



The Growth Of Islamic Schools In Sintang In The Colonial Era, 1901-1942

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Abstract

This research is intended as a preliminary study of the historical journey of Islamic schools in Sintang during the Dutch colonial era (1901-1942), which has rarely been discussed. The transformation of Islamic education from traditional to formal-modern also occurred in the upper Kapuas River, not only on the west coast. The research uses a historical method with the following stages: source collection, source criticism, interpretation, and historical writing (historiography). The results of the study indicate: First, the condition of Islamic education in Sintang in the early 20th century was organized non-formally and traditionally, where institutions such as mosques and langgar became places of learning. The curriculum focused on religious lessons by ustads who came from all over the archipelago. Second, the existence of the Wild School Ordinance and the development of Pan-Islamism regarding educational reform encouraged traditional Islamic education to transform into formal schools by adopting a modern (general) curriculum. By 1942, a number of Islamic schools were established around Sintang, Melawi, and Kapuas Hulu. Third, the implemented curriculum adopted a number of general subjects such as reading and writing Latin letters, arithmetic, natural sciences, geography, and drawing, in addition to religious subjects. The length of education is estimated to be similar to the three-year *Volkschool* and the five-year *Standardschool*. The existence of Islamic schools has had an impact on the growth of educated native Indonesians and fostered a spirit of nationalism. This was evident after the Japanese occupation of 1942-1945, when young people around Sintang became involved in the struggle to maintain Indonesian independence. This research is expected to contribute to the historiography of local history and serve as study material for further research.

Keywords: Islamic School, Madrasah, Sintang, West Kalimantan, Curriculum

1. Introduction

The implementation of Islamic education in Indonesia, with all its dynamics, has been attempted since ancient times in simple and traditional forms. Educational institutions at that time were still in the form of langgar (prayer hall), hermitage (padepokan), surau (prayer hall), and other similar institutions, as known during the era of the Islamic Sultanate (Furqan, 2019). However, the development of Western colonialism in the 16th century CE significantly influenced the development of education in the archipelago at that time. Western educational models were introduced, emphasizing general curriculum subjects such as arithmetic, reading, and writing in Latin. From the Dutch perspective, for example, colonialism intended to advance the civilization of people of color (Daliman, 2012). However, in practice, these good intentions were never realized. Instead, they were directed more towards cultural transmission and the production of low-level employees. Furthermore, this education did not reach a wide audience, and there was no apparent seriousness in opening access to mass education to the people (Frankema, 2013). This lack of genuine commitment to education highlights the paradox of colonial efforts, where the supposed aim of uplifting colonized populations often masked exploitative motives. Consequently, the legacy of such educational systems continued to perpetuate inequality and hinder true development in the regions affected. Providing access to education for Indigenous children was only seriously considered in 1900, through the so-called ethical policy, one of its programs being the education policy. However, the educational policy implemented often led to exclusivity. Education was not directed towards the advancement of the people but rather towards the perpetuation of colonialism (Machmudi et al., 2024). Lower-class indigenous people generally only had access to village schools with simple curricula, known as *Volkschools*. These schools were established throughout the Dutch East Indies with minimal funding. In West Kalimantan, for example, a *Volkschool* for indigenous children was established in Pontianak as early as 1892. It was only after the ethical policy began in the early 20th century that it was also followed in other cities in the West Kalimantan Residency. In Sintang, it was detected that a *Volkschool* was only established in 1908 (Ahok et al., 1980).



In the same year, a *Volkschool* was also established in Sejiram (Kapuas Hulu) by the Congregation of the Sisters of SFIC, targeting indigenous children, especially from the Dayak tribe (Fidelia, 1918).

