

# The Vision of Internationalization at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor: A Transnational Theory Perspective

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Received January 2, 2025, Accepted May 20, 2025

## Abstract

**Purpose** - Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor (PMDG) is one of Indonesia's most influential Islamic educational institutions, with alumni actively engaged at both national and international levels. This study explores the vision of internationalization at PMDG through the lens of transnational theory. Specifically, it applies both classical (high-politics) and contemporary (low-politics) models of transnationalism to analyze Gontor's global orientation. **Methods** - Employing a qualitative content analysis based on literature and official documents, this study identifies key teachings of the kyai (religious leaders) that articulate international ideals. **Findings** - The findings reveal that PMDG adopts a new-style transnational approach, where education, ethical values, and cultural ideas become the core instruments of global engagement. These ideals are diffused internally through kyai-student interactions and mobilized externally by alumni across various countries and sectors. The study also finds that Gontor's educational model is influenced by a synthesis of four international institutions: Al-Azhar, Syanggit, Santiniketan, and Aligarh. These form the epistemological foundation for its vision of Islamic global citizenship. **Research Implications/ Limitations** - include the need for further studies on Islamic educational institutions as soft power agents in international relations. the study lie in its reliance on textual sources, which may not fully capture the lived experiences of santri and alumni. **Originality/value** of this research lies in its application of transnational theory to analyze a pesantren's educational vision, a subject rarely explored in prior scholarship.

**Keywords:** *Gontor, Internasionalization, Transnational, Islamic education, Pesantren.*

## INTRODUCTION

Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor (PMDG) is one of the major Islamic Boarding Schools in Indonesia; which has more than 30,000 students; with no less than 20 branches spread across various regions in Indonesia.<sup>1</sup> The levels of education in Gontor include secondary education "Kulliyatu-l- Mu'allimin al Islamiyah (KMI) and Universitas Darussalam Gontor (UNIDA Gontor) for higher education levels.<sup>2</sup>

PMDG, which was founded in 1926, also has alumni who take part in various roles at the national level such as becoming ministers, politicians, businessmen, regents, heads of community organisations; and at the international level such as ambassadors, diplomats, preachers and academics.<sup>3</sup> These facts invite the question of what is taught at PMDG so that many of its alumni are involved actively at the national and international levels. It can be assumed that at PMDG the santri are encouraged and taught to have an international vision; that is, their alumni are expected to have a community role at the national and international levels. Therefore, this study aims to explore the international vision taught at PMDG.

There have been numerous studies written about Gontor and its contribution to society. Among the studies are Syamsuri (2016),<sup>4</sup> Yulianti, (2015),<sup>5</sup> Rahman, et.al, (2016),<sup>6</sup> which focus on Gontor's contribution to the establishment and development of human quality for society. While Juliyani, (2023) highlighted the role of graduates in community economic development.<sup>7</sup> Muslim (2017) wrote in the field of education.<sup>8</sup> In addition, research Amalia, (2018),<sup>9</sup> Ulum & Setyaningsih, (2022),<sup>10</sup> and Amin, (2018),<sup>11</sup> highlighted the role of Gontor graduates at both national and international levels. From the research above, the author did not find a single study that discussed

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<sup>1</sup> Tim Penyusun, *Wardun: Warta Dunia Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor* (Ponorogo: Darussalam Press, 2023).

<sup>2</sup> Imam Zarkasyi, *Pekan Perkenalan Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor* (Ponorogo: Darussalam Press, 2024).

<sup>3</sup> Tasirun Sulaiman, *Gontor Menerobos Mitos: Menelusuri Jejak Dan Kiprah Gontor* (Afkari Publishing, 2018).

<sup>4</sup> Joni Syamsuri, "Eksistensi Dan Kontribusi Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Dalam Pembangunan Sumber Daya Manusia," *AT TA'DIB* 11, no. 2 (December 29, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.21111/at-tadib.v11i2.776>.

<sup>5</sup> Kadar Yulianti, "Kaderisasi Kepemimpinan Di Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Ponorogo Jawa Timur" (UIN Sunan Kamlajaga, 2015).

<sup>6</sup> Muhammad Rahman, Ahmad Lukman Fahri Mansur and Khalikussabir, "Peran Alumni Pesantren Gontor Dalam Upaya Pengembangan Diri Menuju Kemandirian Santripreneur (Studi Pada Forum Bisnis Ikatan Keluarga Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor)," *Jurnal Riset Manajemen* 11, no. 3 (2016): 82–94.

<sup>7</sup> Erly Juliyani, "Peran Alumni Dalam Pengembangan Ekonomi," *AL Maqashid : Journal of Economics and Islamic Business* 03, no. 01 (2023): 30.

<sup>8</sup> Muslim Muslim, "Eksistensi Gontor Di Tengah Arus Modernisasi Pendidikan Sebuah Model Inovasi Kurikulum," *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan* 17, no. 2 (2017): 167–78, <https://doi.org/10.17509/jpp.v17i2.8252>.

<sup>9</sup> Novi Amalia, "Peran Pondok Pesantren Modern Gontor Sebagai Instrumen Multitrack Diplomacy Pendidikan Dalam Kerjasama Internasional," *Nation State Journal of International Studies* 2, no. 2 (2018): 151–60, <https://doi.org/10.24076/nsjis.2019v2i2.163>.

