

# Development of Gontor's *Muadalah* System-Based *Muallimin* Curriculum

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## Abstract

**Objective** This qualitative research aims to explore the development of the *Muallimin* curriculum based on the *Muadalah* system in Indonesia.

**Methodology** This study employed a qualitative research method in which interviews and documentation were the two main methods used in data collection. The descriptive qualitative analysis was adopted for data analysis.

**Research Findings** The Gontor's *Muadalah* system-based *Muallimin* curriculum (or *Muallimin* curriculum) was designed based on Islamic concepts of education and general theories of curriculum development. It was developed based on the national standard curriculum as other curricula in Indonesia. However, the curriculum is distinguished by these five characteristics, namely, Pesantren's life, 24 hours' education, a school for teachers, Kyai, or Sheikh (a scholar) as the central authority, and students' language skill. *Muadalah* system (the standardization of education in Pesantrens), which is a new system that was established by the Indonesian government has made a great impact on the *Muallimin* curriculum development and it also has paved the way for other Pesantrens to implement the *Muallimin* curriculum. The curriculum is well accepted and recognized by the Government and the people of Indonesia. Due to its well-integrated curriculum in which general and religious subjects are offered, the curriculum was able to produce well-rounded graduates, equipped with various faculties and senses; intellectual, moral, spiritual, physical, and social.

**Applications** This paper will broaden insight into the concepts and development of Gontor's *Muadalah* system-based *Muallimin* curriculum and provide practical guidelines in curriculum development for other Pesantrens (Islamic Boarding Schools) in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** *Curriculum Development, Muadalah system, Muallimin Curriculum*

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## Introduction

The development of education in Indonesia has been based on the ideology of Pancasila and the constitution of 1945. Education spelled out in five foundations of the Republic of Indonesia's principles such as belief in one God; just and civilized humanity, including tolerance to all people; unity of Indonesia; democracy led by the wisdom of deliberation among representatives of the people; and social justice for all (Shigeo Nishimura, 1995). The law on education number 2/1989 declares that the development of Indonesia education must be based on two objectives, they are, *first*; is to establish a high-quality and self-reliant human being whose values are based on *Pancasila* (Indonesia's ideology), *second*; is to encourage the development of ability and creativity among Indonesian people (Education regulation, 1989). Correspondingly, the national education aims to improve the society's life and develop the Indonesian people in all dimensions required for developing a well-rounded person, which include intellectual, moral, spiritual, physical, and social dimension. To serve these aims, various types of schools were established, among them were public schools and Islamic boarding schools.

Pesantren is one of the Islamic schools in Indonesia which serve to provide integrated-based education for all Indonesians citizen. Historically, Pesantren has made a great contribution to the process of decolonization and spreading of Islam in Nusantara. Thus, it has become evident that the Pesantren has been in existence for a long time ago even before Indonesia gained its independence. Moreover, the establishment of pesantren aims to serve the present demands of globalization and the needs of Muslim society. Also, it has a strong mission of actualizing Islam in Indonesian society and creating the agents of change who have a profound understanding of Islam and the ability to transform Islamic teaching into practice in the Muslim society in Indonesia. To accomplish the set mission, a Pesantren's life which is one of the unique characteristics of the Pesantrens was developed. This pattern of life requires a particular type of curriculum that enables to develop students' Islamic personality traits based on Muslim stakeholders' needs.

Pondok (pesantren) Modern Darussalam Gontor is one of the Islamic boarding schools (Pesantrens), which has the above mentioned uniqueness and implemented a particular type of curriculum, called *Muallimin* curriculum, which is well known as Pesantren curriculum that has

obtained legality to be the standard curriculum for Pesantren in Indonesia. *Muallimin* curriculum was legitimized by the year 2000 after getting recognition from the Indonesian government through the establishment of a *Muadalah* system, which is a new system that supports the implementation of the Pesantren curriculum in Indonesia. The introduction of this system was being hailed as a milestone in the educational collaboration between the government and the Pesantrens. By getting legality through the *Muadalah* system, Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor has the authority to develop the type of curriculum that responds to the school and nation needs.