Indigenous communities, such as the Malays, also desired access to formal education for their children. However, this desire was hampered by the limited number of government-established *Volkschools* in the Sintang area. Sending children to Catholic Mission schools was discouraged due to differing principles (Tanasaldy, 2014). Indigenous Malays in Sintang, identified with the Muslim community, also desired a school that taught Islamic religious education. This was driven by concerns about exposure to Western culture through colonial-established schools. Another concern was the potential for alienation from the community's original character, as they focused solely on Western-style general education. Therefore, the community strongly desired the existence of Islamic schools, or madrasas, as an alternative to formal education at that time (Prabowo & Kumalasari, 2021). The problem at that time was that there were no Islamic schools around Sintang at the beginning of the 20th century. However, in other cities in West Kalimantan, such as Pontianak (1914) and Sambas (1916), Islamic education began to move towards modernity. This was accompanied by a shift from traditional institutions such as *pengajian* (religious study groups) or *langgar* (prayer rooms) to madrasahs. The strong influence of the nationalist movement around the 1920s and 1930s also influenced the transformation of Islamic education. This period was known for its major ideological struggles that would determine the basis of the struggle of intellectuals and youth activists at that time, one of which was the Pan-Islamism ideology. This ideology fostered awareness among Indonesian Muslim intellectuals to implement Islamic educational reforms, transforming traditional Islamic education by incorporating general subjects (Nasrullah et al., 2018). The establishment of Islamic schools also appears to have been a response to the limited access to education for indigenous children. Apart from the regulations issued by the colonial government regarding the activities of religious teachers (Kumalasari, 2013), and ordinances on private schools that had to obtain permits (Makmur et al., 1993).

Conducting a study on the existence of Islamic schools in the *Afdeeling* Sintang during the colonial era, which now includes the following areas: Sintang Regency, Melawi Regency, and Kapuas Hulu Regency, is considered important by researchers. This is because it will present new facts that Islamic schools were also able to develop in Sintang, which is part of the interior and the Kapuas River Basin (Daerah Aliran Sungai/DAS). It will enrich the local historical narrative about the history of education, which has been dominated by the narrative of school growth in the coastal areas/west coast of Kalimantan. Therefore, this study will first present a general overview of education in Sintang in the early 20th century, followed by the establishment of Islamic schools and their curriculum. The researchers will also attempt to explain the social impact of the existence of Islamic schools in Sintang.

2. Literature review

A study of the development of Islamic education around Sintang was briefly reviewed in Jeprianto et al., (2023) study entitled *Perkembangan Pendidikan Islam Masa Awal di Kalimantan*. The study briefly mentioned the Sintang and Jongkong Kingdoms, which promoted Islamic education, although it was still in the form of mosque education. Meanwhile, Alghifari (2025) in his *Sejarah Kesultanan Sintang Pada Masa Panembahan Abdul Bahri Danu Perdana Al-Mukarram Kesuma Negara 1934-1944*, described the existence of several madrasas run by preachers from West Sumatra. These include the Taman Pendidikan Madrasah in Sintang and the Tarbiyah Islamiyah Madrasah in Nanga Pinoh. This study is also intended as a form of continuity from studies conducted by previous researchers on the same broad theme. These include *Perkembangan Sekolah Islam di Pontianak Pada Masa Kolonial 1914-1941* (2021) and *The Growth of Islamic Schools in Singkawang in the Colonial Era* (2025).

3. Significance of Study

This study aims to describe the growth of Islamic schools in Sintang during the colonial era, specifically the transition from traditional to formal Islamic education until the end of Dutch East Indies rule in 1942. This study aims to understand the impact of Islamic schools on the emergence of an educated elite. Their presence is also believed to have fostered Muslim solidarity and national consciousness in Sintang, enabling them to move forward toward independence. This research is expected to contribute to the historiography of local history in West Kalimantan, particularly in the study of the history of education. It will pioneer a more in-depth study of Islamic schools in the Hulu Kapuas region. It will also serve as an effort to balance the study of Islamic education/schools in West Kalimantan, which is still dominated by narratives from cities on the west coast.

4. Research Methodology

As a working step to discover facts related to the existence of Islamic schools in Sintang during the colonial era, the researcher utilized historical methods consisting of heuristics, verification, interpretation, and historiography (Kuntowijoyo, 2018). In the heuristic stage, the primary sources used include contemporary newspapers such as *Borneo-Barat* (1938-1940). Meanwhile, secondary sources can be the results of studies by other researchers, such as books and journals. To maintain the authenticity and credibility of sources, as in the verification stage, one way is to