<sup>10</sup> Syaiful Ulum and Rila Setyaningsih, "Manajemen Komunikasi Biro Alumni Dan Kerjasama Universitas Darussalam Gontor Dalam Melaksanakan Tracer Study," *Sahafa Journal of Islamic Communication* 4, no. 1 (2022): 65, <https://doi.org/10.21111/sjic.v4i1.6050>.

<sup>11</sup> Ali Amin, "Alumni Pesantren Gontor Dan Jaringan Islam Global," *Journal of Islamic Education Policy* 3, no. 2 (December 30, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.30984/j.v3i2.862>.

Gontor's international vision from the perspective of transnational theory. Therefore, this study will explore the teachings and international vision of Gontor.

## METHOD

This study employs a qualitative literature review approach, focusing on the interpretation of texts relevant to Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor's vision of internationalization. The primary data sources consist of official documents, speeches, and written publications issued by Gontor itself, while secondary sources include scholarly articles, books, and studies by external researchers.

Data analysis is carried out using content analysis to identify themes and patterns within the texts. Although this is a library-based study, the researcher adopts analytical steps inspired by Miles and Huberman, including data collection, data reduction, categorization, and presentation, to ensure the findings are systematically organized and thematically coherent.<sup>12</sup>

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Transnasional Theory

Transnationals are understood as movements that spread beyond national boundaries or the borders of various countries.<sup>13</sup> There are two main views in transnational theory; first, old-style transnationals with a high-politic approach based on the policies of political and military leaders.<sup>14</sup> For instance, the formation of the Axis and Allied Forces blocs during the Second World War; the colonisation of Western nations in Africa and Asia; and the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union.

The second is a new model of transnationalism with a low-political approach that relies on other aspects such as education, art, ideas and norms.<sup>15</sup> For example, Henry Dunant founded the International Red Cross (PMI) after the Italian war of independence, which later established PMI branches around the world. La Via Campesina also promoted the 'Declaration of the Human Rights of Farmers and Rural Communities'. These movements generally involve individuals, non-state groups or international organisations working on an issue with a specific purpose that provides a bridge between the domestic and international spheres.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Sugiyono, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif Kuantatif R&D* (Bandung: Alfabetha, 2019).

<sup>13</sup> Robert O. Keohane, *Transnational Relations and World Politics: An Introduction*, 1971.

<sup>14</sup> Ahmad Zakky Mubarak, "TRANSFORMASI GONTOR DARI GERAKAN LOKAL MENJADI GERAKAN INTERNASIONAL. DARI SISTEM PENDIDIKAN HINGGA PEMIKIRAN ISLAM." (Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, 2022), <https://etd.umy.ac.id/id/eprint/32446>.

<sup>15</sup> Sidney Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism*, 2005.

<sup>16</sup> Tarrow.

Based on the dissemination model, transnational also has two mechanisms, namely diffusion and mobilisation.<sup>17</sup> Mechanism means the stage of spreading ideas from the owner of the idea to other parties to cross national boundaries. For example, the ideas of equality, freedom and independence that developed in the early 19th century among colonised nations. Another example, with the advancement of information technology today, this mechanism is easy to happen such as the spread of LGBTQ ideas through social media platforms. The second mechanism is the mobilisation mechanism where the recipient of the message has agreed to the idea in the message and takes action. This includes the liberation and independence movements of colonised nations in the first half of the 19th century. Another example, LGBTQ has been accepted and legalised in several countries in the world.<sup>18</sup>

### PMDG: a Brief Explanation

Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor (PMDG) was founded by three brothers K.H. Ahmad Sahal, K.H. Zainuddin Fananie, and K.H. Imam Zarkasyi in 1926 - known as trimurti- in Gontor Village, Mlarak, Ponorogo;<sup>19</sup> and was endowed by the founders in 1958.<sup>20</sup> The establishment of PMDG was actually a renewal of the old Pondok Gontor which had no longer been operating;<sup>21</sup> where PMDG (the new Gontor) is the one that is currently still operating.

The levels of education at PMDG are at the intermediate and higher levels. Firstly, KMI (*Kulliyatul Mu'allimin/Mu'allimat al-Islamiyah*): A secondary institution with a study period of 6 or 4 years, at the level of Tsanawiyah and Aliyah or junior and senior high school. Second, UNIDA (Darussalam University): A pesantren higher education institution that has 7 faculties in various levels of S1, S2 and S3. Currently, both levels of education have been acknowledged nationally and internationally.<sup>22</sup>

### International Vision of PMDG

As in any pesantren, the kyai is the central figure in PMDG. His teachings, directions, visions, ideals and advice are always conveyed and strongly considered by all students, ustadz and successors of PMDG. Some of these teachings and advice can be identified as PMDG's international vision. The author summarised some of them:

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<sup>17</sup> Tarrow.

<sup>18</sup> Muliastuti Andi, "Aktivisme Transnasional Dalam Prakarsa Being LGBT in Asia: Mobilisasi Gerakan Dan Pembentukan Identitas Kolektif," *Jurnal Hubungan Internasional* 15, no. 2 (2022): 398–419, <https://doi.org/10.20473/jhi.v15i2.35109>.

<sup>19</sup> Faqih Nidzom et al., "CULTURAL IDENTITY OF PESANTREN CADRES IN INDONESIA," *Scaffolding: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Dan Multikulturalisme* 6, no. 3 (2024): 261–78, <https://doi.org/10.37680/scaffolding.v6i3.6419>; Syamsul Badi, "Al Tashawwur Al Islami Inda Mu'assissi Ma'hadi Darissalam Gontor Li Tarbiyah Al Islamiyah Al Hadistah Wa 'Amaliyatu Gharsihi" (UNIDA Gontor, 2023).

