

MA'HAD 'ALY AND ISLAMIC HIGHER EDUCATION IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA

Contributions, Dynamics of Intellectualization, and Scientific Independence of Islamic Boarding Schools

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Abstract: This study examines the role of Ma'had Aly and Private Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKIS) managed by pesantren in Indonesia in strengthening the scientific independence of Islamic boarding schools through intellectualization. The research is based on field observations and interviews conducted at 12 pesantren offering Ma'had Aly and postgraduate programs, analyzed using Creswell's analytical approach. The findings indicate that Ma'had Aly and PTKIS postgraduate programs significantly enhance the intellectual capacity of santri, not only in mastering Islamic religious sciences but also in developing related disciplines such as social and natural sciences. These programs encourage the integration of traditional pesantren learning with formal higher education, introducing more advanced and systematic intellectual frameworks within Islamic studies. Furthermore, they provide opportunities for santri to cultivate critical thinking, apply scientific methodologies, and engage in interdisciplinary research. The study concludes that integrating Islamic higher education into pesantren enriches Islamic educational theory and demonstrates the continuing relevance of pesantren in responding to modernization and globalization.

Keywords: Islamic higher education, *Ma'had Aly*, pesantren.

Introduction

Islamic higher education in Indonesia, especially that carried out in Ma'had Aly and other Islamic religious higher education institutions,

has become a growing topic in Islamic education studies.¹ However, the debate around the relevance and contribution of Ma'had Aly in the scientific dynamics of pesantren and the integration of religious sciences with other sciences still raises various views among academics.² Ma'had Aly plays a central role in strengthening the position of pesantren as educational institutions that are able to answer the challenges of the times by developing a curriculum that combines the scientific tradition of pesantren with modern scientific approaches.³

Pesantren are required to move forward by maintaining their Islamic identity while accommodating the development of global science.⁴ However, this view has been criticized by several other academics, such as Abdul Djalal et al, who argue that the modernization of education in pesantren through Ma'had Aly risks eroding the traditional values that are the foundation of pesantren. they suggest that pesantren focus more on strengthening classical Islamic values rather than being oriented to the needs of a formal

¹ Wawan Juandi and Abu Yasid, "Discourse of Islamic Jurisprudence in Indonesian Ma'had Aly between Taqlidi and Manhajy," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 10, no. 1 (2016): 139-58, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2016.10.1.139-158>; Wahidul Anam et al., "Quo Vadis Hadith Studies in Islamic Boarding Schools in Al-Jabiri's Perspective," *Nazhriyya: Journal of Islamic Education* 7, no. 2 (2024): 290-314; Muhamad Arif, Sulaiman Dorloh, and Shuhairimi Abdullah, "A Systematic Literature Review of Islamic Boarding School (Pesantren) Education in Indonesia (2014-2024)," *Tribakti: Journal of Islamic Thought* 35, no. 2 (2024): 161-80, <https://doi.org/10.33367/tribakti.v35i2.5330>.

² Muhammad Alfatih Suryadilaga, "The Dynamics of Hadith Studies in PP Hasyim Asy'ari Tebuireng Jombang: From Classical to Ma'had 'Aly," *Al Quds: Journal of Quranic and Hadith Studies* 3, no. 2 (2019): 119-34; Wahyuddin Halim, "The Mass Production of Religious Authority: A Study on a Ma'had Aly Program in South Sulawesi, Indonesia," *Islamic Studies Review* 1, no. 2 (2022): 161-80, <https://doi.org/10.56529/isr.v1i2.83>; Firmanda Taufiq, "From Traditionality to Modernity: How the Ma'had Aly Contributes to Muslim Society in Indonesia," *Muslim Education Review* 3, no. 2 (2024): 386-403, <https://doi.org/10.56529/mer.v3i2.320>.

³ Hatim Gazali and Abd Malik, "Pesantren and the Freedom of Thinking: A Study of Ma'had Aly Pesantren Sukorejo Situbondo, East Java, Indonesia," *Al-Jami'ab: Journal of Islamic Studies* 47, no. 2 (2009): 295-316, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2009.472.295-316>.

⁴ Firdaus Wajdi and Rihlah Nur Aulia, "Ma'had 'Aly and the Challenge of Modernizing Islamic Education in Indonesia," *Hayula: Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Islamic Studies* 3, no. 2 (July 22, 2019): 173-90, <https://doi.org/10.21009/hayula.003.2.04>.

curriculum that follows the standards of general higher education.⁵ In contrast, researchers such as Ainol Yaqin, et al.,⁶ Wahidul Anam, et al.,⁷ and Ibnu Siregar Halomoan, et al.⁸ consider that Ma'had Aly and Islamic higher education can be a strategic space to bring together pesantren intellectuality with the demands of globalization and modernity. They argue that Islamic higher education in pesantren has the potential to form intellectuals who have scientific skills that do not only focus on religious textual studies, but can also participate in broader global scientific discourse, especially in the social, economic, and cultural fields. On the other hand, criticism of Islamic higher education in pesantren, as presented by several researchers, states that although Ma'had Aly has transformed into a higher education institution, the existing education system is often still trapped in rote-based learning and does not encourage the development of critical scientific methodologies.

It is important to note that Ma'had Aly and Postgraduate programs in pesantren play a central role in the intellectualization of pesantren in Indonesia, contributing significantly to the development of Islamic scientific studies.⁹ The existence of Ma'had Aly in various large pesantren in Indonesia further enriches the intellectual dynamics of pesantren, as well as bridges between the scientific tradition of

⁵ Abdul Djalal et al., "Two Sides Moderation of Islamic Religiosity and Education in High Pesantren Education (Ma'had Aly) in Indonesia," 2021, <https://eudl.eu/doi/10.4108/cai.11-11-2020.2308312>.

⁶ Ainol Yaqin, Moch Cholid Wardi, and Achmad Mulyadi, "Actualization of Moderation in Reasoning at Ma'had Aly Salafiyah Sya'fiyah Sukorejo Situbondo and Its Influence on Istimbâth of Islamic Law," *AL-IHKAM: Journal of Law & Social Institutions* 17, no. 2 (2022): 434–57, <https://doi.org/10.19105/al-lhkam.v17i2.5962>.

⁷ Anam et al., "Quo Vadis Hadith Studies in Islamic Boarding Schools in Al-Jabiri's Perspective."

⁸ Ibnu Siregar Halomoan, Isnarmi Moeis, and Abubakar Yakubu, "An Overview of the Strength of Implementing Democratic Values in an Islamic Boarding School Atmosphere," *Nazhruna: Journal of Islamic Education* 6, no. 2 (2023): 190–206, <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v6i2.2865>.

