

**EDUCATION IN THE COLONIAL PERIOD: ANALYSIS OF NAHDLATUL  
ULAMA'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS DUTCH POLICIES IN INDONESIA****Ananda Citra Isfayanti (1)**

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*This study analyzes the attitude of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) towards the Dutch colonial education policy in Indonesia. The main focus of this study is to understand how NU, as one of the largest religious organizations in Indonesia, responded to and faced the challenges presented by the colonial education policy. This study uses a qualitative approach with historical methods, collecting data through literature studies, and document analysis. The results of the study show that NU displayed a firm stance in maintaining Islamic education and religious identity under colonial pressure. NU established Islamic boarding schools and Islamic educational institutions as an alternative to fight the colonial education system and adapted some useful elements of modern education. This strategy of resistance and adaptation shows NU's commitment to Islamic education and its contribution in shaping the national education system after independence. This study provides in-depth historical insights and offers valuable lessons for the development of Islamic education strategies in the modern era. Thus, this article enriches knowledge about the history of Islamic education in Indonesia and the relevance of NU's strategy in facing repressive education policies.*

**Keywords:** Education; Dutch Colonial; Nahdlatul Ulama (NU); Attitude; Islamic Boarding School

**INTRODUCTION**

During the colonial period, the Dutch introduced modern schools based on the Western education system, which influenced education in Indonesia and gave rise to a dualism in education: secular schools that emphasized general knowledge and Islamic boarding schools that focused on religious teachings. Although Dutch education claimed to be neutral, in reality it was more supportive of Christianity and viewed Islam as a political threat, so that Muslims often faced pressure and surveillance. In 1832, the Dutch formed the Presterraden agency to oversee religious life and Islamic education, which then recommended various restrictive policies. One of these was the 1905 regulation requiring permission for religious teaching, followed by a stricter regulation in 1925 that limited only certain kiai to be able to provide religious lessons. These efforts prompted ulama to make reforms, such as incorporating Western knowledge into the madrasah curriculum, thus giving birth to various modern Islamic schools in Indonesia (Kodir, 2015). The emergence of various Islamic organizations in Indonesia in the late 19th century was triggered by an increasing sense of patriotism and nationalism in response to the inequality and decline caused by the political exploitation of the Dutch colonial government. The colonial government's efforts to suppress resistance through educational policies actually triggered the awareness of Islamic figures to rise up against colonialism by making education a means of instilling and developing nationalism among the people. This organizational awareness based on the spirit of nationalism opened a new era in education and teaching, marked by the establishment of national educational institutions supported by private businesses (private) which had grown rapidly since the early 1900s. The leaders of the national movement realized that education oriented towards national interests must be an important part of the struggle agenda to overcome the backwardness of the Indonesian people (Herman, 2022).

Education, this word is attached to Islam, has been defined differently by various groups, which are greatly influenced by their respective worldviews. However, basically, all these different

views meet in a kind of initial conclusion, where education is a process of preparing the younger generation to live life and fulfill their life goals more effectively and efficiently (Azra, 2012).

In a dynamic society, education plays a role in determining the existence and development of society, economy, and culture. Therefore, education is an effort to preserve, transfer and transform cultural values in all aspects and types to the next generation. Education is the most effective way to deal with the problems of stagnation and decline of the people so far. Islamic education is expected to accommodate new developments in the West (Ghofur, 2016).

The History of Islamic Education is a discipline that studies various aspects and components of education that have taken place among Muslims, based on Islamic teachings contained in the Qur'an and Al-Sunnah, as well as other sources that are in line with the two guidelines. The aspects of education studied are not only seen in terms of time and place of implementation, but also from the actors who formulate and implement them, as well as the background, intent, and purpose behind them. Information regarding the time, place, actors, background, intent, and purpose of these educational components is based on data and facts that can be academically accounted for regarding their validity (Nata, 2011).

The history lessons taught to the native people provide enlightenment and train critical thinking skills regarding the political situation in the Dutch East Indies. Although it was intended to indoctrinate views of Western superiority and legitimize Dutch colonialism, the implementation of history lessons actually produced effects that were not desired by the colonial government's ideology. Through ethical political policies in education, the influence of colonialism was inserted into history learning through the role of educators, various formal and non-formal exams, the subject matter provided, the textbooks used, and the students who were the targets of colonization. However, this educational process indirectly triggered criticism of Dutch colonialism, which ultimately contributed to the collapse of colonial domination. Therefore, history is one of the subjects that is very important for the progress of the nation and state. The findings and historical facts from this study are expected to enrich references on the history of education in Indonesia, especially during the Dutch colonial era (Arifin, 2020).

