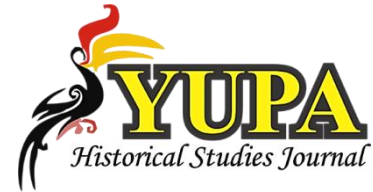


P-ISSN: 2541-6960; E-ISSN: 2549-8754

Yupa: Historical Studies Journal

Vol. 8 No. 1, 2024 (108-123)

<http://jurnal.fkip.unmul.ac.id/index.php/yupa>



The Dynamics of the Islamic Association (Persis) Educational Institutions, 1923-1962

Rosmawati¹, M Afif Ansori², An An Andari³, Sugianto⁴, Sudarningsih⁵

¹ SMP Negeri 64 Bengkulu Utara, Bengkulu, Indonesia

² Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan, Lampung, Indonesia

³ Universitas Islam An Nur, Lampung, Indonesia

⁴ SMA Negeri 1 Bintang Bayu Perbaungan, Serdang Bedagai, Indonesia

⁵ SMP Muhammadiyah 05 Medan, Medan, Indonesia

¹rosmawati.mpd@gmail.com, ²afifanshori@gmail.com, ³anandandari@gmail.com,

⁴sugiantoma1@gmail.com, ⁵sudarningsih909@gmail.com

Submitted	Revised	Accepted
11/01/2024	22/02/2024	23/02/2024

Abstract: This study aims to elucidate Persis's pivotal role in fostering the growth of Islamic boarding school institutions in Indonesia between 1923 and 1962. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, this research utilizes library research methods and content analysis. Primary sources include the Sipatahoenan Newspaper and Bendera Islam. The findings reveal that Persis's emphasis on primary and secondary education has culminated in the establishment of 230 Islamic Unity Islamic Boarding Schools nationwide. Moreover, Persis has notably founded the Islamic Education University as a tertiary-level institution. The organization also facilitates courses and discussion forums addressing religious matters and disseminates literature to advance the discourse on Islamic propagation and education renewal. Regarding the educational curriculum, Persis integrates Islamic studies, Quranic teachings, and Hadith studies with conventional education. However, challenges persist in the operational aspects of Islamic educational institutions, necessitating enhancements in management practices, augmenting educational facilities, and bolstering the quality of human resources.

Keywords: Success, Islamic Educational Institutions, Pesantren.

Abstrak: Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengungkap peran Persis dalam bidang pengembangan lembaga pendidikan pesantren Islam di Indonesia pada tahun 1923 hingga 1962. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan menggunakan metode penelitian kepustakaan dan analisis isi. Sumber Primer yang digunakan adalah Surat Kabar Sipatahoenan dan Bendera Islam. Berdasarkan kajian tersebut diketahui bahwa fokus Persis pada bidang pendidikan dasar dan menengah telah berhasil mewujudkan 230 Pondok Pesantren Persatuan Islam di seluruh Indonesia. Bahkan, Persis juga berhasil mendirikan Universitas Pendidikan Islam sebagai lembaga pendidikan Islam setingkat perguruan tinggi. Persis juga menyelenggarakan kursus dan kelompok diskusi mengenai isu-isu keagamaan. Selain itu, Persis juga menerbitkan buku dan majalah untuk menyebarkan ide dan pemikiran mengenai pembaharuan dakwah dan pendidikan Islam. Pada aspek kurikulum pendidikan, Persis mengintegrasikan pendidikan Islam, kajian Al-Qur'an, dan Hadits dengan pendidikan umum. Namun dalam menjalankan lembaga pendidikan Islam, Persis perlu melakukan perbaikan karena masih terdapat kelemahan dari segi manajemen dan kurangnya fasilitas pendidikan, serta kualitas sumber daya manusia yang kurang memadai.

Kata Kunci: Keberhasilan, Lembaga Pendidikan Islam, Pesantren.



This work is licensed under a

[Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a crucial role in shaping differences and impacts within a country. Through training, it is hoped that strengths can be cultivated in frontier regions, enabling them to shoulder responsibilities in public governance (Asmanto et al., 2023, p. 263). In the authentic development of Islamic educational organizations in Indonesia, there is a continuous transition taking place (Mustafida et al., 2022, p. 497).

At the beginning of the 20th century, the development of Islam was marked by the emergence of Islamic organizations (Anita et al., 2023, p. 511). Most of these organizations emerged in Java, such as Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama, Sarekat Islam, Persis, and others. Deliar Noer explains that the background of Islamic organization development in Indonesia is influenced by colonial discrimination and the backwardness of Muslims in terms of economics, education, social, and political aspects. Therefore, each organization has a main field reflected in the vision and mission of the organization's statutes. The Islamic Union, or better known as Persis, became part of these organizations that developed in the second decade of the 20th century. Persis embraces the vision and mission of improving religious understanding in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad and implementing it in the field of education (Defnaldi et al., 2023a, p. 101).

The development of Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia cannot be separated from the development of organizations as their parent bodies (Anshori et al., 2022, p. 235). Similarly, with Persis, the development of Persis educational institutions is greatly influenced by the institutionalization of this organization which has been successful since its inception. Generally, educational institutions in the early 20th century still had traditional characteristics (Hidayati, 2022, p. 208). Generally, the main factors underlying the development of Islamic education in Indonesia are the emergence of many Islamic intellectuals returning from the Hijaz and the contact between Islam and the West. According to Karim (2019), the reform movement in the 20th century has three patterns: reform oriented towards Western civilization (westernization), towards pure Islamic sources: the Qur'an and Hadith, and towards nationalism (Karim, 2019, p. 43).

