

Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama Education: Two Main Pillars of National Education in Indonesia

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Abstract

Muhammadiyah and NU are the mainstream Islamic social organizations established before the Indonesian independence. These organizations drive the renewal of Islamic thought, da'wah, social, health, and education. They have thousands of educational institutions spread throughout Indonesia and play an important role in the development of Islamic education, so they are the main pillars of National Education. This study aimed to discuss the role and contribution of Muhammadiyah and NU as pillars of national and Islamic education. A historical approach through source search (heuristics), assessment (criticism), and construction was used. Through an integrative and modern Islamic education system, the results showed that Muhammadiyah had opened the minds of Muslims and the Indonesian people about the importance of religion and science to realize a progressive Islamic society. Furthermore, NU prioritizes the education system of traditional pesantren and madrasas and has instilled basic Islamic teachings in shaping the morals of Muslims and the Indonesian nation. Therefore, Muhammadiyah and NU education contribute to religious moderation (Islam wasathiyah) and pillars of national education. The results of this study have implications for the development of any National Education policy that cannot deny the roles of Muhammadiyah and NU.

Keywords: Education, Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama, Pillars, National Education

Abstrak

Muhammadiyah dan NU merupakan organisasi sosial Islam mainstream di Indonesia yang telah berdiri sebelum Indonesia merdeka. Kedua organisasi ini menggerakkan pembaharuan pemikiran Islam, dakwah, sosial, kesehatan dan pendidikan. Mereka memiliki ribuan lembaga pendidikan yang tersebar di seluruh wilayah Indonesia dan memainkan peran penting dalam pengembangan pendidikan Islam, bahkan merupakan pilar Pendidikan Nasional. Studi ini mendiskusikan peran dan kontribusi pendidikan Muhammadiyah dan NU sebagai pilar Pendidikan Nasional dalam mengembangkan pendidikan Islam dan mencerdaskan kehidupan bangsa. Penelitian ini berbasis pada studi pustaka, menggunakan pendekatan sejarah yang ditempuh melalui pencarian sumber (heuristik), penilaian sumber (kritisisme), dan konstruksi. Hasil penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa Muhammadiyah melalui sistem pendidikan Islam integratif dan modern telah membuka alam pikiran umat Islam dan masyarakat Indonesia tentang pentingnya agama dan ilmu pengetahuan untuk mewujudkan masyarakat Islam yang berkemajuan. NU yang lebih mengutamakan sistem pendidikan pesantren tradisional dan madrasah telah menanamkan ajaran Islam yang mendasar dalam membentuk moral umat Islam dan bangsa Indonesia. Pendidikan Muhammadiyah dan NU berkontribusi sangat besar dalam



membangun moderasi beragama (*Islam wasathiyah*), dan mencerdaskan kehidupan bangsa, sehingga mereka memainkan peran kunci sebagai pilar Pendidikan Nasional. Hasil penelitian ini berimplikasi pada pengembangan setiap kebijakan Pendidikan Nasional tidak dapat menafikan peran pendidikan Muhammadiyah dan NU.

Kata kunci: Pendidikan, Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama, Pilar, Pendidikan Nasional

Introduction

Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) are the largest mainstream Islamic social organizations in Indonesia (Suharto, 2017). According to Abdullah (2020), they are the mainstream organizations. Rahmat & Fahrudin (2018) found that 93% of respondents accepted the existence of Muhammadiyah and NU. These two organizations have contributed to awakening the Indonesian independence movement and educating the nation's life. They independently and sincerely build, organize, and spread education throughout Indonesia.

The two mainstream organizations have different educational ideologies but eradicate ignorance, backwardness, and poverty from the Indonesian people and nation. Muhammadiyah develops a modern holistic-integrative education system in schools and madrasas that integrate Islam and science through its *tajdid* ideology. Similarly, NU uses its *madhhab* principle in conducting Islamic teachings with the scientific tradition of the Yellow Book, focusing more on religious education based on traditional *pesantren* and *madrasas*. However, it also established schools and universities as a response to the development of science and the demands of the times (Syarif, 2015). The two organizations educate the younger Muslim generation to understand and practice Islamic teachings in their lives. Moreover, Muhammadiyah and NU education have similarities in the orientation of the hereafter (Ni'mah, 2014). This common mission shows that they compliment and complement each other to realize progressive Islamic education.

