Curriculum Innovation in Reproducing Ulama Cadres: A Case Study at Ma'had Aly Iqna' Ath-Thalibin (MAIT) Sarang

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to find the curriculum model of Ma'had Aly Iqna' Ath-Thalibin Sarang in the reproduction of ulama cadres, as well as to discover its implementation in learning. This research was conducted using a descriptive approach and a qualitative research design. The descriptive approach in the context of this research is used to seek and provide an overview of the form and implementation of the Ma'had 'Aly educational curriculum. This study employs several techniques, including non-participant observation, unstructured interviews, and documentation. Data validity tests were conducted using triangulation of techniques and sources. Data analysis was performed interactively and continuously until the data was completed, according to Miles and Huberman. The research results indicate that Ma'had Aly Iqna' Ath-Thalibin Sarang integrates courses that are distinctive or specific to its major namely tasawuf, based on the reference of the Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation (PMA) which requires several general subjects. This curriculum is implemented using two learning strategies. That is, in the form of face-to-face and non-face-to-face. In the face-to-face format, the methods used are bandongan, sorogan, and mudzakaroh. Meanwhile, the non-face-to-face format is realized in the form of bahtsul masail, assignments, both individually and in groups. Overall, the implementation and evaluation framework at MAIT Sarang demonstrate a balanced approach between traditional Islamic pedagogy and modern academic standards, aiming to produce *ulama* who are intellectually competent, spiritually grounded, and socially responsible

Keywords: Curriculum, Ma'had Aly, Ulama

Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan bentuk kurikulum Ma´Had Aly Iqna' Ath-Thalibin Sarang dalam reproduksi kader ulama, serta menemukan implemetasi dalam pembelajarannya. Penelitian ini dilakukan melalui pendekatan deskriptif dan jenis rancangannya penelitian kualitatif. Pendekatan deskriptif dalam konteks penelitian ini digunakan untuk mencari dan memberikan gambaran tentang bentuk dan implementasi kurikulum pendidikan Ma'had 'Aly. Penelitian ini menggunakan beberapa teknik yakni melalui observasi non partisipan, wawancara tidak terstruktur, dan dokumentasi. Uji Keabsahan datanya dengan menggunakan teknik triangulasi teknik dan sumber. Adapun analisis datanya dilakukan secara interaktif dan terus menerus sampai data selesai menurut Miles dan Huberman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Ma'had Aly Iqna' Ath-Thalibin Sarang melakukan pengintegrasian antara mata kuliah yang menjadi kekhasan atau takhassus di jurusannya yakni tasawuf, dengan didasarkan pada acuan Peraturan Menteri Agama (PMA) yang mewajibkan beberapa mata kuliah umum. Kurikulum ini diimplementasikan dengan menggunakan beberapa 2 strategi pembelajaran. Yakni berbentuk tatap muka dan non tatap muka. Dalam tatap muka digunakan metode bandongan, sorogan, mudzakaroh. Sedangkan bentuk non tatap muka diwujudkan dalam bentuk bahtsul masail, tugas, baik secara individual maupun kelompok. Secara keseluruhan, implementasi dan sistem evaluasi yang diterapkan MAIT Sarang menunjukkan model pendidikan yang terpadu antara tradisi keilmuan klasik dan sistem akademik modern, dengan orientasi utama pada pembentukan *ulama* yang berilmu, berakhlak, dan berjiwa pengabdian.

Kata kunci: Kurikulum, Ma'had Aly, Ulama

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BACKGROUND

Islamic Boarding Schools (Pesantren) have long been considered essential institutions in the development of Islamic education in Indonesia. Pesantren are also regarded as the oldest Islamic educational institutions, growing and evolving alongside the spread of Islam in the country(Musaddad, 2023). In practice, pesantren have the power to bring about fundamental changes in both religion and education. Since their inception, their role has been to disseminate Islamic knowledge, preserve existing traditions, and train future religious scholars (ulama)(Shapiah, 2024) . In essence, pesantren play a major role in preparing students (santri) to study and gain Islamic knowledge, while also being expected to produce new ulama, contribute to shaping Indonesian society through religion, spread Islam, and serve as a moral center for the community.However, in recent times, pesantren have undergone changes and shifts in response to the rapid development of modern life, particularly in the fields of science and technology (Fuady et al., 2024). Public interest in studying religion has decreased. In addition, many kyai (religious leaders) and bu nyai (female religious leaders) have passed away without fully transferring their knowledge to the next generation, creating fears that valuable Islamic sciences such as Ushul Fiqh, Falak, Ilmu Alat, and Tasawuf may be lost .

