

# Revitalization of Islamic Education at Madrasah NWDI Lombok: Reviving the Heritage of National Heroes during the Colonial Era

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## Abstract

This study aims to explore the efforts of revitalizing Islamic education at Madrasah NWDI in Lombok, Indonesia, with a focus on how Madrasah NWDI plays a role in preserving and reviving the national hero heritage of Indonesia during the colonial period. The primary issue addressed is how Madrasah NWDI has implemented the values of national heroes and local culture in its Islamic education, as well as how this relates to the challenges of contemporary education. The research employs historical research, document analysis, and interviews to gather relevant data. The findings reveal that Madrasah NWDI has played a significant role in upholding national and religious values and the spirit of national heroes. Education in this madrasah promotes character, morality, and leadership, which are relevant to the development of Islamic education today. This study makes a significant contribution to understanding the importance of Islamic education in preserving and rekindling the national heritage during the colonial era and its relevance in the context of present-day Islamic education. The conclusion underscores the pivotal role of Madrasah NWDI in inheriting and revitalizing the values of Indonesian national heroes. This research reinforces the understanding that Islamic education can serve as an agent of change that fosters national and religious spirit amidst ongoing societal transformations.

**Keywords:** Islamic education at Madrasah NWDI, leadership, national heroes.

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## INTRODUCTION

Islamic education plays a crucial role in shaping the character and identity of individuals as well as communities in Indonesia (Ulyan Nasri, 2023). An intriguing aspect is the effort to revitalize Islamic education in traditional madrasahs, particularly those embedded with rich historical and cultural values. This study focuses on the revitalization efforts of Islamic education in Madrasah NWDI on Lombok Island, aiming to resurrect the legacy of national heroes during the colonial era (Atsani & Nasri, 2023).

Madrasah NWDI was established by Tuan Guru Kiai Haji Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid, a prominent scholar from East Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara Province. Founded in 1937, the madrasah became a leading institution within the Nahdlatul Wathan Lombok organization (Atsani & Nasri, 2021). The history of Madrasah NWDI reflects the spirit of struggle and the significant role played by scholars and

community leaders during the Dutch colonial period (Nasri, 2015).

This madrasah holds strong historical and cultural values passed down through generations (Fahrurrozi, 2019). These values include religious fervor, nationalism, and the spirit of struggle exemplified by Indonesia's national heroes. Madrasah NWDI Lombok has become a vital institution for preserving these values and incorporating them into Islamic education (Muliadi & Zainul Fahmi, 2021).

In the current context of Islamic education, Madrasah NWDI strives to bridge traditional values with the evolving needs and challenges of the times. The revitalization of Islamic education in this madrasah plays a key role in preserving the legacy of Indonesia's national heroes while seeking educational solutions relevant to the modern society (Nasri, 2017).

To comprehend the role of Madrasah NWDI in preserving and revitalizing the legacy of national heroes

during the colonial era, this research will delve deeper into the educational practices and philosophies of Madrasah NWDI. Through this study, various strategies and methods employed by Madrasah NWDI to uphold and revive the values of national heroes are expected to be revealed, along with their relevance to the current development of Islamic education (Atsani, Nasri, Walad *et al.*, 2023).

Previous research in this domain has explored various aspects of Islamic education, focusing mostly on Islamic education theories and religious curriculum. Some studies have highlighted the significant role of madrasahs in inheriting traditional values. However, there is still a gap in knowledge as there hasn't been a specific in-depth study exploring the efforts of revitalizing Islamic education in Madrasah NWDI Lombok within the context of preserving and restoring the legacy of national heroes. Therefore, this research aims to fill this significant knowledge gap.

This study aims to explore the educational practices and philosophies of Madrasah NWDI, focusing on preserving and revitalizing the legacy of national heroes during the colonial era. Through historical analysis, philosophical approaches, and interviews with relevant stakeholders, this research will identify the methods and strategies employed by Madrasah NWDI in formulating education solutions relevant to the present context while preserving traditional values.

It is expected that this research will contribute to understanding the importance of Islamic education in preserving national and religious values and provide alternative educational solutions relevant to the challenges of the ever-evolving times. This study will reveal how Madrasah NWDI Lombok can serve as an inspirational example in overcoming educational gaps and bridging traditional values with the modern world.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is a qualitative study utilizing a multidisciplinary approach, including historical exploration, document analysis, and interviews (Creswell, 2008). This approach allows the researcher to delve into the practices and philosophy of Madrasah NWDI's education and its influence on the legacy of national heroes during the colonial era. The research took place during a specific period, commencing on [August 3, 2023], and concluding on [October 23, 2023]. The research is located at Ponpes Syaikh Zainuddin Nahdlatul Wathan Anjani, East Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia, which serves as the primary focus of the study (Bamberger, 2000). This boarding school is a heritage of Madrasah NWDI that has evolved in accordance with government regulations.