<sup>20</sup> Zarkasyi, *Pekan Perkenalan Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor*.

<sup>21</sup> Sekretaris Pimpinan, *Serba Serbi Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor* (Ponorogo: Darussalam Press, 2024).

<sup>22</sup> Tim Penyusun, *Wardun: Warta Dunia Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor*, 2023.

Table 1. International Vision of PMDG

No	Teaching/vision	Analysis
1	This boarding school is a combination/synthesis of four elements; 1. Al-Azhar, 2. Syanggit, 3. Santiniketan, 4. Aligarh. <sup>23</sup>	From this statement, there are several institutions abroad such as Al Azhar in Egypt, Syanggit in Mauritania, Africa, and Santiniketan and Aligarh in India. This synthesis shows the international vision of PMDG's founders.
2	<i>Indonesia omahku, Asia tegal sawahku, Eropa lan Amerika planconganku/</i> Indonesia is my home, Asia is my yard, Europe and America are my playground. <sup>24</sup>	This statement is the Kyai's advice to his students with the hope that his students can perform internationally. This shows Kyai Gonto's international vision.
3	<i>Kalau kamu pergi, pergilah yang jauh, maka yang dekat akan terlampaui. Kalau tujuanmu ke Mekkah, maka Jakarta terlewat. /If you want to travel, go to a faraway place, then what is near will be surpassed. If your destination is Mecca, then Jakarta will be bypassed. If you pursue the Akhirah, you will reach the world.</i> <sup>25</sup>	This advice is actually intended for the santri to have a life purpose. However, the illustration is as if they are travelling abroad. This will generate the idea for the students to go abroad.
4	<i>Dari Gontor menyapa Indonesia, bahkan Dunia/From Gontor to Indonesia, even the World.</i> <sup>26</sup>	This is a motto taken from the jargon of Radio Suara Gontor; which also wants to state that Gontor does not only play a role in Ponorogo or Indonesia but also worldwide.
5	The highest politics is the politics of education. <sup>27</sup>	The international idea spread by PMDG is the idea of education.
6	<i>Kenapa tidak mencetak ulama yang pandai berbahasa Arab sekaligus bahasa Inggris?/Why don't we produce scholars who speak Arabic and English at the same time?</i> <sup>28</sup>	This statement was the original statement of Gontor's founders after attending the Muslim congress in Surabaya in 1926. They wanted to produce Indonesian scholars who could speak Arabic and English to be able to take part at the international level.
7	<i>Agar kelak anak-anakku mewujudkan Darussalam di Indonesia/So that one day my children/students will manifest Darussalam in Indonesia.</i> <sup>29</sup>	Although the word 'Indonesia' is mentioned, it refers to where the students are. Including abroad.

### Teaching 1: The synthesis of PMDG are: Al Azhar, Syanggit, Santiniketan and Aligarh

Gontor is a combination of excellence from four international educational institutions namely al Azhar, Syanggit, Santiniketan and Aligarh.<sup>30</sup> Firstly, Al Azhar

<sup>23</sup> Sekretaris Pimpinan, *Serba Serbi Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor*; Ahmad Suharto, *Senarai Kearifan Gontor: Kata Bijak Para Perintis Dan Masyayikh Gontor* (Bantul: YPPWP Guru Muslich, 2016).

<sup>24</sup> Suharto, *Senarai Kearifan Gontor: Kata Bijak Para Perintis Dan Masyayikh Gontor*.

<sup>25</sup> Suharto.

<sup>26</sup> Humas, "Wajah Baru Suara Gontor FM," gontor.ac.id, 2019, <https://gontor.ac.id/wajah-baru-suara-gontor-fm/>.

<sup>27</sup> Suharto, *Senarai Kearifan Gontor: Kata Bijak Para Perintis Dan Masyayikh Gontor*.

<sup>28</sup> Sekretaris Pimpinan, "Berdirinya Pondok Gontor Baru, Gagasan & Cita-Cita," gontor.ac.id, 2022, <https://gontor.ac.id/berdirinya-pondok-gontor-baru-gagasan-dan-cita-cita/>; Zarkasyi, *Pekan Perkenalan Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor*.

<sup>29</sup> Sekretaris Pimpinan, *Serba Serbi Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor*.

<sup>30</sup> Imroatul Fatihah, "Kepemimpinan KH. Imam Zarkasyi Di Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor," *JlEM (Journal of Islamic Education Management)* 2, no. 2 (2018): 26, <https://doi.org/10.24235/jiem.v2i2.3407>; Humas, "Sintesa," gontor.ac.id, 2023, <https://gontor.ac.id/sintesa/>; Mubarak, "TRANSFORMASI GONTOR DARI GERAKAN LOKAL MENJADI GERAKAN INTERNASIONAL. DARI SISTEM PENDIDIKAN HINGGA PEMIKIRAN ISLAM.," Suharto, *Senarai Kearifan Gontor: Kata Bijak Para Perintis Dan Masyayikh Gontor*.