⁹ Muhammad Munadi and Abdul Matin bin Salman, "The Development of Hadith Expert Comparison Of Science Curriculum Of Hadith Ma'had Aly And PTKIN" (International Conference on Islamic Education (ICIE 2018), Atlantis Press, 2018), 58–65, <https://doi.org/10.2991/icie-18.2018.11>; Mokhammad Miftakhul Huda and Muhammad Nabil Musyarrof, "Ma'had Aly: Integration of Islamic Universities and Islamic Boarding Schools," *IJIBS* 1, no. 2 (2023): 135–56, <https://doi.org/10.35719/ijibs.v1i2.24>.

pesantren and the demands of modern higher education.¹⁰ Several pesantren that have Ma'had Aly and postgraduate programs, such as Ma'had Aly Pondok Pesantren As-Salafiyah Syafi'iyah in Sukorejo, Situbondo, Ibrahimy University in Sukorejo, and Ma'had Aly Nurul Jadid in Paiton, Probolinggo, are clear examples of how pesantren higher education has played an important role in scientific renewal and development. In addition, several Islamic higher education institutions that are also affiliated with pesantren, such as Nurul Jadid University in Probolinggo and Hasyim Asy'ari University in Jombang, show the increasingly strong integration between Islamic higher education and modern curriculum. Postgraduate programs at Hasyim Asy'ari University and Tribakti Islamic University in Kediri also contribute to enriching the intellectualization of pesantren education, producing Muslim intellectuals who are ready to face the challenges of the academic world and global society.

The spread of Ma'had Aly is also quite extensive, covering various regions in Indonesia, such as Ma'had Aly in Lirboyo Kediri, Ma'had Aly in Ciwaringin, Babakan Cirebon, and Ma'had Aly Ashshiddiqiyah in Kebon Jeruk, Jakarta, which shows how pesantren in various regions play a role in building Muslim intellectuals in Indonesia. Not only that, Ma'had Aly that is more spread outside Java, such as MUDI Masjid Raya in Banda Aceh and Institut Agama Islam Aly Aziziyah in Bireun, Aceh, shows that pesantren higher education is increasingly developing and penetrating into various regions with diverse social and cultural backgrounds. The existence of these pesantren-based higher education institutions shows the importance of research to explore the contribution of Ma'had Aly and pesantren Postgraduate programs to the development of Islamic science, as well as how these two institutions answer the challenges of modernity and the negative stigma that develops in society towards the relevance of pesantren higher education.¹¹

¹⁰ Wajdi and Aulia, "Ma'had 'Aly and the Challenge of Modernizing Islamic Education in Indonesia."

¹¹ Taufiq, "From Traditionality to Modernity"; I. Ihsan and Ahmad Fatah, "Pancasila and Islamic Education: The Deradicalization Model of Madrasahs Based on Islamic Boarding Schools in Central Java," *QIJIS (Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies)* 9, no. 1 (2021): 245-78, <https://doi.org/10.21043/qijis.v9i1.8941>; Mohammad 'Ulyan, Fauzi, and Nur Rofiq, "Prison Islamic Boarding School: Efforts to Instill Morals in Prisoners in Correctional Institutions," *Tribakti: Journal of Islamic Thought* 33, no. 1 (2022): 83-98, <https://doi.org/10.33367/tribakti.v33i1.1791>.

The urgency of this research arises from the skepticism and negative stigma that develops in the community towards the role of Ma'had Aly and PTKIS under the auspices of pesantren. Although the existence of Ma'had Aly is expected to produce graduates who not only master religious knowledge in depth, but also have the ability to think critically and master other relevant fields of science, the reality is that many pesantren are still hampered by a conservative curriculum and are less adaptive to the dynamics of developing science.¹² Therefore, this study aims to analyze how Ma'had Aly and Postgraduate programs in pesantren can contribute to the intellectualization process of pesantren scientific studies, as well as how these institutions are able to adapt to the increasingly complex demands of the times. This research is also important to understand the extent to which Ma'had Aly and Private Islamic Religious Higher Education (PTKIS) can function as a driver of intellectual dynamics among santri and pesantren managers, which in turn can enrich the contribution of pesantren in the national and international academic world.¹³

In the study of Islamic education in Indonesia, especially related to the role of Ma'had Aly and Private Islamic Religious Higher Education (PTKIS) under the auspices of pesantren, there are several research gaps that still need to be answered. Although many studies have highlighted aspects of pesantren education in general, very few have discussed in depth the dynamics of pesantren scientific intellectualization through Ma'had Aly and Postgraduate programs. Some previous studies, such as those conducted by Wajidi et al,

¹² Zaenal Arifin, "Conflict Management in the Collective Leadership of BPK-P2L Pondok Pesantren Lirboyo Kediri," *Tribakti: Journal of Islamic Thought* 29, no. 1 (2018): 177-205, <https://doi.org/10.33367/tribakti.v29i1.616>; Ali Mas'ud, Ah Zakki Fuad, and Achmad Zaini, "Evolution And Orientation Of Islamic Education In Indonesia And Malaysia," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 13, no. 1 (2019): 21–49, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2019.13.1.21-49>.

¹³ Suwendi Suwendi et al., "Roles And Challenges Of Pesantren Intellectual Networks," *Islamic Scientific Journal Futura* 24, no. 2 (2024): 453-70, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jiif.v24i2.23134>; Amanah Nurish, "Santri And Abangan After A Half Century Of Clifford Geertz," *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 21, no. 2 (2021): 226-39, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jiif.v21i2.5829>; J. M. Muslimin, Reksiana Reksiana, and Wildan Munawar, "Constructivism And Teaching Design: In Search of An Appropriate Learning Process of Sharia Entrepreneurship For Pesantren-Based University," *MIQOT: Journal of Islamic Sciences* 46, no. 2 (2022): 274–96, <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v46i2.969>.

revealed the potential of Ma'had Aly as a link between religious and general sciences.¹⁴ However, the study did not specifically explore how Ma'had Aly and Postgraduate programs in pesantren play a role in enriching Islamic scientific studies and the dynamics of pesantren intellectualization. While Wahidul Anam et al. showed the challenges faced by Islamic higher education in pesantren, especially related to the relevance of the curriculum that is not fully in accordance with the needs of the modern academic world, the study did not provide a detailed description of the contribution of Ma'had Aly and PTKIS in shaping a more developed and relevant science.¹⁵

These previous studies have made important contributions in understanding the development of Ma'had Aly and higher education in pesantren, but have not provided comprehensive answers regarding how these two institutions play a role in responding to the challenges of modernity in higher education and their contribution to broader Islamic scientific studies. This research is present to fill this void by deeply analyzing the contribution of Ma'had Aly and the pesantren Postgraduate program in the dynamics of pesantren scientific studies through the intellectualization process. This research aims to explore the role of Ma'had Aly in increasing the intellectual capacity of santri, especially how the curriculum offered by Ma'had Aly can integrate religious knowledge with general sciences that are relevant to the times. In this case, this research aims to understand how Ma'had Aly and its Postgraduate program can adapt to the demands of modernizing higher education in Indonesia, as well as how they can improve the quality of education provided. Finally, this research also aims to provide an overview of how Ma'had Aly and PTKIS can strengthen the position of Islamic intellectuals, both at the national and international levels.

This research was conducted in 12 Islamic boarding schools that have Ma'had Aly and Private Islamic Religious Higher Education (PTKIS), spread across Java and outside Java, to map the dynamics of shifting educational paradigms in pesantren. Researchers conducted direct observation in each pesantren, with several visits to ensure a deep understanding of the implementation of higher education,

¹⁴ Wajdi and Aulia, "Ma'had 'Aly and the Challenge of Modernizing Islamic Education in Indonesia."