Muhammadiyah organizes education and establishes boarding schools, such as Mu'allimin and Mu'allimaat, though its management uses a modern education system (Azra, 1999, p. 37). Steenbrink (1994, p. 57) showed the development of Islamic education, *pesantren*, and schools in Indonesia in the modern era. According to Steenbrink, before Muhammadiyah, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan established a madrasa that uses Arabic to introduce learning and an elementary school in the Yogyakarta Palace that teaches general subjects. Therefore, Steenbrink considered

Muhammadiyah education a modern element in the Yogyakarta palace, terming it as ultra-conservative. Conversely, since its establishment, NU has focused more on the development of traditional *pesantren* and *madrasas*. It transmits the treasures of Islamic religious knowledge inherited by past ulema (*mutaqaddin*) through the Yellow Book.

Muhammadiyah has valuable social capital for the development of national education despite ideological differences. The ideological foundation of Muhammadiyah education is *tajdid*, which implies purifying Islamic teachings, dynamics, and modernization (Widodo, 2011). This view has implications for the paradigm of modern integrative Islamic education. It is an education system that combines Islam with science. In contrast, NU's educational thinking is closely related to the practice of Islamic law (Fuad, 2020). The attachment to a *madhhab* is an effort to preserve their tradition of thought through education. Therefore, NU prioritizes the traditional *pesantren* education system as a transmission system of Islamic religious knowledge.

Muhammadiyah and NU education continue to grow and show an interesting phenomenon. Specifically, Muhammadiyah, a modern Islamic institution, has revitalized the quality of its education by developing a boarding school-based program. This supports Hasan (2012), which showed that the modernist discourse that emerged in the early 20th century encouraged Muslim organizations to develop a modern education model integrated into *pesantren*. Similarly, NU, known for its traditional *pesantren* education system, has also changed its institutions (Muhammedi, 2016). According to Steenbrink (1994), it initially rejected education modernization, but the traditional *pesantren* resisted and imitated, showing that educational change is unavoidable. Therefore, the traditional *pesantren* have shifted and adapted to the modern education system (Basri, 2017). These changes lead to traditional, transitional, and modern models. As a result, in recent developments, many *pesantren* have established public schools.

The educational development of Muhammadiyah and NU is interesting and important to study. They play an important role in the development of Islamic and national education. Furthermore, they are essential in peacefully moving religious, social, and political life by mobilizing education (Al-Ansi *et al.*, 2019). The organizations also significantly facilitate equal access to education (Muhammedi, 2016; Huda and Kusumawati, 2019). Therefore, this study discusses the role and contribution of Muhammadiyah and NU in the development of modern

Islamic and national education. Additionally, it discusses the influence of the two organizations in national education, so that NU and Muhammadiyah can be the pillars of National Education.

Research Method

This is a literature study that uses a qualitative model with a historical approach. It uses secondary data obtained from the library on previous research articles, books, and organizational documents. The study stages include source search (heuristics), assessment (criticism), and construction (Wasino and Hartatik, 2018). This procedure was adapted from George's (2008) literature study model that involves selecting a topic, developing themes, and choosing and focusing on the problem. Other steps include compiling plans, searching for databases, selecting, and evaluating sources based on problems. The last two steps are developing insight by reflecting and developing and compiling a thesis and study results.

Result and Discussion

Discussing the education system of Muhammadiyah and NU requires an understanding of the establishment, founders, and thoughts of these organizations. This supports the historical fact that Muhammadiyah education develops ideas and movements pioneered by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan. Similarly, NU education is influenced by the ideas and thoughts of K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari that were then developed according to the needs and developments of the times.

Background of the Founding of Muhammadiyah

Muhammadiyah's establishment was related to the socio-religious situation and Islamic thought in the early 20th century. There were many deviations in Islamic faith and worship, known as superstition, *bid'ah* (innovation in religious matters), and TBC. Also, the Indonesian people suffered from poverty, backwardness, and ignorance. Consequently, the various problems and the inequality in Islamic teachings prompted K.H. Ahmad Dahlan to improve it through the *da'wah* (Islamic propagation) movement *Amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (commanding the good and forbidding the evil), renewal and purification of Islam. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan started the *da'wah* movement through education. This strategy was chosen because it effectively spreads Islamic teachings, empowers the people, and is the main key to eradicate poverty and underdevelopment (Fuad, 2004).