Egypt. Al-Azhar is one of the oldest universities in the world located in the city of Cairo Egypt. The reason why Gontor decided to adopt the inspiration of Al-Azhar is its waqf.<sup>31</sup> The waqf system applied in managing this university has many significant advantages, not only related to the internal life of the campus but also the world of education as a whole.<sup>32</sup> Egypt, the country where Al-Azhar was established, has a more advanced waqf system than Indonesia. In its implementation, waqf management in Egypt has reached the stage of productive waqf.<sup>33</sup> This waqf management model allows waqf funds to empower the institution's economy even more broadly. The authority to manage this waqf rests with the waqf department or Nadhir waqf.<sup>34</sup>

This department makes policies to cooperate with trustworthy companies, manage vacant land, as well as store it in the Islamic Bank where the proceeds can be distributed to the benefit of the community more extensively. In terms of campus education, Al-Azhar University's waqf fund is able to meet school fees and even provide funds for student necessities so that students there are free of charge and even being paid to study. Furthermore, the waqf system in Al-Azhar could also contribute to the Egyptian state in various aspects of human development such as poverty alleviation, education, and health. For instance, in the era of the Mamluk empire around the 13th to 16th century, al-Mansyur Qalawun established a hospital that was still operating well into the 19th century.<sup>35</sup> In the global scale, Al-Azhar became an icon of world education. Many countries were inspired by the development of knowledge supported by the waqf management system. Then from there the countries and educational institutions to run waqf management with a similar model, one of which is Gontor.

Secondly, Shanggit University is an old university located in the country of Mauritania, a country near Morocco.<sup>36</sup> The city was once one of the most important trade routes in the eighth century until the early 20th century. The city of Shanggit was also visited by many Muslims who wanted to perform the hajj to Mecca. In addition to its economic importance, the city was also a place where religious and cultural traditions grew. The scholarly tradition in this city was highly developed in line with the development of manuscripts and the writing of books that were published and also

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<sup>31</sup> Syahrudin Sumardi Samindjaya et al., "Imam Zarkasyi's Contribution to Indonesia's Modern Waqf Education System," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 14, no. 1 (2024): 74–91, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.141.05>.

<sup>32</sup> Zainal. Veithzal Rivai and Chusnul Indah Lupitasari, "Model Pengelolaan Wakaf Produktif Di Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Dan Perannya Terhadap Pengembangan Universitas Darussalam Gontor (Productive Waqf Management Model at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor and Its Role in the Development of Darussalam Gontor)," *Al-Awqaf* 10, no. 1 (2017): 69–79, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.47411/al-awqaf.v10i1.48>.

<sup>33</sup> Mubarak, "TRANSFORMASI GONTOR DARI GERAKAN LOKAL MENJADI GERAKAN INTERNASIONAL. DARI SISTEM PENDIDIKAN HINGGA PEMIKIRAN ISLAM."

<sup>34</sup> Khasib Amrullah et al., "The Concept of Waqf From Worldview Theory: The Study of Sharia-Philosophy," *ULUL ALBAB Jurnal Studi Islam* 23, no. 1 (2022): 22–41, <https://doi.org/10.18860/ua.v23i1.15694>.

<sup>35</sup> Syarifah, "Manajemen Kurikulum Kuliyatul Mu'allimin Al-Islamiyyah Di Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor," *At Ta'Dib* 11, no. 1 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.21111/at-tadib.v11i1.624>.

<sup>36</sup> Mubarak, "TRANSFORMASI GONTOR DARI GERAKAN LOKAL MENJADI GERAKAN INTERNASIONAL. DARI SISTEM PENDIDIKAN HINGGA PEMIKIRAN ISLAM."

traded. There the migrants came not only for economic purposes but also specifically to study. Today, there is not much data or history of this educational institution, but its scientific tradition is still recognised by scholars.<sup>37</sup> Syanggit is famous for the generosity of its figures and their struggle in defence of Islam, and Gontor was inspired to emulate this value.<sup>38</sup>

Third, Aligarh university, which was originally named Mohammedan Anglo Oriental Collage founded in India in 1875, was the first university in the South Asian region. It then became Aligarh Muslim University in 1920.<sup>39</sup> The founding figure who initiated the establishment of this university was Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, a Muslim reformer who was also a statesman.<sup>40</sup> Aligarh is well-respected for the modernity of its education. This Education Institution initiate the revolution of Islamic science. Aligarh become the first University that teach the modern and Islamic science together. This is also become a concern for the founders of Gontor to the way they develop education in Indonesia.<sup>41</sup>

Fourth, Shantiniketan is the name of a small town in West Bengal, India. It is a town that was originally owned and founded by the Tagore family. In the beginning Debendranat Tagore who was a very famous landlord. in the area he founded a school with a boarding system during his lifetime from 1817 to 1905. during his time Rabindranath transformed this small town into a city of students. This transformation was attributed to Tagore's views which attracted many people to study at santiniketan. Tagore introduced an outdoor concept school that replaced learning in classrooms.<sup>42</sup> In his view, he assumes that the concept of learning science is through experiences that involve the five senses and even feelings. With this conditioning, Santiniketan is also famous for its peacefulness.<sup>43</sup>

From the description above, it can be concluded that Gontor is a combination of the four international educational institutions. Al-Azhar with the permanence and strength of its waqf and its consistency in education and independence from practical political behavior. Syanggit with the generosity of its founders and the spirit of

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<sup>37</sup> Mubarak.

