

## Ahmad Dahlan's Educational Legacy: Answering Education Challenges in Era 4.0

Amir Hamzah\*<sup>1</sup>, M. Yunus Abu Bakar<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Master of Islamic Religious Education, Sunan Ampel Islamic University, Indonesia.

\*Corresponding Author Email: [amiergamex4@gmail.com](mailto:amiergamex4@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** This research aims to find out how K.H Ahmad Dahlan's views on Islamic education and its relevance to modern Islamic education. The method used in this research is library research using a descriptive qualitative approach. In the research, the researcher attempts to collect data through several books, articles, journals, or other sources related to K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's Islamic education thought, then the researcher analyses it and explores significantly related to the relevance of Ibn Khaldun's Islamic education. The result of this research is that KH Ahmad Dahlan pioneered the renewal of Islamic education in Indonesia by integrating religious and general sciences to produce a generation of Muslims who are knowledgeable and noble. He used dialogical learning methods that involved hands-on practice, and adopted a modern education system in the management of the institution. His progressive thinking remains relevant, making Islamic education under Muhammadiyah an innovative and future-orientated education model.

### Article History

Received: 02-12-2024

Revised: 20-02-2025


Published: 15-13-2025

### Key Words :

Islamic Education, KH  
Ahmad Dahlan, Education  
Concept

**How to Cite:** Hamzah, A., & Abu Bakar, M. Y. (2025). Ahmad Dahlan's Educational Legacy: Answering Education Challenges in Era 4.0. *IJE : Interdisciplinary Journal of Education*, 3(1), 23–36.

<https://doi.org/10.61277/ije.v3i1.170>

 <https://doi.org/10.61277/ije.v3i1.170>

This is an open-access article under the [CC-BY-SA License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).



### Introduction

Education is a learning process that cannot be separated from human life. When humans want progress in their lives. Therefore, since then, the idea of transferring, preserving and developing culture through education has also emerged. In fact, educational activities have undergone a long process, namely when human history itself has existed, and along with socio-cultural development. In general, educational activities have existed since humans were created, although the form is simple, humans must carry out education because humans are not among the instinctive creatures, (Jalaluddin, 2003).

Likewise, Islamic religious education is the spearhead of da'wah and the development of the nation's morals and morals Islamic education is education that aims to form a complete Muslim person, develop all human potential, both physical and spiritual, foster a harmonious relationship between each human person and God, humans and the universe, (Daulay, 2019). In the early 20th century, Indonesia had two education systems: secular and traditional. Secular education was an education system established by the Dutch East Indies government. In this education system, only science is taught. While traditional education is an education system

established by Muslim scholars, in which only religious knowledge is taught. This term is called the scientific dichotomy, between religious and general sciences. This dichotomy has led to the impression that existing religious education runs without the support of science and technology and vice versa general education exists without any touch of religion.

In this context, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan was born. He is so inspiring in the discourse of Islamic Education in Indonesia. He is known as a National Hero whose activities in advancing the Indonesian nation, especially Muslims in the past, have been recognised by various groups. Even the influence of his efforts is still felt today. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan was one of the sons of the earth who had the opportunity to study abroad. In his place of study, he interacted with Islamic reformers. This provision later made him able to position himself appropriately and solutively in the midst of the problems that were happening in Indonesia, (Mu'thi, 2015).

The emergence of thinkers who care about the education of the Indonesian people is a driving factor for the Indonesian national movement. K.H Ahmad Dahlan was one of the figures who cared about the education of the Indonesian people. At that time he implemented a new system in the educational institutions he founded. He saw some weaknesses in the traditional Islamic education system in pesantren. The absence of general subject matter in this education is the main weakness. Then it was also accompanied by various methodological weaknesses that were no longer relevant to the times. In this context, he sees the Western education system as very good to emulate. However, the fundamental flaws related to the ideological basis and purpose of this education must be removed. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan wanted to create an education model that integrated the pesantren model and the Dutch model. This is one of the forerunners of the birth of integrative Islamic schools with various names, for example: integrated Islamic schools, plus schools, and others.

In this context, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan made fundamental reforms and overhauls to the existing education system at that time. Renewing the general education system on the one hand and renewing the Islamic education system on the other so as to create a distinctive educational model as a result of Ahmad Dahlan's intelligent innovation and creativity. (Mu'thi, 2015) Thus, the renewal of Islamic education is an effort to reconstruct, revitalise, reform, reorganise, and review Islamic education with its various aspects to be adapted to the times, and to be able to answer the needs of the times, (Nata, 2005).

## **Research Method**

The method is a tool used to solve research problems. (Alfi, 2021), then to solve these problems researchers use research methods. Researchers use library research. In library research (character study) emphasises more philosophical and theoretical meaningfulness, therefore in observing the data, it is always related to philosophical and theoretical meaningfulness related to the value system and material objects and research in the form of K.H Ahmad Dahlan's thoughts, especially in the field of Islamic education.