¹⁵ Anam et al., "Quo Vadis Hadith Studies in Islamic Boarding Schools in Al-Jabiri's Perspective."

especially in Ma'had Aly.¹⁶ In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 36 informants, including pesantren managers, caregivers, teachers, and santri, to explore perspectives related to the curriculum, paradigm shift, and the resulting intellectual products. The data obtained included the applied curriculum, scientific specialization, and the synergy between the pesantren tradition and the formal education system.¹⁷

In analyzing the data, researchers used a qualitative analysis approach with an inductive method consisting of four stages: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and data verification.¹⁸ Data obtained from observations and interviews were analyzed thematically to identify the main patterns related to educational changes in pesantren, as well as to reveal the synergy between pesantren and the formal education system.¹⁹ The results of the study were then presented in the form of a narrative describing the paradigm shift of education in pesantren, including relevant quotes from interviews to support the main findings, as well as comparisons between the pesantren studied.²⁰

Dynamics of *Ma'had Aly* as an Islamic Higher Education Institution

Islamic boarding schools in their development experience various dynamics in applying their learning methods. Thus, there are two forms of boarding schools in Indonesia, namely boarding schools that maintain traditional (classical) learning that is the same as the early era of its emergence, which is called *salaf* (traditional) boarding school. There are also boarding schools that adopt modern learning methods

¹⁶ John W. Creswell et al., "Qualitative Research Designs: Selection and Implementation," *The Counseling Psychologist* 35, no. 2 (2007): 236–64, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000006287390>.

¹⁷ Jo Anne Ollerenshaw and John W. Creswell, "Narrative Research: A Comparison of Two Restoring Data Analysis Approaches," *Qualitative Inquiry* 8, no. 3 (2002): 329–47, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778004008003008>.

¹⁸ Douglas Ezzy, *Qualitative Analysis* (London: Routledge, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315015484>.

¹⁹ Carl Auerbach and Louise B. Silverstein, *Qualitative Data: An Introduction to Coding and Analysis* (New York: NYU Press, 2003).

²⁰ Lawrence B. Mohr, "The Qualitative Method of Impact Analysis," *The American Journal of Evaluation* 20, no. 1 (1999): 69–84, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1098-2140\(99\)80109-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1098-2140(99)80109-X).

that are combined with existing traditional methods, giving rise to modern boarding schools.²¹

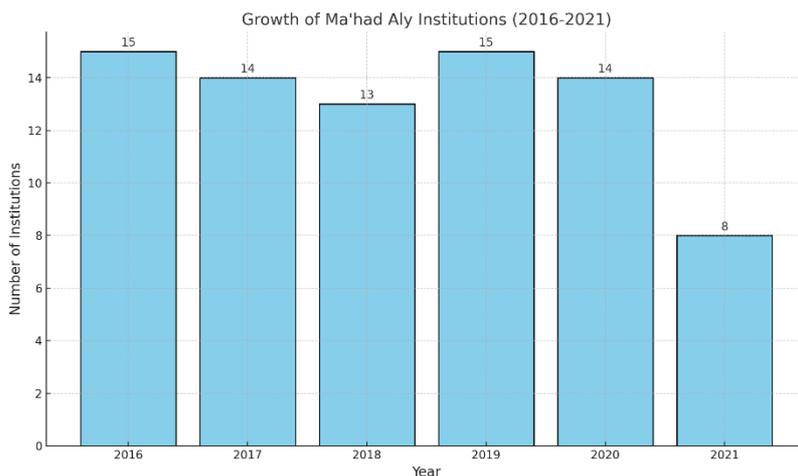
Traditional learning has several characteristics. First, *the sorongan* method. In this method, a Kyai or those assigned receive the learning results of his santri on their memorization or study of the yellowclassical books to be corrected. Second, *the wetonan/bandongan* method. This method takes the form of a recitation given at certain times by the Kyai or his representative. In addition, there is the *deliberation* method or *batsul masa'il*, which is a learning method similar to the discussion or seminar method. And there is a memorization method (*muhafazhah*). The memorization method is the activity of the students by memorizing a certain text which must be deposited with the Kyai or who represents him.²²

Then from the learning of such books, it was developed by Islamic boarding schools by dividing the levels of education, adjusted to the ability of students to complete their learning in Islamic boarding schools, hence the name Madrasah Diniyah and Ma'had Aly was born. The Diniyah Madrasah education level as in formal education has levels from elementary, junior high and senior high (Ibtidaiyah, Tsanawiyah and Aliyah). While the level of Ma'had Aly education is equivalent to Higher Education (University), with the levels of Marhalah Ula (stratum-1) and Marhalah Tsani (stratum-2).²³

²¹ Hasan Baharun, "Total Moral Quality: A New Approach for Character Education in Pesantren," *Ulumuna* 21, no. 1 (2017): 57–80, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.-v21i1.1167>.

²² Mubaidi Sulaeman, "The Concept of Islamic Education in the Perspective of Muhammad Fethulah Gulen," *Didaktika Religia* 4, no. 2 (2016): 61–86.

²³ Suryadilaga, "The Dynamics of Hadith Studies at PP Hasyim Asy'ari Tebuireng Jombang."



The idea related to the establishment of the Ma'had Aly level itself in 1989 from the consensus of the pesantren kyai led by the late K.H. As'ad Syamsul Arifin. Then it was officially established on February 21, 1990, at Sukorejo Situbondo.²⁴ The founder was K.H. As'ad Syamsul Arifin. This first post-primary institution was later known as *Al-Ma'had Al-'Aly Lil Ulum al-Islamiyah Qism al-Fiqh*.²⁵ The Ma'had 'Aly pioneered by Kiai As'ad was a pioneer of the presence of Ma'had 'Aly in the midst of the pesantren community in Indonesia and was designed to produce reliable and professional scholars, especially scholars who are experts in the field of fiqh. Then the Ma'had Aly founded by Kyai As'ad in Situbondo influenced several large Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia to flock to establish Ma'had Aly, including: Ma'had Aly Saidusshiddiqiyah Pesantren As-Shiddiqiyah Kebon Jeruk DKI Jakarta Islamic History and Civilization (*Tarikh Islami wa Tsaqafatuhu*); Ma'had Aly Sheikh Ibrahim Al-Jambi Pesantren Al As'ad Jambi City Jambi Fiqh and Ushul Fiqh (*Fiqh wa Ushuluhu*); Ma'had Aly Sumatera Thawalib Parabek Pondok Pesantren Sumatera Thawalib Parabek

²⁴ Muhammad Romadlon Hiam Al Haroki, "Implementation of the Ma'had Aly Curriculum: A Multisite Study at Iqna'Ath-Thalibin Al-Anwar Islamic Boarding School Sarang Rembang Central Java and Nurul Haromain Islamic Boarding School Pujon Malang East Java" (PhD Thesis, Sunan Ampel State Islamic University Surabaya, 2019).

²⁵ Abu Yasid, "Higher Education in Pesantren: Case Study of Mahad Aly Situbondo," *EDUKASI: Journal of Religious Education Research* 8, no 2 (2010).

