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## THE EDUCATIONAL CONCEPT OF HAJI AGUS SALIM

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### Abstract:

Haji Agus Salim (1884–1954) was a prominent figure in the Indonesian independence movement. After independence, he became a famous diplomat and served as Indonesia's Minister of Foreign Affairs. Numerous historians concentrated on his career as a politician. Nevertheless, Haji Agus Salim was also intrigued by educational concepts. Throughout his life, he demonstrated his interest in education in several ways: During the Dutch colonial period he decided to teach his children at home. Later, he was an effective instructor for the *Jong Islamieten Bond*, and he was also a successful visiting lecturer at Cornell University. In addition to his political expertise, he saw the value of transmitting some educational elements. The underlying structuralist approach of this research revealed that Haji Agus Salim was more concerned with the aspects of language teaching and Islamic knowledge. According to him, it was indispensable that the students develop a motivational and interested consciousness, and the teacher should instigate the eagerness to learn.

### Keywords:

Haji Agus Salim, Home Teaching, Indonesia, Language Teaching, Sarekat Islam

## Introduction

In Indonesia, Haji Agus Salim is widely recognized as one of the most prominent national heroes and an exceptional individual. Despite his Western education, he had familial ties to famous Islamic scholars such as Ahmad Khatib al Minangkabawi (1860-1916), a prominent

scholar in Mecca. Moreover, he rejected the idea that his children are exposed to the Dutch secular school system. Consequently, he taught them at home. Additionally, his intense interest in Islam-related matters was evident as a prominent figure in the Islamic movement *Sarekat Islam*. For example, there was an intellectual dispute at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century between modernists (the so-called young generation, or *kaum muda*) and traditionalists (the old generation, or *kaum tua*). This conflict was widespread in Haji Agus Salim's homeland, the highlands of West Sumatra.

Several individuals who encountered Haji Agus Salim during his lifetime were impressed by his personality. They bestowed upon him their own 'titles'. He was seen as the 'father of Indonesian intellectualism' (Maarif, 1984) as a result of his teaching of intellectuals, including Mohammad Roem or Kasman. On the other side, he was a brilliant politician, and many saw him as 'the diplomat' (Coast, 1984). One of his significant contributions was the recognition of Indonesia as an independent state by several Arabic nations, which was accomplished through his diligent efforts. He was also referred to as the "grand old man" in his later years (Suradi, 2014). Haji Agus Salim had a versatile personality, and he had many interests. He rejected a blind following of scholars of the past. Sometimes, this led to conflicts. However, he remained steadfast in his conviction and vision.

The objective of this paper is to clarify Haji Agus Salim's educational perspective. Despite his decision not to enroll his children in Dutch government schools, they were nonetheless able to speak Dutch proficiently from an early age. Many contemporaries found this to be pretty impressive. The researchers aimed to conduct an in-depth analysis of the educational concept of Haji Agus Salim. The purpose is to provide an alternative portrayal of the politician Haji Agus Salim and inspire people with his educational ideals.

### ***A Brief Biography of Haji Agus Salim***

On October 8<sup>th</sup>, 1884, Agus Salim was born in the small town of Koto Gadang, which is located near Bukittinggi (West Sumatra). His father was Mohammad Salim, a high-ranking government officer in Riau. His mother was Siti Zaenab. His father named him Mashadul Haq (Mukayat, 1985). However, during the time, the people became used to calling him Agus.

He attended the European school in West Sumatra during his childhood. After that, he continued his studies in the capital, Batavia (Jakarta). He was a brilliant young man and was able to acquire a wide range of linguistic skills during the course of his life. He was capable of speaking nine languages: Dutch, English, French, German, Arabic, Turkish, and the local languages Sunda, Javanese, and Minangkabau. Following his graduation from high school, he made an effort to secure a scholarship that would allow him to further his education in the Netherlands. The effort that was made was in vain. However, he was brilliant, and therefore the famous orientalist Snouck Hurgronje (1857-1936) offered him a position as a translator in the Dutch consulate in Jeddah (Damanik, 2022).

