

# Enhancing Islamic Education in Asahan Regency: Muhammadiyah's Institutional, Curricular, and Human Resource Management Contributions

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## ABSTRACT

Islamic education is central to shaping the character and advancing the civilization of the Muslim community. In Indonesia, Muhammadiyah—one of the country's largest Islamic organizations—has played a pivotal role in promoting Islamic education. This study explores Muhammadiyah's contribution to Islamic education in Asahan Regency, focusing on institutional development, curriculum integration, and human resource management. A qualitative research design was employed, utilizing interviews, observations, and document analysis. Data were collected through 10 in-depth interviews with key stakeholders and direct observations at several Muhammadiyah educational institutions. The study found that Muhammadiyah oversees 50 educational institutions in Asahan Regency. These institutions implement a curriculum that integrates religious and general sciences, reflecting the educational philosophy of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan. Human resource management practices emphasize professionalism and the internalization of Islamic values, contributing to improved educational outcomes. The integration of religious and general knowledge serves as a model for balancing spiritual and intellectual development. Muhammadiyah's approach aligns with the broader objectives of Islamic education reform, promoting intellectual independence and character building rooted in Islamic teachings. Muhammadiyah plays a critical role in enhancing the quality of Islamic education in Asahan Regency. The findings offer practical insights for curriculum design and staff development in Islamic educational institutions, while also contributing to academic discourse on holistic and integrative approaches in Islamic education.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic education plays a crucial role in shaping individual character and contributing to the development of civilization. It functions not only as a means of knowledge transfer but also as a medium for instilling moral values, ethics, and personal integrity within society (Mualifah et al., 2023). In the Indonesian context, the role of Islamic education has become increasingly significant, given that the majority of the population adheres to Islam, making it an integral part of the national education system (Frاندani, 2023).

One of the most influential organizations in the development of Islamic education in Indonesia is Muhammadiyah. Established by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan in 1912, Muhammadiyah aimed to reform the Islamic education system, which at the time was fragmented and lacked access to modern knowledge (Zarro, 2020). Over the years, Muhammadiyah has expanded into a vast organization managing thousands of educational institutions, ranging from elementary schools to universities. The presence of Muhammadiyah's educational institutions across various regions in Indonesia reflects its commitment to enhancing the quality of Islamic education and producing competent Muslim generations (Yusri et al., 2024).

In Asahan Regency, Muhammadiyah has established numerous educational institutions to provide quality Islamic education to the community. According to recent data, there are 50 Muhammadiyah-affiliated educational institutions in Asahan Regency, spanning from early childhood education to higher education levels. The establishment of these institutions underscores Muhammadiyah's significant role in improving the quality of Islamic education in the region. One of the distinctive features of Muhammadiyah's education system is its curriculum, which integrates religious and general sciences. This approach aligns with the holistic concept of Islamic education, emphasizing a balance between worldly and spiritual knowledge (Thahir, 2024). The curriculum implemented in Muhammadiyah schools encompasses both Islamic studies and general subjects such as mathematics, science, and technology, ensuring that graduates are equipped with competencies relevant to contemporary demands.

Apart from curriculum development, human resource management within Muhammadiyah educational institutions is a crucial factor in enhancing the quality of Islamic education. Muhammadiyah applies a structured teacher development system based on Islamic values, professionalism, and a strong work ethic. Educators and academic staff at Muhammadiyah institutions receive regular training to improve their teaching skills and pedagogical methods, thereby ensuring effective learning outcomes for students (Setiadin & Rohida, 2020).

Despite Muhammadiyah's significant contributions to Islamic education in Asahan Regency, several challenges remain. One major issue is the limitation of resources, including shortages of qualified educators, infrastructure, and financial support (Sudarmin et al., 2024). Additionally, globalization and modernization require Muhammadiyah educational institutions to continuously adapt to contemporary developments to remain relevant and competitive in producing highly skilled graduates (Siswosuharjo & Listiyoko, 2020).