In this library research that focuses on the thoughts of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, researchers collect data from various literature sources such as books, journals, articles, and other relevant documents. This method involves several stages, namely heuristics for initial data collection, criticism to assess the validity of sources, interpretation to understand the meaning of data, and historiography to compile a coherent historical narrative, (Musliadi, 2022). This research aims

to explore the thoughts of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan in the field of Islamic education, which emphasises the integration between religious and general sciences, as well as the importance of balanced and comprehensive education, (Hepi Ikmal, 2023).

## **Result and Discussion**

### **A. Short Biography of KH Ahmad Dahlan**

To know the journey of a person's life, there are two ways that can be done, the first is to live in his time, then the second is to read his life history through writings written by historians and experts. The data and facts about KH Ahmad Dahlan in this paper are taken from various library sources, including books, journals and other scientific articles.

K.H Ahmad Dahlan was born in Kauman Yogyakarta on 1 August 1868. Kauman is a village in the heart of Yogyakarta. Ahmad Dahlan's childhood name was Muhammad Darwis. (Nugraha, 2009). K.H Ahmad Dahlan was the son of K.H Abu Bakar and Siti Aminah. K.H Abu Bakar was an official of the Sultanate of Yogyakarta Hadiningrat with the title Penghulu Katib in the Sultanate's Great Mosque. While his mother, Nyai Abu Bakar was the daughter of K.H Ibrahim bin K.H Hasan who was also an official of the Sultanate of Yogyakarta. (Hamdan, 2009). K.H Ahmad Dahlan had 6 siblings, namely Nyai Ketib Harun, Nyai Mukhsin or Nyai Nur, Nyai Haji Saleh, Ahmad dahlan, Nyai Abdurahim, Nyai Muhammad Pakin and Basir. (Hasbullah, 1999) ). He was one of the twelfth descendants of Maulana Ibrahim, one of the Walisongo, the pioneers of the spread of Islam in Java. (Ahmad & Asy, 2021).

K.H. Ahmad Dahlan received his early education through the homeschooling method. This method is not new in the world of education, and K.H. Ahmad Dahlan experienced it since childhood. He did not attend a formal institution, but was educated directly by his parents, who taught him to read the Qur'an and the basics of religious knowledge. By the age of 8, he was able to read the Qur'an fluently. (Sucipto, 2010). In addition to learning from his father, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan also studied at a boarding school. There, he studied qira'ah, tafsir, and Arabic. After completing his education at the Yogyakarta boarding school, he made his first trip to Mecca in 1890.

In Mecca, he studied for one year and one of his teachers was Syaikh Ahmad Khatib, a reformer from Minangkabau, West Sumatra. In 1903, he returned to Mecca to deepen his religious knowledge, this time staying for two years. (Nata, 2005). While there, he continued to study with his teachers whom he had previously met on his first visit. In addition, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan regularly discussed with Indonesian scholars living in Saudi Arabia, discussing various social and religious issues, including those that were happening in Indonesia.

In 1912, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan founded an Islamic organisation called Muhammadiyah, which aimed to advance education, improve morals, and encourage the economic independence of Muslim communities in Indonesia. The organisation also sought to correct the influence of religious traditionalism by introducing religious practices that conformed to the pure teachings of Islamic law. At the beginning of his establishment, Ahmad Dahlan faced various challenges, including slander, accusations, and pressure from his family and neighbouring communities. However, with his determination and enthusiasm, he continued to lead and develop Muhammadiyah until it became one of the major forces in the life of Indonesian society.. (Mukhtarom, 2015). Ahmad Dahlan also established Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Diniyyah Islamiah.

Within seven months of its establishment, the school had received support in the form of teaching staff from the Budi Utomo Organisation. After gaining much experience and interacting with various groups outside the Kauman santri community, on 18 November 1912 in Yogyakarta, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan officially established Muhammadiyah. Eleven years after founding Muhammadiyah, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan passed away in Yogyakarta on 23 February 1923. During his life, he often conveyed a message that became a guideline: "*Live Muhammadiyah, do not seek life in Muhammadiyah*". (Roziqin, 2009). K.H. Ahmad Dahlan is respected as a figure full of dedication and enthusiasm in advancing the nation, leaving a clear and influential legacy.