Islamic educational institutions such as pesantren still use classical teaching methods with deepening of Islamic sciences. On the other hand, Western educational institutions specifically for nobility and colonial officials continue to experience rapid development. In terms of education, the Dutch colonial government only provided limited numbers of public schools in each region. Therefore, this situation then prompted scholars and founders of Persis to desire progress in the field of education through the institutionalization route of the Persis organization (Fauzan & Fata, 2021, p. 38).

The reform of Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, henceforth referred to as *madrasahs*, emerged as a distinct feature in the mid-20th century. The establishment of the Islamic Association (Persis) in the early 20th century in Indonesia marked a new change and dynamism in the Islamic renewal movement. Persis arose in response to the challenges faced by Muslims at that time, where they were entrenched in stagnant thinking, immersed in excessive mystical practices, and the emergence of practices incompatible with Islamic teachings, such as superstitions, innovations, superstitions, polytheism, idolatry, and moral decline. Additionally, Muslims were also bound by Dutch colonial rule, which sought to hinder the development of Islam in Indonesia.

This study examines the dynamics of Persis Islamic educational institutions from 1923, the year of Persis's founding, until 1962. The year 1962 marks the transition between the young generation of Persis or, in other words, the end of the formal leadership period of Persis's founding parents. Therefore, the scope of this research aims to limit the study for more systematic analysis and to assess the participation and contribution of the first generation of Persis in the development of Islamic education in Indonesia.

This situation spurred the emergence of the Islamic "reform" movement, which subsequently influenced Muslim society in Indonesia through intellectual interaction and contact. This movement aimed to renew religious practices and Islamic thought, with the hope of improving the condition of the community and revitalizing authentic Islamic spirit.

METHOD

This study on the Dynamics of the Islamic Association (PERSIS) Educational Institutions utilizes library research, encompassing reference books, journals, archives, documents, and other relevant writings. Viewed from its nature, this research is a historical study focusing on the Dynamics of the Islamic Association (PERSIS) Educational Institutions that grew and developed in Indonesia before and after its independence. It employs a qualitative research method to explore and investigate references. In the qualitative tradition, researchers utilize themselves as instruments, aligning with cultural assumptions while following the data. Through the qualitative method, data is naturally discovered and then critically analyzed, presenting the data as it is (Wardah, 2014, p. 171).

This study employs a historical research method structured in four stages: heuristic, source criticism, verification, and historiography (Wardah, 2014, p. 170). Initially, the research gathers various sources. The sources used in this research are divided into two categories: primary sources, including primary information data about the Persis Islamic educational institutions, such as the *Sipatahoenan Newspaper* and *Bendera Islam*. These two newspapers contain news or information related to Persis activities during the Dutch East Indies era.

Secondary sources encompass scholarly studies, including books, journals, and magazines related to the development of Persis educational institutions.

In the source criticism stage, researchers verify the validity of data by conducting source tracing tests related to the data's validity. For example, if there is a citation from a scholarly article in a book or newspaper source, the researcher cross-checks the primary source (Imanullah et al., 2024, p. 34). Next is the interpretation stage, where the framework of events is formulated based on historical sources obtained. The main objective of interpretation in this study is to answer and explain the questions formulated in the introduction regarding the dynamics of Persis development from 1923 to 1962. Lastly, historiography or the writing stage involves organizing the sources compiled into a systematic and scholarly form of writing. This study belongs to the category of descriptive analytical modern historiography (Wardah, 2014, p. 172).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

History of Persatuan Islam

Islamic organizations and movements in Indonesia have grown and evolved since before the official independence of the country, continuing to rapidly develop through relentless efforts of renewal and modernization (Mustafida et al., 2022, pp. 555–570). One such organization is the Islamic Association (abbreviated as Persis), which is an Islamic organization in Indonesia. The birth of Persis began with the formation of a tadarusan group (Islamic study group) in the city of Bandung, led by H. Zamzam and H. Muhammad Yunus (Nasution, 2020). Within this group, there was an awareness of the importance of communal living, leading congregational prayers, and strengthening relationships in spreading Islamic teachings. The spirit and enthusiasm of this tadarusan group then drove them to establish a new organization with distinct characteristics. Unlike other organizations founded in the early 20th century, the Islamic Association focused primarily on shaping Islamic understanding. According to Hanun Asrohah, citing Federspiel, the Islamic Association had distinguishing features from other organizations at that time. They emphasized activities related to the development of understanding and beliefs in Islam (Hasbullah, 2011, p. 201).

The idea of establishing this organization originated from regular feast gatherings held at the home of one of the group members originally from Sumatra but had long resided in Bandung. At that time, among those present were Haji Zamzam, Haji Muhammad Junus, and Pakih Hasjim from Surabaya who acted as religious speaker Abdul Sani (Hasbullah, 2011, p. 222). In this discussion, especially Haji Zamzam and Haji Muhammad Yunus from the three families, conveyed many thoughts because they had extensive knowledge. Although both were actually

traders, they still had the opportunity and time to delve into their knowledge of Islam (Djamaluddin & Aly, 1999).