<sup>38</sup> Amalia, "Peran Pondok Pesantren Modern Gontor Sebagai Instrumen Multitrack Diplomacy Pendidikan Dalam Kerjasama Internasional"; Muhammad Yusron Maulana El-Yunusi, "Eksistensi Kurikulum Pesantren Sebagai Sub-Sistem Pendidikan Nasional (Konteks Kasus Pondok Modern Gontor Ponorogo)," *Jurnal Kependidikan Islam* Volume 13, no. Nomor 1 (2023): 30–43, <https://doi.org/0.15642/jkpi.2023.13.1.30-43>; Imam Kamaluddin, "Kurikulum, Pembelajaran Dan Penanaman Nilai-Nilai Pesantren Model Universitas Darussalam Gontor" (Ponorogo, 2023).

<sup>39</sup> Mubarak, "TRANSFORMASI GONTOR DARI GERAKAN LOKAL MENJADI GERAKAN INTERNASIONAL. DARI SISTEM PENDIDIKAN HINGGA PEMIKIRAN ISLAM."

<sup>40</sup> Mubarak.

<sup>41</sup> Kurniawan Dwi Saputra and Krismono Krismono, "The Reconstruction of Aligarh and Santiniketan Educational Philosophy: The Creative Ijtihad of Trimurti in Developing Islamic Education in Indonesia," *TSAQAFAH* 17, no. 2 (December 18, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.21111/tsaqafah.v17i2.6879>.

<sup>42</sup> Mubarak, "TRANSFORMASI GONTOR DARI GERAKAN LOKAL MENJADI GERAKAN INTERNASIONAL. DARI SISTEM PENDIDIKAN HINGGA PEMIKIRAN ISLAM."

<sup>43</sup> Amalia, "Peran Pondok Pesantren Modern Gontor Sebagai Instrumen Multitrack Diplomacy Pendidikan Dalam Kerjasama Internasional"; Saputra and Krismono, "The Reconstruction of Aligarh and Santiniketan Educational Philosophy: The Creative Ijtihad of Trimurti in Developing Islamic Education in Indonesia."

struggle to preserve Islam. Santiniketan with its peace, shade and simplicity and Aligarh with its modern education system. This means that from the beginning Gontor has had an international outlook and vision.

### **Teaching 2: *Indonesia omahku, Asia tegal sawahku, Eropa lan Amerika planconganku***

The teaching in Javanese means more or less “Indonesia is my home, Asia is my yard, Europe and America is my playground”. This futuristic phrase from the founder of Gontor illustrates far-sighted internationalization; far-reaching thinking and high idealism.<sup>44</sup> Indonesia is my home, Asia is my playground and Europe and America are the stopover countries on my journey. This statement is the Kyai's advice to his students with the hope that his students can take part internationally. Kyai is describing the idea and perspective of the s to be able to participate in Indonesia, Asia and even the world. This advice raises the desire in students to have high ideals, to take part as far as possible wherever they are. The results are currently proven that Gontor alumni have spread to all continents in the world.<sup>45</sup>

In addition to the work of alumni who are in various parts of the world and take part in various fields, this expression is also implied in the hidden curriculum at Gontor. As Rumah Indonesia has a main and important position for Gontor students in the formation of principles and identity. Wherever the student travels to mingle with different cultures and environments, the identity of the santri and Islamic principles are still firmly held. An example is the IKPM (Pondok Modern Family Association) organization or the Gontor alumni family association.<sup>46</sup> This organization often organizes student activities to become a home for Gontor diaspora students or students in big cities and even abroad.

Along with PPI and other diaspora associations, IKPM is an essential instrument for the sustainability of the Gontor students diaspora.<sup>47</sup> The existence of IKPM has the advantage on both sides of maintaining those who are abroad and motivating those who want to depart. Many students through the forum hosted by this organization have successfully headed out of the country for study and career purposes.<sup>48</sup> Although the majority of the membership currently comes from three countries such as Egypt,

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<sup>44</sup> Suharto, *Senarai Kearifan Gontor: Kata Bijak Para Perintis Dan Masyarakat Gontor*.

<sup>45</sup> Sulaiman, *Gontor Menerobos Mito: Menelusuri Jejak Dan Kiprah Gontor*.

<sup>46</sup> Muslim, “Eksistensi Gontor Di Tengah Arus Modernisasi Pendidikan Sebuah Model Inovasi Kurikulum”; Rahman, Ahmad Lukman Fahri Mansur and Khalikussabir, “Peran Alumni Pesantren Gontor Dalam Upaya Pengembangan Diri Menuju Kemandirian Santripreneur (Studi Pada Forum Bisnis Ikatan Keluarga Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor).”

<sup>47</sup> Ratna Nurcahyani et al., “RELIGIOUS PRACTICE AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION AMONG MUSLIM DIASPORA,” in *The 2nd ICONITIES: International Conference on Islamic Culture and Humanity* (Surabaya: UIN Surabaya, 2024), 639–50, <https://proceedings.uinsa.ac.id/index.php/iconfahum/article/view/1839/1308>.

<sup>48</sup> Nurcahyani et al.



Malaysia, and Turkey, the factual distribution is also spread in continental Europe such as England, the Netherlands, Germany, even America and Australia.<sup>49</sup>

**Teaching 3:** *Kalau kamu pergi, pergilah yang jauh, maka yang dekat akan terlampaui. Kalau tujuanmu ke Mekkah, maka Jakarta terlewat. Kalau kamu mengejar akhirat, dunia akan kamu raih.*

This teaching is actually Kyai's advice for santri to have a purpose in life.<sup>50</sup> Planning for life goals and farther destinations, hanging lofty ideals at the height of the stars in the sky. then things that are close will be exceeded, building great idealism, then small things will be too. that's how in this life, ideals and idealism must be great and high. If the happiness of the afterlife becomes the main goal then the pleasure of the world will be exceeded. Planting rice, the grass will grow, but not the other way around.