Due to the existing gap of literature in which previous studies focused on the Islamization of curriculum (Che Noraini Hashim and Hasan Langgulung, 2008; Marzuki, 2016; Muhlisin, 2019; Rosnani Hashim, 2004) and other studies focused on the concepts of *the Muallimin* curriculum of Pesantrens (Imron Fauzy, 2018; Rahmat Arofah Hari Cahyadi, 2017), but none of the previous studies examined the development of *Muallimin* curriculum and *Muadalah* system in Indonesia despite the success of Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor in getting standardization from the Indonesian government. Therefore, the researcher is interested to conduct a study

about how is the concepts and development of the *Muadalah* system based *Muallimin* curriculum in Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor, Indonesia ?.

### Literature Review

Several researches can be found which are related to the study, most of researches adopted qualitative methods. First, Hamdani Hamid (2012) had been done a study about a new concept of Islamic education in globalization era. It was found that unity indiversity, it explained about pesantren implemented multiculture education without discriminating any races. Second, Che Noraini Hashim and Hasan Langgulung (2008) focused on doing observation about the development of Religious in two different countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia. This study showed that the concept of Islamic education implementation witnessed many changings in Indonesia and Malaysia. Third, Rosnani Hashim (2013) investigated the Islamization of the curriculum, this study opined that curriculum is designed to give high insight about Islamic curriculum foundation based on Qur'an, the prophet's sunnah, Muslim Scholars and their legacy, and Islamic history.

It can be seen that most of studies focused on analyzing the improvement of

Islamic curriculum, Islamization of the curriculum in the school, management curriculum in Islam perspective, and introducing Islamic curriculum in general education which took place in Indonesia and Malaysia. *Muadallah* system is well known as a new system for Pesantren in Indonesia. Therefore, there is small literature about the development of *Muallimin* curriculum based on *Muadallah* system. Meanwhile, this research will lead to the inevitable expansion of the literature about the development of *Muallimin* curriculum in Indonesia.

## Methodology

The data collection was conducted at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor, the founder of *the Muallimin* curriculum, which is located in Ponorogo, East Java, Indonesia. This study adopted a qualitative approach to explore the development of *the Muallimin* curriculum based on *the Muadallah* system, called *the Muadallah* system based *Muallimin* curriculum, in which Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor is used as a setting of the study. Interviews and documentation were the two main methods used for data collection. Relevant documents were selected for reviewing purposes. There were 4 respondents who were purposively selected

for the interview. They are the leader of the Pesantren *Muadallah* Indonesia community (president of the University of Darussalam Gontor), the secretary of Pesantren *Muadallah* Indonesia community, the leader of Pesantren *Muadallah* Indonesia community in West Java, and the leader Pesantren *Muadallah* Indonesia community in Tasikmalaya. They were selected because they are part Pesantren *Muadallah* Indonesia community and they have main role to help pesantren's development and to work with the government in Indonesia. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis and the data triangulation was also used to confirm the research findings.

## Findings

### 1.1 Development of *Muallimin* Curriculum

*Muallimin* curriculum is well known as the Pesantren curriculum which was designed by Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor. It is considered as a national curriculum for the Pesantrens in Indonesia. The introduction of *the Muallimin* curriculum, which has a specific aim of developing a well-rounded Muslim, has been witnessed as a landmark in the development of Islamic education in Indonesia. *Muallimin* curriculum was designed based on the following basics,

namely, the values of Pesantren, the good practices of Pesantren, the development of personality and mental-spiritual needs, and the regulations of the Indonesian government. These basics were translated by “director’s decree (SK Dirjen)” (2015) into five foundations, consisting of philosophical foundation (based on the values of Pesantren), Sociological foundation (good practices of Pesantren), Psycho-pedagogical foundation (based on personality and mental-spiritual needs), and juridical foundation (Indonesia’s constitutions) (Ministry of Religious, 2015: 7-8). These foundations are considered as the foundation of *the Muallimin* curriculum, which was designed and developed in Pesantren.

Historically, *the Muallimin* curriculum had been introduced and implemented before Indonesia’s Independence Day. Later, the curriculum was redesigned and improved to meet the needs of the societies and to maintain the uniqueness of Pesantren in Indonesia. In the earlier stage of its implementation, *the Muallimin* curriculum was not yet recognized by the Ministry of Education, and the status of Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor was not considered as a national educational institution in Indonesia as it adopted a non-standard curriculum, unlike other schools such as Senior High School,

Junior High School, Alyah, or Madrasah which implement the national standard curriculum. The information regarding the development of *the Muallimin* curriculum obtained from the related documents and interview data given by the respondents as below,