In the year 1906, he began to work in Jeddah. Due to the city's proximity to Mecca, he had the chance to undertake the pilgrimage. He could perform the rites of *haj* five times (Kahfi, 1997). Consequently, they bestowed upon him the title 'Haji.' Haji Agus Salim had the opportunity to meet his cousin Shaikh Ahmad Khatib, the Shafiite Imam of Mecca, while he was in Jeddah. The Shaikh was considered to be anti-colonial (Laffan, 2003). After five years, Haji Agus

Salim returned to Indonesia. He went to his hometown and married Zaitun Nahar (Damanik, 2022).

The education of the younger generation was a matter of concern for Haji Agus Salim. He personally witnessed the separation of religious values that resulted from secular education. As a consequence, he built a school in West Sumatra. However, he could not teach as he had no teaching diploma. Therefore, he planned to acquire it. Unfortunately, his efforts were not successful, and he decided to move to Java.

In 1915, he became a member of the *Sarekat Islam*, a significant Islamic organization. Tjokroaminoto (1882-1934) was the leader. He was very popular and influential. Another significant person was Abdul Muis (1883-1959). Soon, Haji Agus Salim became a leading figure too. One of the major challenges was the leftist movement, which tried to control the decision-making process. Haji Agus Salim demonstrated a high level of intelligence by suggesting that a member of *Sarekat Islam* cannot simultaneously be a member of another party. Haji Agus Salim also became involved in instructing members of the "Young Islamic Association" (*Jong Islamieten Bond*, JIB). In the 1920s, he was a member of the *Volksraad* (parliament) and was renowned for being the first member to deliver a speech in the national language, *Bahasa Indonesia* (then known as Malay).

The following years in the 1930s remained turbulent. In 1934, Tjokroaminoto passed away. The discussion on whether the party should cooperate or not cooperate with the colonial government remained an important issue and conflict. The newly established *Partai Sarekat Islam* decided to exclude Haji Agus Salim. He was still active in the political party *Penyedar*.

During the time of World War II, the Japanese controlled Indonesia. At the end of their reign, they formed a committee that should prepare for the independence of Indonesia. On August 17<sup>th</sup>, 1945, was the Independence Declaration of Indonesia. In the cabinets of Amir Sjarifuddin (1907-1948) and Mohammad Hatta (1902-1980), Haji Agus Salim was appointed as minister of foreign affairs. He embarked on diplomatic visits to several Middle Eastern nations. His efforts were fruitful, and Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia recognized the independence of Indonesia. Diplomatic visits to numerous Middle Eastern nations were initiated by him. Indonesia's independence was acknowledged by Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia as a result of his successful endeavors.

In 1953, Haji Agus Salim assumed the position of a visiting lecturer at Cornell University. He taught Islamic studies. On November 4, 1954, he passed away.

### ***The Field of Education and Haji Agus Salim***

Throughout his academic career, Salim acquired the understanding that language is the foundation of knowledge (Mukayat, 1985). He developed a passion for reading and particularly treasured the exploration of books that focused on historical figures such as Diponegoro. He attempted to obtain a scholarship to continue his studies in the Netherlands after leaving school, but his attempts were unsuccessful. Salim was not demoralized, as he knew that knowledge is connected to books.

After he returned from Mecca, he intended to be an educator. Even though the plans to get a teaching permission were not fruitful, there were nonetheless periods in his life in which his educational concept can be seen:

- 1) The efforts to teach his children at home.
- 2) Haji Agus Salim gave lessons at the *Jong Islamieten Bond*.
- 3) In the 1950s, he taught students at Cornell University.

An extraordinary occurrence in the context of Haji Agus Salim and education was his decision to refrain from enrolling his children in public schools. One of the reasons was probably that he himself faced a situation that led to some neglect of religious duties. He was raised in a secular milieu that prioritized worldly affairs and neglected the concept of the hereafter. In some way, he found himself disconnected from Islamic values. This changed when he studied in Mecca with Shaikh Ahmad Khatib.

The second significant aspect of his life was the sharing of knowledge through his teaching lessons at the *Jong Islamieten Bond* in the 1920s and early 1930s. During this time, he served as a mentor to numerous distinguished students, among them Mohammad Roem (1908-1983). During this period, Haji Agus Salim also imparted important teachings through radio broadcasts. Some of these lessons were also compiled, written down, and published in book form. They served as a medium of education for many people.