Agam West Sumatra Fiqh and Ushul Fiqh (*Fiqh wa Ushuluhu*); Ma'had Aly MUDI Mesjid Raya Pondok Pesantren Ma'hadul Ulum Ad Diniyyah Al Islamiyah (MUDI) Mesjid Raya Bireun Aceh Fiqh and Ushul Fiqh (*Fiqh wa Ushuluhu*); Ma'had Aly As'adiyah Pesantren As'adiyah Sengkang South Sulawesi Tafsir and Tafsir Science (*Tafsir wa Ulumuhu*); Ma'had Aly Rasyidiyah Khalidiyah Pesantren Rasyidiyah Khalidiyah Amuntai South Kalimantan Aqidah and Islamic Philosophy (*Aqidah wa Falsafatuhu*); Ma'had Aly Hasyim Al-Asy'ary Pesantren Tebuireng Jombang East Java Hadith and Hadith Science (*Hadith wa Ulumuhu*), and so on.²⁶

Although until 2014 the status of Ma'had Aly education has not been formally recognized by the Government, Ma'had Aly's contribution to the development of Islamic science in Indonesia is so pronounced contributed by its stakeholders and alumni. Until finally in 2015, based on the mandate of PP number 55 of 2007 concerning Religious and Religious Education, Law number 12 of 2012 concerning Higher Education, PMA number 13 of 2014 concerning Islamic Religious Education, and PMA number 71 of 2015 concerning Ma'had Aly, there were 13 Ma'had Aly throughout Indonesia that were given an Operational License Decree. Thus, the thirteen Ma'had Aly have formal status as Islamic Religious Universities that are equal to other universities in Indonesia, both General Universities such as UGM, UI, ITB and others, as well as Religious Public Universities such as UIN and IAIN.²⁷

Until now, there are 74 Ma'had Aly in Indonesia that have official operational licenses from the Government. Among them is Ma'had Aly Lirboyo which has Ula and Tsani education levels (S1 and S2). Ma'had Aly Lirboyo itself was established in 2006, although it was not operational for several years, then Ma'had Aly Lirboyo returned to active learning when the Government formally recognized Ma'had Aly as one of the formal education channels based on Islamic boarding

²⁶ Farid Permana, "Ma'had 'Aly Education as Higher Education for Mahasantri," *Al-Qodiri: Journal of Education, Social and Religious Affairs* 16, no. 1 (2019): 1-16.

²⁷ Firdaus Wajdi and Rihlah Nur Aulia, "Ma'had'Aly and the Challenge of Modernizing Islamic Education in Indonesia," *Hayula: Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Islamic Studies* 3, no. 2 (2019): 173-90.

schools in 2016. Ma'had Aly Lirboyo has a curriculum that focuses on the development of National Fikih for its santri.²⁸

Furthermore, PMA (Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation) Number 32 of 2020 concerning Ma'had Aly regulates the establishment of Ma'had Aly. Article 8 stipulates: (1) Pesantren in establishing Ma'had Aly, (2) The establishment of Ma'had Aly as referred to in paragraph (1) must obtain permission from the minister, (2) Permission from the minister as referred to in paragraph (2) is obtained after fulfilling the requirements: (a) a legal entity as evidenced by a notarial deed authorized by the ministry that carries out government affairs in the field of law and human rights, (b) having a PSP, (c) established in a pesantren environment as evidenced by a location plan, (d) having a pesantren management organizational structure, (e) the pesantren has been operating for a period of at least 20 (twenty) years from its establishment as evidenced by a statement letter, (f) has a Ma'had Aly RIP, (g) has at least 5 (five) educators and 2 (two) education personnel in each concentration of study, (h) has facilities and infrastructure for learning activities within the pesantren, (i) a funding source plan for the continuity of education for at least the next 1 (one) school year, (j) has at least 1.000 (one thousand) people, (k) students registered as prospective mahasantri are at least 20 (twenty) people, and (l) get a recommendation for establishment from the community assembly.

The purpose of establishing Ma'had Aly is to prepare and deliver mahasantri to become scholars who have humanistic, religious, open and tolerant traits. These traits are of course also accompanied by professional abilities and high dedication to scientific development. With this goal, Ma'had Aly wants to develop all the potential possessed by pesantren and Muslims. Ma'had Aly has a vision to become one of the centers of Islamic studies in Indonesia. The development of all cultural potential, the works of Indonesian Muslim scholars, scholars and scientists become a source of Islamic studies parallel to the works of the Middle East, and the West. Intensive studies on various works of these scientists will color the style of thinking of *Ma'had Aly*

²⁸ Sahal Mahfud, Yunita Dwi Pristiani, and Suratman, "Nationalism Education at Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School in an Effort to Counteract Radicalism," *PINUS: Journal of Learning Innovation Research* 7, no. 2 (2022): 70–79, <https://doi.org/10.29407/pn.v7i2.18493>.

students. Extensive references and reading provide a basis and introduction to enrich insight, sharpen analysis and comparison.²⁹

Intellectualization of Islamic Boarding School Education

The scientific dynamics that occur in the world of pesantren have led to the position of this institution not only functioning as an educational institution with the main task of enriching the minds of santri with religious texts (*tafaqqub fiddin*), but moving further by trying to improve the moral standing and actualization of Islamic values in social life. This condition is in line with the main objective of pesantren, which has been pursued since the beginning, which is to uphold Islam in the midst of social life by always considering the socio-cultural conditions of the surrounding community. This condition makes pesantren known as an institution that is very flexible in dialoguing with changing times. This flexibility is in accordance with the slogan that has been popular in the pesantren world: *al-muhafazah 'ala al-qadim al-salih wa al-akbdu bi al-jadid al-aslah*.³⁰

If seen in its history, pesantren has never been silent in facing socio-religious problems. The role of pesantren is not even enough to be said to be limited to a regional scale. Pesantren have been involved in responding to global issues: pesantren have responded to global challenges when facing Western colonialism which at that time was expanding to its colonies, including Indonesia. During Dutch colonialism, pesantren educational institutions continued to live and develop on their own strength. In fact, for the Dutch government, this institution was not only considered not useful for colonial purposes, but was considered very dangerous because pesantren was a very fertile nursery for cadres who opposed colonial practices on earth.³¹ The function as an institution for social transformation is still ongoing today, namely with the involvement and active role of pesantren in responding to various contemporary issues of the people, such as issues of corruption, terrorism, and religious extremism movements. In

²⁹ Halim, "The Mass Production of Religious Authority."

³⁰ Muhammad Latif Fauzi, "Traditional Islam in Javanese Society: The Roles of Kyai and Pesantren in Preserving Islamic Tradition and Negotiating Modernity," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 6, no. 1 (2012): 125–44, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2012.6.1.125-144>.

³¹ Ali Maulida, "The Dynamics and Role of Islamic Boarding Schools in Islamic Education Since the Era of Colonialism to the Present," *Islamic Education: Journal of Islamic Education* 5, no. 09 (2016): 16–16, <https://doi.org/10.30868/ei.v5i09.91>.

fact, not a few references have recorded the names of pesantren spread across various regions in the country that are involved in real actions, such as empowering civil society through economic, political, and other social actions that have relevance to the purpose of pesantren: upholding Islamic morals and values as a whole in various aspects.³²

The synergistic process of scientific development in pesantren-based higher education postgraduate programs can be seen from the historical background of the emergence of postgraduate programs in the pesantren environment. The following are the results of a review of the historical reality of the emergence of postgraduate programs in pesantren sourced from various documents and the results of direct interviews with pesantren-based higher education actors. Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo Situbondo, for example, a Higher Education institution with the name Ibrahimy University was established on March 14, 1968. Initially, only one faculty was opened, namely the Faculty of Shari'ah and only received Recognized status on February 1, 1972 with the Decree of the Minister of Religion. RI. Number 10 of 1972.³³

In its development on July 25, 1988, Ibrahimy University changed its name to Ibrahimy Islamic Institute based on a circular letter from the Director General of Islamic Guidance of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. Number E.III/PP.009/A.2/3041/88, concerning changes in the name of PTAIS and the determination of majors. As a university under the auspices of the Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo Islamic Boarding School, IAI Ibrahimy cannot be separated from the vision, mission and objectives of organizing the Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo Islamic Boarding School. Therefore, every graduate of Ibrahimy College, in addition to being equipped with scientific competence, is also required to have three pesantrenan competencies, namely: the ability to read the Qur'an properly, understand the yellow book according to the type and level of expertise and Akhlakul Karimah.³⁴

³² Dihyatun Masqon Ahmad, "The Dynamics of the Pondok Pesantren: An Islamic Educational Institution in Indonesia" (Brill, 2012), https://doi.org/10.1163/97894-01207584_006.