The Islamic Association (PERSIS) was officially established in 1923 in Bandung by a group of Muslims interested in religious studies and activities led by Zamzam and Muhammad Yunus. Unlike other organizations founded in the early 20th century, PERSIS had its own distinctive characteristics. In addition to being an educational organization, it also focused on shaping Islamic ideology. Within it, Muhamad Natsir implemented his reformist idea called intergalactic education. An integrated education system did not separate religious and secular knowledge (Mustafida et al., 2022, pp. 232–245). The Islamic Association was initially led by Zamzam. He was a graduate of Dâr al-'Ulûm Mecca who from 1910-1912 was a religious teacher at the Dâr al-Muta'alimîn religious school. He and his close friend, H. Muhammad Yunus, a successful merchant also from Palembang, both had backgrounds in traditional religious education and mastered the Arabic language. Therefore, they were able to independently study through the religious texts that caught their attention. At least Persis brought three important missions: presenting Islam as an important part of the Dutch East Indies. Second, participating in international issues at that time, the World Islamic Congress held in Mecca. Third, making changes and striving for better conditions, especially for Muslim communities (*Bendera Islam* No.72 tahun 1926)

The name "Persatuan Islam" implies the spirit of striving and exerting efforts to achieve hopes and aspirations in line with the organization's desires, namely the unity of Islamic thought, feelings, efforts, and voices. Inspired by QS.Ali Imran verse 103: "And hold firmly to the rope (law/regulation) of Allah all together and do not become divided," and the hadith of Turmuzi: "The strength of Allah is with the congregation." At its inception, the community was shackled by baseless fatwas that were not based on the Quran and Sunnah.

Persis was founded based on Islamic principles. The purpose of establishing Persis is to present an understanding of Islam that aligns with its original teachings brought by the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Persis also aims to provide a different perspective from traditional Islamic understandings, which are considered to have been mixed with local culture, emphasizing blind imitation, lack of critical thinking, and reluctance to delve deeper into Islam through the study of authentic Hadith books. Therefore, through its scholars like Ahmad Hassan, also known as Hassan Bandung or Hassan Bangil, Persis introduced Islam sourced solely from the Quran and Hadith (sayings and actions of the Prophet).

In an effort to achieve these goals, Persis formulated several core programs, including: 1) Returning Muslims to the leadership of the Quran and Hadith. 2) Reviving the spirit of jihad and ijtihad among the Muslim community. 3) Eradicating innovation, superstition, blind imitation, and polytheism among the Muslim community. 4) Expanding the dissemination of Islamic

preaching and propagation to all layers of society. 5) Establishing Islamic schools or boarding schools to educate Muslim children based on the Quran and Sunnah (Munandar, 2021, p. 5).

The influence of the Persis organization is much greater than the number of its branches or members. In 1923, only about twelve members participated in congregational Friday prayers held by Persis in Bandung. However, in 1924, when Japan invaded Indonesia, such congregational prayers were held in six mosques and attended by more than 500 people (Djamaluddin & Aly, 1999, p. 79).

To achieve the organization's goals, Persis carried out various activities, including education, which began with the establishment of Persis Boarding School on March 4, 1936. From this boarding school, various educational institutions developed, ranging from Raudlatul Athfal (kindergarten) to universities. Then, they published various books, scriptures, and magazines, including the Pembela Islam magazine (1929), Al-Fatwa magazine (1931), Al-Lissan magazine (1935), At-Taqwa magazine (1937), periodic Al-Hikam magazine (1939), Aliran Islam magazine (1948), Risalah magazine (1962), Sundanese-language magazine (Iber), as well as various magazines published in Persis branches. In addition to education and publishing, routine activities included organizing study groups and discussions held in various regions, both initiated by the Central Leadership of Persis and requested by Persis branches, invitations from other Islamic organizations, and the general public.

The Indonesian Muslim community has the option to implement various innovations in various aspects of Islamic life by bringing about changes through education. Individuals with a good education tend to have a mindset geared towards progress and orderly development (Defnaldi et al., 2023b, pp. 164–174). Meanwhile, Persis' efforts in the field of education have been carried out by Persis figures since before Indonesia's independence through formal educational institutions. With the issuance of permits by the colonial government of the Dutch East Indies in 1915 for the public to organize Islamic education systems, Persis seized the opportunity to establish an education system similar to schools. One of the Persis members named A. Banama founded an Islamic Education school (Pendis), consisting of Kindergarten and Elementary Islamic School (HIS) in 1930, and also established a Middle School (MULO) in 1931 and a Teacher Education School in 1932, led by Mohammad Natsir. By 1938, the Islamic educational institution had HIS schools in five other regions in West Java. In 1930, Persis established Kindergarten and HIS, then MULO schools in 1931, and a Teacher School in 1932. All of these educational levels were conducted in Bandung city, while in other cities like Garut and Tasikmalaya, Persis HIS schools were built since 1938 (Hasbullah, 2011, p. 202).

In addition to the general education mentioned earlier, Persis also conducted specialized education in the field of Islamic religion through pesantren institutions. Initially, Persis established a madrasah intended for the children of Persis members. However, as it developed,

this madrasah was expanded to admit children from outside Persis. Around 1927, Persis organized special classes or discussion groups for children who had completed their education in government secondary schools and wanted to study Islam more seriously and deeply. On March 4, 1936, the "Persatuan Islam Boarding School" was established in Bandung, led by Hasan Hamid and E. Abdurrahman.

