

RECONSTRUCTING ISLAMIC EDUCATION BASED ON THE INTEGRATIVE-ADAB NUSANTARA THEORY

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Abstract

Islamic educational discourse in Indonesia has often been framed through a modernist-traditionalist dichotomy. Although studies of KH. Ahmad Dahlan and KH. Hasyim Asy'ari are extensive, most remain descriptive or comparative and rarely reconstruct their complementary ideas into an explicit theoretical mechanism. This article develops the proposed Integrative-Adab Nusantara Theory through a Critical Literature Review that prioritizes primary texts and triangulates them with historical scholarship and contemporary Islamic education studies. The analysis identifies four mutually reinforcing dimensions: knowledge integration, adab formation, spiritual consciousness, and social responsibility. Primary textual evidence shows that Dahlan linked continuous learning with the practical enactment of knowledge, whereas Hasyim Asy'ari positioned ethical refinement as a condition for meaningful educational action. The theoretical reconstruction therefore advances four propositions: integrated knowledge requires ethical direction; adab requires a spiritual horizon; spiritual consciousness must be translated into social responsibility; and socially responsible action becomes a criterion for the meaningful use of knowledge. The study contributes a relational framework that moves beyond merely combining modernist and traditionalist educational ideas. Because the framework is derived from documentary evidence, it is presented as a propositional conceptual theory that still requires empirical validation in schools, pesantren, and higher education.

Keywords: *Adab; Critical Literature Review; Integrative-Adab Nusantara Theory; Islamic Education; Knowledge Integration.*

Abstrak

Diskursus pendidikan Islam di Indonesia sering dibingkai melalui dikotomi modernis-tradisionalis. Meskipun kajian tentang KH. Ahmad Dahlan dan KH. Hasyim Asy'ari sangat luas, sebagian besar masih bersifat deskriptif atau komparatif dan belum



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merekonstruksi gagasan keduanya menjadi mekanisme teoretis yang eksplisit. Artikel ini mengembangkan Teori Integratif-Adab Nusantara melalui Critical Literature Review yang memprioritaskan teks primer dan melakukan triangulasi dengan kajian historis serta studi pendidikan Islam kontemporer. Analisis menghasilkan empat dimensi yang saling menguatkan, yaitu integrasi ilmu, pembentukan adab, kesadaran spiritual, dan tanggung jawab sosial. Bukti tekstual primer menunjukkan bahwa Ahmad Dahlan menghubungkan keterbukaan terhadap pengetahuan dengan pengamalannya, sedangkan Hasyim Asy'ari menempatkan pembinaan adab sebagai syarat agar ilmu bermakna dalam tindakan pendidikan. Rekonstruksi ini menghasilkan empat proposisi: integrasi ilmu memerlukan arah etis; adab memerlukan horizon spiritual; kesadaran spiritual harus diterjemahkan menjadi tanggung jawab sosial; dan tindakan sosial menjadi ukuran kebermaknaan penggunaan ilmu. Kontribusi penelitian terletak pada kerangka relasional yang melampaui sekadar penggabungan pemikiran modernis dan tradisional. Karena dibangun dari bukti dokumenter, teori ini diposisikan sebagai teori konseptual-proposisional yang masih memerlukan validasi empiris di sekolah, pesantren, dan perguruan tinggi.

Kata Kunci: *Adab; Critical Literature Review; Integrasi Ilmu; Pendidikan Islam; Teori Integratif-Adab Nusantara.*

A. Introduction

Contemporary Islamic education faces a double demand: it must respond to scientific, technological, and social change while maintaining a coherent moral and spiritual orientation. The persistence of fragmentation between religious and general knowledge, and between cognitive achievement and character formation, has encouraged renewed interest in integrative approaches to Islamic education (Halstead, 2004; Sahin, 2018). In Indonesia, this problem is particularly significant because Islamic education developed through diverse institutional traditions, including reformist schools, madrasahs, and pesantren. A theoretically adequate response therefore needs to connect epistemology, ethics, spirituality, and public responsibility rather than treating them as separate educational domains.