Research on the attitude of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) towards Dutch colonial education policy has important relevance in the history of Islamic education in Indonesia. By examining NU's resistance and adaptation to the colonial education system, this study provides insight into NU's contribution in forming an independent Islamic education system. In addition, this study also shows how the legacy of NU's struggle influenced national education policy after independence, and offers valuable lessons on relevant educational strategies to face today's challenges. Through an understanding of NU's attitudes and strategies, we can appreciate the role of ulama and educational figures in maintaining Islamic values under colonial pressure, thereby enriching our knowledge of the history of Islamic education in Indonesia and providing inspiration for the development of modern educational strategies.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted on the 5th floor of the Main Library of UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, located at Jl. Ir. H. Juanda No. 95, Ciputat, Ciputat Timur District, South Tangerang City, Banten 15412. This research lasted for approximately 14 days, from December 1, 2024 to December 14, 2024. This research uses a qualitative type and approach with a library research method, which aims to explore and analyze data from relevant literature. This approach also utilizes social history and descriptive methods to understand and explain existing phenomena in their social and historical context. This research focuses on interpreting data from various sources to compile a comprehensive picture of the subject being studied. The data sources used in this study are secondary data, obtained from various literature, scientific journals, archives, and other relevant documents. This data is analyzed to provide a comprehensive and in-depth picture of the topic being studied.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### NU's Attitude and Response to Colonial Education Policy

The arrival of the Dutch to Indonesia was initially aimed at trading and seeking spices for great profit, even though they had to undertake a dangerous sea voyage in small ships; the first group led by Cornelis de Houtman and de Keyzer anchored at Banten Harbor, but their rude behavior made the locals dislike the presence of the Dutch. To facilitate trade, the Dutch established a VOC trading office which later became the beginning of their domination of the surrounding area. In the 18th century, education in Indonesia declined; the number of students in Java was very small, even outside Java there were no schools, and the situation worsened during the two centuries under the VOC until schools for Dutch children were only established in 1817. While education for natives was neglected on the grounds of respecting local institutions and financial difficulties due to the Diponegoro War (1825–1830) and the Dutch-Belgian conflict (1830–1839), the government instead implemented a *cultur stelsel* system that exploited native labor for great profit. Colonial education policy began to change during the ethical politics era with the establishment of Dutch-style first-grade schools and village schools, but still sided with colonial interests and supported the spread of Christianity through church schools since the time of Governor General Van den Bosch (1871). The development of the Western school system gave rise to criticism of Islamic boarding schools which were considered old-fashioned, so that in 1819, Governor General Van den Capellen encouraged elementary schools to improve literacy skills for the sake of compliance with colonial law. However, Islamic boarding school managers continued to maintain Islamic education as a religious obligation and rejected Western influence, although some progressive thought encouraged the use of Western advantages by organizations such as Jamiat Khair, Al-Irsyad, Persis, and Muhammadiyah. The colonial government's concern about Islamic schools gave rise to strict supervision policies, such as the establishment of Priesterraden in 1882, regulations on Islamic religious teacher permits in 1905, and the illegal school ordinance in 1932, which required government permits and periodic curriculum reports. Reactions to this policy varied, traditional Islamic boarding schools took a defensive stance by establishing remote schools, while Islamic organizations such as Serikat Islam and Muhammadiyah rejected the supervision system at their congresses in 1926 and 1928, until the Dutch finally revoked the regulation in 1933. This discriminatory colonial policy resulted in Islamic education, including madrasahs, being isolated and having difficulty following the current of modernization (Zulhimma, 2021).

The education policy implemented by the Dutch colonial government focused on secularization and serving colonial interests, which had a major impact on religious education in Indonesia. The colonial government restricted religious activities and directed the education system to be in line with the goals of colonialism (Muid, Albab, & Ibad, n.d).