### Literature Review

In the literature review, it must be differentiated between secondary publications that were written by scientists about Haji Agus Salim and articles that were personally published by him.

#### *Literature About Haji Agus Salim*

There are a number of biographical publications available, which is not surprising since Haji Agus Salim was a national hero. Consequently, Mukayat (1985) wrote a concise biography for the Indonesian Ministry of Education. A more recent biography was published by the team of Tempo magazine (Tempo, 2013). This book is very illustrative and easy to read. Kahfi (1997) authored another comprehensive work about his life. This work is captivating because it provides intriguing background information. Fauzi and Hasanah (2019) provided a more recent overview of Haji Agus Salim, which examined his background. He grew up in a Minangkabau village community that stressed the usage of discussions and proverbs. This knowledge not only shaped his role as a diplomat, but it also significantly shaped his educational philosophy.

Setiono and Kuswandi (2023) wrote a highly important article that centers on Haji Agus Salim's educational concept. The authors concentrate on the influence of Haji Agus Salim on primary school education. It was emphasized that he was a proponent of homeschooling. Haji Agus Salim fostered certain features, such as a literary education, the development of good character, communication, and the possibility of living as an educated person in a globalized world. The article is highly inspiring. Nevertheless, the authors concentrated on primary education, and it would be intriguing to observe the impact of Haji Agus Salim on higher education. This article will attempt to explore this topic.

A totally different perspective was used by Damanik (2022). He emphasized that Haji Agus Salim employed Sufistic values. These values were stressed by Salim's students. He lived under simple conditions, and such a modest lifestyle is in accordance with Sufi principles (Shamsul Mohd. Nor, 2020). Haji Agus Salim was a source of inspiration for a number of young scholars who chose to concentrate their research on his life and ideals.

Azizah (2021) focused on the theological thoughts of Haji Agus Salim. She concluded that basic Islamic principles like Islamic monotheism (*tauhid*), destiny (*takdir*) and trust in Allah (*tawakkal*) served as major principles for activities related to freedom. Other authors, like Hamka (1984), emphasized also that Haji Agus Salim was a significant Islamic scholar, and therefore it is not surprising that many academicians focus on this aspect. The Islamic idea about fate is essential, as a person has no choice in which society he will grow up in (Wardana, 2022). However, the educator can shape the political landscape, thereby influencing the state's progress.

Table 1 presents the principal publications concerning Haji Agus Salim and their respective areas of interest.

**Table 1: Scientific Publications About Haji Agus Salim And Their Main Content**

Author	Biographical Information	Education	History	Politics
Damanik (2022)	✓		✓	✓
Fauzi & Hasanah (2023)	✓	✓		✓
Kahfi (1997)	✓		✓	✓
Laffan (2003)	✓			✓
Mukayat (1985)	✓		✓	✓
Suradi (2014)	✓		✓	✓
Setiono & Kuswandi (2023)		✓		

Table 1 shows that many researchers concentrated on Haji Agus Salim and his political role. The topic of his contribution in the field of education received less attention.

### ***Haji Agus Salim's Literary Works***

Haji Agus Salim was invited to deliver lectures on Islamic studies in 1953. These lectures were published (Salim, 2009). The talks were designed to be attractive to both Muslim and non-Muslim audiences. Consequently, the content is quite general. The biggest part of the lectures is the biography of Prophet Muhammad (saw.). This biography bears a close connection to the concepts of *tauhid* and *tawakkal*. Prophet Muhammad (saw.) had complete trust in Allah (swt.). His emigration with his close companion Abu Bakar (r.a.) serves as an excellent illustration. Despite encountering numerous obstacles, the Prophet (saw.) maintained a composed demeanor and placed unwavering trust in destiny.



The book *Seratus Tahun Haji Agus Salim* [100 Years Haji Agus Salim] includes many articles that were written by his friends, researchers, and other influential Indonesian figures. However, it also contains numerous newspaper articles authored by Haji Agus Salim during the 1920s and 1930s. Some of these essays are significant in terms of education, particularly the article *Hasrat Manusia kepada Agama* [The Human Desire to Religion]. In this article, he describes the necessity of an individual to follow religious values.