This study aims to analyze the role of Muhammadiyah in the development of Islamic education in Asahan Regency, focusing on three key aspects: institutional management, curriculum integration, and human resource governance. The findings are expected to contribute both academically and practically to the development of Islamic education in Indonesia. From an academic perspective, this research serves as a reference for further studies on Islamic education and the role of religious organizations in its advancement. From a practical standpoint, the study's outcomes can provide valuable insights for Muhammadiyah and other stakeholders in formulating more effective policies and strategies to enhance the quality of Islamic education in Asahan Regency.

Research on the role of Islamic organizations in the development of Islamic education in Indonesia has been widely conducted, demonstrating the substantial contributions of organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama in establishing an education system based on Islamic values. A study by Nurhalima et al. (2019) explores how Islamic scholars and religious organizations have not only focused on da'wah (Islamic propagation) but also established educational institutions as part of their

efforts to advance Islamic thought. The introduction of educational reform ideas has led to a more inclusive system that integrates general knowledge with Islamic studies. Scholars such as K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari, and other prominent figures have played vital roles in founding educational institutions that continue to contribute significantly to Islamic education in Indonesia today. This research emphasizes that education is a fundamental part of Islamic organizations' missions to develop a Muslim generation that balances scientific knowledge with spiritual values.

Beyond educational development, Islamic organizations also play a role in promoting Islamic moderation in Indonesia. A study by Rusli & Sugiarto (2022) highlights how Islamic organizations and Islamic educational institutions function as safeguards against extremism and religious-based conflicts. In this context, educational institutions play a strategic role in instilling values of tolerance, inclusivity, and diversity through curriculum development and learning programs grounded in Islamic moderation. Using a literature review method, the study finds that organizations such as Muhammadiyah not only focus on education but also take responsibility for maintaining social harmony through an educational approach that emphasizes national and humanitarian values. Thus, Islamic educational institutions affiliated with Muhammadiyah serve not only as centers for knowledge dissemination but also as instruments for fostering a more moderate and inclusive understanding of Islam in a pluralistic society.

The role of Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama in education has also been examined by Adelia Maulida and Nana Sutarna, who focus on primary education. Their study investigates how these two major Islamic organizations have established a system of Islamic education by founding primary schools and madrasahs that contribute to shaping quality Muslim generations. Through a literature review approach, the research identifies that the educational philosophies developed by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan and K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari serve as foundational principles in shaping the curriculum and character education in Muhammadiyah and NU-affiliated schools. The findings suggest that primary education serves as a crucial foundation in instilling Islamic values and shaping students' cognitive frameworks in line with moderate and progressive Islamic principles. Therefore, Muhammadiyah's role in education extends beyond secondary and higher education and significantly influences early education as a fundamental stage in character development for knowledgeable and ethical Muslim generations.

Although Islamic education in Asahan Regency has developed, there are still some weaknesses in institutional aspects, curriculum, and human resource management, particularly in the context of Muhammadiyah's contributions. Previous studies have tended to focus on general aspects of Islamic education without specifically highlighting how Muhammadiyah, as an Islamic organization, impacts the improvement of education quality in this region. Moreover, there is still a lack of research exploring the interrelation between institutional policies, Islamic-based curriculum design, and the management strategies of educators and education personnel within Muhammadiyah institutions, creating a research gap that needs to be addressed. Therefore, this study is necessary to gain a deeper understanding of how Muhammadiyah contributes to enhancing Islamic education in Asahan Regency through institutional management, curriculum, and human resources. Consequently, this research aims to answer the question: How does Muhammadiyah contribute to enhancing Islamic education in Asahan Regency through institutional management, curriculum, and human resource management?