The socio-religious thoughts and movements of Muhammadiyah (*tajdid*) are in line with the spirit of Islamic renewal pioneered by reformers, such as Shaykh Muhammad Abduh, Jamaluddin al-Afghani, Rasyid Ridha, and Ibn Taimiyah (Abdul, Binfas, and Ismail, 2014). Also, Muhammadiyah's *da'wah* and *tajdid* movements are normative-reconstructive. They reflect their vision oriented towards the future lives of people and the development of science and social changes. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's visionary thinking is because of studying with many ulemas in fields of science, including Syaikh Ahmad Khatib, a great ulema from Minangkabau (Abidin, 2017). Furthermore, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's thoughts and visions reflect their wide association. Kiai Dahlan mingled with Islamic reformers and national movement figures and even established good relations with other religious leaders (Suwarno, 2019). Specifically, Kiai Dahlan had close relationships with reformist figures, such as Ahmad Surkati (founder of Al-Irsyad) and Hassan (founder of Persatuan Islam). The relationship between them involved learning from each other to invite people back to the Qur'an and Sunnah, fighting *taqlid*, *bid'ah*, shirk, and superstition (Mughni, 2017).

Ahmad Dahlan also had good relations with figures of the national movement and joined the Budi Utomo organization pioneered by students of STOVIA (School of Medicine in Batavia). Also, Ahmad Dahlan is a member of the Kauman board and one of the commissioners in Budi Utomo's Yogyakarta branch (Pakaya and Malae, 2020). Consequently, Ahmad Dahlan's enthusiasm for establishing a school grew stronger. According to Steenbrink, Ahmad Dahlan founded a *madrasah diniyah*, an educational institution, in 1911. Although this *madrasa* is simple, located in the living room of Ahmad Dahlan's house, it uses a modern and integrative Islamic education design. It combines Islamic religious education with general knowledge (Iskandar and Firdaus, 2020, pp. 16–38).

Islamic education applied the modern school system and transcended the thoughts and experiences of Muslims. Therefore, it was considered eccentric by the public and a foreign thought by most ulema. Also, Ahmad Dahlan was accused of being a pagan and misleading Kiai and other negative charges (Baedhowy, 2010, pp. 135–146). However, Ahmad Dahlan continued to realize true Islam and advance the Indonesian nation through the renewal of Islamic education integrated with science.

To develop and sustain ideas and *da'wah* movements, especially the educational institutions founded in 1911, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan founded the Muhammadiyah organization on November 18, 1912/8 Dzulhijjah 1330 H. This received support and a positive response from Ahmad Dahlan's students. Since its inception, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan gave their personal property to the Muhammadiyah Association as charity. This became a reference in asset management that all business charities and organizational assets belonged to the Muhammadiyah Central Executive.

Ahmad Dahlan is an Islamic reformer and national fighter with a significant contribution to pioneering the renewal and revival of Muslims in Indonesia. Also, Ahmad Dahlan has contributed to the modernization of Islamic education through the Muhammadiyah organization. The modern Islamic education system pioneered by Ahmad Dahlan is growing rapidly, instilling and disseminating Islam. Furthermore, it pioneers and develops business charities to solve social problems (Mughni, 2017) and education based on Islamic teachings for national progress. Kiai Dahlan also pioneered the revival of Indonesian women through the Aisyiyah organization founded in 1917. Ahmad Dahlan spearheaded the empowerment of the women's movement to experience education and participate in preaching and other social functions as men (Qodariah, 2016). According to Ahmad Dahlan, although Muslim women are at home, they should participate in society and are specifically tasked with instilling Islamic teachings and advancing their lives (Wasito, 2016). Ahmad Dahlan's thoughts and movements in developing integrative Islamic education handed down to Muhammadiyah were essential in national education.

Background of the Founding of NU

The establishment of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in 1926 was supported by the social situation and the ideology of Islamic renewal. At that time, the Islamic renewal movement significantly influenced Indonesian Muslims, causing concern among traditionalist clerics. Therefore, they responded to the renewal movement by establishing an organization to preserve the past Islamic heritage. Hasbullah (2014), referring to Deliar Noor, explained:

"The reaction against the reformists appears in Surabaya with the establishment of Muslim clerics organization to preserve the past

Islamic heritage called Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), established by KH. Hashim Asy'ari and KH. Wahab Hasbullah on January 31, 1926."