The research target is Madrasah NWDI, as an Islamic educational institution, and the research subjects are educational staff, madrasah administrators, and education policymakers involved in the efforts to revitalize Islamic education at Madrasah NWDI. The research procedures include historical exploration, where the history of Madrasah NWDI is traced to understand its origins, development, and significant changes throughout its history. Subsequently, an analysis of historical documents, educational curriculum, madrasah regulations, and relevant records is conducted to identify the strategies and values adopted in Madrasah NWDI's education.

Next, the researcher conducts interviews with individuals involved in the process of revitalizing Islamic education at Madrasah NWDI (Ali, 2002). Interviews will encompass educational staff, madrasah administrators, and education policymakers. As for the instruments and data collection techniques, firstly, for historical exploration, data are collected from historical archives, official records, and relevant historical literature. Secondly, document analysis employs a qualitative method to evaluate relevant documents regarding Madrasah NWDI's education. Thirdly, interviews are conducted using a structured interview guide to gain in-depth perspectives and understanding from respondents (Prastowo, 2016).

Data analysis is performed using a qualitative approach, including content analysis for data generated from interviews (Miles *et al.*, 2014). Data are analyzed based on themes and concepts that emerge during the research (Hadi, 2002). This research method is expected to provide a profound understanding of Madrasah NWDI's role in preserving and reviving the values of national heroes during the colonial era and its relevance in the context of current Islamic education (Hadi and Haryono, 2005).

## RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION RESULTS

This research reveals the significant role of Madrasah NWDI in the effort to revitalize Islamic education amidst the changing challenges of the times, particularly during the colonial era. Born in 1937, during Japan's occupation of Indonesia, Madrasah NWDI has undergone a long journey, maintaining religious values, nationalism, and the spirit of struggle of national heroes in its educational curriculum (Nasri, 2015). This is relevant in bridging the transition from Dutch colonization to Japanese occupation and preparing for Indonesia's independence (Nukman, 1988, 2000, 2010, 2019).



**Figure 1: Portrait of the NWDI students in the early days of TGKH. Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid founded NWDI and NBDI as the basis for the struggle in spreading Islamic teachings in Lombok**

Madrasah NWDI was established in 1937 by Tuan Guru Kiai Haji Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid when Indonesia was still under colonial rule, both by the Dutch and the Japanese (Nasri, 2017). Previously, TGKH Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid was a student of Al-Saulatiah. After returning from Mecca, he began teaching and founded the Al-Mujahidin Islamic boarding school, which marked the beginning of the struggle leading to the formation of Nahdlatul Wathan. The community in his village entrusted him to be the imam and Friday sermon speaker at Masjid Jamiq, acknowledging his knowledge, high spirit of struggle, and conferred upon him the title Tuan Guru Bajang or Young Master (Diahmad, 2023).

As time passed, TGKH Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid became known as Maulana Syaikh. On August 22, 1937, he founded the Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyah Islamiyah (NWDI) Madrasah, a classical-based madrasah with a more structured education system compared to regular study groups. NWDI was specifically established for male students. Then, two years before independence, on April 21, 1943, he established another madrasah called Nahdlatul Banat Diniyah Islamiyah (NBDI), which accepted female students. NWDI and NBDI became the first two madrasahs in Lombok to adopt the classical teaching system (Atsani & Nasri, 2023).



**Figure 2: Founder of Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyah Islamiyah (NWDI) Madrasah**

Over time, branch madrasahs developed rapidly, established by alumni of NWDI and NBDI. Whether it was directly ordered by Maulana Syaikh or their own initiative with his approval. By 1952, there were already 66 madrasahs founded by alumni of NWDI and NBDI. To facilitate coordination among these madrasahs, on March 1, 1953, TGKH Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid established the Nahdlatul Wathan organization. This organization focuses on education, social activities, Islamic preaching, and serves as a unifying platform for the affiliated madrasahs, including NWDI and NBDI, named "DWI TUNGGAL PANTANG TANGGAL" (Fahrurrozi, 2017a).