KH. Ahmad Dahlan and KH. Hasyim Asy'ari occupy central positions in this intellectual history. Dahlan's reform agenda is associated with openness to useful knowledge, institutional modernization, disciplined learning, and the transformation of knowledge into social action. Hasyim Asy'ari, by contrast, articulated a detailed ethics of learning in which adab, sincerity, discipline, respect for knowledge, and spiritual orientation shape the relationship among teacher, learner, and knowledge. Their institutional trajectories differed, but both

understood education as a process that should transform the person and benefit society (Arroisi et al., 2020; Musliadi, 2022; Rosyidin et al., 2023).

Recent scholarship has revisited both figures through historical, philosophical, curricular, and comparative studies. These works have clarified the reformist character of Dahlan's educational thought, the centrality of adab in Hasyim Asy'ari's pedagogy, and the different organizational cultures later associated with Muhammadiyah and pesantren traditions (Fathonah et al., 2025; Mokmin et al., 2025; Mun'im & Yanto, 2025; Rasyid et al., 2026). However, much of this literature still ends with a catalogue of similarities and differences. The analytical outcome is therefore comparison rather than theoretical reconstruction.

The problem is not simply that the two traditions have been studied separately. The more fundamental gap is that modernism and traditionalism are often treated as mutually exclusive epistemic positions. Such a binary can obscure the possibility that knowledge integration and adab address different but complementary educational problems: the former asks how learners engage a plural field of knowledge, while the latter asks how knowledge should form the person and govern action. Contemporary Islamic education theory likewise warns against reducing education either to knowledge transmission or to moral instruction detached from intellectual inquiry (Al-Attas, 1980; Halstead, 2004; Sahin, 2018).

This article addresses that gap by reconstructing the two intellectual traditions as a relational theoretical framework rather than merely combining selected values. The novelty of the proposed Integrative-Adab Nusantara Theory lies in four linked propositions: (1) knowledge integration requires adab as an ethical criterion for selecting and using knowledge; (2) adab requires spiritual consciousness so that ethical formation is not reduced to external discipline; (3) spiritual consciousness should generate social responsibility rather than private piety alone; and (4) social responsibility provides a practical test of whether knowledge has become educationally meaningful. These propositions transform four familiar educational themes into an explanatory relationship among epistemic, ethical, spiritual, and social dimensions.

The term Nusantara in the proposed theory does not claim an exclusive or essentialized Indonesian form of Islam. It identifies the historical-intellectual location from which the synthesis is reconstructed: the educational legacies of two Indonesian Muslim scholars whose movements shaped modern schools and pesantren. The theory therefore remains open to dialogue with broader Islamic educational thought, including al-Attas's concept of ta'dib, Rahman's concern with intellectual renewal, Halstead's multidimensional account of Islamic education, and

Sahin's critical-reflective framing of Islamic Education Studies (Al-Attas, 1980; Halstead, 2004; Rahman, 1984; Sahin, 2018).

Accordingly, this study aims to: (1) identify the primary educational principles in Ahmad Dahlan's and Hasyim Asy'ari's thought; (2) critically examine their convergences, differences, and limitations; (3) formulate the relational propositions of the Integrative-Adab Nusantara Theory; and (4) position the proposed theory within contemporary Islamic education scholarship. Its scholarly contribution is therefore not a new historical claim about either figure, but a theoretically explicit reconstruction that can later be operationalized and empirically tested in curriculum, pedagogy, institutional culture, and educational assessment.

B. Research Methods

This study uses a Critical Literature Review (CLR) as a method of theoretical reconstruction. A CLR was selected because the research question concerns the assumptions, relationships, and explanatory potential of educational concepts rather than the measurement of an empirical intervention. In contrast to a purely narrative review, the procedure treats literature as an object of critical interpretation: claims are compared, conceptual tensions are identified, and complementary concepts are reconstructed into a propositional framework (Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009; Barry et al., 2022; Snyder, 2019). No human participants, research site, or fieldwork period are involved because the unit of analysis is documentary and conceptual evidence.