In carrying out its activities, Persis was fortunate to receive support and participation from two important figures. First was Ahmad Hassan, considered the primary mentor of Persis at its inception. Second was Muhammad Natsir, who at that time was a developing young man and played a role as the organization's spokesperson among the educated.

The Islamic Unity Organization has spread to various provinces, including West Java, East Java, DKI Jakarta, Banten, Lampung, Bengkulu, Riau, Jambi, Gorontalo, and other provinces that are still in the pioneering process. Persis is not a politically oriented religious organization but rather focuses more on Islamic Education and Preaching. Its main goal is to uphold Islamic teachings as a whole without the influence of superstition, polytheism, and innovation that have spread widely among the common Muslim community.

Today, Persis strives to adapt to the needs of its contemporary society, which are more realistic and critical. Persis' struggle is not limited to ritualistic issues in the narrow sense but extends to strategic issues needed by the Muslim community, especially in matters of worldly affairs and the advancement of Islamic thought.

This pesantren is organized into two levels of education, namely the Small Pesantren, which is prepared for the education of children and conducted in the afternoon, and the Big Pesantren, which is prepared for the education of adolescents. After A. Hassan moved to Bangil, East Java, in March 1940, the Big Pesantren was developed there, and the Special Girls' Big Pesantren was established in February 1941 (Fauzan & Fata, 2021, p. 37). This pesantren aims to provide education and guidance to female cadres of Persis.

Eventually, Persis pesantrens evolved into various Islamic educational institutions with educational spans ranging from the earliest level, Raudlatul Athfal (Kindergarten), to the university level. In its development, Persis has successfully established 230 pesantrens not only in the Bandung, Garut, and Tasikmalaya regions but also in various other areas of Indonesia.

Persis also formed Autonomous Bodies such as the Persatuan Islam Istri (Persistri), Himpunan Mahasiswa Persis (Hima Persis), Himpunan Mahasiswi Persis (Himi Persis), Pemuda Persis, and Pemudi Persis. The existence of Persis continues to grow and currently encompasses 23 provinces in Indonesia, with 62 District-level Regional Leadership and 358 Sub-district-level Branch Leadership. The domain of Persis's role is mainly focused on education and social affairs. To date, Persis manages more than 200 pesantren-based educational institutions spread across Indonesia (Muzakky, 2021, p. 93).

Regarding the subjects taught in the Persis Islamic Educational Institutions, initially, the focus was on religious sciences, but over time, general education subjects were also implemented. The religious curriculum at Persis Islamic Educational Institutions is manifested in subjects such as Tauhid, Fiqh, Quranic recitation, language studies like Sharaf and Nahwu, Rhetoric, Badi', Ma'ani', and Manthiq, History, Tafsir, Hadith, Usul Fiqh, and Akhlaq. In addition to these subjects, general subjects such as Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Journalism, and other fields of knowledge are also taught. The integrated curriculum between Islamic and general subjects is also implemented by Persis in various pesantrens and schools in other areas. Since its establishment in 1936, the curriculum composition at Persis Pesantren has been 80% religious subjects and 20% general subjects. Even in public schools, the curriculum composition for Islamic Education is 70% religious subjects and 30% general subjects. Persis provides a balanced curriculum between religious knowledge and worldly knowledge. Religious knowledge includes Arabic language, Quran, fiqh, Islamic history, and ethics. Meanwhile, for general subjects oriented towards worldly knowledge, they include geography, arithmetic, history, Indonesian language, Sundanese language (Husaeni et al., 2023, p. 100).

The dynamics of development and innovation in the Pesantren of the Islamic Union continue at the Tarogong Garut Islamic Union Pesantren, established in 1979. Since its inception, this pesantren has advocated for its students to take state equivalency exams so that graduates can pursue higher education. In 1988, a change in the educational system of Persis occurred under the leadership of KH. E. Abdurrahman, allowing students to take national exams as a final evaluation for those completing their studies at the Tsanawiyah and Mu'allimien levels. Additionally, the Tarogong Garut Islamic Union Pesantren pioneered the transition from the Hijriah educational calendar (Syawal-Sya'ban) to the national education calendar (June-July). Eventually, other Persis pesantrens followed suit (Ajidin & Ajidin, 2022, p. 10).

The pesantren system is also implemented by Persis at the Al-Islam Surakarta institution. This institution has a specialized educational curriculum applicable to all levels of education under its umbrella, from preschool education, elementary education, secondary education, to tertiary education. Meanwhile, Persis's movement in North Sumatra is also focused on education, preaching, culture, and community affairs (Ali Usman, 2022, p. 236).

The Garut branch of the Islamic Union established a mosque on Guntur Street, Bentar, Garut City in 1965. This mosque is used for worship and religious studies. Additionally, the mosque serves as the venue for Ibtidaiyyah educational activities under the name Madrasah Diniyah. This Madrasah Diniyah was the precursor to the birth of the Islamic Union Pesantren in Garut. In 1967, the Islamic Union Pesantren officially opened the Tajhiziyyah and Tsanawiyah levels, led by Al-Ustadz Sjihabuddin and Al-Ustadzah Aminah Dahlan. From this Madrasah

Diniyah, the Garut Islamic Union Pesantren, now known as Pesantren Persis 19 Bantar, developed (Agung et al., 2020, p. 130).