Since the implementation of ethical politics in Indonesia in the early 20th century, education has been directed to make Indonesia part of Western culture through a policy of cultural association. The idea of assimilation even emerged, with the aim of equalizing the social and political structure of the colony with the Netherlands. Snouck Hurgronje, a Dutch advisor on Islamic affairs in Indonesia, who recognized the threat of pan-Islamism, advocated that Indonesian society be kept away from this ideology through Western education within the framework of association with the Netherlands (Untung, 2013). However, the pure implementation of ethical politics was only carried out by a handful of people. Not long after, the ethical spirit began to be limited by the powerful Dutch companies. Ethical politics eventually became a tool for large companies that controlled the government, and only became a slogan to cover up economic exploitation. Although there were individuals who might be ethical towards the Indonesian people, the economic motives of the companies remained dominant, so that the concept of "ethics" lost its meaning. Quality education was only intended for the upper class, while for ordinary people, education was limited to remain low and simple, with little opportunity to continue to a higher level of education. Ethical politics also had the

aim of spreading Christian ideals. According to Alwi Shihab, this policy was the foundation for the consolidation of Christianity in Indonesia, reflecting the shift in the Dutch colonial strategy towards Christianization. This shows that the claim of religious neutrality in this policy was merely an illusion (Untung, 2013).

The Dutch colonial government also separated Islamic education from the general education system, as part of an anti-Islamic policy. The curriculum implemented in colonial schools emphasized general knowledge and skills that supported the colonial administration, while religious education was barely taught or even not taught at all. After the separation, Islamic educational institutions developed independently, adhering to their traditions even though they were open to change. Thus, since the beginning of the 20th century, Islamic education began to build its own model separate from the colonial education system, one of which was in the form of Islamic boarding schools (Untung, 2013). The Dutch colonial government implemented various methods to limit the movement of Islamic boarding schools. These steps included holding exams for prospective teachers to obtain teaching permits, recording data on *kyai* and their students, and censoring books from abroad. Religious teachers and religious teaching materials were strictly monitored by the colonial government to prevent the spread of ideas that were considered to be able to trigger resistance or rebellion. In 1904, the *Kantoor Van Inlandsch Zaken* was established with one of its objectives being to supervise the activities of Islamic boarding schools. A year later, the Teachers Ordinance of 1905 was issued, which was updated in 1925. The colonial government issued an ordinance that regulated and limited religious teaching in schools. These policies were clearly detrimental to Islamic boarding schools. At that time, it was customary for teachers to teach not only in their own Islamic boarding schools, but also in Islamic boarding schools owned by colleagues located far away. The restrictions and supervision imposed made the relationship between teachers increasingly strained. In addition, the reduction in imported books as teaching materials also hampered the development of knowledge in Islamic boarding schools. As a result, the teaching and learning process was disrupted, which had an impact on the decline in the quality of education. Graduates of religious schools were often not recognized or accepted in jobs arranged by the colonial government, which prioritized graduates from secular schools. Overall, the colonial government's repressive policies towards Muslims led to a decline in Islamic education in Indonesia (As'ad, 2014). In response to this policy, organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah strengthened *pesantren* and *madrasah* education as an alternative to maintain and develop Islamic education in Indonesia (Sumanti, 2018).

NU has a long history of rejecting colonial education which is considered to be able to damage Islamic beliefs and traditions. During the Dutch colonial period, NU and other Islamic organizations such as Muhammadiyah faced major challenges from colonial education policies that tried to change the traditional Islamic education system. NU, which has a rural follower base with strong mystical traditions, saw colonial education as a threat to the Islamic values and traditions that they had maintained. In response, NU preferred to develop their own education system that focused on teaching Islam while maintaining local traditions (Hijazi, 2011).

Initially, NU was skeptical and tended to reject the education system implemented by the Dutch colonial government. They viewed this education as a threat to Islamic beliefs and traditions that had long been maintained. Colonial education was considered to be able to erode Islamic values and replace them with Western values that were considered not in line with the traditions and beliefs of Muslims in Indonesia (Ningsih, 2023).

In response to colonial education policies, NU strengthened *pesantren* education as an effort to maintain and develop traditional Islamic education. *Pesantren* function as the main fortress, where students study religious knowledge such as the Qur'an, Hadith, Fiqh, and other Islamic teachings, accompanied by the instillation of Islamic moral and ethical values. In addition, *pesantren* play an important role in preserving local traditions and maintaining Islamic identity among the community (Fathoni, 2016).