³³ Gazali and Malik, "Pesantren and the Freedom of Thinking."

³⁴ Yaqin, Wardi, and Mulyadi, "Actualization of Moderation in Reasoning at Ma'had Aly Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo Situbondo and Its Influence on Istīnāth of Islamic Law."

Currently, Institut Agama Islam Ibrahimy has three faculties, namely; Faculty of Shari'ah, Faculty of Tarbiyah, Faculty of Da'wah and Postgraduate Program, all of which have been accredited by BAN-PT Depdiknas. From 2008 to 2014, IAI Ibrahimy by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia was chosen and designated as the Center of Excellence for PTAIS in Indonesia in the field of Classical and Contemporary Fiqh Studies. and in 2011 the IAI Ibrahimy Sukorejo Postgraduate program also won the trust of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia to become the implementer and manager of the Advanced Study Scholarship (S.2) for the Kader Ulama' program.³⁵

The synergy between Postgraduate and Ma'had Aly in Sukorejo Situbondo, can be seen in the context of fulfilling the formal legality of the output of Ma'had Aly, which in the early days was not issued a diploma. But it turns out that in the field, many Ma'had Aly alumni need a diploma. Their academic competence has been fulfilled through the education process at Ma'had Aly, but because the formal diploma is not issued, this is where the postgraduate of Ibrahimy University Sukorejo Situbondo carries out the equalization process by giving the burden of Ma'had Aly alumni who do not have a diploma to take several additional courses at the postgraduate level. After fulfilling this process, a postgraduate master's certificate is issued. This is with the permission of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which at that time the Director of Diktis was held by Prof. Qodri Azizi. This was the case in the early days of the postgraduate program. After Ma'had Aly has a legal umbrella in the form of the Pesantren Law and its various derivatives, and after Ma'had Aly fulfills the systemic completeness of the institution, then Ma'had Aly diplomas are issued on behalf of Ma'had Aly itself. Then the synergy of scientific studies that can be seen is in the realm of lecturers in certain subjects who use the same people between Ma'had Aly and Postgraduate.³⁶

In the next development, the formal establishment of Ma'had Aly became a new competitor for PTKI, as echoed by the Director General of Islamic Education Prof. Komarudin Amin, at that time.³⁷

³⁵ <https://pps-ibrahimy.ac.id/index.php?pilih=hal&id=1> accessed September 25, 2022

³⁶ Interview with Abu Yazid, director of the Postgraduate Program at Ibrahimy University Sukorejo Situbondo, July 5, 2022.

³⁷ Interview with Abu Yazid, director of the postgraduate program at Ibrahimy University Sukorejo Situbondo, July 5, 2022.

Ma'had Aly Sukorejo then displayed a figure that was responsive to the problems faced by the community, by providing question and answer services for various problems submitted by the community. A weekly bulletin called *Tanwirul Afkar* was then published to accommodate and socialize questions and answers in the field of daily fiqh.³⁸ This bulletin was later transformed into a magazine. This is where the synergy between Postgraduate and Ma'had Aly occurs, synergy in the historical setting, synergy in the scientific sampling that becomes the study, synergy in the provision of lecturers and synergy in publications raised from the academic process of discussion and community question and answer.

So it can be said that basically the Postgraduate Program at Ibrahimy University Situbondo has something in common with other PTKIS. But here there is a distinction, namely institutionally he has synergistic cooperation with Ma'had Aly. In contrast to what happened at Pesantren Nurul Jadid Paiton Probolinggo, the establishment of Ma'had Aly was a response to the mayayikh who saw the extraordinary development of the madrasah and school education systems, as well as the higher education level which gave more orientation to learning general scientific aspects.³⁹ This unrest was then responded to by establishing Ma'had Aly which aims to provide a means of *tafaqquh fi al-ddin* in order to become qualified scholars. So that the relationship between Postgraduate and Ma'had Aly is more of an independent relationship, each has the autonomy to develop scientific studies according to their specialization, concentration.⁴⁰ Nurul Jadid University Postgraduate Program develops scientific studies that are the concentration of the institution in the form of Masters in Islamic Education Management. Management and scientific development are directed to the field of science that is the concentration. As seen in the vision, mission and objectives of UNUJA postgraduate as follows.⁴¹

³⁸ Interview with Abu Yazid, director of Postgraduate Program at Ibrahimy University Sukorejo Situbondo, July 5, 2022.

³⁹ Alparslan Açıkgöç, "Challenges and New Trends in Higher Education," in *Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century* (CRC Press, 2008).

⁴⁰ Interview with the head of Postgraduate Program at Nurul Jadid University Paiton Probolinggo, July 5, 2022.

⁴¹ <https://pasca.unuja.ac.id/prodi/visi-misi-mpai.html> accessed on 25 September , 2022

The same pattern also occurs at Pesantren Lirboyo Kediri, the synergy that occurs shows more of an independent relationship pattern between Postgraduate and Ma'had Aly, which is characterized by the existence of independent activities in the process of scientific study. Ma'had Aly develops what is its takhassus, while Postgraduate also develops the science that is the concentration of the institution. Namely in the realm of master's degrees in Islamic Religious Education and MI Teacher Education. This is so, because the demarcation of higher education in the Ma'had Aly pathway is clear and firm paying the law which distinguishes it from Islamic higher education which also has clear rules of the game. The following is an explanation on the IAI Tribakti Kediri internet page.⁴²

The Postgraduate Program of the Islamic Institute (IAI) Tribakti Kediri was established based on the Decree of the Rector of IAI Tribakti Kediri Number: 029/SK/K.1/408/2003 Dated March 23, 2003. The history of its establishment cannot be separated from the existence of IAI Tribakti because it is under its auspices. Like other universities, the idea of establishing this Postgraduate Program is also expected to be a means of accelerating the provision of human resources that are fully related to the direction of Islamic science. Thus, one day IAI Tribakti can be a meaningful contributor to the fulfillment of the need for development resources who master various theories in Islamic science and have analytical skills for various phenomena for the progress of the nation. The establishment of the IAI Tribakti Postgraduate Program is also based on the reality that there are many undergraduate graduates of Islamic sciences in Kediri and its surroundings, while there is no postgraduate program that these graduates can go to for further study.⁴³

Considering that the majority of these undergraduate graduates have a background in Islamic Education Study Program, the study program established by Islamic Tribakti University of Kediri Postgraduate Program is Islamic Education Management, through the Rector's Decree number: 032/SK/K.1/408/2003 dated April 20, 2003. The Islamic Education Management Study Program of IAI

⁴² Arifin, "Conflict Management in the Collective Leadership of BPK-P2L Pondok Pesantren Lirboyo Kediri."