NWDI produced its first graduates in 1941, while NBDI did so in 1949. Some of these graduates continued their education to higher levels, while others returned to the community. Some of them established branches of NWDI and NBDI madrasahs and actively engaged in preaching activities in mosques and rural areas. By 1952, there were already 66 standing madrasahs (Fahrurrozi, 2016).

NWDI and NBDI are educational institutions founded with the aim of improving the education of Muslims and spreading Islamic teachings in Lombok. This was expected to reduce the levels of ignorance and underdevelopment among the Sasak youth. The history of the establishment of NWDI and NBDI is full of struggles, especially when under the pressure of colonial governments. Although these madrasahs were briefly closed by the Japanese colonial government, they continued to uphold education in the spirit of Islam and the values they held. These madrasahs play a crucial role in preserving and reviving nationalistic and religious values, as well as the spirit of struggle of national heroes, in their educational curriculum (Fahrurrozi & Thohri, 2019). Madrasah NWDI not only focuses on academic aspects but also on shaping the character, morality, and leadership of students (Atsani *et al.*, 2023). The research results indicate that Madrasah NWDI has successfully integrated the values of Indonesian national heroes into its Islamic education by teaching the spirit of struggle, courage, and love for the homeland to its students (Fahrurrozi, 2017b).

Madrasah NWDI also promotes a spirit of diversity and pluralism in its Islamic education, which is relevant in the context of an increasingly multicultural society. This reinforces Madrasah NWDI's contribution to supporting social change and the development of Islamic education in Indonesia (Fahrurrozi, 2018). Additionally, this research reveals that Madrasah NWDI has rapidly growing branches, established by alumni of Madrasah NWDI and NBDI. These branch madrasahs have assisted in disseminating educational values and the spirit of Indonesian national struggle. By 1952, there were already 66 madrasahs founded by alumni of NWDI and NBDI (Bull, 2010).

The Nahdlatul Wathan organization was founded on March 1, 1953, by TGKH Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid to facilitate coordination among these madrasahs. This organization plays a role in education, social activities, Islamic preaching, and serves as a unifying platform for NWDI and NBDI madrasahs, which are the parent madrasahs under the umbrella of Nahdlatul Wathan (Basri, 2017). In its history, Madrasah NWDI and NBDI faced challenging struggles. Under the pressure of colonial governments, these madrasahs were used as a means to instill the spirit of struggle, patriotism, and resilience in the face of colonial government treatment. Although facing closure by the Japanese government, Madrasah NWDI continued to maintain Arabic and English language lessons, with Arabic being the language of the Quran and English as a global language (Arifin, 2014). Additionally, Madrasah NWDI also served as an educational institution for prospective religious leaders and imams responsible for managing the worship and marriages of Muslims. Despite being required to change its name to "religious leader and imam school," Madrasah NWDI continued to strive to uphold its values and teachings in the spirit of Islamic education (Nasri & Tabibuddin, 2023).

Madrasah NWDI implements an education method that not only focuses on academic aspects but also on character building, morality, and leadership. Research results indicate that Madrasah NWDI has successfully integrated the values of Indonesian national heroes into its Islamic education by teaching the spirit of struggle, courage, and love for the homeland to its students. This reflects how the madrasah functions as a preserver of national values in the context of Islamic education. As stated in the Book of Reflection Testament by TGKH. Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid:

*Ummat muhtadin selalu ziarah  
Di NWDI induk madrasah  
Secara zhahirah dan ruhaniyah  
Membawa berkat dan sinar Ka'bah*

*Nahdlatul Wathan berjalan terus  
Siang dan malam tidak terputus  
Meskipun dahsyat gelombang arus  
Dalam lindungan Ilahi al-Quddus*

English translation:

*The guided community always makes pilgrimages*

*To NWDI, the main school*

*Both physically and spiritually*

*Bringing blessings and the light of the Kaaba*

*Nahdlatul Wathan continues to progress*

*Day and night without interruption*

*Even in the face of powerful waves*

*Under the protection of the Divine, the Holy*

*One*



The stanza of the Testament Reflection Era illustrates the importance of the role and continuity of Madrasah Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyah Islamiyah (NWDI) as an Islamic educational institution. This stanza reflects

dedication and the spirit to continuously develop and provide benefits in both outward (*zhahirah*) and spiritual (spiritual) aspects to Muslims who continuously visit (*ziarah*) NWDI as the main madrasah (Diahmad, 2023).