Concerned about this situation, Islamic scholars developed the idea of creating a formal post-pesantren education program called Ma'had 'Aly. Pesantren have made efforts to transform their educational system to gain formal recognition (Wafa, 2022). One notable figure from Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), KH. As'ad Syamsul Arifin, proposed formalizing pesantren education beyond the Tsanawiyah and Aliyah levels, suggesting the establishment of institutions aimed at producing future generations of pesantren scholars. As a pilot initiative, the "Ma'had 'Aly" institution was founded in 1990 at the Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Islamic Boarding School in Situbondo (Abu Yasid, 2010). Its rapid growth eventually drew attention and support, leading to formal recognition by the government as an educational institution.

Ma'had Aly is a higher education institution offering formal Islamic studies beyond the Aliyah (secondary school) level (Ali, 2020). Essentially, it provides advanced post-pesantren religious education. According to the Directorate General of Islamic Education, Ma'had Aly is an Islamic higher education institution offering academic programs in religious sciences based on classical Islamic texts (kitab kuning), operated by pesantren, with the goal of producing graduates who are experts in their fields (Direktorat Jendral Pendidikan Agama Islam Kementerian Agama RI, n.d.).

According to Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, there are at least three institutions responsible for advancing the tafaqquh fid-din program at an institutional level: Satuan Pendidikan Muadalah, Diniyyah Formal, and Ma'had Aly (Direktorat Jendral Pendidikan Agama Islam Kementerian Agama RI, n.d.). The official regulation for Ma'had Aly was issued in 2015 through Ministerial Regulation No. 71 of 2015. This regulation recognizes Ma'had Aly as equivalent to other Islamic and general higher education institutions and grants its graduates the academic title of Bachelor of Religion (S.Ag). This legalization reinforces Article 1, Paragraph 2 of Indonesian Law No. 12 of 2012 on Higher Education, which states that higher education is the level of education following secondary education. Additionally, Article 30, Paragraph 2 of Chapter Six on Religious Education states that religious education, as referred to in Paragraph 1, can be provided through universities, institutes, colleges, academies, and Ma'had Aly.

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Although there are many existing Islamic higher education institutions, they are often considered inadequate in producing future ulama (Subhan et al., 2025). Therefore, Ma'had Aly seeks to fill this gap. The program, held within pesantren, aims to preserve Islamic values that are being eroded by modern developments and to produce new generations of ulama. Ma'had Aly also maintains a selective relationship with the outside world in order to preserve its traditional pesantren-based educational model (Rahmadani & Nurhidin, 2025). As Rusman argues, "curriculum management development must be comprehensive, cooperative, systematic, and structured according to schedule, to achieve the intended curriculum objectives" (Rusman, 2012). Accordingly, Ma'had Aly has full authority to design and implement its curriculum, while the Ministry of Religious Affairs only sets general standards. This is outlined in Ministerial Regulation No. 32 of 2020, which states that "each area of study within Ma'had Aly must develop a competency-based curriculum in the form of structured content based on classical Islamic texts (kitab kuning), assessed using a semester credit system." The curriculum must also include content on Pancasila and Civics Education, as well as the Indonesian language. Furthermore, it is required to include research and community service components in accordance with Islamic disciplines and areas of study.

Given these provisions, there may still be aspects of curriculum development in Ma'had Aly that are overlooked. Therefore, this article raises several questions: What is the structure of the curriculum for producing ulama? How is it implemented in the learning process? The purpose of these research questions is to identify the curriculum model used for the reproduction of ulama and to understand its implementation in educational practices.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted using a descriptive approach and employed a qualitative research design. The descriptive approach in this context was used to explore and provide an overview of the form and implementation of the Ma'had Aly education curriculum. Meanwhile, qualitative research emphasizes deductive and inductive reasoning based on scientific logic. It does not involve statistical calculations in either data processing or analysis. Moreover, the data collected were not in numerical form but consisted of verbal information obtained from informants (Aspers & Corte, 2019).

The primary data sources in this research were individuals who were interviewed and observed, including institutional leaders, lecturers (muhadir), students (mahasantri), and graduates of Ma'had Aly Iqna' Ath-Thalibin Sarang. To determine these informants, the researcher employed purposive sampling technique of selecting data sources based on specific considerations, such as individuals deemed most knowledgeable about the research problem. This technique allowed the researcher flexibility in deciding when to continue or conclude the data collection process.