⁴³ Kadi Kadi, "Continuity and Change of Salaf Tradition in the Education System of Pondok Pesantren Lirboyo Kediri," *Islamica: Journal of Islamic Studies* 12, no. 1 (2017): 117–41, <https://doi.org/10.15642/islamica.2017.12.1.22-46>.

Tribakti Postgraduate Program received an operational permit from the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia through the Decree of the Director General of Islamic Institutions number: Dj.II/270/2004 dated August 18, 2004. This Decree was extended by the Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia number: Dj.I/266/2007 dated 2007. In its development, the Ministry of Religion also stipulated changes in the Study Program from the original Islamic Education Management to Islamic Education. Finally, since June 2013, IAI Tribakti Kediri Postgraduate Program officially changed the name of the Study Program to Islamic Education and has been accredited by BAN PT Number: 314/SK/BAN-PT/Akred/M/-I/2018 dated January 16, 2018 with an A rating."⁴⁴

Table 1. Distribution of Scientific Products

District / City	Postgraduate	Scientific Products	Ma'had Aly	Scholarly Products
Situbondo	Univ. Ibrahimy	Excavation of hukum	MA. Sukorejo	Ushl Fiqh
Probolinggo	Univ. Nurul Jadid	Ushl Fiqh	MA. Nurul Jadid	<i>Maqashid Sharia</i>
Jombang	Unhasy		MA. Hasyim Asy'ari	Hadith and Hadith Science
Kediri	IAI Tribakti		MA. Lirboyo	Fiqh of nationality
Pati, Kajen			MA. Maslakul Huda	Fiqh social
Kudus			MA. Charming	Falak Science
Jepra			MA. Balekambang	Hadith and Hadith Science
Yogyakarta			MA. Al Munawwir	Al Muktatofat
Wonosobo	UNSIQ	Qur'an Science		
Cirebon			MA. Babakan	Falak Science and Astronomy

⁴⁴ <https://pasca.iai-tribakti.ac.id/profil-pascasarjana/> accessed on Sept 25, 2022.

District / City	Postgraduate	Scientific Products	Ma'had Aly	Scholarly Products
Jakarta			MA. Asshiddiqiyah	Excavation of Islamic History
Aceh	MUDI Mesjid Raya	<i>Usbl Fiqh</i>	MA. Aziziyah	

Source: excavation of field data

Pesantren Tebuireng Jombang also has an independent synergy relationship pattern between Postgraduate Program and Ma'had Aly. Both have their own Islamic scientific development tasks in accordance with their respective concentrations. Ma'had Aly Tebuireng has a takhassus in the field of Hadith wa ulumih.⁴⁵ While Postgraduate oriented its study in the field of Islamic Education Management. The following information can be the basis of the above analysis. "Hasyim Asy'ari University (UNHAS) is a private Islamic religious university under the guidance of Nahdlatul Ulama which officially holds the status of University since July 2013, UNHAS has officially provided education for prospective scholars since June 22, 1967, UNHAS opened 15 Study Programs in 7 Faculties starting in the 2013-2014 academic year. UNHAS is a university founded by the caretaker of Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School in Jombang, KH Muhammad Yusuf Hasyim. Before becoming a university, the campus located in the Tebuireng Boarding Islamic School complex was named the Hasyim Asy'ari Islamic Institute."⁴⁶

Thus, from the data analysis of the research results, the pattern of the scientific synergy relationship between *Ma'had Aly* and Postgraduate/College is obtained, the pattern is as follows: First, the pattern of synergy dependency, where between Ma'had Aly and Postgraduate/College there is synergy that is interdependent between one another. Second, the independent synergy pattern, where between Ma'had Aly and Postgraduate/College there is no dependency relationship, each stands alone. Third, the partial dependency synergy

⁴⁵ Interview with the Mudir and Naib Mudir of Ma'had Aly Tebuireng Jombang, July 8, 2022.

⁴⁶ Source https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universitas_Hasyim_Asy%27ari accessed on September 25, 2022.

pattern, where there is a partial dependency relationship between Ma'had Aly and Postgraduate/College.

Pesantren's Scientific Independence through *Ma'had Aly* and PTKIS Postgraduate Program

Scientific independence is an important process in the development of knowledge, especially in the pesantren environment.⁴⁷ This process rests on the roots of the time-tested Islamic scientific tradition, but must also be able to adapt to contemporary dynamics. Pesantren as a center of traditional Islamic education faces great challenges to remain relevant in the midst of social, economic, and technological changes.⁴⁸ Therefore, scientific independence in pesantren is a strategic step to ensure that this institution is not only able to maintain its identity, but also continues to make a real contribution to the development of modern society.⁴⁹

One important aspect in the scientific independence of pesantren is the integration of classical and modern sciences. Pesantren have long been known for the tradition of teaching the yellow classical *books*, which are classical texts that are the main reference in Islamic studies. These yellow Islamic classic books are the basis for mastering religious sciences, such as fiqh, tafsir, and morals.⁵⁰ However, in the current era, social sciences, economics and technology increasingly play a vital role in human life. Therefore, pesantren need to develop a curriculum that combines the tradition of teaching the yellow Islamic *classic book* with contemporary insights in these fields. This step does not mean abandoning tradition, but rather strengthening its relevance to the

⁴⁷ Dihyatun Masqon, "Dynamic of Pondok Pesantren as Indigenous Islamic Education Center in Indonesia," *Tsaqafah* 7, no. 1 (2011): 155–68, <https://doi.org/10.21111/tsaqafah.v7i1.114>.

⁴⁸ Imam Mujahid, "Islamic Orthodoxy-Based Character Education: Creating Moderate Muslims in a Modern Pesantren in Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 11, no. 2 (2021): 185–212, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v11i2.185-212>.

⁴⁹ Safiudin Safiudin et al., "Pesantren Law; Challenge and Opportunity for Indonesian Islamic Education," *AJIS: Academic Journal of Islamic Studies* 8, no. 1 (2023): 97–122, <https://doi.org/10.29240/ajis.v8i1.5909>.

⁵⁰ Maulida, "The Dynamics and Role of Islamic Boarding Schools in Islamic Education Since the Era of Colonialism to the Present."

current context, so that santri have the ability to solve modern problems with Islamic values as the main footing.⁵¹

Regarding the scientific direction of Ma'had Aly, Gus Rozin, Chairman of the Majelis Masyayikh Pesantren, said that the establishment of Ma'had Aly is expected to be a typical pesantren higher education, which has different characteristics. "Even at the beginning of its initiation, it did not have to use the SKS system"⁵² meaning that this is a form of uniqueness given to Ma'had Aly. But now it seems that there are changes that lead to the application of SKS in Ma'had Aly. This change as conveyed by Gus Rozin is a side that is beyond Gus Rozin's knowledge. Changes like this have an impact on the uniformity of various Ma'had Aly which actually have their own differences in line with their distinctiveness. It would be less elegant, said Gus Rozin, if Ma'had Aly, which has a specialty in the field of Ulumul Hadith, is equated with Ma'had Aly, which has a specialty in Tasyawuf, Falak science and others. This is possible because the formulation of the final version of the Regulation on Ma'had Aly was intervened by DIKTIS which included the system and elements of Islamic higher education in it.⁵³

Curriculum transformation is also an important step in this dynamization process. Learning methods in pesantren must be adjusted to be more responsive to the needs of modern society. The traditional curriculum that often emphasizes the memorization of texts needs to be complemented with more interactive approaches, such as critical discussions, interdisciplinary studies, and the development of applicative skills.⁵⁴ In this case, pesantren is not only a place of intellectual formation, but also a laboratory of life that equips santri with practical skills to face the challenges of the times. This transformation aims to produce a generation of Muslim intellectuals

⁵¹ Makruf Widodo, Maragustam, and Supriyanto, "Kitab Kuning at the Salafiyah Pesantren in Indonesia: The Dynamics of Online Learning," *Al-Isblab: Journal of Education* 15, no. 3 (2023): 3005–16, <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v15i3.2841>.