obtain contemporary newspapers from reliable providers. In this case, the author obtained contemporary newspapers only from the National Library of the Republic of Indonesia (Perpusnas). Similarly, to check the credibility of the source content, a comparison can be made between the data presented in the researcher's study results with that reported in contemporary newspapers. The historical sources collected are often inseparable from biased narratives, such as personal interests, closeness, and knowledge base. Therefore, an interpretation stage is necessary to enable researchers to make the most of the available sources and reconstruct them into a factual narrative (K anumuyoso, 2020). The final stage is historiography, or historical writing. Therefore, this research will utilize a social history approach. This approach covers a wide range of issues within society, including education. The social history approach is considered appropriate because the existence of Islamic schools in the colonial era was born from a growing public awareness of the need for formal religious education. Furthermore, Islamic schools were also able to give birth to a new social class within society: the indigenous intellectuals.

5. Discussions

5.1 Overview of Islamic Education in Sintang in the Early 20th Century

The area around Sintang, as described above, during the colonial era was part of a sub-district extending to the upper reaches of the Kapuas River. This area was then further divided into several sub-districts: Sintang, Melawi, Tanah Pinoh, Semitau, and Boven Kapuas. Of these three regions, only the sub-districts of Sintang, Melawi, and Tanah Pinoh had autonomous status (KITLV, 1919), thus granting the Malay Sultanate of Sintang limited political power. Eventually, the sub-district of Tanah Pinoh was abolished in 1924 (Fienieg, 2007). Meanwhile, Semitau and Boven Kapuas were under the full control of the Dutch East Indies colonial government (*Gouvernementgebied*). This was due to their vast territory with limited terrain and infrastructure, where transportation still relied on river routes. Thus, the sultanate's influence did not extend beyond the upper reaches of the Kapuas. In addition, the colonial government had also removed the political rights of local rulers there, such as in Suhaid, Jongkong, Silat, and Selimbau (Tanasaldy, 2014).

These differences in administrative control and demographics influenced the existence of Islamic education around Sintang. Regions within the autonomous region experienced the relative influence of the development of Islam fostered by the sultanate (Rahmadi, 2020). Therefore, the sultan appointed a person entrusted with the mandate to develop Islam in his territory, holding a position equivalent to a minister of the sultanate, called *Penghulu* (Peterianus, 2012). Furthermore, a grand mosque was built not far from the Sintang palace, led by an imam called Khatib (Syahzaman & Hasanuddin, 2003). Both positions were also tasked with fostering the life of the Muslim community based on Islamic Sharia values and law. Therefore, religious education, which at that time was still traditional, was necessary. The area around Sintang itself before the 20th century had been visited by quite a number of preachers or religious teachers from various parts of the archipelago and abroad. Among the well-known are Abas from Aceh and Raja Dangki from Pagarruyung, West Sumatra (Peterianus, 2012). Meanwhile, from around the island of Borneo, preachers are known to have come from the Sultanate of Banjar, namely Muhammad Saman, and Sarawak, namely Encik Shomad (Fadani, 2023). Oral tradition in Sintang also mentions preachers from the Arabian Peninsula, such as Tuan Johar and Tuan Serysaf, both of whom settled and spread Islam. In addition, there was a preacher from Sintang, namely Haji Ismail, who received direct education from a Khatib at a mosque in Kampung Masuka. Haji Ismail later became the successor to the Khatib of the Kampung Masuka Mosque and preached as far as the Kapuas Hulu and Sanggau area (Syahzaman & Hasanuddin, 2003).

These preachers, were permitted by the ruler of Sintang to settle and work. In return, the preachers were asked to contribute to the development of Islam in the Sintang region, including through teaching. The towns and villages along the Kapuas River were generally inhabited by Malay communities, with mosques or surau serving as places of worship. However, these mosques and surau served more than just religious services. As observed in Sambas, these places of worship also served as platforms for Islamic education (Mohamed et al., 2018). Students, called *santri*, came to study directly with individuals considered to possess extensive knowledge of Islam. These students were then known as khatib or *tuan guru* (teacher), who helped manage the mosque and served as its imam. Traditional teaching methods emphasized preaching skills. The curriculum was simple, focusing on Islamic religious subjects such as *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *tafsir* (interpretation of the Islamic teachings), hadith, and *tauhid* (theology) (Lubis, 2017). Education at this mosque is generally organized using the *halaqah* model, a study group for religious texts held both before and after prayer times (Wibowo, 2023). Teaching and learning activities take place inside or in the mosque's foyer, where students sit in a circle around the teacher who delivers the material. The study period is not specifically set but rather depends on the teacher's assessment based on the students' academic achievements. Similarly, there is no formal document like a diploma issued, as is the case today. Interestingly, education at this mosque is also open to a wider audience, across ages and genders, through religious study groups or assemblies organized by the mosque's