The review prioritized primary textual evidence from the two scholars. For Ahmad Dahlan, the principal primary text was the 1922 address commonly known as *Tali Pengikat Hidup* or *Kesatuan Hidup Manusia*, republished in the archival compilation edited by Sukrianta and Mulkhan (Dahlan, 1985). For Hasyim Asy'ari, the principal text was *Adab al-'Alim wa al-Muta'allim*, consulted through the Tebuireng textual tradition and its Indonesian translation (Asy'ari, 1415 H/1995; Asy'ari, 2019). Secondary sources were included when they directly analyzed educational philosophy, knowledge integration, adab, character formation, curriculum, Muhammadiyah, pesantren, or contemporary Islamic education. Biographical pieces without substantive educational analysis and sources unrelated to the conceptual problem were excluded from the core synthesis.

Analysis proceeded in four stages. First, statements and interpretations were coded under educational purpose, concept of knowledge, learner formation, teacher-learner ethics, spirituality, curriculum, and social action. Second, within-figure analysis identified the internal logic of each scholar's educational position. Third, cross-figure comparison identified convergence, divergence, and

complementarity. Fourth, concepts were reconstructed into theoretical propositions only when the synthesis added an explanatory relationship that was not already captured by simple comparison. This stage produced the four dimensions and four relational propositions of the proposed Integrative-Adab Nusantara Theory.

Source triangulation was operationalized as cross-source corroboration rather than participant triangulation. Each major interpretive claim was checked across three layers of evidence: primary texts, historical or philosophical scholarship on the relevant scholar, and contemporary studies that examine related educational practices or concepts. Where a primary text supported more than one interpretation, the analysis retained the interpretive tension rather than presenting a single reading as self-evident. This procedure strengthens conceptual credibility but does not substitute for empirical validation. The absence of classroom, school, pesantren, teacher, or student data is therefore treated as a methodological boundary: the output is a propositional conceptual theory, not evidence of implementation or effectiveness.

C. Results and Discussion

Results

Primary Textual Anchors of the Reconstruction

Ahmad Dahlan's primary text provides an explicit epistemic and practical orientation. In *Tali Pengikat Hidup*, he states, "*Orang itu harus dan wajib mencari tambahan pengetahuan, jangan sekali-kali merasa cukup dengan pengetahuannya sendiri*" (Dahlan, 1985). The statement links intellectual openness to a refusal of epistemic self-sufficiency. The same address also insists that knowledge should not remain merely known but should be enacted. In this study, these two emphases are interpreted as the primary textual basis for the knowledge-integration and social-responsibility dimensions of the reconstructed theory.

Hasyim Asy'ari's primary text provides the ethical-spiritual counterweight. In the introduction to *Adab al-'Alim wa al-Muta'allim*, he emphasizes that religious action must be accompanied by "*budi pekerti yang baik, sifat-sifat yang terpuji dan akhlaq yang mulia*" (Asy'ari, 2019). This formulation positions adab not as an ornamental addition to learning but as a condition that gives educational action its moral quality. The book's organization - covering the ethics of learners, teachers, teaching, learning, and the use of books - further indicates that adab operates across the educational process rather than in a single character-education lesson.

Reformist-Integrative Educational Paradigm of KH. Ahmad Dahlan

The primary and secondary literature portrays Dahlan's educational reform as an effort to overcome the practical separation between religious learning and useful modern knowledge. His educational orientation combined Qur'anic commitment, disciplined inquiry, institutional reform, and social service. The important point for theoretical reconstruction is that integration is not treated as the mechanical addition of religious subjects to general subjects. It is an epistemic disposition that remains open to beneficial knowledge and evaluates learning by its capacity to improve human action and public welfare (Dahlan, 1985; Arroisi et al., 2020; Shofiyah, 2024).

This reading also explains why Dahlan's educational legacy cannot be reduced to modernization of school organization. The primary text criticizes knowledge that is rejected simply because it comes from others and knowledge that is not translated into practice. In the reconstructed framework, the Dahlanian contribution therefore supplies two linked principles: epistemic openness and socially consequential learning.