⁵² Interview with Gus Rozin, Chairman of Majelis Masyayikh Pesantren, Kajen Pati, August 5, 2022.

⁵³ Interview with Gus Rozin, Chairman of Majelis Masyayikh Pesantren, Kajen Pati, August 5, 2022.

⁵⁴ Fathur Rohman, "Problem Based Learning in Islamic Religious Education: The Case of the Indonesian Pesantren," *Global Journal Al-Thaqafah* 12, no. 1 (2022): 82–97, <https://doi.org/10.7187/GJAT072022-5>.

who not only understand religious teachings deeply, but are also able to become problem solvers for their communities.⁵⁵

Scientific dynamization efforts also require strengthening the capacity of human resources (HR) in the pesantren environment. This can be done through further education, such as in Ma'had Aly and PTKIS Postgraduate programs. Ma'had Aly, as a pesantren-based higher education institution, plays a role in exploring specific religious studies, for example in the fields of fiqh, tafsir, or Sufism.⁵⁶ Meanwhile, the PTKIS Postgraduate program offers a more academic and interdisciplinary approach, allowing teachers and students to master modern research methods and contribute to the development of Islamic science at the global level. With this advanced education, pesantren teachers and graduates not only have a solid understanding of religion, but also the analytical and innovative skills needed in the modern world.

Ma'had Aly is the last pattern developed by pesantren from the many development forms of pesantren education. Ma'had Aly is a variant of institutionalizing the tradition of pesantren academic studies. The forerunner of this institution comes from the takhasus programs that have developed over a long period of time. Its establishment was motivated by the need to improve the quality of pesantren education. With various variants and forms of pesantren education, it does not guarantee that its graduates will become cadres who master the academic studies typical of pesantren.⁵⁷ "Takhasus in Ma'had Aly, although the major is the same, but each has differences," said Gus Rozin. Like Ma'had Aly which has takhasus in the field of ushul fiqh, for example, between one another has different characteristics. In Sukorejo, for example, it has the characteristic of Ushul fiqh⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Ronald Lukens-Bull, "Madrasa By Any Other Name: Pondok, Pesantren, and Islamic Schools in Indonesia and the Larger Southeast Asian Region," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 4, no. 1 (2010): 1–21, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2010.4.1.1-21>.

⁵⁶ Açıkgenç, "Challenges and New Trends in Higher Education."

⁵⁷ Mohammad Kosim et al., "The Dynamics of Islamic Education Policies in Indonesia," *Cogent Education* 10, no. 1 (2023): 2172930, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331-186X.2023.2172930>.

⁵⁸ The reason why this characteristic of ushul fiqh is part of the takhasus in Sukorejo is mentioned by Abu Yazid, because Fiqh cannot be separated from ushul fiqh, as is the case in the Middle East, all of them juxtapose Fiqh wa ushulihi. Interview with Prof. Abu Yazid, director of the Postgraduate Program at Ibrahimy University Sukorejo Situbondo, July 5, 2022.

muqaran, in Lirboyo Kediri the characteristic is Fiqh of Nationality,⁵⁹ in Nurul Jadid Paiton Probolinggo the peculiarity is ushul fiqh in the field of muamalat and munakahat, including fiqh iqtishadiyyah.⁶⁰

In this context, Ma'had Aly and the PTKIS Postgraduate program play complementary strategic roles. Ma'had Aly, as a pesantren-based educational institution, upholds the traditional approach in strengthening the mastery of *turats* (classical Islamic scientific heritage) while providing opportunities for students to explore certain scientific fields comprehensively.⁶¹ For example, Ma'had Aly often focuses on scientific specializations such as ushul fiqh, tafsir, or hadith. Students are not only taught to understand classical texts, but are also encouraged to develop analytical skills that enable them to contextualize Islamic teachings in modern life.

The problem around the distinctiveness and scientific characteristics of Ma'had Aly is that in PD Potren in charge of Ma'had Aly there is no curriculum grid design, so the development is freed up to each Ma'had Aly. However, this freedom is not fully given, leaving the problem of epistemological roots in it.⁶² On the other hand, as stated by Gus Fayyad, Mudir Ma'had Aly Nurul Jadid Paiton Probolinggo that the distinctiveness chosen by Ma'had Aly is to distinguish what is in IAIN and UIN. Distingsi needs to be emphasized so that the ideals of producing scholars from Ma'had Aly can be realized. The takhassus system stipulated in the Ma'had Aly regulation leaves a problem, where Ma'had Aly becomes limited in developing its knowledge. Ma'had Aly is "divided, partitioned".

This is less beautiful to look at, because an institution needs certain knowledge outside of what has been limited. Gus Fayyad hopes that this rule can be relaxed again in the future. So that takhassus is enriched with other things that can answer and respond to developing issues. If it is associated with the treasures of Islamic science and the existing turats, the scope is actually quite broad, Gus Fayyad added. "If

⁵⁹ Interview with Gus Rozin, Chairman of Majelis Masyayikh Pesantren, Kajen Pati, August 5, 2022.

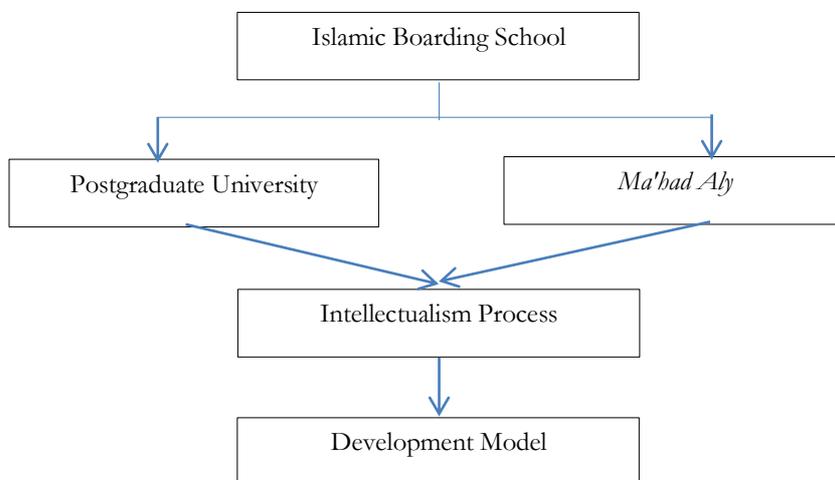
⁶⁰ Interview with Gus Fayyad, Mudir Ma'had Aly Nurul Jadid Paiton Probolinggo, July 5, 2022.

⁶¹ Lukens-Bull, "Pesantren, Madrasa and the Future of Islamic Education in Indonesia."