## **B. Ahmad Dahlan's Educational Thought**

### **1. The purpose of education according to KH Ahmad Dahlan**

Education is a key element in the development of human resources and the cultivation of human values, with the aim of creating a civilised society. (Rahmania et al., 2023) According to K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, Islamic education should be directed at forming Muslim individuals who are virtuous, have a deep understanding of religion, have broad insights into worldly sciences, and are willing to contribute to the progress of society. (Sucipto, 2010). The educational goals put forward by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan were an update of the two conflicting education systems at that time, namely pesantren education and Dutch-style school education. Islamic boarding school education only focused on the formation of pious individuals and the study of religion, while Dutch-style education was secular without religious teaching. This dualism of education systems resulted in two different groups: pesantren graduates who mastered religious knowledge but lacked understanding of general knowledge, and Dutch school graduates who mastered general knowledge but lacked religious knowledge. Seeing this imbalance, KH Ahmad Dahlan argued that the ideal goal of education was to produce a complete individual, mastering religious and general sciences, material and spiritual, and balanced between the world and the hereafter. To realise these ideals, he established educational institutions that integrated the teaching of secular and religious sciences. (Shihab, 2016). For K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, the two aspects (religion-general, material-spiritual, world-afterlife) were inseparable. This view encouraged him to challenge the practice of Islamic education in his day, which only served as the inheritance of traditions and the socialisation of individual and social behaviour without providing space for students to be creative or take initiative. This rigid and one-way education did not open opportunities for dialogue and exploration of learners' potential. According to K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, education should develop critical thinking, dialogical attitudes, and respect for the potential of the mind and the sacred heart.

This vision reflects his desire to reform Islamic education by combining modern and traditional education systems in a harmonious and integral manner. This is in accordance with the spirit of the modern movement which aims to build a more advanced and educated society. (Sucipto, 2010). In the process of Islamic education, various sciences, both general and religious, need to be accommodated to hone the intellect while strengthening the spirituality of students. This integral education aims to produce graduates who are able to become "intellectualised scholars" as well as experts in general sciences. This system is realised in

Muhammadiyah educational institutions, which combine modern approaches with Islamic values to produce a generation that is knowledgeable and has a vision of progress.

So that the objectives of Islamic education according to K.H. Ahmad Dahlan can be summarised as follows:

- a) Islamic education should be geared towards forming Muslim individuals who are virtuous, deep in religious understanding, broad in world knowledge, and committed to contributing to the advancement of their society.
- b) The ideal education aims to produce individuals who are balanced, mastering religious and general sciences, material and spiritual, and able to harmonise the needs of the world and the hereafter.
- c) Increase intellectual power while strengthening spirituality. (Putra, 2018)

## 2. Islamic Education Materials

In the book entitled K.H. Ahmad Dahlan the Enlightener, Educator and Founder of Muhammadiyah by Herry Sucipto, it is written as follows:

*“According to K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, the implementation of education should be based on a solid foundation, namely the Qur'an and Sunnah. This foundation is a philosophical framework for formulating the concept and ideal goals of Islamic education, both vertically (khaliq) and horizontally (creature). In Islam, there are at least two sides of the task of human creation, namely 'abd Allah (servant of God) and khalifah fi al-ardh (representative of God on earth)”* (Sucipto, 2010).

To realise this concept, the educational materials according to K.H. Ahmad Dahlan include the teaching of the Qur'an, Hadith, reading, writing, arithmetic, earth science, and drawing.

Broadly speaking, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan can be called a fundamentalist Muslim because he based his thoughts on the main sources of Islam, namely the Qur'an and As-Sunnah. However, on the other hand, his ideas regarding the development of social ethics and community relations in accordance with Islamic principles show that he was also a modernist. (Azzahra & Bakar, 2023).

In an effort to update educational materials, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan integrated general subjects into the education system in Islamic institutions. In addition to adopting and adapting the Dutch curriculum system, Muhammadiyah schools also provide teaching in religious sciences. (Mu'thi, 2015). This step was an important innovation, considering that at that time general education institutions (schools) only focused on general subjects, while religious education institutions (pesantren) were limited to teaching religion. With this curriculum approach, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan sought to produce a "whole" individual through teaching that included religious and general sciences simultaneously.

Although the educational material pioneered by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan did not yet have a fully structured curriculum, the delivery of his preaching material was adjusted to the conditions and level of understanding of the Indonesian people at that time. Nevertheless, his teaching included various discussions that were relevant to the needs of the community at that time, which included several discussions, namely:

a) Aqidah

The main subject matter taught to the community focused on tawhid, the belief in the oneness of God and following the sunnah of the Prophet as the last prophet sent by God to mankind. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan invited the community to abandon various forms of shirk and practices known as TBC (Tahayul, Bid'ah, and Khurafat), which at that time were widely practised by the community. He considered that if these practices continued, it would have a negative impact on the preservation of Islamic teachings in Indonesia. Therefore, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan sought to guide the community to always uphold and fight for the pure teachings of Islam and in accordance with the actual guidance.