### Research Methodology

The researchers employ an analytical approach that takes into account both primary and secondary sources in this research. The first category includes books authored by Haji Agus Salim himself. His articles give a good idea about his educational approach.

The following research objectives were formulated:

- 1) To identify the educational subjects that Haji Agus Salim found interesting.
- 2) To use a structural way of reading in order to detect dichotomies.

The researchers also decided to use a structural analysis and refer to the work of Edmund Leach (1976) and Claude Levi-Strauss (1963).

The structuralist method is designed to reveal latent patterns or structures that are not immediately apparent.

If someone reads a text from beginning to end, then he uses the usual way of reading. Conversely, it is also feasible to concentrate on a specific aspect and analyze potential dichotomies and significant factors. This will facilitate a more thorough comprehension of the educational concept of Haji Agus Salim.

### Findings And Discussion

In this chapter, the researchers want to focus on the educational elements that were of interest to Haji Agus Salim.

#### *Ways to Disseminate Knowledge*

Accounts from individuals who were closely associated with Haji Agus Salim indicate that he harbored certain concepts that could be classified as highly progressive. His dedication to the education of women was an essential component of his work (Mochtar, 1984). His ideas can be considered innovative when he introduced that men and women should not sit separately. Haji Agus Salim employed a variety of methods to disseminate his knowledge:

- 1) He delivered a lecture to the audience. He employed this approach in instructing the *Jong Islamieten Bond* students. The students came to his house, and he taught them. Sometimes there was some kind of dialogue at the beginning. However, this dialogue often transitioned into a monologue.
- 2) Haji Agus Salim utilized his skills in delivering lectures through radio broadcasts. He was able to effectively engage a large audience by utilizing this approach. Frequently, the purpose of the content was to provide Islamic knowledge. His explanations of *tawakkal* (reliance on Allah), *tauhid* (faith in the unity of Allah), and *takdir* (divine decree) serve as exemplary illustrations. Haji Agus Salim was deeply concerned about

the correct understanding of Islamic belief concepts. A good example is his lessons that were broadcast on *Radio Ketimuran*.

3) Haji Agus Salim actively contributed to many Islamic media, disseminating knowledge through his writings in articles and books.

For Haji Agus Salim, the educational system had to implement specific features. He states in his article *Hasrat Manusia kepada Agama* (Human Desire for Religion) that the prevalent materialistic tendencies have caused a significant number of individuals to become irritated. Consequently, he emphasized the significance of the pedagogical instructions at the *Jong Islamieten Bond* (JIB) in promoting spiritual guidance and mental freedom (Salim, 1984). Western education can cultivate a distorted perception as a result of its emphasis on Western supremacy.

### ***General Educational Principles***

Haji Agus Salim had some general principles that can be considered as basic ‘guidelines.’ These concepts shaped his pedagogical approach.

1) Haji Agus Salim opposed corporal punishment in the realm of education in order to advance freedom of expression. It is crucial for children and pupils to have the freedom to express their own opinions and pursue their interests. A good example is his own children, who were permitted to select and read books that they found enjoyable.

2) Courage and self-confidence: Haji Agus Salim saw the necessity to be brave. However, in order to be successful, it is essential to be wise. He himself could be a role model for his students. A single incident exemplified this potential and could serve as a source of inspiration for future generations:

In the 1920s, Haji Agus Salim was a member of the *Volksraad* (a kind of parliament). Haji Agus Salim was the first person who delivered his speech in Malay (Indonesian). The consequence was that the Dutch representatives became upset and disrupted him. They asked him about the Indonesian term for ‘economy’. He bravely responded by inquiring about the Dutch term for ‘economy.’ (Mukayat, 1985)

This case illustrates the courage of Haji Agus Salim. Even though others wanted to intimidate him, it was not possible. The young generation was so motivated to pursue his ideals.