### **NU's Strategy in Resisting and Adapting to Colonial Education Policies**

Education run by NU has an Islamic and Nationalist character, which is the basis for NU's efforts to improve public education. The goal of educating the nation is one form of NU's resistance to Dutch colonialism and imperialism in Indonesia. The focus of NU education is on teaching religion and nationalism, with the aim of strengthening Islamic understanding and the spirit of nationalism as an effort to maintain the stability of the struggle for independence from colonialism. In this commitment, NU expanded the number of Islamic boarding schools and madrasas to compete with educational institutions established by the Dutch, which were limited to the nobility and only taught secular knowledge without religious aspects. As it developed, Islamic boarding schools not only functioned as educational institutions, but also became places for fostering volunteer troops who were ready to defend religion, nation, and state, driven by the spirit of jihad in Islam. Jihad carried out by students and scholars is seen as a religious obligation in defending the homeland. This spirit is strengthened by the slogan of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, "Hubbul Watan Minal Iman," which means love of the homeland is part of faith (Asiah & Subakti, 2024). Pesantren is the oldest Islamic educational institution in Indonesia and is a characteristic of NU. In it, students study yellow books (classical Islamic books) taught by Kyai. Yellow books also have an important symbol that distinguishes traditionalist Muslims from reformist Muslims, who tend to use Islamic books in Latin script and Indonesian (called white books). With this, traditionalist scholars assert a different identity from reformists while building an intellectual foundation for traditionalist Muslims in developing Islamic discourse. The works of scholars from the early 20th century are included in the yellow books, because they have a major role in enriching the understanding of traditional Islam. In addition, Kyai in NU act as educational leaders who not only teach, but also guide students in their daily lives, making them central figures in NU education. They are also involved in the management of Islamic boarding schools and madrasas to ensure professional and accountable management. NU is committed to maintaining this educational tradition so that it remains relevant to the times, while maintaining unique theological and local cultural values (Amrullah, 2023). Colonial policies resulted in dualism in the education system, with Western education controlled by the colonial government and Islamic education managed by the Muslim community. As a result, Islamic education, including Islamic boarding schools, developed independently without much intervention from the government (Novita, 2022).

Islamic boarding schools became the starting point where scholars began to build their social and intellectual careers in defining Islam for their communities. Therefore, Islamic boarding schools continued to play an important role in the development of Indonesian scholars in the early 20th century. Over time, scholars began to make changes in Islamic boarding schools when they competed with reformist figures, especially Muhammadiyah which had formal schools. In this context, the efforts of scholars to reform Islamic boarding schools can be understood as an effort to adapt tradition to the framework of modernity. However, instead of changing all aspects of Islamic boarding schools, the scholars chose certain elements, limited to the technical aspects of education. Hasyim Asy'ari's experience at the Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School is an example of how scholars introduced educational reforms in the Islamic boarding school environment (Burhanudin, 2017).

In the 1920s, along with his involvement in the establishment of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Hasyim Asy'ari initiated reforms in Tebuireng by opening a one-year preparatory class as part of the six-year elementary school education in the madrasah system. This new education was called Madrasah Salafiyyah, which introduced new teaching methods and subjects to students, such as general science, history, geography, and mathematics, in addition to traditional pesantren lessons. This reform was then continued by his son, Wahid Hasyim, who tried to bring pesantren into the modern education system. In 1950, the madrasah system was adopted in Tebuireng, although the traditional learning system was maintained (Burhanudin, 2017). NU established formal schools such as madrasahs that combined religious and general education. This step was an important effort in adapting to the new national education system (Farih, 2016).

Through this madrasa, Hasyim Asy'ari played an important role in the renewal of pesantren

education. As a prominent ulama figure, what he did in Tebuireng became a model for other pesantren in East Java. The pesantren that experienced this renewal were known as khalaf pesantren and became centers of ulama education, where yellow books remained an important part. The learning objectives in pesantren also began to change. As noted by Dhofier, pesantren no longer focused solely on producing ulama, but also educating students to become "intellectual ulama" (who mastered general knowledge) and "intellectual ulama" (scholars who studied Islamic science). In this context, traditional ulama began to engage in modernity in a similar way to the reformers. Traditionalist NU ulama and Muhammadiyah reformers met in an effort to renew the Islamic education system through madrasas and schools (Burhanudin, 2017). NU collaborates with the government to improve the quality of education in Islamic boarding schools, including through teacher training programs, provision of educational facilities, and development of a more comprehensive curriculum (Huda, Rahma, & Yahdi, 2023).