b) Worship

Manusia Humans are required to worship God who created everything, so that their lives become more meaningful and feel inner peace. Worship is the obligation and need of every individual, as explained in Q.S. 51: 56, which states that the purpose of human creation is to worship Allah, the Lord of the universe. Therefore, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan as a preacher has the responsibility to teach people about matters related to worship.

c) Morals

K.H. Ahmad Dahlan was very concerned about moral issues. A Muslim's morals must be reflected in his or her behaviour, whether alone or in the presence of others. This is because humans are always watched by the angels of God who are always close to them. Thus, the nature of ihsan will be embedded in humans, who feel as if they see Allah, or at least realise that Allah always sees them. In Islamic religious education, the development of akhlak al-karimah is very important, especially in the life of society in the current era of globalisation. If in a society there are no al-karimah morals, it is certain that the society will experience destruction. (Novita et al., 2021)

d) Muamalah

In addition to teaching matters relating to the afterlife, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan also taught about world affairs, especially in terms of muamalah, based on his knowledge. The aim is to create a prosperous human life in the world, namely baldatun toyyibatun wa robbun ghofur (a fertile, prosperous, just and safe country). Therefore, teaching about muamalah is very important to be given to Muslims in Indonesia.

e) General Science

In line with his reformist thinking, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan was an educator who highly valued and emphasised the importance of intellectual education. He argued that the mind is the source of knowledge, but often it does not get enough attention, like a seed buried in the ground. Therefore, education must provide proper guidance and teaching so that the human mind can develop properly. This is important because according to him, the intellect is the main instrument for understanding and deepening religion. In order to develop the mind, he advocated the teaching of mantiq in educational institutions.

f) The strength of the educational method developed by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan lies in the combination of religious values with common sense. However, there are some challenges and criticisms in its implementation that can be further explored. One of the main criticisms is that, although the educational model designed is comprehensive, the implementation of an incompletely structured curriculum in the early years can be an obstacle to the standardisation

of education. The lack of an organised curriculum can lead to differences in the quality of teaching between educational institutions that adopt this approach. (Harahap, 2021) Furthermore, although K.H. Ahmad Dahlan was known as a modernist, the application of his ideas still faces challenges in integrating Islamic principles with the rapid development of science, especially in the face of contemporary globalisation and digitalisation.

K.H. Ahmad Dahlan was similar to other Islamic education reformers such as Egypt's Muhammad Abduh in emphasising the importance of rational and faith-based education. However, Abduh's approach emphasised structural reforms in Islamic educational institutions, such as the reform of Al-Azhar, while K.H. Ahmad Dahlan focused more on the establishment of community-based educational institutions, such as Muhammadiyah. (Mukhtarom, 2020) This difference shows that K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's education model is more based on social movements and community service, which may be an advantage but also a challenge for the sustainability of a more structured education system. Therefore, it is important to continue studying K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's educational philosophy so that it can continue to evolve and face modern challenges without losing its fundamental values.

### **3. Islamic Education Methods**

In addition to making updates in educational materials, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan also introduced updates in Islamic education methods. The learning method applied used a classical system, with material structured according to the educational level of each class. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan was an educator who continued to develop his insights, approaches and methods. In addition, he was also a person who did not hesitate to continue learning and *ijtihad*. The existing limitations actually encourage him to be more creative and innovative in creating learning media. In teaching religious lessons, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan not only used a textual approach, but also a contextual one. He argued that it is not enough for religious lessons to be memorised or understood cognitively, but they must be practised in accordance with existing situations and conditions. Thus, religious teachings sourced from the Qur'an and hadith must be "earthed" so that they become living and relevant teachings in everyday life. (Y. Arifin, 2018).

In teaching religion, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan introduced a more practical and exemplary approach, and used a question and answer method that gave students the freedom to ask questions. This was in contrast to the traditional education system, which tended to be one-way. In the traditional method, students are not given the opportunity to ask questions and are seen as objects of learning, while the teacher is considered the main source of knowledge that must be respected. In this context, asking questions or looking at the teacher is considered impolite. In contrast, Ahmad Dahlan viewed students as active learning subjects and was given the freedom to ask questions and dialogue with their teachers.

According to K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, Islamic teachings will only be accepted and applied as a way of life if they are put into practice. Although a programme may be very good, if it is not put into practice, the goal will not be achieved. Therefore, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan practised the teachings of the Qur'an more through concrete actions rather than simply quoting verses. One example of his concrete deeds was teaching the content of Surah Al-Ma'un, which emphasises the importance of loving orphans and helping the poor.

To implement the teachings of Surah Al-Ma'un, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan took his students to Bringharjo market, Malioboro, and Yogyakarta's North Square, where many beggars and poor

people gathered. He instructed his students to bring the poor to the Great Mosque. There, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan provided them with soap, clothes, and food, and asked the poor to maintain personal hygiene. Since then, Muhammadiyah has been active in helping the poor and orphans.(Mu'thi, 2015).