administrators. This traditional Islamic education was also implemented in Melawi, centered in Nanga Pinoh. As a region under the authority of the Sintang Sultanate, the Sultan appointed an official with the rank of Minister in Nanga Pinoh (Nurcahyani, 2013). To that end, a Grand Mosque was built in Nanga Pinoh in 1888 as a symbol of the Sintang Sultanate's representation in Melawi (Nadhiroh, 2021). Both boys and girls flocked to the mosque and surau as places to study the Quran at that time throughout the areas under the Sintang Sultanate (Syahzaman & Hasanuddin, 2003). The thriving non-formal Islamic education was also felt around Kapuas Hulu, which is part of the Sintang sub-district. Hermansyah (2010), in his research, revealed that da'wah in Jongkong by the 20th century had succeeded in converting approximately 4,000 indigenous people in the area to Islam. He also described the role of religious teachers from the early 20th century until the 1940s who came from various regions in the archipelago and the Arabian Peninsula, including Sintang, Banjar, Krui (Lampung), Medina, Palembang, and Padang. Meanwhile, in Nanga Bunut, the ruler of the kingdom there demonstrated seriousness in developing Islam by starting to build a large mosque in 1861 (Anita et al., 2006). An interesting thing happened in Selimbau, where Islamic education there taught religious knowledge and general knowledge but still used Arabic script (Jawi). The curriculum was centered on general religious studies and fiqh, led by Maharaja Khatib Seri Kusuma starting in 1885 AD (Suprianto et al., 2021).

From the explanation above, it is clear that in the early 20th century, Islamic education around Sintang was still conducted informally, with a curriculum focused on religious studies. Nevertheless, this simple educational model had a positive impact on the development of social and cultural life. Increasing numbers of residents around Sintang were proficient in writing and reading Arabic-Malay script, thus encouraging interaction and information between residents and outside areas, particularly the Malay Sultanate. Islamic education also sparked the birth of several works of art and literature, such as calligraphy and religious texts (Syahzaman & Hasanuddin, 2003). A new social elite was also created through this education, with the emergence of a class of educated local Muslim scholars from Sintang. Many of these expanded their da'wah and education to areas outside the Sintang Swapraja. For example, there were religious teachers from Sintang and Nanga Pinoh around 1920-1940 who provided Islamic education in Jongkong (Hermansyah, 2010).

5.2 The Establishment of Islamic Schools in Sintang during the Colonial Era

The existence of formal Islamic educational institutions, in the form of schools, became a phenomenon that began to emerge in many parts of the Dutch East Indies around the 1920s. The demands of the times influenced the transformation of Islamic education, which had previously been traditional, into a more modern one. Some of these characteristics included having qualified teachers, a class system, a set curriculum, evaluations, and issuing learning and graduation documents. Although these Islamic schools were private, they began to adopt a more systematic and structured teaching plan similar to that implemented in public schools (Makmur et al., 1993). In addition to adapting to the current developments, which were also implemented by public and private schools, this transformation also occurred due to the influence of Pan-Islamism, which was also felt throughout Indonesia. This ideology inspired Muslim intellectuals and religious scholars to implement a number of reforms in the foundations of Muslim community life in Indonesia. One of these concerns Islamic education, which, according to Islamic reformists, can no longer be maintained in its traditional form (Ramadhan et al., 2019). This reformism or renewal in Islamic education was also felt around West Kalimantan through the thoughts and concrete actions of several religious scholars, among whom is well-known H.M. Basiuni Imran, Qadi and Mufti of the Sambas Sultanate (Mahrus et al., 2023). This figure, who holds the title Maharaja Imam, once studied directly with Sheikh Muhammad Rasyid Ridha, a student of Jamaludin Al-Afgani who focused on ideas for reforming Islamic education (Mahrus, 2018).