*Respondent 1.* The first respondent stated that *the Muallimin* curriculum was designed based on the people’s needs. It is known as a modern curriculum for the Pesantrens in Indonesia. Unlike Gontor, most Pesantrens adopted the traditional learning system. To keep abreast of the global change, Gontor had reevaluated and improved the existing curriculum based on worldwide demands and development. And this was the reason for the *Muallimin* curriculum to be recognized by the Indonesian government. By this curriculum in which the traditional and modern systems are well combined, the Muslim needs are well served. This curriculum is mainly concerned with producing graduates who are equipped with well-balanced competencies and language proficiency. *Muallimin* curriculum was developed by Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor and initially implemented in Gontor. With this curriculum, the Gontor has more authority to decide the teaching contents for its students.

*Respondent 2.* The second respondent said that *the Muallimin* curriculum aims to create generations have a deep understanding of religion (*Tafaqquh Fiddin*) which means generations who have a profound understanding of Islam and can be Muslim leaders and scholars in their hometown. For example, to be a Muslim scholar teaching in the Mosque in Riau.

*Respondent 3.* According to the third respondent, *the Muallimin* curriculum was recognized as the “contemplation” curriculum, which was designed by Imam Zarkasyih. He developed *the Muallimin* curriculum after his graduation and having experienced curriculum implementation in the “Quick school” in Padang Panjang. The third respondent also reported that Gontor was able to maintain the distinctive Pesantren’s life which is different from other Pesantrens.

*Respondent 4.* The fourth respondent opined that *the Muallimin* curriculum is an independent curriculum designed by Gontor. It is also considered as an integrated curriculum. The structure of *the Muallimin* curriculum had remained unchanged unchanging since the first formulation, however, a minor improvement was made to the curriculum in which a few subjects were added to the curriculum to conform with the *Muadalah* system.

Based on the collected data, it was revealed that *the Muallimin* curriculum used *Dirasah Islamiyah* as the learning system in Gontor. The *Dirasah Islamiyah* is a well-structured system and integrated model of education, consisting of Islamic education and national educational standards. Although the education provision at Gontor was in line with the national standard, it failed to get recognition from the Indonesian Government. As few subjects required by the government were not offered at Gontor (e.g, ideology and Indonesian civic education). *Muallimin* curriculum is distinguished by 5 characteristics as below;

#### 3.1.1 Twenty-four hours of education

Most of the respondents hold the same opinion that *the Muallimin* curriculum is 24 hours education, which means “what students listen, see, and understand are regarded as education”. Besides, *the Muallimin* curriculum pays attention to the development of teachers’ personality.

#### 3.1.2 Students’ language skills

The interview data reported that the graduates of Gontor had a good mastery of Arabic and English languages because the curriculum put much emphasis on developing language proficiency of the students, especially on speaking skills. Both languages are among the main subjects taught in Gontor and the

students are encouraged to use these two languages in their daily lives.

### 3.1.3 Kyai center

Kyai (Islamic religious scholar) is regarded as the central figure and the main source of authority in decision-making. Dormitory and students are the sources of Pesantren. Besides, Kyai plays a key role in *Muallimin* curriculum implementation, and he or she is the source of reference for handling any problems that arise in the Pesantren.

### 3.1.4 School for teachers

*Muallimin* curriculum has a specific aim of producing graduates who are competent to be teachers. Thus, the curriculum can be synonymous with a “school for teachers”. Respondents opined that the curriculum is very concerned with creating quality graduates. The students are expected to gain a teaching skill during their study, and after graduation they will be teachers for themselves, family, and society. The graduates of Gontor would have a 1-year devotion program called “*pengabdian*” before going to university. This program aims to train the graduates to learn about the essential skills required to act as mentors. And it is highly expected that if they are recruited to be teachers, they will effectively perform a

mentoring task. According to the data, the Gontor has a policy of giving priority to its graduates when recruiting new teachers because Gontor strongly believes in its graduates’ teaching competencies.

### 3.1.5 Pesantren’s life

Pesantren’s life is the main purpose of *Muallimin* curriculum development. This curriculum is developed to maintain the uniqueness of Pesantren’s life, characterized by the combination of a traditional and modern system.