3) Anti-authoritarian style: The children of Haji Agus Salim had the freedom to pursue their interests. They were granted the freedom to play at their own discretion. Haji Agus Salim promoted an anti-authoritarian educational approach that enabled children to follow their own interests. Salim was significantly ahead of his time, rejecting a teaching approach that upheld the primacy of a single viewpoint. One possible reason could be that the Minangkabau society supports discussions in order to reach a consensus (Stark & Hassan, 2023).

### ***Methodology For Acquiring Language Skills***

Haji Agus Salim was capable of speaking nine different languages. When he decided that his children should not attend the Dutch schools, this did not mean that he neglected the language education. He employed a pragmatic strategy by speaking Dutch inside the confines of his home. The visitors were amazed to find that his children were able to speak Dutch fluently. Mohammad Roem offered several plausible explanations (Roem, 1984). He observed that Syauket, the son of Haji Agus Salim, was already able to communicate in Dutch at the age of

four. This means that he learned the language when he was quite young. One reason might be that imitation is a major point at that early age (O'Grady, 2005). Mohammad Roem illustrates Haji Agus Salim's educational 'methodology':

The author, who has known Haji A. Salim's family, although not since he had his first child, but since his first child was 12 years old, has never seen him give lessons according to certain rules. There is study time, (and) there is playtime. There is no limit between studying hours and playing hours. This means that every time he is with his children, he teaches them, and that started when the child was born. I think that's Haji A. Salim's attitude towards his children. Therefore, everyone who first gets to know Haji A. Salim wonders why his children, who are not in school, speak Dutch well, fluently and eloquently. (Roem, 1984, p. 181) [Translation by the researchers]

Mohammad Roem illustrated Haji Agus Salim and his teaching method with astonishment. It was ahead of his time. He promoted an 'early childhood education' in which his children should develop a thirst for knowledge. Interestingly, instead of adopting an authoritarian teaching style, he fostered an intellectual environment that sparked the children's curiosity and thirst for knowledge.

Haji Agus Salim possessed the ability to fluently communicate in nine different languages. Initially, he often possessed a basic foundation in one of these languages, which he later enhanced through exposure to native speakers. A good example was the time when he worked in the Dutch consulate in Jeddah. During this time, he had some basic knowledge of Arabic. However, in Jeddah he had no other choice than to practice the language. He used a similar approach when he taught his children Dutch. Haji Agus Salim, who frequently used Dutch in his household, also encouraged them to use it. The children had the freedom to choose a book that interests them.

The teaching pedagogy encompassed several elements:

- 1) He fostered an environment in which his children were required to speak either Dutch or, in rare instances, English.
- 2) The children should develop their own interests. They were encouraged to read the books that they liked in order to acquire the skill of reading.
- 3) There was no fixed schedule. The children could interrupt their studies and play. After that, they should continue with their studies.

By examining the three points, it becomes clear that Haji Agus Salim utilized a contemporary pedagogical approach that went beyond merely teaching grammar rules and accompanying exercises. He prioritized communication because he recognized the importance of communication as a critical component of language acquisition.

### ***Islamic Education***

Haji Agus Salim was very concerned with the preservation of Islamic values. For him, these values serve as the foundation for the community. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was a dispute between traditional and modern values. Haji Agus Salim studied in Jeddah with Shaikh Ahmad Khatib al Minangkabawi, who can be considered an orthodox scholar with modern influences (Ulum, 2021).



When discussing Islamic education, it is important to distinguish between education that is intended for Muslims and education that aims to teach Islam to non-Muslims. Throughout his life, Haji Agus Salim concentrated on educating his children, instructing the *Jong Islamieten Bond* students, and broadcasting his lessons with Islamic content. The second category comprised his lectures as a visiting professor at Cornell University.

1) Education to Muslims: Haji Agus Salim emphasized the importance of *tauhid*, the belief in the oneness of Allah. A correct belief will lead to an accurate understanding of *tawakkal* and *takdir* (Salim, 1954). Before a person begins to act, he or she should recite the *basmala* (*Bismillahirrahmanirrahim* - In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful). Haji Agus Salim emphasized that only Allah has power. Even individuals in positions of authority or leadership do not possess such authority or control (Salim, 1954, p.32). When these sentences were published, Indonesia was in a precarious position as the foreign rulers had the power. The people were reminded that it might seem so, but actually, this is not the case. The real power is with Allah (swt.). Haji Agus Salim gives some detailed examples. He writes that many things are beyond human control:

- They are unable to determine their country of birth.
- Humans have no power in relation to their soul.
- A child cannot choose the type of education they will receive.