This is in line with Farah (2019), which stated that the establishment of NU was a reaction to the Islamic renewal movement. This is because the renewal of Islamic thought endangers the survival of traditional Islam. Other research confirmed that it is the response of *pesantren* ulema to global Islamic thought with various programs, including purification (Razi, 2011). Additionally, Hidayatullah (2012) explained that the establishment of NU is a reaction of the traditionalists against Islamic reformists, such as Muhammadiyah. The reformists have different directions of Islamic thought and contradict their traditional religious behavior and culture.

The process and forerunner of NU establishment were related to several previous institutions, including a discussion forum called "*Tashwirul Afkar*," initiated by KH. Wahab Hasbullah in Surabaya (Nafi', 2018). This forum was formed as a concern for Kiai Wahab and other Kiai to the religious, educational, and political challenges Muslims face (Ulum and HS, 2019, pp. 54–75). Furthermore, Nahdlatul Wathan and the Hijaz Committee were important factors in encouraging the establishment of NU (Masfiah, 2015).

The Hijaz Committee was formed as a reaction to the policy of the Arab rulers that did not involve traditional *pesantren* as delegates at the caliphate conference in Mecca (Fuad, 2020). The delegates only represented reformist figures and ulema, HOS Cokroaminoto and Mas Mansur, representing Syarikat Islam and Muhammadiyah, respectively. This condition encouraged the *pesantren* ulema, the traditionalist group, to show their independence and strength to send their delegation representing the *pesantren* as Hijaz Committee (Abdul, Binfas and Ismail, 2014; Masfiah, 2015). The committee proposed to King Saud in Saudi Arabia not to destroy the historical sites of Muslims in the Land of the Hejaz. According to Darajat (2017, pp. 79–94), this committee finally morphed into Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) on January 31, 1926.

The principles and objectives of this organization are to commit to the four *madhhabs*, benefit Islam (Ismail, 2011), and adhere to the teachings of *ahlus sunnah wal jama'ah*, shortened to *aswaja* (Munawir, 2016). *Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah* was originally a *mahdhab* or school in Islamic theology founded by Abu al-Hasan al-Asy'ary and Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (Mufid, 2013). This school is widely followed by Islamic organizations in Indonesia, whether officially or not. In this regard, NU is an Islamic

organization that officially declares itself as Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaah. To apply Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaah and organizational principles, K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari wrote the Qanun Asasi (basic principles) and the I'tiqad Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah. These two books are references for NU organizations and citizens in conducting the teachings of Ahlus Sunnah waljamaah. They later became the NU Khittah, the social, religious, and political thought and behavior (Suyadi, 2019).

NU declares itself as Ahlus Sunnah and is represented as traditionalists. However, traditionalism does not imply tradition or social custom whose Arabic language is *adah*. On the contrary, it means *sunnah* tradition, whose followers are called *ahlus sunnah*. In its original sense, Ahlus Sunnah is people that follow the Prophet Muhammad (Munawir, 2016). Therefore, they are followers of the *sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad, not custom in people's lives. This is because the traditionalists strongly oppose customary practices that contradict Islamic law. Ahlus Sunnah is in a large group and a congregation. Therefore, NU is a follower of the Sunnah wal Jamaah, abbreviated as *aswaja*. Hilmy (2013) showed that NU's traditional identity was due to the extraordinary appreciation of the classical ulema thought in the Yellow Book, a *pesantren* tradition. For this reason, NU members are often criticized for how they approach and understand Islam and the world.

Jam'iyah NU was once a political party participating in the elections during the Old Order era, then merged with the United Development Party (PPP). However, its leaders realized that their involvement in practical politics for three decades reduced their religious and social functions. The 27th NU congress in 1982 in Situbondo decided to return to its *jam'iyah diniyyah* and social identity by going back to the 1926 *khittah* (Bush, 2009). Since then, this organization has focused more on religious and social thought and movements, including the development of education. As a result, it contributes more to the development of Islamic education and the national intellectual life.

Muhammadiyah and NU: Two Pillars of National Education

Based on the history of national education, Islamic education has existed since before Indonesia's independence. Mahmud Yunus stated that its beginning coincided with the arrival of Islam to this country around the 12th century AD (Yunus, 1996). Islamic education was initially simple in terms of curriculum, management, and learning methods. However, the ulemas that studied in Mecca mastered religious knowledge and brought

the spirit of renewal of Islamic thought, developing an education system with various styles.