Data sources were categorized into two types, primary data sources, consisting of verbal statements and observed behavior from informants related to curriculum development for the reproduction of ulama' consisting of institutional leaders, lecturers (muhadir), students (mahasantri), and graduates of Ma'had Aly Iqna' Ath-Thalibin Sarang ; and Secondary data sources, which included written documents, recordings, images, or any other materials related to activities concerning curriculum development (Zega et al., 2025). This research employed several techniques

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for data collection, namely non-participant observation, unstructured interviews, and documentation. The validity of the data was tested using triangulation of techniques and sources.

Data analysis was conducted in an interactive and continuous manner until the data were fully processed, following the model proposed by Miles and Huberman. This process included data reduction selecting what is important, focusing on essential matters, identifying themes and patterns and data presentation in the form of brief descriptions, charts, category relationships, and other relevant forms for the purpose of drawing conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Curriculum

The definition of curriculum according to Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, Article 1 Paragraph 19, is a set of arrangements regarding the objectives, content, and instructional materials that serve as a guide for the implementation of educational activities so that the planned goals can be achieved. In the traditional view, the curriculum is defined as a collection of subjects or learning materials that students are required to master within a school. Nana Syaodih defines curriculum as the teaching and learning process that serves as a reference or guideline (Erihadiana & Zakiyyah, 2022). This is in line with Nasution's view, which defines curriculum as a plan designed to facilitate the educational process, including guidance and the responsibilities of educational institutions and their staff (Sultan & Syafiuddin, 2024).

Along with the development of educational theory and practice, the concept of curriculum has become more diverse, depending on the school of thought or educational theory applied. The traditional view perceives the curriculum as a tool for teachers to transfer knowledge to students, who then study it. In contrast, modern views see the curriculum as a process conducted by educational institutions to stimulate learning, both inside and outside the classroom. Sukmadinata offers a broader understanding of curriculum, defining it as a plan designed to maximize student development and overall learning experiences with the help of teachers and institutions (Sukmadinata, 2019).

From these expert definitions, it can be summarized that curriculum is a planned set of activities aimed at achieving educational objectives, where the learning process contributes to goal attainment. In the context of management, curriculum management refers to a curriculum administration system that emphasizes productivity, democratization, cooperation, effectiveness, and efficiency (Oktavia et al., 2025). This system also aligns with the vision, mission, and objectives of the institution in this case, Ma'had Aly.

In curriculum discussions, there are several types of curriculum:

a. Intracurricular. Activities related to the core academic subjects taught within an institution. (Raharjo, 2013)

b. Co-curricular. Activities conducted by educational institutions to complement the core curriculum, usually held outside regular classroom hours.

c. Extracurricular. Educational activities outside school hours designed to develop students' talents and interests according to their needs, through specific activities beyond intracurricular and co-curricular programs. (A'yun, 2019)

d. Hidden Curriculum. Unplanned and unintended learning experiences that contribute to students' development, often without explicit instruction or design. (Abdullah Idi, 2014)

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Curriculum development begins with planning, a crucial process for realizing ideas and optimizing the desired outcomes. Planning involves organizing future activities systematically to produce informed decisions. Technically, it allows for structured management of future processes (Huring et al., 2025). Planning is also understood as preparing decisions concerning anticipated events or conditions and the actions to be taken.

Curriculum planning also requires organization, which involves combining two or more curricula into one integrated system. The goal of curriculum organization is to answer key questions related to curriculum selection. Important considerations include sequencing, continuity, balance, and integration (Anshori et al., 2023).

According to Nasution, from a curriculum organization perspective, there are three types of curriculum:

a. Separated Subject Curriculum (SSC). Subjects are grouped separately with distinct boundaries and little or no integration. This approach can lead to narrow scopes and limited interdisciplinary connection.

b. Correlated Curriculum (CC). Maintains the identity and strengths of each subject while establishing links between certain subjects.

c. Integrated Curriculum (IC). Refers to the merging or unification of two or more subjects into a coherent whole. Integration as unifying elements into a single, complete system. In this model, learning is centered around specific themes, and all subjects are designed to support that central theme(Muhammad Shobirin, 2025)

After planning and organizing, the next step is curriculum implementation. Implementation is the process of putting ideas, concepts, or policies into action that result in changes in knowledge, skills, values, or attitudes. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines implementation as "putting something into effect." When applied to curriculum, it refers to enacting the written curriculum through the teaching and learning process. Miller and Seller assert that in some cases, implementation is identical to the process of introduction (Fitri & Hasibuan, 2024). Others define it as the practical application of curriculum concepts into the classroom, resulting in transformation among target learners.