## 2. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study method to analyze the role of Muhammadiyah in the development of Islamic education in Asahan Regency. A qualitative approach was chosen as it allows for an in-depth exploration of social, cultural, and institutional phenomena related to the Muhammadiyah Islamic education system (Rasyid, 2022). The data collection techniques in this study consist of in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Interviews were conducted with school administrators, principals, teachers, and students to explore their perspectives on Muhammadiyah's management of Islamic education, curriculum implementation, and human resource development. Observations were carried out by visiting several Muhammadiyah educational institutions in Asahan Regency to directly examine the learning process, interactions between educators and students,

and the application of curriculum and teaching methods in classrooms. Meanwhile, document analysis involved collecting and reviewing relevant materials such as educational curricula, Muhammadiyah's internal regulations, annual school reports, and academic evaluation results, providing valuable insights into Muhammadiyah's educational policies and their effectiveness in improving the quality of Islamic education (DP, 2022).

Data analysis in this study was conducted using thematic analysis (Rukminingsih et al., 2020), which involved data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, the collected data were categorized based on key themes such as institutional management, curriculum implementation, and human resource governance. The categorized data were then presented in a descriptive narrative format to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn by analyzing patterns and relationships in the data while considering the theoretical framework of the study. To enhance reliability, intercoder reliability checks were conducted by having multiple researchers independently code the data and compare their results to ensure consistency in theme identification. To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, this study employed triangulation techniques (Denzin, 2009), including source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and member checking. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing interview results from different participant groups, such as administrators, teachers, and students, to identify consistent patterns. Methodological triangulation involved integrating data from interviews, observations, and document analysis to enhance the accuracy and credibility of the research findings. Additionally, member checking was carried out by sharing preliminary findings with participants after data analysis to confirm the accuracy of interpretations. Through this systematic approach, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of Muhammadiyah's role in the development of Islamic education in Asahan Regency.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Findings

Muhammadiyah is one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia, playing a strategic role in the development of Islamic education. Since its establishment by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan in 1912, Muhammadiyah has positioned education as one of its core missions to enhance national intellectual development. In various regions, including Asahan Regency, North Sumatra, Muhammadiyah actively establishes Islamic-based educational institutions to strengthen Islamic values in education while simultaneously improving the quality of Muslim human resources in Indonesia (Lubis et al., 2024).

Asahan Regency has a strong foundation in Muhammadiyah-based education. The organization has not only established formal educational institutions such as elementary and secondary schools but has also developed higher education institutions and non-formal educational centers. Muhammadiyah has demonstrated a firm commitment by founding approximately 50 educational institutions, ranging from kindergartens, elementary schools, madrasahs, and secondary schools to higher education institutions. This extensive network illustrates that Muhammadiyah is not only focused on da'wah and social activities but also prioritizes building a quality education system rooted in Islamic values.

The presence of Muhammadiyah educational institutions in Asahan Regency significantly contributes to increasing access to education for the local Muslim community. According to a study conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) of Asahan Regency (2022), the school participation rate in this region has increased by 15% over the past decade, largely driven by the presence of Islamic-based schools, including those managed by Muhammadiyah. This organization also plays a vital role in providing inclusive education that emphasizes both academic achievement and the development of Islamic character. The curriculum implemented in Muhammadiyah schools in Asahan integrates the national curriculum with in-depth Islamic education. This approach aligns with the concept of Islamic education proposed by (Arifuddin & Karim, 2021), which suggests that Islamic education should integrate modern scientific knowledge with Islamic values to produce competent and morally upright Muslim generations.

The institutional structure of Muhammadiyah education in Asahan Regency is well-organized, with each school operating under a management system that adheres to national education standards while maintaining Islamic values in its operations. Each Muhammadiyah-affiliated school follows a structured governance model involving the regional Muhammadiyah leadership, school principals, educators, and school committees in decision-making processes. According to Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, educational institutions in Indonesia must uphold proper management standards to ensure quality learning. In the context of Muhammadiyah, the education management system in Asahan Regency adheres to the principles of school-based management (MBS), which grants educational institutions autonomy in managing resources and making strategic decisions.