Subsequent developments in Persis education have been rapid, so much so that by 1980, there were 78 Pesantren Persis, and now there are 250 pesantrens scattered across various regions in Indonesia. With changing times and societal aspirations, in 1988 Persis expanded the pesantren into a Higher Islamic Boarding School (PPT) aimed at producing scholars with solid academic capabilities, scholars capable of nurturing the community for a better life according to the Quran and Sunnah. Initially, the Higher Islamic Boarding School did not have permission or nomenclature from the government. However, eventually, the Persis Higher Islamic Boarding School (PPT) changed its name to the School of Islamic Religious Sciences (STIU), and later evolved into the Persatuan Islam School of Islamic Religious Sciences (STAIPI), then continued to expand by opening the Two-Year Diploma Program for Raudhatul Athfal Teachers (PGRA) under STAIPI, the Persis School of Teacher Training and Education (STKIP), and the STAIPI Higher Education Institute for Arabic Language Education.

In its development in 2019, under the leadership of K.H. Maman Abdurrahman together with K.H. Aceng Zakaria, Persatuan Islam (Persis) successfully established the Universitas Persatuan Islam in Bandung. This was achieved through the issuance of a Decree by the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education (Kemenristekdikti) acknowledging the establishment of the Universitas Persatuan Islam (Unipi).

Based on the above description, it is evident that the role of Persatuan Islam (Persis) in developing Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia through various activities it carries out always refers to the Qanun Asasi (basic regulations) and Qanun Dakhili (internal regulations) of Persis in 1957, which encompass the following aspects:

- 1) Restoring Muslims to live according to the guidance of the Quran and Sunnah.
- 2) Reviving the spirit of jihad among the Muslim community.
- 3) Eradicating innovation, superstition, and idolatry among Muslims.
- 4) Expanding the dissemination of Islamic teachings and preaching to all segments of society.
- 5) Building, maintaining, and enriching mosques, prayer rooms, and other places of worship, and leading the worship of Muslims in accordance with the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad SAW.
- 6) Establishing Islamic boarding schools to educate Muslim boys based on the Quran and Sunnah.
- 7) Publishing books, magazines, and other broadcasts to enhance the intelligence of Muslims in various fields of knowledge.

Maintaining and fostering good relations with Islamic organizations and movements in Indonesia and throughout the Muslim world, towards the realization of global unity among Muslims (Kamiluddin, 2006, p. 100). In this regard, Persis needs to establish policies that create an integrated education system, where all levels of education within Persis are considered as one cadreization system for both leadership and intellectual cadres of Islam.

Figures of Persis and Their Thoughts

1. KH. Zam-zam (Founder of Persis)

KH. Zamzam was a merchant from Palembang who had long settled in the city of Bandung. During his youth, Zamzam spent 3 1/2 years studying in Mecca, where he attended the Darul Ulum institution. It was during his time in Mecca that his thinking was greatly influenced by the reformist ideas that were prevalent at the time, particularly the ideas of Muhammad Abduh and his followers. Based on information from the Sipatahoenan Newspaper, the founder of Persis was well-known among the local community, especially in Bandung.

....People in Bandung don't just listen to anyone, they also listen to Dr. H. Zamzam, especially those involved in the Islamic movement, when this person speaks, it's significant..." (Sipatahoenan Newspaper, January 27, 1933)

Upon returning from Mecca, Zamzam became a teacher at Darul Muta'allimin, a religious school in Bandung. During this time, he was known to have a relationship with Sheikh Ahmad Surkati from al-Irsyad in Jakarta. However, he only stayed at this school for two years. From then on, KH Zamzam became active in various community organization activities. On September 17, 1923, KH Zamzam and H. Muhammad Yunus initiated the establishment of an organization in Bandung focused on social, educational, and religious fields. The organization was named Persatuan Islam, or more commonly known as PERSIS (Djamaluddin & Aly, 1999, p. 139).

2. Ahmad Hassan (Main Teacher of Persis)

Ahmad Hassan is regarded as the primary teacher of Persis during the pre-war era. He was also the founder of Persis (Persatuan Islam) in Bangil, East Java. Born in Singapore in 1887, Ahmad Hassan hailed from a mixed Indonesian and Indian family background (Djamaluddin & Aly, 1999, p. 80). His father, Ahmad, held the title of pandit and hailed from India, while his mother, Muznah, originated from Pelekat, Madras, and was born in Surabaya (Kutoyo & Soetjiatingsih, 1991, p. 165). Ahmad and Muznah got married in Surabaya while conducting business in the city and later settled there. Ahmad's father, Sinna Vappu Maricar, was a writer and an expert in Islamic religion and Tamil literature. He served as an editor for Nur Al Islam, a Tamil magazine focusing on religion and literature, and authored several books in Tamil as well as translations from Arabic. Ahmad came from a devout family in Surabaya and was known for engaging in debates on language and religion in newspapers (Djamaluddin & Aly, 1999, p. 80).

At around the age of 7, Hassan began studying the Quran and religion, as well as attending a Malay school. He also learned Arabic, Malay, Tamil, and English. However, Hassan never completed his primary education in Singapore. He started working to earn a living at the age of 12 in his brother-in-law Sulaiman's shop, while also studying Quranic recitation under Haji Ahmad and Muhammad Thaib to learn about ablution, prayer, fasting, and Nahwu and Sharaf. He later studied Arabic language under Said Abdullah Al-Musawi. Additionally, he studied religion under Abdul Lathif, Sheikh Hassan, and Sheikh Ibrahim in Singapore until 1910 (Kutoyo & Soetjiatingsih, 1991, p. 165). From 1910 to 1921, Hassan held various jobs in Singapore, including teaching, textile trading, acting as an agent for ice distribution, office clerk for the Hajj congregation, and serving as a member of the editorial staff of *Utusan Melayu*, where he predominantly wrote on ethical matters (Kutoyo & Soetjiatingsih, 1991, p. 166).