Adab-Centered Educational Paradigm of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari

Hasyim Asy'ari's educational thought places the moral-spiritual formation of the learner and educator at the center of the learning process. Adab al-'Alim wa al-Muta'allim does not oppose intellectual mastery; instead, it orders intellectual activity through sincerity, humility, disciplined conduct, respect for teachers and knowledge, responsibility in teaching, and careful use of learning resources. Contemporary studies of the text similarly show that adab functions as an educational structure shaping relationships, dispositions, and the use of knowledge (Asy'ari, 1415 H/1995; Zaim, 2020; Rosyidin et al., 2023).

The Hasyimian contribution is therefore interpreted as more than character education in the contemporary programmatic sense. Adab provides an ethical grammar for knowledge: it regulates why knowledge is sought, how learning relationships are conducted, and how intellectual authority is exercised. Its spiritual orientation prevents ethical discipline from becoming merely administrative compliance.

Convergence, Difference, and Complementarity

The analysis shows convergence at the level of educational purpose. Both thinkers reject an education that ends in the accumulation of information. Dahlan stresses learning that becomes action and social benefit, while Hasyim Asy'ari stresses knowledge that forms ethically disciplined and spiritually oriented persons.

The difference lies primarily in emphasis and institutional response: Dahlan gives greater attention to epistemic openness, curricular integration, and reformist social action; Hasyim Asy'ari gives greater attention to the ethical-spiritual conditions under which knowledge is acquired and transmitted (Musliadi, 2022; Fathonah et al., 2025; Mokmin et al., 2025).

These differences are productive rather than contradictory. Knowledge integration without adab can become instrumental, while adab without intellectual openness can be reduced to preservation without renewal. Their complementarity therefore provides the logical basis for a theory that connects epistemic breadth, ethical discipline, spiritual purpose, and public responsibility.

Reconstruction of the Proposed Integrative-Adab Nusantara Theory

The reconstruction yields four dimensions that are analytically distinct but educationally interdependent: knowledge integration, adab formation, spiritual consciousness, and social responsibility. Their theoretical value lies in the relations among them, not in the novelty of each term considered separately.

Proposition 1. Knowledge integration requires ethical direction.

Educational integration is meaningful when knowledge is selected, interpreted, and used through criteria of truthfulness, responsibility, and benefit.

Proposition 2. Adab requires a spiritual horizon. Ethical conduct becomes educational formation when it is connected to intention, accountability before God, and the cultivation of the self rather than external compliance alone.

Proposition 3. Spiritual consciousness must become social responsibility. Religious consciousness is educationally incomplete when it remains private; it should generate service, justice, cooperation, and public benefit.

Proposition 4. Social responsibility tests the meaningful use of knowledge. The value of integrated knowledge is partly demonstrated by whether learners can translate it into responsible action in family, school, community, and civic life.

The four propositions form a reciprocal rather than strictly linear system. Ethical-spiritual commitments influence what counts as worthwhile knowledge, while engagement with new knowledge can deepen ethical judgment. Social action, in turn, exposes the adequacy or limitations of prior understanding and generates new learning needs. This reciprocity is what distinguishes the proposed theory from a four-item value taxonomy.

Table 1. Comparative Synthesis of the Educational Thought of KH. Ahmad Dahlan and KH. Hasyim Asy'ari

Educational Dimension	KH. Ahmad Dahlan	KH. Hasyim Asy'ari	Integrative-Adab Synthesis
Epistemic orientation	Openness to useful knowledge; rejection of intellectual self-sufficiency	Knowledge governed by ethical and spiritual discipline	Knowledge integration guided by adab
Educational foundation	Qur'anic commitment, inquiry, reform, and social action	Adab, sincerity, spiritual discipline, and scholarly responsibility	Epistemic openness joined to ethical-spiritual formation
Pedagogical emphasis	Learning that is enacted and socially useful	Ethical relations among learner, teacher, knowledge, and learning resources	Learning as intellectual, ethical, and relational formation
Educational outcome	Competent Muslim contributing to public welfare	Knowledgeable Muslim with moral and spiritual integrity	Intellectually capable, ethically formed, spiritually conscious, socially responsible learner
Primary textual anchor	Continuous search for knowledge and enactment of what is known	Good character and noble conduct as conditions of meaningful educational action	Knowledge, adab, spirituality, and social responsibility operate as one relational system