Additionally, the Regional Leadership of Muhammadiyah (PDM) in Asahan Regency plays a crucial role in overseeing Muhammadiyah educational institutions. PDM functions as a supervisor, facilitator, and innovator, ensuring that the education provided aligns with Muhammadiyah's vision and mission of producing outstanding Muslim cadres. The Chairman of PDM Asahan, interviewed in this study, stated that one of the biggest challenges in managing Muhammadiyah education is balancing Islamic traditions with innovations in modern education. According to him, PDM's strategy includes periodic evaluations of the curriculum and educational programs, as well as organizing training sessions for educators to adapt to evolving educational trends. Research by Suyatno et al. (2021) highlights that leadership based on Islamic values within Muhammadiyah significantly contributes to fostering a strong organizational culture in education.

One of the primary strengths of Muhammadiyah educational institutions in Asahan Regency is the integration of general knowledge with Islamic education in its curriculum. The curriculum implemented in Muhammadiyah schools does not solely focus on academic aspects but also fosters strong Islamic character development among students. A principal of a Muhammadiyah school interviewed in this study explained that the pedagogical approach employed follows a *value-based education* model, where students are not only taught Islamic concepts theoretically but also provided with real-life applications. For instance, students are required to participate in congregational prayers, read the Qur'an regularly, and engage in social activities such as community service and mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*). Research conducted by Nasir et al. (2020) confirms that Muhammadiyah schools implement a *value-based education* approach to shape Muslim personalities centered on Islamic ethics and morals. At every educational level, there are dedicated subjects that teach Qur'anic studies, Hadith, and Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), along with habitual worship practices such as congregational prayers and social activities that cultivate compassion and solidarity (Anwar & Ikhwan, 2023).

Innovation in teaching methodologies is also a key focus in Muhammadiyah education. A senior teacher at a Muhammadiyah high school in Asahan Regency revealed that their school has adopted various modern learning approaches, including digital technology in teaching, *project-based learning*, and more interactive and participatory educational strategies. In interviews with educators, they emphasized that the application of these methods has significantly increased students' engagement, particularly in science and technology subjects. This approach aligns with the constructivist learning theory developed by (Halawa et al., 2022), which posits that learning should involve active interaction between students and their learning environment.

Despite Muhammadiyah's substantial contributions to Islamic education in Asahan Regency, several challenges persist in managing its educational institutions. One of the major challenges is the limitation of resources, including funding constraints and the availability of qualified educators. A school principal interviewed acknowledged that Muhammadiyah schools often struggle to recruit highly skilled teachers in the science and technology fields. Additionally, he mentioned that the operational funding for Muhammadiyah schools is still highly dependent on donations and endowments from Muhammadiyah members, which are sometimes insufficient to meet the schools' operational and developmental needs. As a non-profit organization, Muhammadiyah frequently relies on charitable contributions as its primary funding source, which at times falls short in sustaining the schools. Moreover, competition with other Islamic-based schools, such as modern pesantrens and

integrated Islamic schools, presents an additional challenge. To address these challenges, Muhammadiyah must continue innovating its educational system, enhancing teacher quality, and strengthening partnerships with the government and private sectors to develop educational facilities (Badriah, Zakiyah, et al., 2023).

Looking ahead, the prospects for Muhammadiyah education in Asahan Regency remain promising, particularly with the increasing public awareness of the importance of quality Islamic education. A parent interviewed in this study stated that they chose to enrol their child in a Muhammadiyah school because they believe that the Islamic education provided at Muhammadiyah institutions fosters better character development than general schools (Alif, 2025). With support from various stakeholders, Muhammadiyah has a significant opportunity to expand and make a broader impact in producing an excellent Muslim generation in the era of globalization. The institutional framework of Muhammadiyah in Islamic education in Asahan Regency has demonstrated a significant role in improving the quality of Islamic-based education in the region. With more than 50 educational institutions spanning various levels, Muhammadiyah continues to contribute to providing high-quality education for society. A well-structured institutional system, strong leadership, and a curriculum rooted in Islamic values remain the fundamental strengths of Muhammadiyah's educational system.