The above five characteristics of *the Muallimin* curriculum are the main elements that make Gontor’s education distinct from other types of education. Due to this distinction couple with well-integrated elements, the curriculum was able to serve the needs of a wide variety of groups in Indonesia and it was gradually recognized by the people of Indonesia and finally, its status was accredited by the Indonesian government through the establishment of *Muadalah* system for Pesantrens. Aside from the five mentioned characteristics, *the Muallimin* curriculum was designed and developed based on the general theory of curriculum development and Islamic concepts of education, presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Concept of *Muallimin* curriculum

No	Stages of Curriculum Development from General Theory	<i>Muallimin</i> Curriculum based on Islamic Educational Concept
1	Statement of Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The concept Islamic education was proposed in the first world of Muslim conference (1977), which aims at creating a well rounded Muslim personality. Influenced by the proposal, Gontor took the initiative to offers an integrated curriculum, in which both Islamic and science subjects were merged into the curriculum and thus the curriculum covers a wide spectrum of subjects emphasizing spiritual, intellectual, imaginative, physical, scientific, and linguistic aspects.</li> <li>● Gontor's curriculum focuses on Shari'ah, Islamic principles, and Islamic values.</li> </ul>
2	Content	<p>Gontor's education was divided into curricula and syllabi based on the suggestions made by the first world of Muslim conference on Islamic education, as below:</p> <p><b>Given 'perennial knowledge':</b> <i>Al-Qur'an, Al-Tajwid, Al-Tafsir, Al-Tarjamah, Al-Hadith, Hadith Musthalahul, Fiqh, Ush al-Fiqh, Al-Faraid, Ushuluddin, Al-Adyan, and History of Islam</i></p> <p><b>Curricula and syllabi</b> consists of Acquired knowledge, such as General sciences, such as <i>Al-Mantiq, AlTarbiyah</i>, English language, Indonesian language, state administration, natural sciences, and social sciences</p>



No	Stages of Curriculum Development from General Theory	<i>Muallimin</i> Curriculum based on Islamic Educational Concept
3	Support	<p>Gontor's system pays special emphasis on the process of teacher recruitment, teacher's training, and teacher's needs. It can be presented as below :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teacher – training: inspired by true Islamic faith</li> <li>● Teacher – selection: based on faith and behavior</li> <li>● Equip teacher-training colleges with facilities</li> <li>● Good and promising students to be enrolled in teacher – training colleges</li> </ul>
4	Resource	<p>Gontor's curriculum provides non-formal education for youth, which was developed based on a few factors, as below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The actual application of Islam, Islamic ethics, and manners</li> <li>● Suitable activities for the youth in line with the objectives of Islamic society</li> </ul>
5	Implementation	<p>Gontor is very concerned about the implementation of female education, in which its implementation was consistent with the suggestions made by the first world of Muslim conference on Islamic education, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Man and woman be taught separately</li> <li>● The special female educational system</li> </ul>
6	Develop and re-develop	<p>The development and re-development of <i>the Muallimin</i> curriculum were divided into two stages:</p> <p>In the first stage; <i>the Muallimin</i> curriculum was developed based on globalization change. At this stage,</p>

No	Stages of Curriculum Development from General Theory	<i>Muallimin</i> Curriculum based on Islamic Educational Concept
		<p>the curriculum component comprises of the Islamic system and the traditional system.</p> <p>The second stage, <i>Muallimin</i> curriculum was re-developed based on <i>Muadalah</i> regulation proposed by the Indonesia government in which the contents of the curriculum was added with a few more subject as required by the regulation.</p>
7	Evaluation	<p>The evaluation system used in Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor is different from other evaluation systems used in other Pesantrens. The Gontor has the authority to set its own internal supervisors, who take responsibility to evaluate the <i>Muallimin</i> curriculum implementation. Regarding educational accreditation, Gontor's educational services and operations are evaluated and verified by the Indonesian government every 4 years in order to provide quality assurance prior to extending the legality of its <i>Muallimin</i> curriculum. However, the educational quality assurance of all other Pesantrens is evaluated by the</p> <p>"Pesantren <i>Muadalah</i> Communication Forum", an evaluation body recognized by the government, whose responsibilities are to manage, control and evaluate the educational quality of all Pesantrens registered under the <i>Muadalah</i> system.</p>