In 1912, Hassan moved to Surabaya with the intention of trading at his uncle and teacher Abdul Kathif's shop. In Surabaya, he resided with his uncle Abdul Hakim, a merchant and sheikh of the congregation. During his time in Surabaya, Hassan also encountered A. Wahab Hasbullah, one of the founders of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), which influenced Hassan's perspectives. Subsequently, Hassan socialized extensively with young Islamic groups in Surabaya, especially Faqih Hasyim. He also acquainted himself with figures from the Islamic Union such as HOS Cokroaminoto, AM Sangaji, Bakri Suroatmojo, Wondoamiseno, among others. Hassan actively participated in the study circles of Persatuan Islam and became a member of the organization in 1926 (Kutoyo & Soetjiatingsih, 1991, p. 166).

Ahmad Hassan's involvement with Persis did not initially stem from an interest in Persis ideologies, but rather, he was the one who transformed Persis into a movement of reform (ishlah). He recognized the need to translate his ideas into a cohesive movement for effective development. Thus, a combination of Ahmad Hassan's sharp intellect and Persis's firm character became evident. This synergy resulted in rapid progress within the renewal movement. Ahmad Hassan successfully positioned Persis as a reformist organization known for its firm stance on fihiyyah issues. Under his leadership, Persis emerged with a new pattern and approach in the Islamic ideological renewal movement in Indonesia.

Ahmad Hassan's involvement with Persis aligned with the "jihad program" of Persis, primarily aimed at disseminating its ideals and thoughts to uphold the Quran and Sunnah. He pursued this goal through various activities, such as conducting religious gatherings (tablig), organizing Islamic education courses for the younger generation, establishing Islamic boarding schools, and publishing numerous books, magazines, and pamphlets. Persis gained significant momentum with Ahmad Hassan's boldness in every debate, even though sometimes these debates were intense. However, this facilitated the opening of critical thinking to dismantle blind imitation (taqlid) and stagnation among the Muslim community.

Subsequent periods saw the development of Persis closely intertwined with Ahmad Hassan's leadership. His viewpoints shaped its tangible form and identity, simultaneously placing Persis in the ranks of "Muslim modernists" in Indonesia. Ahmad Hassan, along with his Persis or Persis with his Ahmad Hassan, engaged extensively in various exchanges of ideas, open dialogues, debates, and polemics through various mass media channels. In the field of education, Hassan envisioned the educational goals of Persatuan Islam as nurturing the ability to comprehend and develop Islamic teachings. Therefore, students were trained to think critically and freely seek truth. The relationship between educators and students considered it acceptable for students to debate with teachers, although Persatuan Islam did not promote this approach (Kutoyo & Soetjatingsih, 1991, p. 167).

3. Mohammad Natsir (politician cleric)

Mohammad Natsir, recognized predominantly as an Islamic scholar and activist (Susanto, 2010, p. 113). Merged as a burgeoning figure and spokesperson for the organization Persis among the educated elite (Djamaluddin & Aly, 1999, p. 80). A pivotal figure in the development of Persis, Mohammad Natsir was born on July 17, 1908, in Alahan Panjang, West Sumatra. His father served as a government employee. In 1927, he ventured to Bandung to pursue studies at Algeme Middelbare School (AMS), equivalent to contemporary high school education. Prior to this, he had attended HIS (Hollandsch-Inlandsche School) and MULO (Meer Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs) in Minangkabau. Additionally, he received education in religious studies in Solok under the guidance of Tuanku Mudo Amin and actively participated in religious teachings by Haji Abdullah in Padang.

In Bandung, Mohammad Natsir's interest in religion flourished. By 1929, he became a member of the Jong Islamieten Bond branch in Bandung, where he imparted teachings to fellow members. Subsequently, he taught Islamic studies at Hollands Inlandse Kweekschool (HIK, teacher's school) and Mulo Bandung. Natsir regularly attended Friday gatherings held by the Persis organization, fostering close ties with its leaders. He also attended special classes organized by Hassan for young Persis members studying in various Dutch secondary schools. Among these leaders, Natsir found companionship in addressing emerging life issues.

The Persis magazine, *Pembela Islam*, provided Natsir with a platform to express his views. His devotion to the study of Islam was so profound that he declined a scholarship offer from the Dutch government to attend law school in Jakarta or economics school in Rotterdam, Netherlands. Instead, he focused on Muslim education, delving into pedagogical studies after completing his AMS education and obtaining a diploma in education in 1931 (Djamaluddin & Aly, 1999, pp. 80–81).

In his book titled "Yang Dai Yang Politician," Dadan Wildan asserts that Muhammad Natsir was one of the students of A. Hassan who frequently visited Ahmad Hassan's home to

inquire and discuss various issues in Islam. Natsir was involved in the cadreship process under Ahmad Hassan's guidance.