The Islamic renewal movement in Indonesia started from Sumatra Island, especially West Sumatra Province. Among the figures of Islamic reform are Shaykh Muhammad Jamil Jambek, Shaykh Thaher Jalaluddin, H. Karim Amrullah, H. Abdullah Ahmad, Shaykh Ibrahim Musa, and Zainuddin Labai al-Yunusi. Furthermore, Islamic renewal occurred on the island of Java. The leaders of Islamic reform included K.H. Ahmad Dahlan through Muhammadiyah organizations and movements and A. Hasan with the Islamic Unity Movement. Others were H. Abdul Halim with the Persyrikan Ulama Indonesia movement, and K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari with Jam'iyah Nahdlatul Ulama (Lenggono, 2018).

The renewal of Islamic education in Java shows different thinking patterns and strategies between Muhammadiyah and NU. Since its inception, Muhammadiyah education has been oriented to an integrative and modern Islamic education system, while NU is more focused on developing traditional *pesantren*-based education. However, both education systems significantly contribute to national intellectual life and moving the struggle for Indonesian independence. Furthermore, Muhammadiyah and NU educations have a national perspective that greatly ignited the spirit of the nation's independence struggle. After Indonesia's independence, the organizations consistently participated in advancing National Education. Also, they influenced and encouraged the development of social movements, increasing the community's dignity (Jahar, 2016).

Muhammadiyah Education

The ideals of the Muhammadiyah movement and *da'wah* are to create a primary, just, and prosperous Islamic society blessed by Allah SWT (Pasha and Darban, 2009). Therefore, this organization uses an educational approach and cultural transformation, showing the moderate character of its thoughts and movements (Faiqah and Pransiska, 2018). This moderation of thought and movement is consistent with the principles of Islam as a middle *ummah (wasathiyah)*, as emphasized in the Qur'an surah al-Baqarah verse 143. Therefore, Muhammadiyah develops educational charities to internalize and transform pure Islamic teachings based on the Qur'an and as-Sunnah into modern and future Indonesian life.

Muhammadiyah views and considers education as a strategic system to improve individual and social life. Therefore, this organization, pioneered by Kiai Dahlan, started its movement through education. Kiai Dahlan had previously established an educational institution as a means of preaching. The institution was different from the traditional *pesantren* education system with strong roots in Indonesian society, called indigenous institutions (Azra, 1999). Also, the institution was different from the secular colonial education system (Yusra, 2018). Kiai Dahlan founded a madrasa that integratively teaches Islam, arithmetic, natural, social, and other sciences.

This integrative Islamic education system is a breakthrough and a way to overcome Indonesia's bad and dichotomous education. The two education systems during colonialism were traditional Islamic and secular colonial-style general education. Traditional Islamic education was simple as *pesantren* and was known as traditional *pesantren* (Azra, 2015). However, it could not deal with the rapid development of science and technology and social changes. Therefore, the Dutch colonial applied secular gubernatorial education, keeping religious teachings away from schools, resulting in an educational dichotomy (Ali, 2017). During the Dutch colonial period, efforts to integrate Islamic religious lessons into general education failed. However, Zending (Christian) schools were included in the government's general education system (Rouf, 2016). Consequently, there is a dichotomous dualism between religious and general education. This problem surrounds education from upstream to downstream (Daulay *et al.*, 2021).

Muhammadiyah considers Islamic education to enable people to perform their duties properly as servants and caliphs of Allah on earth. These two missions are carried out properly by developing a modern Islamic education system integrating religion with general knowledge. Therefore, Muhammadiyah developed an integrative and modern education system as schools and madrasas. These two educational institutions share the same philosophy of modern-integrative education (Sya'bani, 2018). The only difference between schools and madrasas is the proportion of curriculum content. In this regard, the madrasa curriculum contains more religious knowledge than public schools. For Muslims to accomplish the task of servant and caliphate properly, they require an integrated mastery of Islamic religious knowledge and science.