Curriculum implementation must be followed by evaluation to assess its effectiveness. The School Curriculum literature defines evaluation as a systematic process of collecting and analyzing data to understand and assess a curriculum, with the aim of improving educational methods (Maryati et al., 2024). Another definition from Curriculum Planning and Development views evaluation as an assessment of the curriculum's implementation performance, which includes three key aspects:

a. Evaluation is only meaningful if clear objectives are established.

b. To reach those objectives, ongoing steps must be reviewed.

c. Conclusions must be based on predetermined criteria.

Evaluation as the process of determining the extent to which behavioral changes have occurred. The focus is on measuring the degree of learning outcomes achieved. Curriculum evaluation is a systematic effort to gather information about the curriculum to assess its relevance in a particular context. Principles of curriculum evaluation include clarity of objectives, objectivity, comprehensiveness, collaboration and responsibility in planning, efficiency, and balance (Sarwani Abdan, 2025).

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Ma'had Aly

The emergence of Ma'had Aly cannot be separated from the actual condition indicating that the role and function of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) have begun to shift in recent times. Among the contributing factors are the pressures of modernization, globalization, and easier access to information, which have changed the way of life of Muslim communities (Riswadi, 2023). Islamic scholars (ulama') fear the loss of Islamic intellectual traditions due to the declining role and function of pesantren. If this issue is not addressed seriously, the future of the Muslim ummah could be at great risk. As a response, the ulama' deemed it essential to establish an institution that would prepare cadres of ulama' who are academically and practically competent. It was from this urgency that Ma'had Aly was born (Aena, 2021).

In 1989, during a grand deliberative meeting of pesantren leaders at Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Islamic Boarding School, Sukorejo, Situbondo—chaired by KH. As'ad Syamsul Arifin—a plan to establish Ma'had Aly was initiated. Following this meeting, the scholars reached a consensus to establish an institution for religious scholarship integrated with pesantren, functioning as a continuation of pesantren education. For this purpose, Ma'had Aly of Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Islamic Boarding School in Situbondo was officially founded on February 21, 1990, with specialization in fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) and usul al-fiqh (principles of jurisprudence).

Although considered a higher education institution, Ma'had Aly is not a separate entity from the pesantren. It cannot be directly compared to other Islamic universities such as UIN, IAIN, STAIN, or PTAI in terms of educational hardware or software. Ma'had Aly remains rooted in all the cultures and traditions of the pesantren. However, due to its unique characteristics, it is provided with special facilities such as dormitories, classrooms, libraries, and publishing infrastructure comparable to higher education institutions (Suryadarma Ali, 2013).

According to the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs No. 71 of 2015 on Ma'had Aly, it is defined as an Islamic higher education institution that offers academic education focused on the mastery of Islamic sciences (tafaqquh fiddin) based on classical Islamic texts (kitab kuning), and organized by Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). This regulation positions Ma'had Aly as formal diniyah (religious) education at the tertiary level, based on two prior laws: Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System and Law No. 12 of 2012 on Higher Education. Both laws are further consolidated in Government Regulation No. 55 of 2007 on Religious Education. Article 20, paragraph 1, indirectly acknowledges the establishment of Ma'had Aly as a form of formal religious education at the tertiary level capable of offering academic programs, further clarified by Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs No. 71 of 2015.

The issuance of Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs No. 71 of 2015 not only ensures the legal recognition of Ma'had Aly within the national education system but also underscores the government's commitment to position Ma'had Aly as equivalent to other religious and general higher education institutions. Additionally, the legal foundation for Ma'had Aly is reinforced in Law No. 18 of 2019 on Pesantren. According to this law, Ma'had Aly is a tertiary-level pesantren education institution, based within the pesantren environment, and focuses on the study of Islam using the classical kitab kuning in a structured and progressive manner. Ma'had Aly offers academic programs at the undergraduate (marhalah ula / M-1), master's (marhalah tsaniyah / M-2), and doctoral (marhalah tsalisah / M-3) levels.