Haji Agus Salim's radio teachings, later published as a book, focus on subjects that hold significance for all individuals. People should refrain from feeling dissatisfied in the event that not all of their endeavors yield success. A person should exert maximum effort and subsequently place their trust in Allah. On the other hand, individuals in influential positions only hold these positions due to Allah's grace.

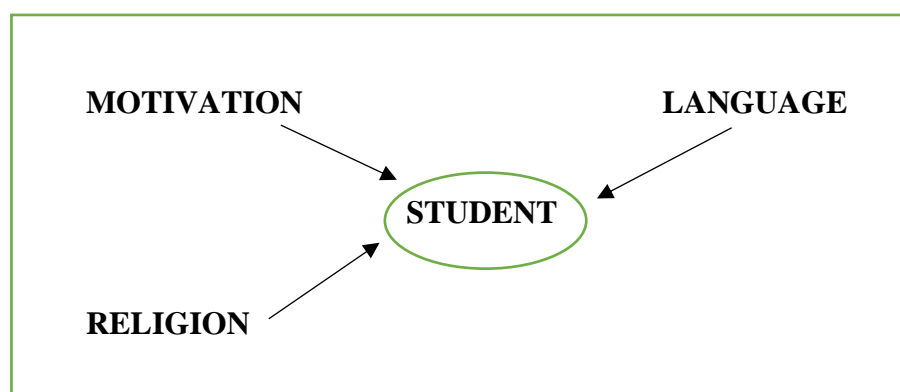
Haji Agus Salim published some of his Islamic books during a precarious period in Indonesia's independence struggle. The radio lectures about *tawakkal*, *takdir* and *tauhid* were aired in the year 1938. The lessons could motivate the listeners to believe that the real power is with Allah, not with any human being. If someone internalizes this knowledge, then he or she will not get a disease of the heart like wrong pride (*takbur*). Allah's help is necessary even during the independence struggle. In a structuralist sense, Haji Agus Salim himself juxtaposes elements that are beneficial and those that are detrimental. The following example should illustrate that: Every person has a target that he or she wants to achieve. However, sometimes we succeed or fail. If we succeed, then we should be grateful. On the other side, if we fail, we should ask Allah for guidance. In this example, we can see that Salim emphasizes knowledge that leads to an inner change. People can develop and correct their behavior through the inner development of their beliefs.

2) Teaching Islam to non-Muslims: When discussing Islamic education for non-Muslims, it is important to highlight that Haji Agus Salim concentrated on key aspects. It is indeed remarkable that he managed to be exceptionally concise. His first lecture at Cornell University serves as an illustrative example. The topics were the five pillars of Islam and the six pillars of Islamic belief. He briefly describes them without delving into detail. For instance, he acknowledges that Muslims are required to engage in five daily prayer sessions, yet he fails to provide a visual depiction of the practice. His main objective was to demonstrate the paramount significance of Islamic monotheism. This belief is

interconnected with all the other pillars. It is Allah (swt.) who sent the prophets to this world, created the angels, determined the destiny, etc. Therefore, the believers must confirm this. Haji Agus Salim recognized that providing an exhaustive account of every aspect of the pillars would overwhelm the audience. For instance, the predominantly non-Muslim audience may not be interested in the factors that could invalidate the prayer. Hence, Haji Agus Salim provided an overview to ensure that the students have a fundamental understanding that would facilitate comprehension of subsequent analyses. When he was in Mecca, Haji Agus Salim received education from Shaikh Ahmad Khatib al Minangkabawi. During this time, Haji Agus Salim met some of his students. Some of them followed an orthodox understanding while rejecting practices that had no basis in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Shaikh Ahmad himself criticized certain elements of the widespread Sufi orders. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that Haji Agus Salim also embraced modern concepts. One important feature of Haji Agus Salim's ideas was his refusal to exclude women from lessons, and his criticism of their practice of sitting in remote places. By doing this, he was challenging a widely held traditional concept. His intention was to inspire and encourage women to acquire knowledge and enhance their learning abilities.