Political pressure also drove changes in traditional Islamic education based on prayer houses and religious studies, which had to adapt to existing formal schooling. In 1905, the colonial government issued the *Priesterraden* regulation, requiring so-called religious teachers to obtain permits to teach or conduct religious studies. This regulation was further tightened in 1925, this time allowing only those with recommendations from the colonial government to provide Islamic instruction (Kumalasari, 2013). Feeling that this was not strong enough, the colonial government again issued the *Wilde Scholen Ordonantie* (Wild School Ordinance) in 1931. Through this regulation, the colonial government had the right to close private schools that were unlicensed or deemed dangerous (Frankema, 2013). Another factor driving this transformation was the social needs of the Muslim community around Sintang at the time. First, parents wanted their children to deepen their Islamic religious knowledge in addition to receiving a general education. This was not possible in government schools (Frankema, 2013). Previously, students had received complementary religious education at mosques around the village in the afternoons or evenings. Second, there were concerns that the liberal nature of government schools would further distance students from local personalities and culture (Daulay & Tobroni, 2017). Third, the development of Catholic mission schools inspired community leaders and religious scholars to participate in developing Islamic education in line with current developments. A 1937 report stated that the Catholic Mission managed several elementary schools in Boven Kapuas, including a school for boys in Benua Martinus, Bika (Nazareth), and Sejiram, where there was also a school for girls run by nuns (Tim, 1937). Even in August 1938, the



Catholic Mission opened the *Hollandsch Chinese School* (HCS) in the middle of Sintang (Paath, 1938), an elementary school equivalent to the *Europesche Lagere School* (ELS) for European children. The arrival of religious teachers around Sintang also likely spurred the transformation of traditional Islamic schools into formal ones. In the 1930s, Panembahan granted permission to nine religious teachers from West Sumatra to live and teach Islam around Sintang (Alghifari, 2025). The presence of these religious teachers then spread to Melawi and Boven Kapuas (Sjamsuddin, 2015). The arrival of these religious teachers played a crucial role, as they possessed knowledge and experience in running Islamic schools that could be applied in the Sintang area. This also contributed to the shift in the form of Islamic education in Sintang, which only occurred in the 1930s, compared to other cities on the west coast, which were earlier. For information, the Madrasah Al-Sulthaniyah in Sambas was established in 1918 (Prabowo, 2022), and the Perguruan Al-Islamiah Kampung Bangka in Pontianak in 1926 (Prabowo & Kumalasari, 2021). In Singkawang, a city with a large ethnic Chinese population and a Catholic mission center, no fewer than eight Islamic schools had been established by the 1930s. These schools were coordinated through the *Persatoean Pendidikan Islam* Singkawang (Prabowo et al., 2025). This demonstrates that efforts to establish Islamic schools in the city began in the 1920s.

In addition to the figure of the Panembahan as a self-governing official, colonial policies also encouraged the emergence of Islamic schools around Sintang. As with the Wild School Ordinance, private schools, including madrasas, had to obtain permission from the colonial government to conduct their activities. Therefore, their founders chose a cooperative strategy as the wisest option to achieve efforts to advance the people through education. For example, the head of the Nanga Pinoh district, Marah Abdullah, from West Sumatra, is known to have been a driving force behind the establishment of Tarbiyah Islamiyah (Paath, 1940f). Similarly, the Controleur of Melawi, Mr. Schuilwerve, granted permission to establish the educational institution in 1938 (Paath, 1940g). Regarding the Islamic schools that were established around the Sintang afdeeling, due to limited sources, researchers found that their existence only emerged around the 1930s. In the center of the Sintang Sultanate (swapraja), there was a Madrasah Taman Pendidikan (MTP) located not far from the palace and the grand mosque (Commisie Redactie PAB, 1940). It is not known exactly when this school was first established. In the research of Mukhlisin et al., (2023), it is mentioned that one of the Sintang figures who had studied at this madrasah was Yusuf Haris. The figure who would later be known as a pioneer of Muhammadiyah in Sintang attended MTP from 1937 to 1941. The Islamic Boarding School (MTP) was led by Ibrahim Ahmad, a religious teacher from West Sumatra who received permission from the Panembahan of Sintang to reside and spread Islam. According to Yusuf Haris, the MTP was equivalent to an elementary school (Sekolah Ibtidaiyah) or an elementary school at the time (Haris, 1994). Strategically located in the center of Sintang, the school received support from the sultanate, attracting many students. Other religious teachers from West Sumatra who taught at the MTP included Nunkar Sidin (Alghifari, 2025) and Ustad Buyung Saidi (Lasa Hs et al., 2022).