According to the Directorate General of Islamic Education, Ma'had Aly is an Islamic higher education institution that offers academic education in Islamic sciences based on classical texts,

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organized by pesantren, with the goal of producing graduates who are experts in Islamic knowledge and capable of developing it through classical scholarship. Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2014–2019), stated that strengthening the institutional framework for tafaqquh fiddin programs should be done through three pathways: Muadalah educational units, formal diniyah education, and Ma'had Aly.

Ma'had Aly is a unique Islamic educational institution focusing on the mastery of Islamic sciences based on classical texts. Graduates of Ma'had Aly are trained to become individuals with moderate Islamic principles. In an age of rapid change technologically, socially, economically, and scientifically people are forced to think critically to navigate these transformations. Education is no exception. Despite the existence of many Islamic universities, they are often seen as insufficient in producing true cadres of ulama' (muhibuddin muhib hanafiah, 2023).

Thus, Ma'had Aly aims to fill that gap. Its programs are designed to preserve Islamic values threatened by modern developments. The integration of pesantren and Ma'had Aly is crucial for producing future ulama'. The goal of Ma'had Aly is to develop students (mahasantri) into devout Muslims and interpreters of Islamic teachings within society. It strictly regulates external influences to preserve the traditional pesantren educational model (M. Agus Kurniawan, 2022).

These circumstances have created a tension between two educational forces. If the curriculum is not proportionally balanced by reducing or eliminating one component in favor of another the holistic mission of Ma'had Aly may be compromised. Ma'had Aly strives to develop a curriculum that fosters students' talents, aligns with local community needs, and preserves traditional Islamic scholarship. Ideally, every educational institution should have a curriculum development management system. According to Rusman, an effective curriculum system containing plans, content, methods, and materials is key to achieving educational goals (Rusman, 2012).

The Cadre Development of Islamic Scholars (Ulama')

According to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI), the term pengkaderan or the standard form pengaderan derives from the word kader (cadre). Pengkaderan means the process, method, or act of educating or shaping someone to become a cadre. A cadre, in turn, refers to individuals who are prepared as successors to carry out the duties and functions of strategic positions left by their predecessors. According to Mangkubumi, cadre development consists of three parts (Muhammad Aman Ma'mun dan Suhadi, 2018):

a. Cadre Education, which aims to deliver or transfer various knowledge necessary for a cadre.
b. Cadre Assignment, which involves giving cadres who have completed cadre education the opportunity to participate in organizational activities as a form of practice for maturity and responsibility.
c. Cadre Career Deployment, which entails assigning greater responsibilities within the organization according to the cadre's potential and capabilities.

Meanwhile, the term ulama' is the plural form of 'alim, meaning a person who possesses knowledge of Islamic religion. When paired with other terms such as Ulama' Fiqh or Ulama' Tasawwuf, it refers to individuals who are experts in Islamic jurisprudence, mysticism, and so on. According to the Islamic Encyclopedia, an ulama' is someone who possesses religious knowledge

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that leads them to fear Allah SWT. They also serve as spiritual guides and provide religious enlightenment for their communities (Muhammad Nur Aziz, 2015).

Ulama' have several duties and functions. These include promoting Islamic preaching (dakwah), nurturing new cadres of ulama' by organizing Islamic education in society, studying and developing Islamic sciences such as the values contained in the Qur'an, Sunnah, ijma', and qiyas, and serving to protect the Muslim community by defending their rights, maintaining unity, and so on (Ta'wil & Haddade, 2025) .

Buya Hamka, in his tafsir Al-Azhar, outlined three criteria for someone to be considered a true ulama'(Hafizh & Dina, 2023):

a. Regularly reading the Qur'an, understanding its meaning and interpretation, and behaving according to its guidance.
b. Being devoted to performing prayer (salat), both obligatory and voluntary. Consistently performing the five daily prayers strengthens a person's spiritual connection with Allah.
c. Being generous and charitable to society.

Furthermore, an ulama' is also defined as someone who is an expert in Islamic religious sciences such as fiqh, tawhid, tasawwuf, and others, and who also possesses high moral standards, noble character, and influence in society. A person is considered an ulama' if they possess at least the following three competencies:

a. Personal Competence, which involves values and attitudes. As prospective cadres of ulama', they must exemplify commendable values and attitudes to the community. Hence, this competence is essential and must be inherent in every ulama'.
b. Academic Competence, which involves knowledge and understanding. The term ulama' itself implies someone with broad and deep understanding of Islamic sciences. Therefore, one cannot be called an ulama' without adequate academic competence.
c. Professional Competence, which involves skills or abilities. An ulama' needs specific skills to carry out their responsibilities in society, such as preaching, delivering sermons, leading prayers, etc (Didik Muhammad Aji, 2021).