Muhammadiyah developed an integrative education system that is also oriented towards holistic education (Widodo, 2019). It covers all

human dimensions of spiritual, emotional, social, intellectual, kinesthetic, and fighting power. This concept is in line with the holistic view of modern education. Moreover, the thoughts and philosophy of holistic-integrative education reaffirmed at the 47th Muhammadiyah Congress in 2015 are in line with the thoughts of K. H. Ahmad Dahlan, as outlined in the speech "Living Ties of Life" and "Unity of Human Life." It means that the highest knowledge is about the unity of life achieved with a critical and open attitude using common sense and *istiqomah* (performing rightly and consistently) with the truth of reason based on a pure heart (Ali and Ali, 2004). This thought is a reference in understanding integrative education. It is then transformed into the integration of education built on empirical experience and the power of reason guided by Allah.

Nahdlatul Ulama Education

The ulema's thoughts behind the establishment of NU have implications for education. This is seen from Jam'iyah NU's attention to developing traditional *pesantren* education, madrasas, and schools. At the 3rd NU Congress in 1928, prominent figures showed their concern for education. They appealed to the congress participants to visit major Islamic boarding schools, including the Tambak Beras, Denanyar, and Nganjuk *pesantren*. Their attention to education continued until the 4th NU Congress in 1929, which sparked the need for a special forum concerning education. Furthermore, the idea continued until the 20th Congress in 1959 in Jakarta, where NU formed a special institution to deal with education called the NU Maarif Education Institution, abbreviated as LPMNU. This shows that the organization pays great attention to education. Additionally, the concern for education was emphasized at the 30th Congress in 1999 in Lirboyo Kediri. The Congress confirmed and reaffirmed education as the main thought and its priority (Najib, 2020).

NU's efforts to improve education provision show that it is an important or the main sector. Since its inception, NU has prioritized working on education with a boarding school system. This could be understood from the first attempt by the founders of NU to establish a *pesantren*. Although this education system is not identical to NU, *pesantren* education is the basis of Jam'iyah NU. In line with this, Ismail (2011) stated that NU founders had an educational background in the *pesantren* tradition, meaning that the organization was born in the aspirations of the tradition (Ismail, 2011). Two major *pesantrens* in East Java that significantly influenced NU were the Tebuireng *pesantren*, led by K.H. Hasyim, and the

Tambakberas *pesantren*, raised by K.H. Abdul Wahhab Hasbullah. According to Ismail, from these two *pesantrens* (Islamic Boarding School) came many of the leading NU figures that significantly contributed to the organization's development.

This *pesantren* education system prioritizes Islamic religious knowledge, especially *fiqh*. The knowledge studied is generally sourced from standard books written and inherited by past ulema (*at-turats* book). Moreover, the education system uses the books of the previous ulema (*Al-Kutub at-Turats*) because they are considered valuable sources of Islamic religious knowledge for *pesantren* (Qomaruddin, 2019).

Mutakin (2018) showed that Jam'iyah NU is a socio-religious organization attached to one of the four *madhhabs* as its teaching principle. The implication of NU's attachment to one *madhhab* is its dependence on the Yellow book as the basis for the intellectual tradition for generations. This is one of the absolute elements in traditional *pesantren* (Silfiana, 2020). Furthermore, they depend on the Yellow book in their intellectual activities because the transmission of Islamic religious knowledge must have a clear *sanad* (reliable backrest or proof feet). In the scientific *pesantren* tradition, the Yellow Book is an important element rooted and passed down for generations as a value system (Asnawi *et al.*, 2016). The *at-turats* books are the main source of the Arabic-language *pesantren* curriculum, and studying them requires tool knowledge, especially *nahwu* and *sharaf*. Therefore, the curriculum of *pesantren* contains subject matter in science and includes *nahwu* and *sharaf* subjects.

Steenbrink (1994) showed that many *pesantren* educational institutions had developed *madrasas*. After President Suharto in the 1970s, *pesantren* was modernized by making *madrasas* part of the national development subject (Azra, 2015). Consequently, *pesantren* education is distinguished from *madrasas*, and its implementation was delegated to the Rabithah Maahid Islamiyah Institution (LRMI). In contrast, *madrasa* education was delegated to the Maarif Educational Institution (LPM). The macro development of education made NU *pesantren* education include general subjects and skills, learning methodologies, institutions, and functions in its curriculum (Djazilam, 2019).