An Islamic school was also established in Nanga Pinoh, which was still under the control of the Sintang Swapraja. On July 1, 1938, the Islamic Education College (TI) in Nanga Pinoh was established, initially initiated by Tuan Pakanuddin from Pariaman, a graduate of the Madrasah Tarbiyah Islamiyah (MTI) Djaho, West Sumatra. After successfully establishing TI Nanga Pinoh in 1939, Tuan Pakanuddin returned to West Sumatra and was replaced by Bagindo Djaladudin Chatim, also from Pariaman (Paath, 1940g). Chatim was one of the religious teachers from West Sumatra who was permitted to live and teach around Sintang by the Panembahan. TI's teaching and learning activities initially took place in the public *Volkschool* building with the permission of the Melawi controller in Nanga Pinoh. It was only in 1939, thanks to capital accumulation reaching f.1,000, that they were able to build their school building, located not far from the Nanga Pinoh Grand Mosque. As it developed, TI expanded its reach to Kotabaru (Tanah Pinoh) and Belitang (Paath, 1939a). Furthermore, in November 1939, due to the lack of early childhood education in other parts of Melawi, TI's management decided to establish an Islamic Frobelschool in Tanjung Paoh, followed by other schools in Kebebu, Belimbing, and Tanjung Lay (Paath, 1940d). By mid-1940, TI's elementary school in Nanga Pinoh had approximately 80 students, both boys and girls (Paath, 1940g). The growth of Islamic schools did not stop in Melawi; it continued to the east, extending to the upper Kapuas River (Boven Kapuas). Religious and community leaders in this region appeared to be beginning to realize and be motivated to catch up with other areas in West Kalimantan in terms of education. This move was driven by at least two factors. First, the lack of elementary schools established around Boven Kapuas, coupled with the apparent lack of commitment from the colonial government to build the necessary schools. Second, inspiration came from Catholic missionaries, whose tenacity and hard work had brought education to the interior and converted the Dayak people to Catholicism (Paath, 1940e).

The Borneo-Barat newspaper reported in June 1939 that Muslim leaders in Selimbau and Putussibau were preparing a committee to establish an Islamic school. Teachers from West Sumatra, both graduates of Sumatera Thawalib and Tarbiyah Islamiyah, would be brought in (Paath, 1940c). This school (Sumatera Thawalib) was known as a pioneer of modern Islamic schools in Indonesia (Harmonedi, 2020). Meanwhile, in Nanga Bunut, a committee to establish an



Islamic school was formed by members of the Persatuan Anak Borneo (PAB) organization, chaired by Abang H.M. Tahir. The committee's hard work finally succeeded in bringing in teachers from West Sumatra, and on August 2, 1940, the Mawaidul Islam School (MIS) was established. Interestingly, this school provided accommodation for students from outside Nanga Bunut (Paath, 1940h).

5.3 The Islamic School Curriculum in Sintang and Its Impact on the Colonial Era

The growth of Islamic schools in the Sintang Afdeeling can be considered a form of public response to the colonial government's lack of attention to education. This is not surprising, given the colonial government's gradualist educational policy (Syaharuddin & Susanto, 2019). Education for the indigenous people was provided as simply as possible, rather than maximizing their potential, without measurable and systematic planning (Sumardi, 2023). It was simply intended to reduce Latin illiteracy (Van Thang et al., 2024) and to recruit low-level civil servants. The existence of private schools, such as Islamic schools, was quite profitable for the colonial government, as it did not require spending money on building and maintaining school buildings or paying teachers. Therefore, from a colonial perspective, this aligned with the doctrine that colonies were positioned as places to maximize profits from agricultural products and taxes (Daliman, 2012). Through the Wild School Ordinance, the colonial government controlled the existence of private schools through licensing, as well as the types of schools and curriculum implemented (Penders, 1968). Therefore, Islamic schools around *Afdeeling* Sintang, as previously described, generally have the same level of education as government-owned schools. Most of the established Islamic schools were elementary or lower secondary schools with varying lengths of study. Their administration was certainly organized and followed a class system. These schools were even known to accept female students and teach them in the same class, as was the case in Sambas (Erwin, 2018). This indicates a familiarity with the concept of coeducational education. This was a step ahead of the gender-segregated Catholic Mission schools, such as those in Sejiram and Benua Martinus (Bos, 2016). However, due to limited historical sources, the exact list of subjects taught is unknown.