The Ma'had Aly Curriculum as an Institution for Producing Ulama' Cadres

As stated earlier in the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs No. 32 of 2020, "The curriculum for each field of study concentration at Ma'had Aly shall be developed by the pesantren based on competencies, structured learning materials grounded in the Kitab Kuning (classical Islamic texts), and shall be measured using the semester credit unit system. The Ma'had Aly curriculum must include instructional content on Pancasila and Civic Education, as well as the Indonesian language. The curriculum must also include content related to the implementation of research and community service in line with the Islamic sciences and the relevant field of study."

This framework has led to the emergence of two major sources of power in determining the curriculum. If these elements are not proportionally balanced i.e., if one aspect is reduced or even eliminated in favor of another it can threaten the overall mission of Ma'had Aly. Ma'had Aly strives to develop a curriculum that fosters the talents of its mahasantri (student-santri), tailored to the needs of the local community while preserving the traditions of classical ulama'. Ideally, every educational institution should possess a curriculum development management system. According to Rusman, the appropriate solution for achieving educational goals lies in the curriculum, which

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acts as a structured plan encompassing the methods and materials needed to carry out learning effectively (Rusman, 2012).

The Curriculum Structure of Ma'had Aly Iqna' Ath-Thalibin Sarang

According to the academic handbook of Ma'had Aly Iqna' Ath-Thalibin (MAIT) Sarang, the curriculum consists of a variety of courses categorized into several groups. These courses integrate the specialized field (takhassus) of the institution—namely tasawwuf (Islamic mysticism)—with general subjects mandated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (PMA). This integration results in the following curriculum structure:

a. General Basic Courses. These include courses such as Q. Fiqh, Ushul Fiqh, Fiqh, Ulumul Qur'an, Takhrijul Hadith, Aqidah, Introduction to Tasawwuf, Ahwal Syakhshiyyah, Pancasila, Civic Education, and Indonesian Language.

b. Specialization Courses. These cover subjects like Mustholah Tasawwuf, Philosophy of Tasawwuf, Studies in Tasawwuf Science, Tafsir, Hadith, Principles of Tasawwuf, Social Tasawwuf, Study of Tasawwuf Wisdom, Introduction to Ma'rifat Science, Introduction to Scientific Writing Methodology, and Introduction to Sufi Orders.

c. Development Courses. These include Advanced Aqidah, Advanced Fiqh, Hadith Authentication (Takhrij), Fiqh Principles, and Advanced Tasawwuf Studies.

d. Special Characteristic Courses. These focus on classic tasawwuf texts, such as the study of Ihya' Ulumuddin.

e. Skill-Based Courses. These include Community Service Program, Thesis, and Mudzakarah (intensive study) of classical texts such as Al-Mahalli and Fath al-Mu'in.

According to the Director of Ma'had Aly and lectures, the courses are taught by lecturers who are highly competent in their respective fields. The selection of lecturers follows three main qualifications: Mashayikh of Pondok Al-Anwar, which includes caretakers, deputy caretakers, and those approved by the principal (mudir) or senior leadership, Pesantren Graduates, particularly from Al-Anwar, who have experience teaching in institutions within the Al-Anwar environment and have been approved by the caretaker, University Graduates with a Master's (S2) or Doctoral (S3) degree, who are also alumni of Al-Anwar and approved by the caretaker or mudir.

The curriculum implemented at MAIT is a Kitab Kuning-Based Curriculum, designed to equip graduates with competencies aligned with their specialization in tasawwuf and tarekat (Sufi orders). All books included in the curriculum are selected with the knowledge and approval of the internal council of mashayikh as the institution's quality assurance body, and are formally ratified by the mudir and the caretaker of the pesantren.