Furthermore, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan also applied the question and answer method between students and teachers. This method proved effective in encouraging students to be more active in the learning process because there was no pressure from the teacher. In this method, students are given the task of making questions according to the material being discussed, not the teacher making them. The questions are then discussed together in a learning group (cooperative learning). This method emphasises more interactive and comfortable learning, where both teachers and students can continue to learn and understand how to learn most effectively for each individual.

This can be seen in the conversation between K.H. Ahmad Dahlan and his students before the lesson began. When asked about the recitation material that day, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan replied, "What do you want to learn?" Daniel, the student, explained that usually the recitation material was determined by the teacher. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan then replied, "In that case, only the teacher is smart," while putting down the violin. He continued, "The students just follow the teacher, do you want to be like that?" All three immediately shook their heads. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan then explained, "Here, you decide what you want to learn, starting with asking questions. Questions are the key to opening the gates of knowledge". (Sanusi, 2013). Another educational method reform is the integrative and multidisciplinary approach in explaining religious teachings. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan tried to explain religion using modern sciences, providing a broader view for his students. He emphasised that religion is not simply accepting doctrine dogmatically, as dogmatism will only fool and hinder modernity. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan strongly criticised blind taklid, because in addition to contradicting Islamic teachings, taklid also made Islam backward.(Mu'thi, 2015)

The educational approach put forward by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan emphasises situational learning and social action and is similar to Paulo Freire's concept of transformative education in 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' which views education as a tool of liberation through authentic experience.(Suharto, 2019) The advantage of this approach is that it makes santri more proactive, reflective and socially aware, reflected in the implementation of the teachings of Surah Al-Ma'un, which encourages santri to interact directly and help the poor. In addition, Ahmad Dahlan's use of question and answer formats and interactive dialogue is also in line with John Dewey's emphasis on experiential education and the importance of freedom of thought in the learning process in Democracy and Education.(N. Arifin, 2020) The challenge of this approach, however, is how to ensure a balance between social practice and academic reinforcement, so that learners not only have a high social awareness, but also have a deep understanding of religion and modern science. Compared to Muhammad Abdu's reforms in Egypt that emphasised the rationalisation of Islamic teachings, Ahmad Dahlan's approach focused more on concrete actions, which may have reduced the emphasis on deep theoretical aspects.(Abduh et al., 2024) Therefore, in the context of modern Islamic education, it is necessary to combine Ahmad Dahlan's practical approach with increased critical analysis and

scholarship to be relevant to the challenges of the times, especially in the digital and global era that requires intellectual skills and adaptation to technological change.

#### **4. Islamic Education Media**

The innovations made by Ahmad Dahlan were not only limited to teaching materials, but also succeeded in raising the image of Islamic education from nonformal to formal education. Graduates of Muhammadiyah schools are not only recognised by the community, but also legally recognised by the government. Institutionally, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan laid the foundation for the birth of modern education. The current Islamic school and madrasah system is the dominant model of Islamic education institutions, which is a further development of the system developed by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, (Mu'thi, 2015).

K K.H. Ahmad Dahlan also adopted the management model and infrastructure from Dutch schools. Although founded by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, Muhammadiyah schools are not his personal property, but rather belong to the community, with the Muhammadiyah organisation as the authority. Muhammadiyah schools are managed organisationally using a governance system similar to that of Dutch schools. In this case, Ahmad Dahlan succeeded in transforming the traditional pesantren education management authority that focused on individual charisma into a modern, organisation-based system.

The learning media used by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, in physical form, is the place of education itself. The educational facility he used was his house. In the early days of education, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's house was divided into two parts; one part was used as a place for education and da'wah, while the other part was for personal use with his family. A Madrasah Ibtidaiyah was successfully established during K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's time as a member of Budi Utomo in 1908-1909. The madrasah was located in a living room measuring 2.5 x 6 metres. Despite the limited space, the education was managed in a modern way using new methods and curriculum, (Lenggono, 2018).

As a thinker and reformer in education, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan emphasised the importance of modern and professional management of Islamic education. Thus, educational institutions are expected to be able to fulfil the needs of students to face the dynamics of the times. For this reason, Islamic education needs to be open, innovative and progressive, (Sucipto, 2010).

After Indonesia's independence, some of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's ideas about the concept of Islamic education curriculum were adopted in the national education system. During the Old Order, the government still maintained the Dutch-style education system, where religious education was not taught as a compulsory subject in government schools. Religious education was only considered an elective subject given based on parental consent. Islamic educational institutions also did not teach modern science. However, significant changes occurred during the New Order period. Based on its political experience and vision of nation-building, the New Order government issued an important policy that made religious education a compulsory subject at all levels of education. Students in public schools were required to take religious lessons according to their respective beliefs. In addition, the government began to develop a madrasah education system that taught both religious studies and science. Since the enactment of the Three Ministers Decree, the proportion of science studies (nonreligious subjects) has been greater than that of religious studie, Steenbrink, 1986).