These renewed Islamic boarding schools have become one of the main sources in the formation of religious authority among Indonesian Muslims, and the madrasah education system continues to develop to this day (Burhanudin, 2017).

### **Implications of NU's Attitude towards Islamic Education in Indonesia**

When discussing Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), we cannot ignore the history of its birth. The beginning of NU emerged from the response of Islamic boarding schools to the national awakening by forming movement organizations, such as Nahdlatul Wathan (Awakening of the Homeland) in 1916. In 1918, Taswirul Afkar was founded or also known as Nahdlatul Fikri (Awakening of Thought) as a forum for socio-political and religious education for students. From Nahdlatul Fikri, Nahdlatul Tujjar (Movement of Merchants) was born, a union that aims to improve the people's economy. With the presence of Nahdlatul Tujjar, Taswirul Afkar not only functions as a study group, but also develops into a rapid educational institution, with branches in several cities. After coordinating with various kyai and in order to form a larger and more systematic organization to face the development of the times, an agreement emerged to establish Nahdlatul Ulama (Ulama Awakening) (Ridwan, Fadlohurrohman, & Elsi, 2022). Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) was founded on January 31, 1926, coinciding with the 16th of Rajab 1334 H in Surabaya by K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari along with traditional ulama figures and entrepreneurs in East Java (Rahim, 2013).

The establishment of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) as an Islamic educational institution is often associated with the efforts of Muslim reformists in Indonesia who want to improve the quality of Islamic education, which is considered to be lagging behind because it only focuses on narrow religious teaching. In addition to being considered outdated, Islamic boarding schools are also considered ineffective in improving children's education. Therefore, the reformists called for Islamic boarding schools to be abandoned and replaced with new educational institutions that are more modern and in accordance with the demands of the times. On that basis, the reformers introduced a new educational model into the tradition of Indonesian Islamic education, namely the madrasah, which was structured in stages and formally organized. The use of the term "madrasah" for these modern schools was intended as an antithesis to the pesantren, which was considered too close to local traditions that were considered heterodox. In addition, this reform also aimed to improve the content and teaching methods, which then developed into schools that tended to be secular and similar to Catholic schools in Europe that had been introduced by the Dutch colonial government in the 19th century. The emergence of these new schools triggered a strong response from pesantren scholars, who considered it a threat to the pesantren tradition, as well as an initial step towards secularization. Pesantren scholars were concerned that this change could damage the harmony of traditional culture that had been preserved by pesantren (As'ad, 2014). In facing these educational reform efforts, pesantren educators did not remain silent. They participated in the reform, but with a different approach from the reformers. While maintaining the advantages of pesantren, pesantren educators began to adopt the madrasah system. However, the madrasahs they founded still maintain the characteristics of pesantren in their learning systems and content (As'ad, 2014).

According to Bruinessen, pesantren in Java are one of the great traditions in Indonesia that

play a role in spreading traditional Islam. These teachings are conveyed through yellow books, which are classic texts that have been written centuries ago (Untung, 2013).

Currently, Muslims, through the largest organizations in Indonesia, in this case Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) have overseen the concept and implementation of progressive Islam and moderate Islam and provide mercy for the whole world (rahmatan lil alamin). Namely, Islam that views that the Qur'an and Hadith are understood as being intended to create a safe, peaceful, and harmonious society through the application of the Islamic concept of tasamuh (tolerant), tawasuth (moderate), and tawazun (balanced). Through the application of the concept of Islam rahmatan lil alamin, Islam and its followers in Indonesia are currently no longer suspected, in fact Islam and its followers are increasingly being used as factors that support and sustain national development (Nata, 2019).

The arrival of the Dutch in Indonesia had a major impact on the Islamic education system. The educational policies implemented by the colonial government did not support the native Muslims or their educational institutions. During the Dutch colonial period, education and religious life were regulated through strict regulations and adjusted to their interests. Pesantren and madrasah, which were considered traditional, were inspired by modern Dutch schools, which encouraged the emergence of awareness to reform Islamic education. As a result, the education system that was originally in the form of halaqah was changed to a classical system with classrooms equipped with tables and chairs. Pesantren began to apply "double standards", where on the one hand they rejected the religious understanding of the modernist reformists, but on the other hand they had to follow the steps of reform by abandoning traditional methods. They made adjustments, such as compiling a tiered curriculum and adopting a classical system, for the benefit of the pesantren and its students. From a political perspective, the involvement of the Dutch East Indies government in education for Bumiputera, especially after the implementation of ethical politics, caused divisions among Muslims and encouraged pesantren that rejected government assistance to move to the interior, thus isolated from the development of modern education. However, in some areas, Islamic boarding schools have survived and have been well received by the community (Abdullah, 2013).