Based on the review of the *Academic Handbook* of Ma'had Aly Al-Anwar Sarang (MAIT Sarang) and the interview with the Head of Ma'had Aly, it can be understood that the curriculum system implemented at MAIT Sarang is the result of an integration between the traditional Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) model and the academic standards of Islamic higher education institutions. This integration reflects the institution's effort to combine the traditional epistemological foundation of the *pesantren* with the modern academic framework regulated by the *Minister of Religious Affairs Decree* . The curriculum structure of MAIT Sarang is systematically organized into several groups of courses, namely General Basic Courses, Specialization Courses, Development Courses, Distinctive Courses, and Skill-Based Courses. This division illustrates a balanced approach between nationally mandated general courses and specific courses that

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represent the institution's academic identity, particularly in the fields of Sufism (*tasawuf*) and spiritual order (*tarekat*).

Such an arrangement demonstrates that MAIT Sarang aims to develop a curriculum that not only emphasizes academic competence but also preserves the spiritual and moral dimensions characteristic of the *pesantren* tradition. Courses such as *Introduction to Sufism*, *Philosophy of Sufism*, and *Wisdom Studies in Sufism* highlight the institution's orientation toward producing graduates who are intellectually competent yet spiritually grounded.

The selection and appointment of lecturers at MAIT Sarang are carried out through a process that takes into account both academic qualifications and traditional legitimacy. The research findings indicate three main categories of course instructors; The Senior Religious Scholars of Pondok Al-Anwar, which include the caretakers, vice caretakers, or other authorized individuals approved by the director, senior Teachers who are Al-Anwar graduates, with proven teaching experience within Al-Anwar's educational institutions, university graduates (Master's or Doctoral degree holders) who are also Al-Anwar graduates and have received approval from the caretakers. This mechanism shows a balance between formal academic authority and traditional scholarly authority. Consequently, lecturers are evaluated not only based on their academic credentials but also on their mastery of classical Islamic scholarship and spiritual discipline. This system functions as an internal quality assurance mechanism, ensuring the authenticity of Sufi teachings within the academic setting.

A distinctive feature of MAIT Sarang's academic system is the implementation of the Kitab Kuning-Based Curriculum . The *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic texts) serve as the primary source of learning materials, ensuring the continuity of traditional Islamic scholarship. The selection of these texts is conducted through internal deliberation by the *dewan masyayikh* (council of scholars), who are responsible for maintaining academic quality, and subsequently approved by the *mudir* and the *pesantren* caretaker.

This approach signifies that MAIT Sarang's curriculum is deeply rooted in the classical Islamic intellectual heritage (turāth) while also aligned with modern academic standards. The Kitab Kuning-Based Curriculum thus serves a dual function: as a means of preserving the scholarly legacy of the *pesantren* tradition and as an instrument for developing academic competence relevant to contemporary needs. The integrative curriculum model implemented at MAIT Sarang has several academic and institutional implications. First, it enhances the relevance of Sufi knowledge to contemporary social contexts, as seen in courses such as *Social Sufism* and *Sufi Knowledge Studies*. Second, the inclusion of skill-oriented courses such as *Community Service*, *Teaching Practice*, and *Mudzakarah al-Kitab* demonstrates the institution's commitment to connecting theoretical understanding with practical experience. Furthermore, this curriculum structure reinforces MAIT Sarang's identity as an Islamic higher education institution that functions as a center for *ulama* (Islamic scholars) development. The curriculum is designed not merely to achieve academic excellence but also to cultivate Sufi character and social awareness among its students.

Curriculum Implementation

Based on an interview with the Director and Student of Ma'had Aly, the curriculum is implemented through two learning strategies: face-to-face and non-face-to-face learning. The face-to-face approach utilizes methods such as bandongan, sorogan, and mudzakarah. Meanwhile, non-face-to-face learning is conducted through activities like bahtsul masail and assignments, both

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individual and group-based. The implementation of mudzakarah and assignments is intended to actively engage the mahasantri (students) in the teaching and learning process, as well as to train them to express their opinions and arguments. The scope of the learning process includes: pre-lecture activities, lecture implementation, and lecture evaluation.

a. Pre-Lecture Activities consist of ta'aruf (orientation), which is mandatory for all new mahasantri as part of the learning orientation at MAIT, The Head of the Administrative Department distributes the MAIT Academic Handbook during the ta'aruf.

b. Lecture Implementation includes: In every lecture session, mahasantri are required to fill out the attendance list, a public lecture is held at least once every semester with a topic considered relevant to the MAIT specialization (takhassus), Field Work Practice or Community Service Program is conducted under the supervision and guidance of the head of the Research and Community Service Institute, The total number of face-to-face meetings per course each semester is 16, in accordance with the academic calendar. Each meeting lasts 100 minutes for 2-credit courses and 150 minutes for 3-credit courses.

c. Evaluation includes; the mahasantri's activeness in participating in the learning process, semester examinations, assignments given by the lecturer.

