created an educational dualism that separated religious and general knowledge, while at the same time stimulating reform through the emergence of *madrasah* and modern educational institutions. This transformation continued into the modern era through curriculum integration, changes in learning methods, and a shift toward more dialogical teacher-student relationships. Within this context, Islamic education now faces a new challenge, namely the imbalance between the cultivation of *adab* and the development of critical thinking. Therefore, their integration becomes essential in constructing a

comprehensive Islamic education system, where adab functions as an ethical foundation and critical thinking serves as an instrument for intellectual development.

The findings indicate that the development of Islamic education in Indonesia should be directed toward an integrative model that balances adab values and critical thinking skills in educational practice. Educational institutions, particularly schools and pesantren, need to design curricula and learning strategies that emphasize not only mastery of content but also the formation of academic ethics and analytical abilities. Teachers and lecturers play a central role as role models of adab and as facilitators who guide critical thinking in a structured and respectful manner. In addition, educational policies should support the integration of religious and general knowledge to avoid the dualism inherited from the colonial period. Through this approach, Islamic education can produce graduates who are intellectually competent, morally grounded, and capable of responding to contemporary challenges in a responsible and thoughtful way.

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