The Muhammadiyah educational system in Asahan Regency consists of various levels of formal education, including elementary, secondary, and vocational schools. Based on data from the *Majelis Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah* (Dikdasmen) of Asahan Regency, there are currently **26 Muhammadiyah-affiliated schools** operating in the region. These institutions cater to different educational levels, providing access to quality Islamic education while integrating general sciences. The distribution of Muhammadiyah schools in Asahan Regency is as follows:

**Table 1.** Muhammadiyah Schools in Asahan Regency

No	School Level	Number of Schools
1	Private Islamic Elementary School ( <i>Sekolah Dasar Swasta – SDS</i> )	8
2	Private Islamic Madrasah Ibtidaiyah ( <i>Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Swasta – MIS</i> )	4
3	Private Islamic Junior High School ( <i>Sekolah Menengah Pertama – SMP</i> )	5
4	Private Islamic Madrasah Tsanawiyah ( <i>Madrasah Tsanawiyah Swasta – MTS</i> )	3
5	Private Islamic Senior High School ( <i>Sekolah Menengah Atas – SMA</i> )	1
6	Private Islamic Vocational School ( <i>Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan – SMK</i> )	2
7	Private Islamic Madrasah Aliyah ( <i>Madrasah Aliyah Swasta – MAS</i> )	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>All Muhammadiyah Schools in Asahan Regency</b>	<b>26</b>

*Source: Majelis Dikdasmen Kabupaten Asahan*

The presence of these 26 Muhammadiyah educational institutions reflects the organization's strong commitment to providing accessible and high-quality Islamic education in Asahan Regency. This distribution also demonstrates that Muhammadiyah schools cover a broad spectrum of education levels, ensuring a continuous learning path for students from elementary to senior high school.

Muhammadiyah integrates a unique curriculum model that balances Islamic religious studies and general sciences, aiming to produce well-rounded graduates who excel academically while upholding Islamic moral values. In line with this approach, Muhammadiyah schools adopt ISMUBA (Al-Islam, Muhammadiyah Studies, and Arabic Language) as a core component of their curriculum. This model emphasizes the development of spiritual intelligence, character education, and academic excellence, making Muhammadiyah institutions a distinguished choice for parents seeking a holistic education for their children. With continuous support from Muhammadiyah Regional Leadership (*Pimpinan Daerah Muhammadiyah – PDM*), educators, and the local community, Muhammadiyah schools in Asahan

Regency are poised to further strengthen their role as leading Islamic educational institutions in the region. The implementation of modern pedagogical methods, digital learning integration, and entrepreneurship-based education ensures that Muhammadiyah remains relevant and competitive in the evolving educational landscape.

The curriculum implemented in Muhammadiyah educational institutions in Asahan Regency has a unique characteristic that reflects the integration of Islamic religious knowledge and general sciences. This educational model aims not only to provide students with academic knowledge but also to shape a strong Islamic character (Purnomo, 2024). A principal of a Muhammadiyah madrasah stated in an interview that the educational approach adopted in Muhammadiyah schools is not solely oriented toward cognitive aspects but also emphasizes affective and psychomotor dimensions, enabling students to apply Islamic values in their daily lives. This integration represents a holistic educational approach that incorporates faith-based learning environments, scientific knowledge, and practical application, as well as a strong work ethic rooted in Islamic principles (Mulkhan, 2007).

One of the fundamental elements of Muhammadiyah's curriculum is the presence of ISMUBA (Al-Islam, Muhammadiyah Studies, and Arabic). A subject teacher in ISMUBA explained that these subjects are not merely supplementary but serve as the foundation for shaping students' character. In an interview, the teacher emphasized that the ISMUBA curriculum consists of six core subjects: *Fiqh, Al-Qur'an and Hadith, Aqidah Akhlak, Islamic History (Tarikh Islam), Muhammadiyah Studies, and Arabic Language* (Alifuddin, 2021b). This curriculum is designed to integrate general scientific knowledge with Islamic teachings, ensuring that students not only acquire academic competencies but also possess a strong religious foundation (Saleh et al., 2021).