Assessment is conducted in an integrated manner to reveal all aspects of the mahasantri's abilities, including scientific knowledge, affective aspects, and character. Learning assessment consists of both process evaluation and learning outcome evaluation.

a. Learning Process Evaluation: This is intended to measure the mahasantri's ability to engage in the learning process. It may be conducted through observation or other methods.

b. Learning Outcome Evaluation: Assessment Method: The assessment at MAIT is conducted through ikhtibar (examinations), Forms of Assessment: Learning outcomes are assessed through written (ikhtibar tahriri), oral (ikhtibar syafahi), and observational methods, Timing of Assessment: Learning outcome assessments are conducted throughout the semester, Assessment Standards: Final assessment results are expressed in letter grades converted from numerical scores, with categories as follows:

Table 1 Grade Categories

Numerical Scores	Letter grades	GPA	Result
91-100	A	3.76 - 4.00	Excellent
86-90	A-	3.51 - 3.75	Very Good
81-85	B+	3.26 - 3.50	Very Good
76-80	B	3.01 - 3.25	Good
71-75	B-	2.76 - 3.00	Good
66-70	C+	2.51 - 2.75	Pass
61-65	C	2.26 - 2.50	Pass
56-60	C-	2.01 - 2.25	Pass
51-55	D	1.76 - 2.00	Poor
0-50	E	0.00 - 1.75	Fail

Undergraduate students (mahasantri) are declared as having graduated based on the following conditions: no grades of D or E, completion of the Community Service Program (KKN) or Teaching Practice Program (PPL), completion of a thesis or final project, and a minimum GPA of

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2.51. Additional information from the Secretary of Ma'had Aly states that before graduation, mahasantri must also pass a series of other graduation requirements, such as memorizing Surah Al-Mulk, Surah Al-Waqi'ah, Juz Amma, at least 50 hadiths, and must have completed the study (khatam) of the book Ihya' 'Ulumuddin. This data is supported by a statement from one of the Ma'had Aly graduates, who shared that one of their classmates had to retake a course because their grade did not meet the minimum passing requirement.

In addition, when viewed through the framework of the four types of curriculums namely intracurricular, co-curricular, extracurricular, and hidden curriculum he existing curriculum structure at Ma'had Aly IT has already incorporated all four. This integration is evident both in the selection of courses and in the implementation, strategies applied in the learning process, such as *mudzakarah*, *sorogan*, *bandongan*, and *bahtsul masail.* With the implementation of this curriculum structure, it is expected to produce future Islamic scholars (*ulama'*) who possess strong personal integrity grounded in Islamic values, demonstrate academic competence in their respective areas of specialization, and exhibit professional skills—such as the ability to serve as *kiai* (religious leaders), preachers, and prayer imams.

The findings indicate that MAIT Sarang's learning and assessment system embodies a comprehensive and character-based educational model. The integration of traditional *pesantren* methods with modern academic assessment ensures that students' intellectual and moral development progress simultaneously. The combination of *bandongan*, *sorogan*, and *mudzakarah* cultivates deep textual comprehension and dialogical thinking, while activities such as *bahtsul masail* and group assignments promote critical inquiry and social engagement. Furthermore, the inclusion of memorization and *kitab khataman* requirements emphasizes the preservation of classical scholarship and the formation of disciplined, spiritually mature graduates. Overall, the implementation strategy and evaluation framework at MAIT Sarang demonstrate a balanced approach between traditional Islamic pedagogy and modern academic standards, aiming to produce *ulama* who are intellectually competent, spiritually grounded, and socially responsible.

CONCLUSION

To fulfill its goal as an institution that produces future ulama, Ma'had Aly Iqna' Ath-Thalibin Sarang integrates core courses specific to its specialization namely tasawuf with general courses mandated by the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs. This curriculum is implemented using two learning strategies: face to face and non-face to face formats. The face-to-face approach employs methods such as bandongan, sorogan, and mudzakarah. Meanwhile, the non-face to face approach includes activities such as *bahtsul masail* and assignments, both individual and group based. Overall, the implementation strategy and evaluation framework at MAIT Sarang demonstrate a balanced approach between traditional Islamic pedagogy and modern academic standards, aiming to produce *ulama* who are intellectually competent, spiritually grounded, and socially responsible.

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