Discussion

The findings challenge the conventional modernist-traditionalist binary by showing that the two traditions address complementary educational deficits. Dahlan's reformist orientation responds to epistemic closure and the social irrelevance of learning; Hasyim Asy'ari's adab-centered orientation responds to the ethical and spiritual risks of knowledge detached from character. The proposed theory therefore does not erase historical differences between Muhammadiyah and pesantren traditions. Instead, it distinguishes institutional history from theoretical complementarity and asks what each intellectual resource contributes to a contemporary philosophy of Islamic education (Mun'im & Yanto, 2025; Rasyid et al., 2026).

The relation to al-Attas is particularly important. Al-Attas (1980) places ta'dib and the recognition of proper order at the center of Islamic education. The Integrative-Adab Nusantara Theory confirms the centrality of adab but extends the discussion through a specific Indonesian intellectual genealogy and by making knowledge integration and social responsibility explicit co-dimensions. In this

sense, adab is not displaced; it becomes the ethical regulator of epistemic openness and public action.

The theory also intersects with Halstead's (2004) account of Islamic education as involving individual development, social and moral formation, and the acquisition of knowledge. The present reconstruction adds a relational mechanism explaining why these domains should not be treated as parallel aims. Knowledge integration is normatively directed by adab; adab is deepened by spiritual consciousness; and spiritual consciousness is tested in social responsibility. This mechanism also resonates with Rahman's (1984) emphasis on intellectual renewal while guarding against renewal that is merely technical or detached from ethical formation.

Sahin's (2018) critical-reflective approach provides another contemporary point of comparison. His call to think about Islam educationally and education Islamically emphasizes conceptual clarity, critical self-reflexivity, and interdisciplinary inquiry. The proposed Integrative-Adab Nusantara Theory is compatible with this agenda but is more specifically concerned with the internal relationship among knowledge, ethical formation, spirituality, and social action in the Indonesian context. It therefore functions as a contextually grounded theoretical proposition that can enter wider Islamic Education Studies rather than as a claim to replace existing theories.

The theoretical reconstruction also speaks to current Indonesian concerns about integrated curricula, character education, and holistic formation. Studies of Islamic educational institutions show continuing efforts to combine religious and general learning, institutional culture, character formation, and community engagement (Hidayatulloh et al., 2024; Ilham et al., 2024; Ilyasin & Muadin, 2024; Manaf et al., 2025; Pratama et al., 2024). The proposed theory adds a criterion for evaluating such initiatives: integration should be visible not only in subject combinations but also in the ethical quality of learning relationships, the spiritual meaning attached to knowledge, and the social consequences of learning.

Table 2. Positioning the Integrative-Adab Nusantara Theory within Contemporary Islamic Education Thought

Framework	Core Emphasis	Convergence with Integrative-Adab Nusantara	Distinctive Extension of the Proposed Theory
Al-Attas (1980)	Ta'dib, proper order, ethical-spiritual meaning of knowledge	Adab is foundational to meaningful education	Links adab explicitly to knowledge integration and social responsibility through an Indonesian genealogy
Rahman (1984)	Intellectual renewal and reconstruction of Muslim thought	Education must reconnect Islamic commitments with contemporary knowledge	Adds a structured ethical-spiritual mechanism for governing renewal

Framework	Core Emphasis	Convergence with Integrative-Adab Nusantara	Distinctive Extension of the Proposed Theory
Halstead (2004)	Knowledge, individual development, and social-moral education	Education is multidimensional and cannot be reduced to cognition	Explains the relational dependence among epistemic, ethical, spiritual, and social dimensions
Sahin (2018)	Critical-reflective Islamic Education Studies and interdisciplinary inquiry	Calls for conceptual clarity, reflexivity, and educational engagement with tradition	Offers a specific propositional model derived from Dahlan and Hasyim Asy'ari for empirical testing in Indonesian institutions