In the context of Asahan Regency, the Muhammadiyah education curriculum has undergone various revisions to align with contemporary developments. One of the notable updates is the introduction of technology and entrepreneurship-based subjects into the Muhammadiyah education system. A Muhammadiyah school principal emphasized that this initiative was undertaken to equip students with skills applicable in the workforce, ensuring that they not only achieve academic excellence but also develop practical competencies applicable to everyday life (Junarti et al., 2021). Beyond the formal curriculum, Muhammadiyah education places significant emphasis on extracurricular religious activities such as Qur'anic recitations, *halaqah tafsir* (Qur'anic study circles), and *hadith* studies. These activities aim to deepen students' understanding of Islam while simultaneously shaping their character in accordance with Islamic principles. Through these concerted efforts, Muhammadiyah education in Asahan Regency continues to expand and significantly impact the community. With support from Muhammadiyah Regional Leadership (*Pimpinan Daerah Muhammadiyah* or PDM), educators, parents, and the wider society, Muhammadiyah has the potential to serve as a model for progressive and relevant Islamic education in the modern era.

From a pedagogical perspective, Muhammadiyah education emphasizes the principle of *prophetic education*, an approach rooted in the four traits of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW): *shiddiq* (honesty), *amanah* (trustworthiness), *fathonah* (intelligence), and *tabligh* (effective communication). This approach aims to cultivate a generation with high integrity, intellectual acumen, and excellent communication skills (Sa'adah et al., 2023).

Furthermore, within the broader context of Islamic education development in Indonesia, the Muhammadiyah curriculum has demonstrated remarkable flexibility in accommodating contemporary needs. Since its inception, Muhammadiyah has sought to bridge the dichotomy between religious and general sciences, a challenge that historically hindered the academic and professional advancement of Indonesian Muslims. By integrating Islamic studies into secular schools and incorporating modern knowledge into religious institutions, Muhammadiyah has successfully developed an inclusive and comprehensive education system (Darmawan et al., 2024). In practice, this integration is further reinforced through character-based and spirituality-oriented approaches. Muhammadiyah education underscores the importance of balancing intellectual, emotional, and spiritual intelligence in the

learning process. This philosophy is evident in various educational policies that prioritize not only academic achievement but also the moral and ethical development of students (Khoirudin et al., 2020).

From an educational governance perspective, Muhammadiyah operates a well-structured and professional management system. Each Muhammadiyah-affiliated institution adheres to national education standards while maintaining an Islamic foundation, thereby producing an education system that emphasizes academic excellence alongside character formation (Badriah, Handayani, et al., 2023). Another unique aspect of the Muhammadiyah curriculum is its dual function as both a preparatory institution for professional careers and a training ground for future Islamic scholars and leaders. As a result, Muhammadiyah continuously invests in teacher training programs to ensure educators possess strong religious competence and effectively impart Islamic values to students (Ridlo & Hafidz, 2024).

The Muhammadiyah education system in Asahan Regency has demonstrated success in integrating Islamic and general sciences within its curriculum. By adapting to contemporary developments while maintaining core Islamic values, Muhammadiyah has solidified its position as one of the leading Islamic educational institutions capable of competing in the modern world. This integrated curriculum not only facilitates students in acquiring comprehensive knowledge but also nurtures individuals with a well-balanced spiritual, intellectual, and social (Perawironegoro et al., 2024).

The success of Muhammadiyah educational institutions in Asahan Regency is inseparable from effective human resource management. As an organization committed to Islamic education, Muhammadiyah has established a clear system for recruiting, managing, and developing educators and administrative staff. This structure ensures that education within Muhammadiyah institutions meets high academic and Islamic ethical standards (Ariadin, 2025). In practice, this governance system adheres to quality management principles implemented across various aspects of Islamic education to enhance teacher professionalism and instructional effectiveness (Farras & Sunesti, 2022).