It is interesting how the illustration presented by Kyai Gontor is a journey abroad. This will lead to the imagination of the santri regarding international travel. Because overseas travel is a long journey, it requires sufficient preparation and more stages than domestic travel. Then the santri will think that in Pondok is to be equipped both for travel in the world and in the afterlife.

The significance of equipping oneself with supplies before a journey is no less critical than the final destination. From the motto, we are reminded that traveling to Jakarta is no less serious than traveling to Mecca, because to reach Mecca we are required to go to Jakarta first. This also implies that we cannot only expect the hereafter without thinking about how our world should be navigated. Because the world provides various ways and resources for us to get the afterlife.

**Teaching 4:** *Dari Gontor menyapa Indonesia, bahkan Dunia.*

This teaching is taken from Radio Suara Gontor; which also wants to state that Gontor is not only Ponorogo or Indonesia but also the world.<sup>51</sup> As an educational institution Gontor has an orientation to the community. In addition, the KMI system, which in Indonesian refers to a training ground for teachers, requires its alumni to educate regardless of their occupation.<sup>52</sup> This term is not limited by regional or national boundaries. some Gontor students are also foreign nationals from Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, even from other continents such as Australia, America, Europe,

<sup>49</sup> Sulaiman, *Gontor Menerobos Mitos: Menelusuri Jejak Dan Kiprah Gontor*.

<sup>50</sup> Suharto, *Senarai Kearifan Gontor: Kata Bijak Para Perintis Dan Masyayikh Gontor*.

<sup>51</sup> Humas, "Wajah Baru Suara Gontor FM."

<sup>52</sup> Zarkasyi, *Pekan Perkenalan Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor*.

and Africa.<sup>53</sup> These santri will later return home to guide the community with the knowledge they obtained at Gontor.<sup>54</sup>

In the meantime, the vision of globalization is also contained in Gontor's curriculum, both written and hidden.<sup>55</sup> As a written curriculum, lessons at Gontor use two international languages, namely Arabic and English.<sup>56</sup> In terms of subjects, there are also several value contents that exceed the limits of national goals. Such as fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) lessons that use the book "Bidayah Mujtahid" where the majority of the Indonesian population is of the Shafi'i school of thought, but in Gontor it is taught about the debate of the four Madhhabs in a balanced manner without being doctrined to tend to one of them.<sup>57</sup> This is a habituation for students to the diversity that will be dealt with in the international sphere. In English lessons, it is also explained in detail to further practice conversation or also imagine how daily life is in the country. For example, there is a theme entitled how people order taxis to travel, order clothes to tailors, even descriptions of travel in Buckingham palace as well as how the 4 seasons are experienced in the world. This is how Gontor educates students to have the ability to adapt and deal with differences in various regions of the world without sacrificing their identity as a Muslim.

### **Teaching 5: *Politik yang terpenting adalah politik pendidikan***

PMDG as an educational institution has a non- political position in the sense that it is not affiliated with any political party, community organization, or political movement.<sup>58</sup> However, the founder often said that education is the highest politics. It is also interesting to see that how Gontor considers the potential of education can have a major impact on the progress of the country.<sup>59</sup>

In developed countries, education plays an instrumental role in how society is shaped so that the country's goals can be realized. However, developing countries that have not paid adequate attention to education often encounter obstacles to achieve state policies due to societal factors. Some examples of poor education are the low quality of human resources which has an impact on the lack of regional development, social inequality and high unemployment. Therefore, we can see that important aspects of the country such as social, cultural and economic aspects are closely related

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<sup>53</sup> Tim Penyusun, *Wardun: Warta Dunia Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor*, 2023.

<sup>54</sup> Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi et al., "Strategy of Indonesian Pesantren University in Achieving Competence of Student: A Grounded Research at UNIDA Gontor," in *6th International Conference on Education and Social Science Research*, vol. 2024 (KnE Social Sciences, 2024), 119–38, <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v9i6.15260>.

<sup>55</sup> Syarifah, "Manajemen Kurikulum Kulliyatul Mu'allimin Al-Islamiyyah Di Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor."

<sup>56</sup> El-Yunusi, "Eksistensi Kurikulum Pesantren Sebagai Sub-Sistem Pendidikan Nasional (Konteks Kasus Pondok Modern Gontor Ponorogo)."

<sup>57</sup> Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi, "Modern Pondok Pesantren: Maintaining Tradition in Modern System," *Tsaqafah* 11, no. 2 (2017): 85–103, <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.21111/tsaqafah.v11i2.267>.

<sup>58</sup> Suharto, *Senarai Kearifan Gontor: Kata Bijak Para Perintis Dan Masyayikh Gontor*.