## Discussion

*Muallimin* curriculum is the standard curriculum for Pesantrens in Indonesia and it is well known as an independent, comprehensive, and integrated curriculum. It was designed by Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor, the founder of the curriculum and it was implemented in Gontor in 1936 before Indonesia Independence Day. At the initial stage, Gontor was not yet recognized as a national Islamic boarding school in Indonesia, because its founder who is known as Zarkasih rejected to implement the standard curriculum from the Ministry of Education. Muhammad Zudi (2014: 422) stated that Zarkasih wanted to implement *the Muallimin* curriculum only as he believed that through this curriculum that Gontor would be capable to develop an integrated Islamic system of education. As a consequence of not being recognized by the government, school certificates were not acknowledge and thus the students who graduated from Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor were unable to continue their studies in any university in Indonesia. Daradjat (1996) also stated that Gontor discouraged its students to take the National Examination, which is necessary for all students in Indonesia in order to get the government-recognized diploma. However, their certificates (certificates issued

by Gontor) were recognized by some foreign universities such as universities in Turkey, Pakistan, Egypt, Malaysia, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and thus the graduates of Gontor determined to further their studies in these countries. At a later time, with a Gontor's new regulation, students are allowed to take National Examination, but the students have to maintain their status as Islamic boarding school students (Muhammad Iqbal Phase, 2017).

The curriculum is comprehensive because it was developed based on four basic foundations, namely philosophical, sociological, psycho-pedagogical, and juridical foundation. The *Muallimin* curriculum is distinct from other curricula by the following characteristics. First; twenty-four hours of education. This means that the curriculum provides twenty-four hours of education including formal and non-formal education for students. The teachers should develop themselves to teach the students 24 hours. For example, after Isya prayer, the students would be provided with a private program. The teachers sit in front of the school and wait for the students to ask about lessons. Imam Bahrani (2010) also mentioned that Gontor divides the programs into three types for the students within 24 hours, such as intra-curricular, co-curriculum, and extra-curricular.

Each program has a few activities based on students' needs. Extra-curricular activities are divided into outdoor activities and indoor activities, but the formulation of activities has to be related to the Gontor's curriculum (Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi, 2005). The advantages of having 24 hours of education are that the whole day with numerous activities would well serve the needs of the students who stay in a dormitory because they have time and can easily get involved in many activities at all times and thus they can be well trained through these Islamic programs/activities. Consequently, they would be equipped with the desired attributes as anticipated by the Gontor.

Second; language skill. Language skill is one of the major focuss of the curriculum in Gontor. Arabic and English are common languages used in students' daily activities. This environment is very much helpful to build their language proficiency. These language programs are expected to make the students master in both languages. It makes students look different and be ready to deal with the development of globalization

Third; Kyai (scholar) as the central authority of the school. Kyai has the absolute right to control all the matters and decisions in the school. Kyai's decisions could not be

denied. In my opinion, this regulation would give both a positive and negative impact on the development of students and the school. On a positive impact, the Gontor can make a fast decision because it is made by a single person and the Gontor can have an easy way to make and to decide immediate decision because all the decisions would be controlled by Kyai. On a negative impact, the democratic atmosphere could not be promoted in this school because teachers are not allowed to share authority and get involved in the school decision-making process. I strongly believe that if teachers are not given chance to voice their opinion, but their position is to accept whatever the decision being made by Kyai, then their sense of ownership and responsibility will gradually decline.

Fourth; School for teachers. This means that Gontor was built to be a school for teachers. This is consistent with the policy of Gontor in which the teachers from Gontor's Alumni are given priority when it comes to recruiting a new teacher. Gontor would recruit external teachers to teach for a few subjects only. This program would train the graduates to enhance the teaching skill that can be applied in the real life.

Fifth; Pesantren's life. Gontor has been acknowledged as a modern Pesantren which

puts much emphasis on implementing a well-balanced traditional and modern curriculum, called the *Muallimin* curriculum. It has been proved that applying Pesantren's life is the best

solution to create the Islamic generation because *Muallimin* offers 100% Islamic subjects and 100% science subjects.

The concept of the *Muallimin* curriculum can be presented in Figure 12:

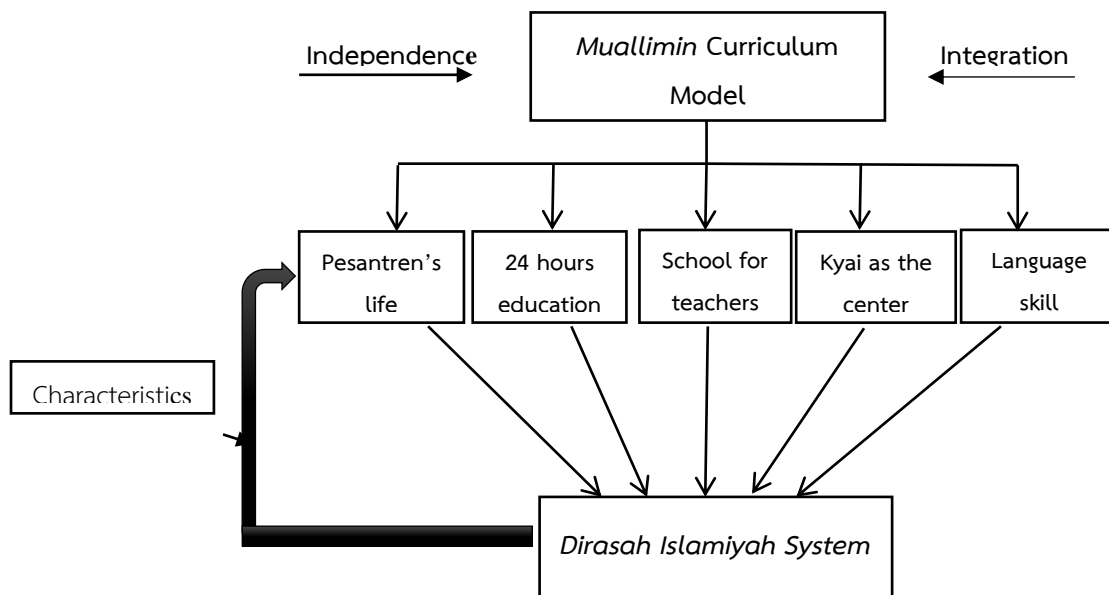


Figure 1 The concept of *Muallimin* Curriculum

The above figure shows the *Muallimin* curriculum concept in Gontor. The *Muallimin* curriculum has five main characteristics to be implemented in Gontor such as Pesantren's life, 24 hours of education, a school for teachers, Kyai as the central authority, and students' language skills. *Muallimin* has adopted the *Dirasah Islamiyah* system for the teaching and learning process by combining modern and traditional systems based on the characteristics of Pesantren.

Owing to a well-balanced integrated curriculum in which the national educational standards and Islamic education were jointly offered and its effective implementation, the *Muallimin* curriculum obtained a qualification from the Ministry of Religious in 2000. Besides its development based on national and Muslim needs, it was also based on the curriculum development theory. The stages of curriculum development of the *Muallimin* curriculum were based on general theories, consisting of the following stages; statement of philosophy,

content, resource, support, implementation, development and re-development, and evaluation". Meanwhile, the aims and objectives of the *Muallimin* curriculum and its practice are solidly grounded in the concepts of Islamic/Muslim education proposed in the First World of Muslim Conferences on Islamic Education in 1977 that was held at the holy city of Makkah. This conference was a particularly significant event for the revitalization of Muslim education and it was essentially aimed at reconstructing Muslim education to achieve the production of a perfect Muslim, attaining a balanced growth of his personality in the dimension of spirit, intellect, feeling, and bodily senses (Saqeb, 2000). Since the curriculum has been designed based on several sources, such as national and Muslim community needs, the general theories of curriculum development as well as the Islamic concept of education, thus the *Muallimin* curriculum has been recognized as a well-balanced integrated curriculum, in terms of its contents and implementation. Moreover, with the support of the *Muadalah* system, the practice of the curriculum become more conducive and the graduates are offered a wide spectrum of learning and working opportunity in the future.

## Conclusions

*Muadalah* system based *Muallimin* curriculum which was developed by Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor, the founder of this curriculum, provides an important landmark in the development of Islamic education in Indonesia. Credit for this significant contribution should be given to the Gontor because it was the first Islamic boarding school that has successfully created a prototype of the Islamic curriculum in which the later models of Islamic curriculum are developed in other Pesantrens. *Muadalah* system-based *Muallim* curriculum is distinct from other curricula by these five characteristics, namely, Pesantren's life, 24 hours' education, a school for teachers, Kyai, or Sheikh (a scholar) as the central authority, and students' language skill. It is owed to these unique characteristics of this curriculum that the true sense of Muslim education has been long preserved in Indonesia through a well-balanced combination between the general sciences and the Divine sources. Consequently, the products of this curriculum are able to attain the goal of education in Islam, which is the attainment of the balanced growth of man/student personality through the training of the spirit, intellect, feeling, and bodily senses.

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