K.H. Ahmad Dahlan faced great challenges in reforming the Islamic education system in Indonesia, especially from conservative scholars who still clung to old traditions. Islamic education at that time only focused on religious knowledge and did not include general subjects such as science, maths or social studies. When K.H. Ahmad Dahlan proposed a concept of education that combined religious knowledge with common sense, many people rejected it because it was considered to deviate from Islamic teachings. Indeed, his attempt to adopt a modern education system similar to the Dutch system was seen as a form of westernisation that could undermine Islamic values. However, through dialogue and discussion, he tried to convince people that Islam was not against science but rather encouraged its followers to continue learning and developing.

In addition to ideological challenges, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan also faced obstacles in funding and managing educational institutions that were different from the traditional pesantren system. To overcome these problems, he implemented a modern and professional education management model by involving the community in the management of Muhammadiyah schools. He also invited Muslim businessmen to contribute to supporting education as part of their social responsibility. This approach has not only helped Muhammadiyah survive, but also grow into one of the largest Islamic organisations in Indonesia, with an education system that continues to innovate and adapt to current developments.

### **C. The Relevance of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's Thought to Education in Era 4.0**

The ever-changing times have influenced human behaviour and attitudes over time. This also has an impact on changes in the education system, both globally and especially in Indonesia. However, the challenges arising from these changing times actually encourage development and renewal (tajdid) in Islamic religious education. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's thoughts related to the changes and developments of the times remain relevant and influential, and can be applied in Islamic education in this modern era.

Although K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's educational reforms in his time were modern and creative, over time, they became obsolete following the times. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan had actually realised the tendency of rapid global change, and this had been conveyed to the early generation of Muhammadiyah. As quoted by Khozin in his book *Menggugat Pendidikan Muhammadiyah*, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan gave advice to the next generation, which reads:

*“The Muhammadiyah of today is different from the Muhammadiyah of tomorrow. So continue to go to school, study knowledge anywhere. Become a teacher, return to Muhammadiyah, become a master, engineer, etc. and return to Muhammadiyah”*, (Khozin, 2005).

K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's ideas, as expressed in the form of Muhammadiyah education, have now been developing for almost a century. In this long period, Muhammadiyah education based on the ideas of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan has faced major changes, both in socio-cultural and socio-economic aspects. These changes are accelerating as time goes by. Therefore, Muhammadiyah education is required to always be ready to anticipate various global trends that occur outside its educational institutions. (Khozin, 2005).

Although K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's efforts were limited, his movement to reform the education system can be considered a major revolution in the world of Islamic education in

Indonesia. In the 21st century, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's renewal efforts can be seen in practical terms through measures such as moving the langgar and pesantren education models to schools, introducing classrooms with chairs and a curriculum that combined general and religious knowledge, (Khozin, 2005).

The thinking of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, when compared to the reality of Islamic education today, can be categorised as an old format in Islamic education. This is because the concept of education put forward by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan was a response to the societal problems he faced at that time. However, if we look back, his thoughts on Islamic education are still relevant to Islamic education in era 4.0. Some aspects of the concept still apply, although there are parts that need to be refined. This is the nature of human thought that is constantly evolving and in need of renewal.

The connection between K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's thoughts and Islamic education in the modern era can be seen from the educational ideals he hoped for, namely the birth of "ulama-intelek" or "intellectual-ulama", a Muslim who has a strong faith and broad knowledge, and is physically and mentally strong. To realise this goal, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan integrated two education systems: providing religious lessons in public schools and establishing his own schools that taught religion and general knowledge together. Both of these measures have now become commonplace in the modern era, where the former has been accommodated by the state, while the latter has been widely carried out by Islamic education foundations.

In addition, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan sought to harmonise the cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects of education. In this modern era, the purpose of Islamic education is not only to develop cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities, but also to instil moral attitudes and personalities in each individual. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's thoughts on Islamic education are closely related to the effort to instil personality, ethical and moral values in students.

K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's Islamic education thinking that is relevant to Islamic education in the 4.0 era can be seen in the aspects and objectives of education that he hoped for, namely to create individuals who are pious, noble, and broadminded. This goal is in line with the objectives of National Education, especially those listed in Law Number 20 of 2003 in Chapter II Article 3, which states that:

*"National Education functions to develop the ability and shape the character and civilisation of a dignified nation in order to educate the nation's life, aims to develop the potential of students to become human beings who are faithful and devoted to God Almighty, noble, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent and become democratic and responsible citizens."* (Undang-Undang (UU) Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 Tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional, n.d.2023).