NU has reformed *pesantren*, *madrasas*, and schools and has established many higher education institutions in the last ten years (Pulungan and Fathurrahman, 2020). However, it is known in the community for its traditional *pesantren* system. It is the oldest Islamic education system in Indonesia, and some historians call it indigenous

education (Pohl, 2006). Furthermore, *Pesantren* educational institution closely relates to NU because of similar scientific traditions, making it the mainstream. Hasan (2012) stated that most *pesantren* are overwhelmingly identified with the traditionalist Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), fostering a moderate understanding of Islam (p. 82). In line with this, Najib (2020) asserted that these schools are the most important and dominant NU *da'wah* institutions for Islamic studies.

Pesantren are not organizationally affiliated to Jam'iyah NU because they have a high autonomy and strong Kiai (an expert in Islam) authority. Most of them are established and led by Kiai, acting as founders, leaders, teachers, and funders of the operational activities. Therefore, *pesantren* education has full autonomy and strong Kiai authority and is not tied to any organization.

Education Contribution of Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama

Muhammadiyah and NU are the largest Islamic organizations and social movements as the mainstays of religion and Islamic education in Indonesia. However, they differ ideologically, where Muhammadiyah represents a modernist organization, while NU is a traditionalist, though both uphold Islam. Also, they have the same character of *da'wah Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar* with the teachings of *wasatiyah* Islam in Indonesia (Suharto, 2015). These ideological differences occur due to their origins, the views of their founders, and the dynamics of their development. However, they had studied with the same great cleric, Shaykh Ahmad Khatib Minangkabau. Also, they interacted with the ideas and movements of Islamic renewal brought by Shaykh Muhammad Abduh, though they had different *da'wah* strategies.

The thoughts of Muhammadiyah and NU founders colored the educational thinking patterns of the two organizations. Muhammadiyah education is normative-reconstructive, in line with the *tajdid* paradigm in thought and movement. This spirit of renewal encourages the development of a modern-style education system. In contrast, NU positions itself as an Islamic *jam'iyah* attached to a school of thought in conducting Islamic teachings (Nizar, 2017). This has implications for its thoughts and movements in education. Furthermore, the tradition of NU thought strongly maintains and uses the treasures of the Yellow book (Burhani, 2015). The principle of *madhhab* supports the perennialist view in maintaining the scientific tradition handed down by the previous ulema. Consequently, NU developed traditional *pesantren* education and made

the *Yellow book* the basis for its scientific tradition. Moreover, the tradition of NU thought, which is influenced by *madhhab* and the *Yellow book*, shows that its ideology is normative-perennialist. This thinking pattern is in line with the *pesantren* tradition of having a slogan "*al-muhafadzatu 'ala al-qadim ash-shalih wal akhdzu bil Jadid al-ashlah*" (Damanhuri, Mujahidin and Hafidhuddin, 2013; Asmar, 2020).

These two organizations were both founded in the 20th century but had different traditions of thought. Muhammadiyah represents modernist Islam, while NU represents traditionalists (Brown, 2019). Also, their background aspect shows the tendency of their respective ideological patterns. Muhammadiyah was born as a response to the backwardness and deviation of Indonesia's Muslims from Islamic teachings. In contrast, the birth of NU was a response to the Islamic renewal movement and its attachment to a school of thought. Therefore, according to its tradition, NU preserves the legacy of the previous ulema through the *Yellow book*, while Muhammadiyah conducts more reform movements (Solichin and Anwar, 2020). Although having several differences, they both face the same challenges in science and technology development and social changes that force them to adapt.

The difference in the ideological patterns of the two mainstream Islamic organizations that have implications for education development is not a problem. On the contrary, it contains wisdom and positive value when synergized because they each have quantitative advantages. Muhammadiyah developed a modern education system (Brown, 2019) that has advantages in schools. In comparison, NU developed more religious education with advantages in *pesantren* and *madrasas* (Najib, 2020). This enriches the educational treasures that meet the diverse social needs. Although they have differences in the style of education with their respective advantages, Muhammadiyah and NU educations have significantly contributed to the people's and national intellectual life. Therefore, the education of the two organizations spearheaded the development of Islamic education and are pillars of national education.