As a protege of Ahmad Hassan, Natsir also produced numerous written works. In his various writings, Natsir positioned Islam not only as a religion but also as a "worldview" encompassing political, economic, social, and cultural matters. For him, Islam was a source of struggle, a resistance against all forms of colonization, human exploitation, eradication of ignorance and illiteracy, elimination of idolatry, as well as combating destitution and poverty. In his perspective, Islam does not separate religious and state affairs. Islam takes precedence.

As a scholar engaged in politics, Muhammad Natsir's political activities became prominent after the opportunity to establish political parties arose in November 1945. He even served as the Minister of Information in the Syahrir I and II Cabinets (1946-1947) and in the Hatta Cabinet in 1948. M. Natsir also held the position of Prime Minister alongside Wahid Hasyim as Minister of Religion when policies regarding religious education in public schools and secular education in religious schools were issued. Mohammad Natsir argued that good education is one that can create an integral educational pattern, balancing spiritual and physical aspects. According to him, this type of education aligns with the essence of Islamic teachings (Susanto, 2010, p. 113).

4. KH E. Abdurrahman

Role, position, and activities in the history of Islamic renewal in Indonesia, as a thinker, preacher, and follower of the *tajdid* movement within the Persis organization, have had a significant influence. He was a humble, authoritative, and broad-minded scholar. With a flexible leadership style, he successfully steered Persis along a different path: adopting a low-profile approach, employing persuasive educational methods, firm yet gentle in principles grounded in the Quran and Sunnah.

Ustadz Abdurrahman was renowned as a great scholar and humble jurist. He eschewed praise and maintained a low public profile. He valued his time, dedicating it to studying books, teaching at *pesantrens* (Islamic boarding schools), and almost every night conducting religious lectures. According to Mohammad Natsir, Ustadz Abdurrahman excelled in his meticulousness in deriving legal rulings through his *ijtihad*, always backed by strong and accountable evidence. Scholars of this caliber were deemed rare even beyond Indonesia's borders.

In his organizational activities within the Persis organization, Ustadz Abdurrahman demonstrated loyalty. He was active as a Persis member since 1934. His first position within the organization was as the head of propagation and education in 1952. In 1953, during the Persis conference in Bandung, Ustadz Abdurrahman was elected as the general secretary of Persis's central leadership, serving alongside K.H. Mohammad Isa Anshary, the chairman.

Following the 7th Persis conference in 1962, Ustadz Abdurrahman was elected as the chairman of Persis's central leadership through a referendum. His leadership tenure marked the third period of Persis's leadership after the end of K.H. Mohammad Isa Anshary's leadership. This period also represented a leadership regeneration from the first generation of Persis to the Youth Persis generation, an autonomous organization within Persis that served as the breeding ground for Persis cadres. The presence of KH E. Abdurrahman, Eman Sar'an, Rusyad Nurdin, and E. Bachrum, former leaders of the early Youth Persis period, demonstrated the passing of the leadership baton to the younger group from Persis's autonomous organization (Fauzan et al., 2020, p. 251).

Educational reform will occur if institution leaders, stakeholders in society, and central and regional governments all share the same innovative, dynamic, and collaborative vision for educational reform. Educational reform is expected to produce quality and competitive graduates (Susanto, 2010, p. 113). In the context of the history of Islamic renewal in Indonesia, Ustadz Abdurrahman's leadership within the Persis jam'iyah tended to strengthen Persis's role, function, and position as an organization striving to return the community to the Quran and Sunnah since its early generations through education, preaching, propagation, and limited publication. The value of Persis does not solely lie in its organization but in its efforts to disseminate its beliefs; acknowledged or not, these beliefs have permeated beyond its organizational boundaries. While its organization may not be widely known, its ideology has transcended the rigidity and obscurity of Islamic understanding in Indonesia (Susanto, 2010, p. 114).

CONCLUSION

Based on this research, several key points can be concluded. Firstly, the Islamic Union (Persatuan Islam or Persis) was established in response to the conditions of Muslims in Indonesia at that time, characterized by stagnation in thought, excessive mysticism, the spread of superstition, innovation, superstition, polytheism, moral decay, and hindered Islamic development due to Dutch colonialism. Persis was founded with the primary aim of addressing these issues. Secondly, Persis was led by a number of figures with diverse thinking characteristics, such as KH. Zamzam, one of the founders of Persis; Ahmad Hasan, the main teacher and founder of Persis; and Mohammad Natsir, a political scholar. KH. E. Abdurrahman also emerged as one of the great scholars within Persis, distinguished by his humble personality. Thirdly, Persis placed great emphasis on education by establishing various educational institutions from early childhood education to higher education, including Islamic boarding schools, schools, and pesantrens. They were also actively involved in organizing courses and discussion groups as part of their educational efforts.