Implications for Schools and Pesantren

The proposed theory can be operationalized at four institutional levels. At the curriculum level, knowledge integration requires learning outcomes that connect disciplinary competence with ethical judgment and socially meaningful application. At the pedagogical level, adab requires teacher modeling, respectful dialogue, intellectual humility, and responsible disagreement rather than moral exhortation alone. At the cultural level, spiritual consciousness should be cultivated through reflective worship, intention, and institutional routines that connect religious practice with learning. At the community level, social responsibility should be demonstrated through service learning, problem-based projects, ecological responsibility, care for vulnerable groups, and other forms of public benefit.

Assessment should likewise avoid collapsing the four dimensions into a single moral score. Academic competence can be assessed through disciplinary tasks; adab through observable learning conduct and reflective evidence; spiritual consciousness through carefully bounded reflective indicators rather than judgments of personal faith; and social responsibility through project processes, participation, and demonstrated public contribution. The model therefore invites empirical research that tests alignment among curriculum, pedagogy, culture, and assessment rather than simply asking whether an institution labels itself integrative or character-based (Lutfi et al., 2024; Sarbini et al., 2025).

Research Limitations and Validation Agenda

This study is limited by its exclusive reliance on documentary and scholarly sources. The reconstruction can establish conceptual coherence and textual plausibility, but it cannot demonstrate that the four dimensions are implemented together in actual educational institutions or that they produce specific learner outcomes. The study also concentrates on two Indonesian Muslim scholars;

therefore, the Nusantara framing should be treated as historically situated rather than automatically generalizable to other Muslim societies. In addition, the scarcity of extensive first-person writings by Ahmad Dahlan means that part of his educational thought must be reconstructed from a limited corpus of speeches and archival compilations, whereas Hasyim Asy'ari left a more systematic written pedagogical text.

A staged validation agenda is therefore required. First, expert validation should examine the fidelity of the four propositions to the primary texts and to Muhammadiyah and pesantren intellectual histories. Second, design-based studies should translate the propositions into curriculum maps, teacher practices, school-culture indicators, and assessment tools. Third, pilot implementation should be conducted in at least one Muhammadiyah school and one pesantren to identify contextual adaptations and unintended tensions. Fourth, comparative mixed-method studies can examine whether the framework functions similarly across schools, pesantren, madrasahs, and Islamic higher education. Finally, longitudinal research should investigate whether integrated knowledge, adab, spiritual reflection, and social responsibility develop as mutually reinforcing learner outcomes rather than as separate program indicators.

D. Conclusion

This study reconstructs the educational thought of KH. Ahmad Dahlan and KH. Hasyim Asy'ari into the proposed Integrative-Adab Nusantara Theory. The analysis shows that their ideas are more productively understood as complementary intellectual resources than as opposing modernist and traditionalist paradigms. The theory consists of four interdependent dimensions - knowledge integration, adab formation, spiritual consciousness, and social responsibility - and its novelty lies in the propositions that connect these dimensions rather than in the individual concepts themselves.

The study contributes a relational framework for Islamic education in which intellectual openness is ethically directed, adab is spiritually grounded, spirituality generates public responsibility, and socially responsible action becomes a practical test of meaningful knowledge. This formulation positions the theory in dialogue with al-Attas's *ta'dib*, Rahman's intellectual renewal, Halstead's multidimensional Islamic education, and Sahin's critical-reflective Islamic Education Studies while retaining a distinct Indonesian intellectual genealogy.

The principal limitation is that the theory remains documentary and conceptual: it has not yet been empirically validated in classrooms or institutions, and Ahmad Dahlan's surviving primary textual corpus is relatively limited. Future

research should therefore proceed through a specific sequence of expert conceptual validation, operationalization into curriculum and pedagogical indicators, pilot implementation in Muhammadiyah schools and pesantren, comparative mixed-method evaluation across Islamic educational settings, and longitudinal assessment of learner development. Until those stages are completed, the Integrative-Adab Nusantara Theory should be regarded as a testable propositional framework rather than an established empirical model.

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