<sup>59</sup> Suharto.

to the quality of education in a country. Moreover, a good society has a greater potential to raise good leaders.<sup>60</sup>

In political practice, various groups organize political movements to strengthen their power in the national scale by promoting candidates for state leaders. However, the current political event has many corrupt practices. This phenomenon is considered unable to uncover humans with superior qualifications to become leaders. Gontor sees that this political unhealthiness results from the lack of people with good qualifications. By establishing educational institutions, Gontor has a vision to massively shape a good society so that the potential for the emergence of a great leader can be greater.<sup>61</sup>

In various histories it is shown that kingdoms, countries, or advanced civilizations are qualified with great leaders whose backgrounds are discussed. Research on this history is an absolute measure in studying a leadership. Information related to family conditions, childhood, education, work, and environment are all crucial aspects to determine how the character of this leader was derived. It is this characteristic of the leader that will have the greatest contribution to national policies and movements. In the shaping of this character, environmental conditioning is intentionally carried out through educational channels. In Gontor, not only material or reading materials, but human education is also pursued through the enrichment of the environment and activities that are filled with values.<sup>62</sup> In other words, education in Gontor is engineered to touch all aspects of the human being to create good character. On a national scale, Gontor alumni used to lead the two largest Islamic organizations NU and Muhammadiyah, which in the same period the chairman of the House of Representatives also graduated from Gontor.<sup>63</sup>

### **Teaching 6: *Kenapa tidak mencetak ulama yang pandai berbahasa Arab sekaligus bahasa Inggris***

The introduction of Arabic and English as languages of instruction in Gontor has a historical dimension and a visionary target. The idea of building the New Gontor and the description of the educational system and its graduates were inspired by the events of the Indonesian Islamic Congress in Surabaya. The congress held in 1926 was attended by Indonesian Muslim leaders. H.O.S. Cokroaminoto, Kyai Mas Mansur, H. Agus Salim, AM. Sangaji, Usman Amin, and others. In the congress it was decided that Indonesian Muslims would delegate to the World Islamic Congress which would be

<sup>60</sup> Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam, Secularism and the Philosophy of the Future* (London: Mansell Publishing Ltd, 1985).

<sup>61</sup> Katni, Ayok Ariyanto, and Sigit Dwi Laksana, "Manajemen Program Pengembangan Panca Kemandirian Dan Kemajuan Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Indonesia," *Al-Asasiyya* 4, no. 1 (2019): 30–45.

<sup>62</sup> Hamid Fahmy. Zarkasyi et al., *Membangun Manusia Yang Beradab Berbasis Islamic Worldview* (Surakarta: Gaza Publishing, 2024); Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi, *Manajemen Pesantren: Pengalaman Pondok Modern Gontor (Pesantren Management: The Experience of Pondok Modern Gontor)* (Ponorogo: Trimurti Press, 2010).

<sup>63</sup> Sulaiman, *Gontor Menerobos Mitos: Menelusuri Jejak Dan Kiprah Gontor*.

held in Makkah. But problems arose regarding who would be the delegate. In fact, to attend the Congress, participants were required to be proficient in at least Arabic and English. None of the participants in the congress mastered the two languages equally proficiently. Finally, two delegates were chosen, namely H.O.S. Cokroaminoto who was proficient in English and K.H. Mas Mansur who mastered Arabic. This event inspired Kyai Ahmad Sahal as the founder of the pesantren who was present as a participant in the congress on the need to raise leaders who have the above criteria. Kyai Ahmad Sahal's impression from the congress became a topic of discussion and was a valuable insight. This impression became the shape and characteristics of the institution that would be raised in the future.<sup>64</sup> From this phenomenon, the founder of Gontor thought of educating alumni who had expertise in both Arabic and English in one person.

The previous phenomenon also indicated that there was segregation between people who were experts in Arabic and English. This occurred because at that time there were two streams of education systems that taught the two languages separately. English was commonly taught in modern Dutch schools while Arabic was taught in the traditional pesantren education system. Moreover, besides language, these two education models taught different subjects. The pesantren education system teaches Islamic religious knowledge which requires students to read Arabic references. Whereas in modern western education, students are taught to read and write cognitively, where they are taught modern science that uses Dutch and English references. This segregation phenomenon encouraged Gontor to formulate an alternative education system that accommodates both competencies between Islamic religious knowledge and modern science.<sup>65</sup>

At current time, after almost a century of Gontor's existence, the urgency of mastering these two competencies is increasingly crucial. With the end of the cold war, the democratic system that emphasizes liberal thinking brings new challenges to post-independence Muslims. Many Muslims who do not understand religion are more likely to accept the arrival of foreign ideologies that are contrary to the principles of Islam. On the other hand, people who only study Islamic teachings are often left behind with the development of social issues that ultimately cannot also provide enlightenment for the Muslim community. Therefore, it is necessary for a Muslim to have both language competencies. So that with Arabic he has a deep basis of Islamic science and with English can keep up with the advancement of modern science. With this qualification, a Muslim can also study the phenomenon of society that continues to emerge to be analyzed using Islamic principles.

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<sup>64</sup> Nidzom et al., "CULTURAL IDENTITY OF PESANTREN CADRES IN INDONESIA"; Sekretaris Universitas, "Profil UNIDA Gontor" (Ponorogo: UNIDA, 2022).

<sup>65</sup> Sekretaris Pimpinan, "Berdirinya Pondok Gontor Baru, Gagasan & Cita-Cita."

**Teaching 7: *Agar kelak anak-anakku mewujudkan Darussalam di Indonesia.***

The Gontor ideas of how education should shape human qualifications that Gontor has, these ideas are too small to be applied on a regional scale. Moreover, with its community-orientated principles, Gontor's ideas need to be spread for the benefit of the wider community. Thus, Gontor's ideas need to be elevated to the national level to have a more tangible impact. Currently, Gontor has 20 branch campuses spread across various provinces in Indonesia.<sup>66</sup> The establishment of these branch campuses is mostly based on requests from the community or leaders who want the presence of Gontor in their area. The distribution only covers the islands of Java, Sumatra and Sulawesi. Although born from a small village far from the big city, the formation of Gontor's ideas and vision covers the challenges of Muslims globally.