### ***Analytical Remarks***

In this chapter, it will be tried to outline the content of Haji Agus Salim's major points of education (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1. The Educational Concept Of Haji Agus Salim**

It was evident in the previously mentioned chapters that motivation was the most essential element of his pedagogical concept.

He encouraged his children to learn a language whenever they felt the need to do so, and he even purchased popular books and novels from that era, such as *Lord Lister*. Mohammad Roem stated that these works bore resemblance to the 'James Bond' series (Roem, 1984). *Lord Lister* had the aim to eradicate bandits. Interestingly, at times, *Lord Lister* himself operated as a bandit, distributing money to those in need (Roem, 1984). By using such types of books, the children of Haji Agus Salim become fluent in the language. Mohammad Roem also had the opportunity to meet Haji Agus Salim's second child, who was reading the Indian Epos *Mahabaratha* in Dutch. Table 2 highlights Haji Agus Salim's educational ideals.

**Table 2: Haji Agus Salim's Educational Concept Compared To The Dutch Concept**

No.	Dutch Educational Concept	Haji Agus Salim's Ideals
1	Secular Education	Religious (Islamic) ideas should be part of the school education.
2	Given syllabus	Students can choose the literature that they would like to read. It is encouraged to follow the own interest.
3	Teaching of a Western centered attitude	Teaching of the values of local history.

Table 2 makes it clear that for Haji Agus Salim, religious values were important. In his own process of socialization, he could experience the negative effects of a secular education. Moreover, the local students experienced discrimination and were unable to pursue their desired paths. Haji Agus Salim asserts that the Dutch colonial authority had the intention of imposing a Eurocentric viewpoint, which would result in a sense of inferiority. This was the main reason he forbade his children from attending school during the colonial era.

#### *A Structural Reading of 'Hasrat Manusia Kepada Agama'*

A structural reading of Haji Agus Salim's article *Hasrat Manusia Kepada Agama* [The Human Desire to Religion] can help to understand his thinking. Haji Agus Salim published the article in 1925. He recounted his educational experiences.

According to Haji Agus Salim, the Western education system is teaching a kind of 'fantasy product,' namely that a human being is in control of every situation. However, as people age, they come to realize that this is not always the case. Even school teachers cannot answer certain questions. This will pose a challenge, as older individuals bear the responsibility of teaching their own children. Haji Agus Salim expresses a critical view, asserting that the Dutch school system fosters a sense of inferiority complex (see Figure 2).

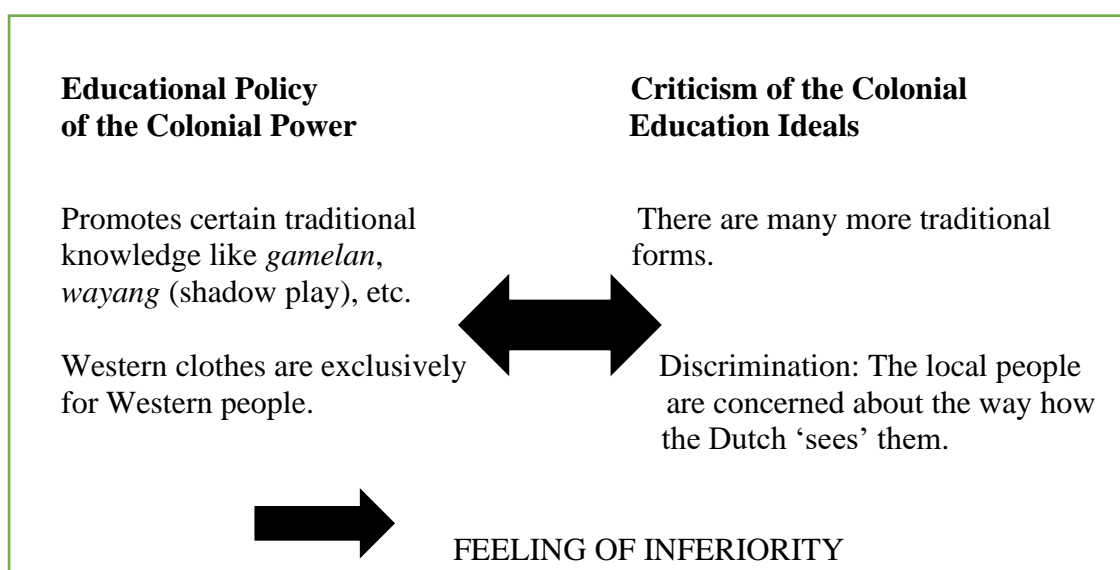
**Figure 2. The Consequences Of The Dutch Education System (A Structural Perspective)**