K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's thoughts on educational materials are also relevant to the goals of National Education. He emphasised that Islamic education materials must keep up with the times. The three basics he emphasised of moral education, individual education, and community education are still applied in the world of education today. Although the names of the materials are now more specific, such as religious subjects that include Al-Qur'an Hadith, Aqidah Akhlak, Fiqh, History of Islamic Culture, and Arabic, as well as general materials such as Indonesian Language, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Skills, and others.

These materials are likely to be maintained, because they are in accordance with the needs of life and useful provisions for the life of the world and the hereafter. (Arlini, 2021). The educational methods applied by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, namely practical, exemplary, and question and answer methods, are still used in education today. Among the various teaching methods applied by educators, these approaches have proven to be effective in increasing student motivation. In addition, many scholars were inspired by the methods chosen by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, which eventually encouraged the development of new, more varied learning methods, (Arlini, 2021).

The educational methods applied by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, namely practical, exemplary, and question and answer methods, are still used in education today. Among the various teaching methods applied by educators, these approaches have proven to be effective in increasing student motivation. In addition, many scholars were inspired by the methods chosen by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, which eventually encouraged the development of new, more varied learning methods, (Arlini, 2021).

Basically, the thoughts outlined by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan about the flexibility and adaptability of Islamic education are extraordinary in the face of changing times. As a reformer, he not only created a progressive education system in his day, but also instilled the spirit of *tajdid* (renewal) so that his educational concepts remained relevant in the 4.0 era. The changes in Islamic education that he advocated not only focused on the integration of religious and general sciences, but also emphasised the balance of cognitive, emotional and spiritual movements in the formation of students' characters. If examined closely, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's vision is: The concept of 'intellectual ulama' is not just a product of past thinking, but an educational paradigm that continues to evolve according to the needs of the times. Therefore, although there are some aspects that need to be adjusted to technological developments and globalisation, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's vision remains an important foundation in building an Islamic education system that is dynamic, innovative and oriented towards the advancement of civilisation.

## **Conclusion**

With the main goal of creating a generation that is virtuous, knowledgeable, and has practical skills, he designed a curriculum that includes religious teachings, general knowledge, and skills that are relevant for daily life. Ahmad Dahlan's educational methods were innovative for his time. He used a dialogical and contextual approach, providing space for students to actively ask questions and discuss. Learning is not only in the form of memorisation or theory, but also direct practice and exemplification in real life. Learning tools such as benches, desks and blackboards that were common in Dutch schools were also adopted by him, showing his vision for modern and professional Islamic education. Ahmad Dahlan's educational ideas and concepts are still relevant today, especially in the integration of religious and general knowledge, character building, and interactive learning approaches. Through Muhammadiyah, he succeeded in laying the foundation for a progressive and future-orientated Islamic education, which always adapts to the changing times without losing the fundamental values of Islam.