Based on these facts, Islamic schools around Sintang may share a similar curriculum to similar schools on the West Coast. Previous research on colonial-era Islamic schools in Pontianak and Singkawang found that religious instruction was prioritized. Therefore, this transformation from traditional formal education only touched on the following aspects: school organization, class system, teacher qualifications, and school level (Prabowo et al., 2025). The use of a curriculum that adopts all subjects from public schools appears not to have been implemented yet. Therefore, Islamic schools around Sintang during this era are not yet classified as fully modern because they require a balance between both subject groups and varied teaching methods (Daulay & Tobroni, 2017). At the Madrasah Taman Pendidikan (MTP) in Sintang, researchers strongly suspect this school is equivalent to a five-year standard school. Research by Mukhlishin et al., (2023) mentions that one of the students who attended MTP was Yusuf Haris. He began attending in 1937 but did not complete his studies because the school was closed at the end of 1941 due to the impact of the Pacific War. Therefore, Yusuf Haris only attended MTP for approximately four years (1937-1941). This fact suggests that MTP had class levels similar to the five-year Standard School. Grades or class levels similar to those of *Standardschool* also appear to have been adopted by Tarbiyah Islamiyah (TI) Nanga Pinoh. As of 1940, it was reported that the school had been operating for three years and had not yet produced any graduates (Paath, 1940g). Referring to the general curriculum of a *Standardschool* or Class II School, the subjects taught were similar to those of a three-year elementary school or *volkschool*, with expanded and deepened material. These subjects were arithmetic, reading, writing, drawing, and the addition of natural and earth sciences (Nasution, 2001). In implementing the curriculum in Islamic schools, religious subjects were certainly added. Regarding the TI branch schools in Belitang and Kotabaru, it is not yet clear whether they were of the same type as *Standardschool*, as in Nanga Pinoh, or a three-year elementary school (*volkschool*).

A different curriculum was implemented by the Mawaidul Islam School (MIS) in Nanga Bunut, which opened in August 1940. According to reports, MIS accepted students who had graduated from three-year *volkschools* who wished to continue their studies (Paath, 1940h). This information suggests that MIS schools were equivalent to *Vervolgschools*, namely two-year continuation schools (Perdana & Pratama, 2022). *Vervolgschools* were established to ensure that *volkschool* graduates could be considered equivalent to graduates of five-year elementary schools or standard schools. Therefore, the curriculum at *Vervolgschools* focused on deepening and expanding the material, as well as adding natural science and earth science subjects to those taught at standard schools. The founders of MIS seemed to fully understand the educational disparity in Boven Kapuas, thus choosing to establish a *vervolgschool*. For information, in 1940, the region had only ten *volkschools* as the only higher education institutions, three of which were run by the Catholic Mission (Loepar, 1940). A 1939 report noted that several *volkschools*, such as those in Selimbau and Putussibau, had overcrowding (Paath, 1940a). Therefore, the existence of *Vervolgschools* was essential to provide *volkschool* graduates with the opportunity to pursue higher education.