As a modern Islamic movement, Muhammadiyah organizes an integrative Islamic education system (Arroisi, Perdana, and Hutama, 2020). These institutions are numerous and spread throughout Indonesia, covering all types and levels of education. Furthermore, Muhammadiyah mobilizes and guards the development of religious life, inculcates noble character, and educates the nation's life towards a progressive future Indonesian civilization. It has pioneered Islamic education with a national

and humanitarian perspective (Huda and Kusumawati, 2019). Similarly, NU mostly develops *pesantren* and *madrassa* education and plays an important role with a significant contribution. The role and contribution of Muhammadiyah and NU are reflected in the many educational institutions spread throughout Indonesia. In line with this, Rahim (2013) showed 12,094 educational institutions under LP Ma'arif. From secondary data sources, the number of Muhammadiyah and NU educational institutions are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of Muhammadiyah and NU Education Institutions by Level

Education Unit	Number of Educational Institutions	
	Muhammadiyah	NU
Elementary	1,432	80
<i>Madrassa Ibtidaiyah</i>	1,385	7,452
Junior High School	1,246	278
<i>Madrassa Tsanawiyah</i>	578	2,991
Senior High School	530	71
<i>Madrassa Aliyah</i>	224	1,002
Vocational High School	616	137

The data on Muhammadiyah and NU educational institutions are dynamic. Table 1 shows that Muhammadiyah has more school educational institutions. In comparison, NU has more *madrassas* and *pesantren* educational institutions. Furthermore, Muhammadiyah and NU have many higher education institutions, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Number of Higher Education Institutions of Muhammadiyah and NU

Education units	Number of Educational Institutions	
	Muhammadiyah	NU

University	61	55
Institution	11	45
High School	80	71
Academy	6	6
Polytechnic	5	4

The contribution of Muhammadiyah and NU to higher national education is described on table 2. Pohl (2006) stated that these two organizations have a complete organizational structure, apparatus, and members, making them key actors in the debate about the social role of Islam. Muhammadiyah and NU rely on education to mobilize their support for moderate Islam in Indonesia. Also, they have a great education, as stated by Pohl;

“Muhammadiyah maintains its private universities, with more than 30 campuses throughout the country. Also, it has schools that employ a curriculum combining general and religious subjects sanctioned by the Department of Religious Affairs. Although the number of universities affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama is far smaller, the majority of Indonesia's *pesantren* in the country has strong cultural affiliations with Nahdlatul Ulama.”

Muhammadiyah and NU also organize thousands of TPQ (Qur'an education parks), preschool education, *madrrasah diniyah*, and *pesantren*. Moreover, they organize non-formal community education through countless recitation groups or *ta'lim* assemblies. This shows that Muhammadiyah and NU significantly contribute to advancing the people's and national education. Furthermore, they contribute to peacefully moving religious, social, and political life in the country (Al-Ansi *et al.*, 2019). Muhammadiyah has developed modern integrative education with its renewal movement (*tajdid*). Similarly, NU has developed *pesantren* and *madrassa* education with its traditional Islamic spirit. The role and contribution of Muhammadiyah and NU in advancing Muslims and the Indonesian nation show that these systems are pillars of national education.

Conclusion

Muhammadiyah and NU have different socio-cultural backgrounds, thoughts, ideologies, and strategies in understanding and implementing

Islamic teachings. However, they have a similar orientation of thought and movement in upholding Islam. Muhammadiyah thoughts and movements in religion, society, and education with its *tajdid* paradigm are normative-reconstructive. In contrast, NU thoughts and movements as a representation of traditionalist thinking are normative-perennialist. This pattern of thought and movement has implications for the development of education. Specifically, Muhammadiyah develops modern-integrative Islamic education in schools and *madrasa* institutions. In comparison, NU prioritizes Islamic education in the form of *pesantren* and *madrasas*. The social changes and rapid development of science and technology make these two educations face the same challenges for they must adapt to.

Muhammadiyah develops an integrative education system by combining Islam and modern science, while NU develops more *pesantren* and *madrasa* education. This study strengthens various previous researches which showed that Muhammadiyah and NU, with their respective advantages, played a key role in developing Islamic education. Moreover, they play an essential role in mobilizing moderate Islamic thought and movement (*wasatiyah*) and educating the nation's life. This finding shows that Muhammadiyah and NU are the main pillars of national education. Therefore, it is necessary for them to develop a future education system that integrates science and Islam.

Suggestion

This study used a historical approach which is general and global. Therefore, further empirical, and more specific studies of Muhammadiyah and NU education should explore their real roles and contributions in the development of national education. The fundamental question that requires empirical studies is whether the government establishes educational policies that focus on Muhammadiyah and NU as mainstream organizations in Indonesia.

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