Not only with the existence of branch campuses, the spread of this idea was also helped by the emergence of Gontor-inspired boarding schools. Currently there are as many as hundreds of boarding schools inspired by Gontor's ideas and ideas. These boarding schools were established by Gontor alumni who felt the urgency to educate the people in their area with what they learnt at Gontor. This Pondok is commonly referred to as Pondok Alumni. If Gontor with its branch campuses is only spread across three major islands, then the alumni boarding schools are almost found on all major islands in Indonesia. The realisation of the spread of Gontor's ideas was also strengthened by the passing of the Draft Law on pesantren which recognised Gontor's KMI education system as a nationally recognised official system.

The name Darussalam, which means peaceful village, also illustrates how the founder's aspiration to realise peace during the colonial oppression. To realise a peaceful Indonesia, unity is needed, which requires mutual respect so as not to be easily duped. For this reason, it is necessary for people to have sufficient knowledge and mature character to respect each other's differences. Education for this is also carried out in the santri development system through various activities and curricula. Comparative Religion lessons are important subjects taught at Gontor. This knowledge is needed not only for da'wah but also for respecting adherents of other religions. Meanwhile, to respect fellow Muslims, Gontor also teaches fiqh of the four madhabs so that an Islamic can see where the substantial and essential differences are so that it is not easy to dispute what is not necessary. In addition, in the management of the dormitory, discipline is also enforced, which erodes the sense of fanaticism towards the region of origin, which was often a means of dividing and conquering during the colonial period. By making regulations on the number of santri who come from the same region and organising regional organisation activities. This is how Gontor sees Pondok Darussalam not only as an institution but also as a concept that answers national problems.

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<sup>66</sup> Tim Penyusun, "Wardun: Warta Dunia Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor" (Ponorogo: Darussalam Press, 2022).

## Discussion

The mobilization of PMDG alumni in the education sector is quite significant, especially at the national level. No less than 700 Islamic boarding schools spread across Indonesia and some in Malaysia and Thailand, have used PMDG's Kuliyyatu-l-Mu'allimin al Islamiyah (KMI) curriculum although to a various extent. Even in 2019, the KMI curriculum was legalized as one type of national curriculum system with the announcement of the Pesantren Mu'is Law.<sup>67</sup> For the record, PMDG's diploma was not recognized by the Indonesian government for a period of time and was only leveled with MA in 1998 (Ministry of Religious Affairs) and SMA in 2000 (Ministry of Education and Culture).<sup>68</sup> Whereas PMDG's diploma has been recognized by the Minister of Education and Teaching of the Arab Republic of Egypt in 1957, Al Azhar University in 1986, the Ministry of Teaching of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1387/1967, and recognition from the University of the Punjab, Lahore in 1991.<sup>69</sup> Another evidence of Gontor's internationalization is that several international scholars have visited PMDG even today.

Apart from the field of education, there are also mobilization mechanisms in other fields, such as in the fields of philanthropy, social life, economics and even politics. However, what appears to be large is in the field of education. This means that the diffusion and mobilization of PMDG, although not so rapid, gradually occurs from the local, national and international levels. This means that what Kyai Gontor accomplished by teaching international teachings and mottos played a role in the diffusion of internationalization concepts, on a very small (local) scale, namely on the PMDG campus.

Second, the type of internationalization of PMDG. As is known, there are two types of internationalization: the old style with a high-political approach based on the policies of political and military leaders, and; second, the new style transnational with a low-political approach based on other sides such as education, art, ideas and norms. It is predictable that PMDG does not engage in practical politics. Internationalization is not done through state or military power, but through educational ideas, norms, and wisdom. This indicates that PMDG's internationalization is a new style of internationalization with a low-politic approach.

## CONCLUSION

From the description above, the author discovered various findings. First, PMDG's vision of internationalization is found in the slogans taught by Kyai to his students. Among the slogans are "Indonesia omahku, Asia tegal sawahku, Eropa lan Amerika

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<sup>67</sup> DPR RI, "UU No. 18 Tahun 2019 Tentang Pesantren," 2019, <https://www.jogloabang.com/pustaka/uu-18-2019-pesantren?amp>; Zainal Panani, Mujamil Qomar, and Abd. Aziz, "Kebijakan Penguatan Pesantren Dengan Muadalah," *Jurnal Budi Pekerti Agama Islam* 2, no. 3 (2024): 231–40.

<sup>68</sup> Humas, "Persamaan Ijazah," [gontor.ac.id](https://gontor.ac.id), 2023, <https://gontor.ac.id/persamaan-ijazah/>.

<sup>69</sup> Humas.

pelanconganku” “This Pondok is a combination / synthesis of four elements; 1. Al-Azhar, 2. Syanggit, 3. Santiniketan, 4. Aligarh” and “From Gontor to greet Indonesia, even the World”. Second, the PMDG Internationalization Model is a new style internationalization with a low-politic approach that focuses on norms, ethics and educational ideas. Third, the internalization mechanism conducted by Kyai to students is in the diffusion form, namely communicating international ideas and concepts; while mobilization is carried out by alumni with their respective work in society. Fourth, the above explanation can be concluded that PMDG has a vision of internationalization which is implemented by Kyai, internalized by students, and mobilized by alumni.

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