Figure 2 shows the consequences of the Dutch education system. In the end, there is a feeling of inferiority. However, the most important dichotomy in the concept of Haji Agus Salim is the opposition to a materialistic way of life versus a non-materialistic way of life. Materialism is taught in schools and people follow this concept. Consequently, those who are unable to adopt such a lifestyle experience unhappiness. Haji Agus Salim mentions the situation of the workers. On the other hand, successful businessmen decide how to treat their workers. They are 'God-like' and assume that they have unlimited power.

In the final part of *Hasrat Manusia Kepada Agama*, Haji Agus Salim focuses on Prophet Musa. Haji Agus Salim likely intended to draw parallels between the followers of Musa (known as the *Bani Israil*) and the Indonesian population. Both groups experienced landlessness and faced oppression. He also shows that intellect (*akal*) alone is not sufficient if there are no religious values. Only after the people followed Musa, there was a way to freedom. Musa could serve as a role model for the people who are oppressed. They should emigrate (perform *hijrah*) from a way of life with little or no religious values to a religious lifestyle.

Haji Agus Salim was deeply concerned about the exclusive influence of Western academics, particularly in the field of education. However, their thinking seems to be occasionally incorrect. In another book (Salim, 1962), he clarified this in which he examined the perspective of orientalist who believe that Islam arrived in Indonesia via India approximately 700 years ago. Nevertheless, he finds this stance unconvincing, as it seems that the orientalist have disregarded Asian scholars, including those from China. This example illustrates that Haji Agus Salim wanted to change the Eurocentric perspective that was prevalent during the colonial era.

## Conclusion

In this article, the researchers examined Haji Agus Salim's approach to education. One objective was to employ a structuralist approach. This strategy remains beneficial as it contrasts the educational concept with the principles of the Dutch administration. The principal ideas of Haji Agus Salim are evident, facilitating the illustration of his key educational concepts, which constituted the second objective.

Haji Agus Salim's lifelong interest in educational matters was evident. Despite his failure to become a school teacher, he maintained a keen interest in educational concepts. Nevertheless, he saw that the public education system would indoctrinate youngsters with misguided values, fostering materialism and a sense of cultural inferiority towards Dutch and Western culture. Consequently, he recognized the need to incorporate religious knowledge into the educational system.

Haji Agus Salim stressed the importance of raising the *semangat* (spirit) in his thinking. This includes the struggle for independence as well as an interest in education and critical thinking. Therefore, he tried to motivate the young generation. He believed that it was crucial for the younger generation to pursue their own interests. For such a development of knowledge, it was essential to live in an atmosphere that respects knowledge

It is possible to incorporate some of Haji Agus' educational concepts in the school system. Specifically, the drive to express oneself freely and learn to enhance oneself by identifying errors stands out. For example, a school might implement the freedom for pupils to read books

in a foreign language that they are interested in. However, implementing such an idea requires a flexible system and a curriculum that doesn't adhere to rigid rules. Furthermore, it's important to keep in mind that there are young, playful children in primary schools. A school could implement a long break for such children in which they can play and refresh their minds. Haji Agus Salim's view on education is inspiring and could motivate educators.

The ideas of Haji Agus Salim offer plenty of ideas for future research. It could be possible to analyze his work, *Pesan-pesan Islam*, in detail. The interesting part would be to look at how he made his lessons attractive for his students. Observing other educators who drew inspiration from him, such as Hamka, would also be fascinating. Maybe there could be a 'school of education' that might be more practical to implement in the Malay-speaking world. All these questions show that Haji Agus Salim's ideas are influential to this day.

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