## References

- Abduh, M., Kh, D., & Dahlan, A. (2024). *Perbandingan Konsep Modernisasi Pendidikan Islam Perspektif*. 4, 9235–9247.
- Ahmad, P. K. H., & Asy, K. H. H. (2021). *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman*. 40–52.
- Alfi, D. Z. (2021). Studi Kebijakan Tentang Kurikulum Pengembangan Muatan Lokal. *Rabbani: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 2(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.19105/rjpai.v2i1.4140>
- Arifin, N. (2020). Pemikiran Pendidikan John Dewey. *As-Syar'i: Jurnal Bimbingan & Konseling Keluarga*, 2(2), 168–183. <https://doi.org/10.47467/assyari.v2i2.128>
- Arifin, Y. (2018). *Pemikiran-Pemikiran Emas Para Tokoh Pendidikan Islam* (A. Iyan (ed.); Cet.1). IRCiSoD.
- Arlini, I. (2021). *Pemikiran K. H. Ahmad Dahlan Tentang Pendidikan Islam ( Studi Penelitian Kepustakaan ) Pendahuluan Pendidikan adalah suatu proses pembelajaran yang tidak dapat dipisahkan dari kehidupan manusia . Saat manusia menghendaki kemajuan dalam kehidupannya . Ol*. 41–70.
- Azzahra, R. T., & Bakar, M. Y. A. (2023). Pemikiran dan Implikasi Pendidikan Islam KH. Ahmad Dahlan Terhadap Pendidikan Islam Kontemporer. *An-Nidzam : Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Dan Studi Islam*, 10(1), 72–92. <https://doi.org/10.33507/an-nidzam.v10i1.979>
- Daulay, H. P. (2019). *Pendidikan islam di indonesia : History dan eksistensinya*. Prenadamedia Group.
- Hamdan. (2009). *Paradigma baru pendidikan Muhammadiyah* (Cetakan I). Ar-Ruzz Media.
- Harahap, D. (2021). Peran Ulama Timur Tengah Terhadap Nusantara Abad XVII dan XVIII Akar Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam. *Tadbir: Jurnal Manajemen Dakwah FDIK IAIN Padangsidimpuan*, 3(1), 157–172. <https://doi.org/10.24952/tad.v3i1.4178>
- Hasbullah. (1999). *Kapita Selekta Pendidikan Islam*. PT Raja Grafindo Persada.
- Hepi Ikmal. (2023). *Media Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (Konsep, Pemilihan, Pengembangan dan Evaluasi*. 6(1), 50. <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=IbG3EAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA46&dq=media+pembelajaran+pendidikan+agama+islam&ots=kujsVFMbaN&sig=UJ-xQIR66NJMOIGkQMj4yw51zd8>
- Jalaluddin. (2003). *Teologi Pendidikan* (Cet.3). PT. RajaGrafindo Persada.
- Khozin. (2005). *Menggugat Pendidikan Muhammadiyah*. UMM Press.
- Lenggono, W. (2018). Lembaga Pendidikan Muhammadiyah (Telaah Pemikiran K.H. Ahmad Dahlan Tentang Pembaharuan Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia). *Islamadina : Jurnal Pemikiran Islam*, 19(1), 43–62.
- Mu'thi, A. (2015). *K.H. AHMAD DAHLAN (1868-1923)* (cet. 1). Museum Kebangkitan Nasional Direktorat Jenderal Kebudayaan Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan.
- Mukhtarom, A. (2015). Menelusuri Rekam Jejak Amal Dan Perjuangan Kh. Ahmad Dahlan. *Jurnal Dinamika UMT*, 1(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.31000/dinamika.v1i1.485>
- Mukhtarom, A. (2020). *Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam KH.Ahmad Dahlan*. 126. [http://repo.iain-tulungagung.ac.id/5510/5/BAB\\_2.pdf](http://repo.iain-tulungagung.ac.id/5510/5/BAB_2.pdf)

- Musliadi, M. (2022). Perbandingan Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam K.H. Ahmad Dahlan Dengan K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari. *AL-USWAH: Jurnal Riset Dan Kajian Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 5(1), 35–44. <https://doi.org/10.24014/au.v5i1.12164>
- Nata, A. (2005). *Tokoh-Tokoh Pembaharuan Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia* (Cetakan I). Raja Grafindo Persada.
- Novita, A., Yunus, M., & Bakar, A. (2021). Konsep Pendidikan Esensialisme dalam Pembentukan Karakter Siswa pada Mata Pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam. *Dirasat: Jurnal Manajemen Dan Pendidikan Islam*, 7(1), 12–22. [Journal.Unipdu.ac.id/index.php/Dirasat/index](http://Journal.Unipdu.ac.id/index.php/Dirasat/index)
- Nugraha, A. (2009). *K.H. Ahmad Dahlan: biografi singkat, 1869-1923* (Cetakan I). Garasi.
- Putra, D. W. (2018). Konsep Pendidikan Islam Dalam Perspektif K.H. Ahmad Dahlan. *Tarlim : Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 1(2), 99. <https://doi.org/10.32528/tarlim.v1i2.1704>
- Rahmania, S., Yunus, M., & Bakar, A. (2023). Studi Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam Perspektif Naquib Al-Attas. *Jurnal Agama Sosial Dan Budaya*, 6(2), 2599–473. <https://doi.org/10.31538/almada.v6i2.3085>
- Roziqin, B. (2009). *101 Jejak Tokoh Islam Indonesia* (Cetakan II). e-Nusantara.
- Sanusi, M. (2013). *Inspiratif KH. Ahmad Dahlan dan KH. Hasyim Asyari* (Cet.1). Diva Press.
- Shihab, A. (2016). *Membendung arus: respon gerakan Muhammadiyah terhadap penetrasi misi Kristen di Indonesia*. Suara Muhammadiyah.
- Steenbrink, K. A. (1986). *Pesantren madrasah sekolah: pendidikan islam dalam kurun modern/ Steenbrink*. LP3ES.
- Sucipto, H. (2010). *K.H Ahmad Dahlan: Sang Pencerah, Pendidik, dan Pendiri Muhammadiyah*. Best Media Utama.
- Suharto. (2019). Pendidikan Islam di Era Revolusi Industri 4.0. In *SALIHA: Jurnal Pendidikan & Agama Islam* (Vol. 2, Issue 2). <https://doi.org/10.54396/saliha.v2i2.33>
- Undang-undang (UU) Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional, Pub. L. No. 20. <https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Details/43920/Uu-No-20-Tahun-2003>