Muhammadiyah employs a selective recruitment system for educators, considering both academic qualifications and moral integrity. Teachers in Muhammadiyah schools typically have strong educational backgrounds in Islamic studies and are encouraged to continually enhance their competencies through training programs and seminars regularly organized by Muhammadiyah (Hermawan & Khan, 2023). These training initiatives often cover pedagogical skills, an in-depth understanding of the ISMUBA curriculum, and the reinforcement of Islamic values in teaching methodologies (Anwar et al., 2023). One of Muhammadiyah's flagship programs is the *Pendidikan Khusus Kepala Sekolah* (Dikuspala), designed to equip school principals with managerial, supervisory, and leadership skills necessary for running institutions based on Islamic principles. Consequently, Muhammadiyah school principals function not only as administrators but also as leaders capable of steering modern and inclusive Islamic education (Siddik et al., 2023).

To enhance teacher competency, Muhammadiyah collaborates with various higher education institutions, both public and private. These partnerships include scholarship programs for Muhammadiyah educators to pursue advanced degrees, ensuring that teachers possess both strong academic qualifications and innovative teaching methodologies that align with contemporary educational developments (Hamami & Nuryana, 2022). Additionally, some Muhammadiyah schools have established collaborations with international educational institutions to broaden teachers' perspectives on global education systems and the integration of technology in teaching (Baqi & Prasetya, 2024).

Beyond professional development, Muhammadiyah also prioritizes the welfare of its educators. Various incentives are provided for teachers with long-term service, including financial support, continuing education assistance, and awards for dedication to Islamic education (Haq, 2024). This system aims to foster teacher loyalty and motivation, ensuring a commitment to delivering quality education to students. In certain cases, Muhammadiyah also offers welfare benefits such as health insurance, housing assistance, and retirement funds for long-serving teachers (Hastasari et al., 2022).

This model reflects Muhammadiyah's internal policies, which prioritize not only professional growth but also the social well-being of its educators.

While Muhammadiyah's human resource management system in Asahan Regency is well-structured, several challenges persist. One major issue is the limited number of educators with expertise in specific fields such as science and technology, an area of growing importance in modern education. To address this, Muhammadiyah collaborates with universities to recruit qualified educators and offers scholarships for teachers seeking further education. Additionally, Muhammadiyah has begun developing technology-based training programs through digital platforms to enhance teachers' proficiency in utilizing digital learning tools (Yumnah, 2022).

Overall, Muhammadiyah's human resource management system plays a crucial role in the success of its educational mission. By maintaining a rigorous recruitment process, fostering continuous teacher development, and ensuring the welfare of its educators, Muhammadiyah has created a professional and Islamic value-based learning environment (Alifuddin, 2021a). Moving forward, adapting human resource management strategies to technological advancements and global educational demands will be essential in maintaining Muhammadiyah's competitive edge in Islamic education.

### 3.2 Discussion

Muhammadiyah is one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia, playing a strategic role in the development of Islamic education. With a long history of commitment to education, Muhammadiyah has established numerous schools that integrate Islamic values with modern educational principles. According to data from the Elementary and Secondary Education Council (Dikdasmen) of Asahan Regency, there are 26 Muhammadiyah schools spread across various educational levels, from elementary schools to vocational high schools. These institutions not only provide access to quality education for the Muslim community but also serve as a platform for character building, fostering students with strong moral foundations, leadership skills, and a deep understanding of both religious and secular knowledge. Through continuous innovation and curriculum development, Muhammadiyah schools strive to balance traditional Islamic teachings with contemporary educational methods, ensuring that students are well-equipped to face the challenges of the modern world while staying true to their faith and cultural identity.

This study found that the presence of Muhammadiyah educational institutions significantly contributes to improving access to education for the Muslim community in Asahan. Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) Asahan (2022) show that the school participation rate in the region has increased by 15% over the past decade, largely driven by the presence of Islamic schools, including Muhammadiyah. Additionally, Muhammadiyah integrates the national curriculum with a deeper Islamic education.