Meanwhile, Islamic kindergartens, or *frobelschools*, run by TI in the Melawi area, have a simpler curriculum than the three-year *volkschools*. Lessons focus solely on reading and writing, with Islamic religious instruction included (Paath, 1940d). *Frobelschools*, designed for children aged 4-6, use a curriculum geared more toward preparing them for elementary school (Saerozi, 2009). The growth of Islamic schools around the Sintang subdistricts has had a positive impact and influence on various aspects of life. It is undeniable that through this formal religious education, a new elite emerged within society: the educated natives (Wahyuni & Mursal, 2022). This group, dominated by young men and women, is well-respected by the community and capable of securing formal employment as clerks and employees in government offices and companies. Through these Islamic schools, young men and women in Sintang have the opportunity to pursue higher education and become successful teachers and assistants. Other social impacts were also , particularly among Muslim residents around Islamic schools, who began to flock to religious assemblies or lectures (*tablig*). For example, in Sintang, a gathering to commemorate Eid al-Adha was reported to have attracted 250 worshippers. This gathering, held in the MTP schoolyard on January 21, 1940, featured Qur'anic recitations and religious speeches (Paath, 1940b). Similarly, in Nanga Pinoh, the presence of the TI Madrasah increased attendance at the Jami Mosque. This was evident during Friday prayers, which were always full and enthusiastically attended by the religious teacher's lecture (Paath, 1940g).

Meanwhile, in villages without Islamic schools, teachers or preachers would come to give lectures once a month. These religious assemblies were welcomed by the local Muslim community (Paath, 1940e). This demonstrated that traditional Islamic education through religious assemblies, such as lectures, was maintained and strengthened. Furthermore, the growth of Islamic schools around Sintang also inspired other areas to establish similar schools. In June 1939, in Nanga Taman, within the Sekadau District, an Islamic Madrasah was established, led by Ahmadoeddin, a teacher from West Sumatra. Ahmadoeddin was a graduate of the Sumatra Thawalib Padang Panjang school and had experience teaching in Padang and Sabang (Aceh) (Paath, 1939b). These Islamic schools also served as places to instill a spirit of nationalism and patriotism in students. It's well known that most of the teachers came from West Sumatra. Graduates of these important Islamic schools, known for producing activists in the nationalist movement, included the Sumatera Thawalib (Suwondo, 1982) and the network of *Persatoean Tarbijah Islamijah* (PERTI) schools, founded in 1930 (Mawangir, 2015). It's no surprise, then, that this anti-colonial sentiment was implicitly instilled in students, encouraging them to move forward toward independence. The results of this training were felt after the proclamation of Indonesian independence on August 17, 1945. Several names became known as republicans who participated in the struggle for independence around Sintang. For example, Yusuf Haris, who attended MTP and later became a courier for news of independence (Lasa Hs et al., 2022). Meanwhile, Bagindo Djalaludin Chatim, the head of the Nanga Pinoh Islamic Boarding School (TI), led the *Organisasi Pemberontak Merah Putih* (OPMP) guerrilla force, consisting of young men from around Melawi (Aspar, 2005).

6. Conclusion

The general picture of Islamic education in Sintang's *afdeeling* (Islamic boarding schools) around the beginning of the 20th century was still carried out traditionally, as was the case in Sintang, Nanga Pinoh, Jongkong, and Selimbau. Imams and preachers played a significant role in teaching held in mosques and *surau* (prayer houses), with a curriculum focused on Islamic religious education material. The transformation of Islamic education from traditional to formal forms occurred not only due to the needs of the times and society but was also influenced by ideas of Islamic educational reform and the spirit of Pan-Islamism. In addition, to comply with regulations regarding the Wild School Ordinance. Islamic schools began to be established around the 1930s in Sintang, including Madrasah Taman Pendidikan (MTP), Madrasah Tarbijah Islamiyah Nanga Pinoh, and Madrasah Mawaidhul Islam Nanga Bunut. The curriculum used in Islamic schools around Sintang was of the same level as three-year elementary schools (*Volkschool*) and five-year elementary schools (*Standarschool*). With the addition of specialized lessons related to Islamic religious education. The presence of Islamic schools around Sintang brought a number of positive impacts, including the emergence of an educated indigenous class and the strengthening of the *Tabligh* movement, extending to the villages. Furthermore, a sense of nationalism grew among young people, evident after August 17, 1945, through a number of efforts to defend Indonesian independence. The above explanation demonstrates that the development of Islamic education was not limited to the western coastal areas, traditionally considered more advanced, but also extended to the eastern (inland) regions of West Kalimantan, providing a counterbalance to the narrative. This research is a significant contribution to the historiography of educational history, particularly Islamic education in Kalimantan during the colonial era. However, future research on this topic needs to be further explored through more credible historical sources. This includes, for example, the role of religious figures or teachers in Islamic schools, as well as examining their existence in the later era (early independence).



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