During the Old Order, Islamic boarding schools, which were expected to develop rapidly, actually lagged behind other educational institutions. Meanwhile, madrasahs, as relatively new educational institutions in Indonesia, continued to progress. Facing rapid developments in the world of education, Islamic boarding schools began to adapt by organizing formal education through the establishment of madrasah schools, while still maintaining traditional methods such as halaqah, bandongan, sorogan, and wetonan. To follow up on policies related to religious education through madrasahs, in December 1945, the Working Body of the Central Indonesian National Committee (BPKNIP) encouraged the continuation of Islamic boarding school and madrasah education. They also urged the government to provide financial support to these institutions. In addition, it was suggested that traditional Islamic boarding schools be transformed into madrasahs that were regulated classically with a fixed curriculum and included general subjects in addition to religious lessons (Abdullah, 2013).

Over time, Islamic boarding schools have faced various complex challenges that must be overcome. We need to understand that the problems that arise in Islamic boarding schools are related to the progress of the times and the influence of modern life. This means that the challenges faced by Islamic boarding schools come from the changes brought about by modernity. The ability of Islamic boarding schools to face these challenges reflects the extent to which they can respond to the modernization process. If Islamic boarding schools are able to overcome these challenges, then they can be considered modern institutions. Conversely, if not, then Islamic boarding schools are considered lagging behind. According to Gus Dur's view, modernization of Islamic boarding schools focuses more on the dialogue between the distinctive and unique cultural values of Islamic boarding schools with modern culture and practices ethically, resulting in a blend of old values with new values that are considered better. Thus, it can be concluded that the challenges faced by the Islamic boarding school education system in the modern era include aspects of curriculum, management, organization, planning, and supervision. All of this requires the important role of the kiyai who manages all elements



related to Islamic boarding schools. The role of the kiyai is one of the main strengths of Islamic boarding schools in facing the challenges of globalization (Al Asyari, 2022). The rapid development of education demonstrated by several religious organizations shows the existence of two models of education in Indonesia: Pesantren as a representation of Islamic education, and Schools as a representation of colonial education. Meanwhile, madrasahs are a form of Islamic education which is also a continuation of pesantren education and an alternative or "match" to colonial education. This is what is called the dualism of education in Indonesia, namely general education "schools" under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Culture, and Islamic education under the Ministry of Religion (Mufid & Suwidi, 2016). The existence of pesantren to this day shows its ability to overcome various challenges and obstacles that continue to emerge over time. Since the era before independence until now, the challenges and obstacles faced by pesantren have continued to change in line with the development of society, science, technology, and art (Dawam, 2016).

## CLOSING

This study reveals that Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) played a significant role in resisting and adapting Dutch colonial education policies in Indonesia. NU, as one of the largest religious organizations, demonstrated a firm stance in maintaining Islamic education and its values amidst colonial pressures. Through the establishment of Islamic boarding schools and Islamic educational institutions, NU succeeded in creating an independent and sustainable education system. Factors such as commitment to Islamic teachings, community solidarity, and the desire to maintain religious identity became the main drivers of NU's stance. NU's strategies in dealing with colonial education policies included direct resistance through rejection of certain policies and adaptation by integrating several useful elements of modern education. The results of this study emphasize the importance of understanding the dynamics of resistance and adaptation in the context of education to enrich the history of Islamic education in Indonesia and offer relevant lessons for current education strategies. Thus, this study provides not only historical insights but also practical contributions to the development of Islamic education in the modern era.

It is recommended to continue strengthening and developing the Islamic education system, integrating technology in learning, and providing ongoing training for teachers and educators. Further research on NU's education strategies in various historical contexts is also important to provide more comprehensive insights. In addition, collaboration with other educational institutions and increasing awareness of the history of Islamic education need to be encouraged to enrich knowledge and educational strategies in the future.

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