Muhammadiyah implements a school-based management (SBM) system, which grants autonomy in resource management and strategic decision-making. This approach allows each school to tailor its educational strategies to local needs while still adhering to the overarching principles of Muhammadiyah. The Muhammadiyah Regional Leadership (PDM) of Asahan plays a crucial role as a supervisor, facilitator, and innovator, ensuring that the education provided aligns with Muhammadiyah's vision and mission in shaping outstanding Muslim cadres. By giving schools greater independence in decision-making, SBM fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among school administrators, teachers, and the community, leading to more effective educational outcomes. Additionally, this system encourages innovation in teaching methodologies, curriculum integration, and extracurricular activities, further enhancing the quality of education within Muhammadiyah institutions.

Muhammadiyah has successfully combined Islamic-based education with modern management, creating a system that balances religious and academic excellence. The 15% increase in school participation shows its strong appeal to the community by providing a structured yet flexible learning environment. However, its approach should be compared with other Islamic institutions. While

modern pesantren focus on intensive religious studies in a boarding school setting, Muhammadiyah integrates religious and secular education in one institution for a more holistic learning experience. Compared to integrated Islamic schools that emphasize project-based learning and technology, Muhammadiyah needs to adopt more interactive and innovative teaching methods. To stay competitive, it must strengthen human resources, improve teacher training, and secure sustainable funding for further educational improvements.

Compared to modern pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), Muhammadiyah places more emphasis on integrating formal and religious education within a single institution, whereas modern pesantren tend to focus more on boarding-based education with a deeper religious curriculum. On the other hand, integrated Islamic schools adopt a more flexible approach by incorporating project-based learning and technology-based education. Although Muhammadiyah has implemented technology-based learning and interactive methods, it still faces challenges in balancing Islamic traditions with educational innovation. Moreover, one of the main challenges Muhammadiyah faces is the limitation of resources, both in terms of funding and the availability of qualified teachers, especially in science and technology. Compared to other Islamic educational institutions with greater financial support, such as modern pesantren with extensive waqf (endowment) networks, Muhammadiyah relies more on donations and endowments from its members.

Overall, Muhammadiyah education has a promising future in improving the quality of Islamic education in Indonesia, especially if it can develop more adaptive strategies to address contemporary challenges. Strengthening human resources through teacher training programs, professional development, and recruitment of skilled educators will be crucial in enhancing the overall learning experience. Additionally, integrating innovative learning systems, such as digital technology, interactive teaching methods, and research-based education, can help Muhammadiyah schools stay relevant in an increasingly modern and globalized world. Collaboration with various stakeholders, including government institutions, private sectors, and international organizations, can also provide valuable support in terms of funding, curriculum development, and technological advancement. By continuously evolving and adapting to educational trends while maintaining strong Islamic values, Muhammadiyah schools can further establish themselves as leading institutions in shaping knowledgeable, ethical, and competent Muslim generations.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Muhammadiyah has played a crucial role in expanding access to quality Islamic education in Asahan Regency. Beyond increasing school participation, its integrated curriculum, which combines Islamic teachings with general sciences, equips students with both religious understanding and academic competencies necessary for contemporary challenges. However, to maximize its impact, Muhammadiyah must continue adapting to changing educational landscapes. To strengthen its educational system, policymakers and Muhammadiyah stakeholders should prioritize investment in teacher development, particularly in science and technology fields, while ensuring adequate infrastructure and learning resources. Enhancing collaboration with government agencies, private sectors, and educational institutions can also provide sustainable support for innovation in curriculum and pedagogy. Additionally, improving teacher welfare programs will help retain high-quality educators and maintain professional standards. Future research could explore comparative studies between Muhammadiyah schools and other Islamic education models, such as modern pesantren or integrated Islamic schools, to identify best practices and areas for improvement. Examining the long-term outcomes of Muhammadiyah's educational approach on graduates' career paths and societal contributions would also offer valuable insights for continuous development.

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