⁶² Interview with Gus Rozin, Chairman of Majelis Masyayikh Pesantren, Kajen Pati, August 5, 2022.

you want to preserve the turats (ihya al-tturats), then M'had Aly is the most appropriate". The choice to present a multidisciplinary Ma'had Aly seems to be an alternative, as Gus Fayyad said.⁶³ Another term that becomes an alternative is multi takhassus, which is Ma'had Aly developing and studying various scientific disciplines.

Meanwhile, the PTKIS Postgraduate program offers space for pesantren graduates to explore new perspectives through a more multidisciplinary academic approach. In this Postgraduate program, students are invited to understand the interaction between Islamic values and developments in the fields of social science, economics, technology, and even politics. In addition, through professionally managed research programs, Postgraduate PTKIS encourages the birth of scientific works that are not only academically relevant but also provide solutions to various social and religious problems. The combination of *turats-based* education in Ma'had Aly and a multidisciplinary approach in Postgraduate PTKIS creates a dynamic intellectual ecosystem, where tradition and modernity can collaborate to produce new innovations.



⁶³ Interview with Gus Fayyad, Mudir Ma'had Aly Nurul Jadid Paiton Probolinggo, July 5, 2022.

Ma'had Aly is a pesantren response to the phenomenon of the scarcity of formal education that produces cadres of scholars in a changing society, despite the many Islamic universities.⁶⁴ The life of the community is growing, giving rise to diverse patterns of life. Therefore, more rational and functional religious thoughts are needed. In ulya level pesantren diniyyah education does not have much impact on social religious changes. Other scientific tools are needed that can support more global religious thoughts.⁶⁵

In Talal Asad's perspective, tradition is not something static and rigid, but rather a discursive practice that is constantly interpreted and negotiated in various contexts. The scientific dynamization of pesantren, as illustrated in the discussion, is an example of how Islamic traditions are not only inherited, but also developed to remain relevant to the challenges of the times. The integration of the classical sciences in the yellow Islamic classic books with contemporary insights shows that pesantren do not merely hold on to the values of the past, but also try to adapt to social, economic, and technological developments.⁶⁶

The debate over the implementation of the SKS system in Ma'had Aly reflects how authority in the pesantren scholarly tradition is not singular, but continues to be negotiated in the broader academic landscape. Regulations from DIKTIS that lead to curriculum uniformity present a tension between the academic freedom of pesantren and the demands of standardization of Islamic higher education. In the discursive tradition referred to by Asad, authority is not only determined by texts and teachings, but also by institutions and policies that shape learning and teaching patterns. When pesantren face regulatory interventions from outside, there is a contestation of discourse on how traditions should be maintained or changed.⁶⁷

In this change process, resistance to innovation is inevitable. Some circles in the pesantren environment see change as a threat to the

⁶⁴ Anam et al., "Quo Vadis Hadith Studies in Islamic Boarding Schools in Al-Jabiri's Perspective."

⁶⁵ Siti Halimah, Achmad Yusuf, and Khamdan Safiudin, "Pesantren Education Management: The Transformation of Religious Learning Culture in the Age of Disruption," *Nidhomul Haq: Journal of Islamic Education Management* 9, no. 3 (2024): 648–66, <https://doi.org/10.31538/ndhq.v9i3.16>.

⁶⁶ Talal Asad, "The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam" (Brill, 1996), https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004457478_022.

⁶⁷ Masqon, "Dynamic of Pondok Pesantren as Indegenous Islamic Education Center in Indonesia."

purity of tradition, while others see it as a form of expansion and strengthening of Islamic intellectual heritage. This is illustrated in the criticism of the limitation of the takhassus system in Ma'had Aly which is considered to hinder wider academic exploration. In Asad's analysis, changes in tradition do not always run smoothly, because they involve a tug-of-war between various interests that seek to redefine the boundaries of pesantren scholarship.⁶⁸

Epistemological transformation is also an important part of this dynamic. Pesantren, with its strong roots in turats or classical Islamic scientific heritage, faces the challenge of adapting its academic approach to more modern interdisciplinary methods. The effort to bring together tradition with contemporary thought reflects how Islamic tradition is not only oriented towards repeating the past, but also trying to place itself in an ever-evolving reality. However, the imperfections in the Ma'had Aly curriculum design show that this process is still in the negotiation stage, where academic freedom and regulatory intervention have yet to find a balance point.⁶⁹

In Asad's framework, tradition and modernity are not two opposite poles, but are intertwined in the process of meaning formation. The dynamization of pesantren is not simply an effort to maintain the past, but also reflects active interaction with contemporary challenges.⁷⁰ The role of Ma'had Aly and Postgraduate PTKIS in bringing together classical and multidisciplinary approaches shows how pesantren is not only a preserver of tradition, but also an intellectual space that contributes to global Islamic discourse. Thus, changes in pesantren are not just structural adjustments, but part of the dynamics of traditions that continue to live and develop along with the changing times.

In the end, the scientific dynamization of *pesantren* through *Ma'had Aly* and Postgraduate PTKIS is a promising transformation process. With a synergistic approach between tradition and innovation, pesantren are not only able to survive, but also develop into adaptive and progressive centers of Islamic education. This process is not just a

⁶⁸ David Scott and Charles Hirschkind, *Powers of the Secular Modern: Talal Asad and His Interlocutors* (Stanford University Press, 2006).

⁶⁹ Ovamir Anjum, "Islam as a Discursive Tradition: Talal Asad and His Interlocutors," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27, no. 3 (2007): 656-72.

⁷⁰ Talal Asad, "Anthropological Conceptions of Religion: Reflections on Geertz," *Man* 18, no. 2 (1983): 237-59, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2801433>.

structural change, but an intellectual journey that revives the spirit of *ijtihad*, strengthens Islamic scholarship, and makes *pesantren* a pioneer of civilization that answers the challenges of the times without losing its identity.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this study confirms that Ma'had Aly and the Postgraduate Program at Private Islamic Religious Universities (PTKIS) under the auspices of *pesantren* play a strategic role in strengthening the intellectual capacity of *santri* while encouraging scientific dynamism in the *pesantren* environment. The findings show that the two institutions not only facilitate the mastery of religious sciences, but also encourage *santri* to engage in the development of other sciences, such as social sciences and science, which are relevant to the needs of contemporary society. The intellectualization process that occurs is not only an effort to strengthen the *pesantren*'s scientific tradition but also reflects adaptation and renewal to the challenges of the times. This dynamization is marked by the integration of the *pesantren* tradition, which is rich in Islamic values, with an academic-based formal education approach. Thus, *pesantren* are able to produce Islamic studies that are more complex and relevant, both in local and global contexts.

In addition, postgraduate programs provide space for *santri* to develop critical thinking skills, apply scientific methodologies, and explore interdisciplinary studies. This not only strengthens the intellectual position of *pesantren*, but also creates a more dynamic scientific landscape, where *pesantren* are able to contribute significantly to the global academic conversation. This scientific dynamism also reflects the efforts of *pesantren* to continue to be relevant in the era of modernization and globalization. By connecting the rich Islamic scholarly tradition with new multidisciplinary approaches, *pesantren* not only maintain their historical role as centers of religious education, but also position themselves as key actors in the development of more universal knowledge. This research, thus, shows that *pesantren* have great potential to become adaptive and innovative scientific laboratories in answering the intellectual challenges of the modern world. []

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