REFERENCES

- Agung, B., Zuhri, M. T., & Ramdhani, K. (2020). Modernisasi Pendidikan Pesantren Berbasis Organisasi Masyarakat Islam (Studi Kasus di Pondok Pesantren Al-Falah Nagreg Bandung, Pondok Pesantren Darul Arqom Garut dan Pondok Pesantren PERSIS Tarogong Garut). *JPA: Jurnal Penelitian Agama*, 21(1).
- Ajidin, Z. A., & Ajidin, A. (2022). Komparasi Model Pendidikan Islam antara Muhammadiyah dan Persatuan Islam. *Lentera: Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Islamic Studies*, 4(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.32505/lentera.v4i1.4223>
- Ali Usman. (2022). Revitalisasi Gerakan Pembaruan Persatuan Persis (Persis). *Mukaddimah: Jurnal Studi Islam*, 6(2), 234–252. <https://doi.org/10.14421/mjsi.62.2922>
- Anita, A., Hasan, M., Warisno, A., Anshori, M. A., & Andari, A. A. (2023). Pesantren, Kepemimpinan Kiai, dan Ajaran Tarekat sebagai Potret Dinamika Lembaga Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia. *Scaffolding: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Dan Multikulturalisme*, 4(3), 509–524. <https://doi.org/10.37680/scaffolding.v4i3.1955>
- Anshori, A., Solikhah, N. A., Aqli, D. R., Musyafa', M. A., & Apriyanto, S. (2022). Dynamics and New Paradigm of Islamic Education in Indonesia. *Scaffolding: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Dan Multikulturalisme*, 4(2), 232–245. <https://doi.org/10.37680/scaffolding.v4i2.1573>
- Asmanto, B., Suradi, S., Warisno, A., Andari, A. A., & Anshori, M. A. (2023). The Evolution of Islamic Educational Institutions in Indonesia. *JMKSP (Jurnal Manajemen, Kepemimpinan, Dan Supervisi Pendidikan)*, 8(1), 262–272. <https://doi.org/10.31851/jmksp.v8i1.11117>
- Defnaldi, D., Yunani, Y., Warisno, A., Andari, A. A., & Anshori, A. (2023a). The Evolution of Islamic Education Institutions in Indonesia. *JMKSP (Jurnal Manajemen, Kepemimpinan, Dan Supervisi Pendidikan)*, 8(1), 164–174. <https://doi.org/10.31851/jmksp.v8i1.10941>
- Defnaldi, D., Yunani, Y., Warisno, A., Andari, A. A., & Anshori, A. (2023b). The Evolution of Islamic Education Institutions in Indonesia. *JMKSP (Jurnal Manajemen, Kepemimpinan, Dan Supervisi Pendidikan)*, 8(1), 164–174. <https://doi.org/10.31851/jmksp.v8i1.10941>
- Djamaluddin, & Aly, A. (1999). *Kapita Selekta Pendidikan Islam*. CV Pustaka Setia.
- Fauzan, P. I., & Fata, A. K. (2021). Rethinking Howard M. Federspiel's Thesis On The Conflict Between Persatuan Islam vs Permoefakatan Islam. *Journal of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Societies*, 5(1), 37. <https://doi.org/10.30821/jcims.v5i1.8889>
- Fauzan, P. I., Fata, A. K., & Basit, G. G. A. (2020). Pola Kaderisasi Gerakan Islam Puritan: Studi Kritis Terhadap Sistem Pengkaderan Persatuan Islam. *Millah*, 19(2), 247–278. <https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol19.iss2.art4>
- Hasbullah. (2011). *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia: Lintasan Sejarah Pertumbuhan dan Perkembangan*. PT Raja Grafindo Persada.
- Hidayati, N. (2022). Reformasi Pendidikan Islam pada Awal Abad ke-20. *Al-Risalah*, 16(2), 203–236.
- Husaeni, M. F., Kosasih, A., & Supriadi, U. (2023). Challenging Gender Mainstreaming Through The Narrative of Islamic Youth Organization: A Case Study on Persis in Indonesia. *Asian Journal of Women's Studies*, 29(1), 97–120. <https://doi.org/10.1080/12259276.2023.2186631>

- Imanullah, R., Sopyanti, A., & Billa, S. S. (2024). Model Penelitian Sejarah Islam. *ARIMA: Jurnal Sosial Dan Humaniora*, 1(3), 29–35.
- Kamiluddin, U. (2006). *Menyorot Ijtihad Persis: Fungsi dan Peranan Pembinaan Hukum Islam di Indonesia*. Takafur.
- Karim, M. A. (2019). *Sejarah Pemikiran dan Peradaban Islam*. Bagaskara.
- Kutoyo, S., & Soetjiatingsih, S. (1991). *Sejarah Pendidikan Daerah Jawa Timur*. Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan.
- Munandar, A. (2021). Konsep Dakwah Ahmad Hassan dan Implementasinya Dalam Gerakan Dakwah Persis (studi kasus debat di majalah dan Pesantren Persatuan Islam). *Komunika: Journal of Communication Science and Islamic Dakwah*, 5(2).
<https://doi.org/10.32832/komunika.v5i2.4713>
- Mustafida, Warisno, A., Andari, A. A., & Ansori, M. A. (2022). Dinamika Organisasi Lembaga Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia. *Scaffolding: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Multikulturalisme*, 4–3.
- Muzakky, A. H. (2021). Tafsir Maqāṣidi dan Pengembangan Kisah Al-Qur'an: Studi Kisah Nabi Bermuka Masam dalam QS. Abasa [80]: 1-11. *Journal of Qur' Ān and Had Īth Studies*, 10(1).
- Nasution, S. (2020). Persis: Pergerakan Dakwah di Kota Medan Tahun 2010-2015. *JUSPI (Jurnal Sejarah Peradaban Islam)*, 4(1), 50. <https://doi.org/10.30829/juspi.v4i1.7926>
- Susanto, A. (2010). *Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam*. Amzah.
- Wardah, E. S. (2014). Metode Penelitian Sejarah. *Tsaqofah*, 12(2), 165–175.