**Figure 5-6: Male and Female Students of Dar al-Qur'an and Hadith Ma'had al-Majidiyah al-Syafi'iyah NW Anjani (Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyah Islamiyah and Nahdlatul Banat Diniyah Islamiyah Madrasah)**

Elaborating with the Revitalization of Islamic Education at Madrasah NWDI Lombok: Reviving the Heritage of National Heroes during the Colonial Era, linking this stanza to the context of Islamic education at Madrasah NWDI. The stanza describes how Madrasah NWDI is considered a place for both spiritual and outward pilgrimage for Muslims (Nasri, 2023). This madrasah serves as an educational center that not only imparts religious knowledge outwardly (*zhahirah*) through classical education but also develops the spiritual dimension (*ruhaniyah*) through religious values, morality, and the spirit of struggle.

In the context of research on the revitalization of Islamic education at Madrasah NWDI, this stanza illustrates the importance of preserving the legacy and educational traditions that have existed for several generations. Madrasah NWDI plays a crucial role in maintaining local religious and cultural values while remaining relevant to the challenges of modern education. The stanza refers to the enduring spirit within Madrasah NWDI, as reflected in research focusing on efforts to understand, preserve, and revive the heritage of national heroes during the colonial period (Atsani, Nasri, & Walad, 2023).

The above Testament stanza also emphasizes that Madrasah NWDI is not just an educational institution but also a center of spiritual happiness and knowledge in the context of ongoing Islamic education over time. In the research context, this underscores the importance of preserving and updating values that have become an integral part of Madrasah NWDI in the efforts to revitalize Islamic education in this ever-changing era.

Madrasah NWDI also plays a role in promoting the spirit of diversity and pluralism, which is relevant in the context of an increasingly multicultural society. This strengthens Madrasah NWDI's contribution to supporting social change and the development of Islamic

education in Indonesia (Nurdiah & Nasri, 2023). This research highlights the importance of Islamic education in preserving and reviving the heritage of national heroes during the colonial era and its relevance in facing changing times. Madrasah NWDI is an inspirational example of how historical and religious values can be integrated into modern education, serving as a guide for current Islamic education in dealing with the complexity of the ever-changing world. In the research context, Madrasah NWDI plays a crucial role in preserving and reviving Indonesia's national and religious spirit amid ongoing changes (Irjanawadi & Nasri, 2023).

Lombok, as one of the regions outside Java, including areas far from formal education development. Seeing the deteriorating condition, TGKH. Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid, as an individual with high intelligence, was inspired to establish an educational institution because Lombok was lagging behind in terms of education. This momentum occurred when the Dutch occupied Indonesia, giving birth to an Islamic organization in Lombok engaged in education, preaching, and social activities (Nasri & Khairi, 2023). This organization was named Nahdlatul Wathan (NW). Its birth is immortalized in his work "Testament Reflection Era" as follows:

*Nahdlatul Wathan modal utama  
Bagi NTB dan Sasak semua  
Karena lahirnya di Zaman Belanda  
Sebagai madrasah sumber utama*

*Perlu dijaga bersama-sama  
Selaku andil utama kita  
Tegakkan iman tegakkan taqwa  
Di Negara merdeka berpancasila*

Translation into English:  
*Nahdlatul Wathan, the main asset  
For NTB and all Sasak  
Born in the Dutch era*

*As the primary source of madrasa*

*It needs to be collectively preserved*

*As our main contribution*

*Uphold faith, uphold piety*

*In the independent, Pancasila state*

The above Testament informs that the establishment of an Islamic organization originated from the al-Mujahidin pesantren, which, in further development, gave birth to two major madrasas, namely Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyah Islamiyah (NWDI) and Nahdlatul Banat Diniyah Islamiyah (NBDI). The naming and purpose of these two madrasas born from the al-Mujahidin pesantren are inseparable from the condition of Lombok (Nasri, 2017). Especially in the context of Dutch colonization. It was this condition that significantly influenced his thinking, resulting in the creation of a humanistic-religious idea in the form of madrasas. The naming of these madrasas was also influenced by the social-cultural conditions of Lombok

during the Dutch-Japanese colonization, named the al-Mujahidin pesantren. This madrasa was established in 1934 CE. Later in its development, the al-Mujahidin madrasa changed its name to Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyah Islamiyah (NWDI). This transition occurred on the 15th of Jumadil Akhir 1356 H / August 22, 1937 CE. The madrasa, named by its main founder, TGKH. M. Zainuddin Abdul Madjid, as Madrasah Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyah Islamiyah (NWDI), was specifically established to educate boys. Then, on the 15th of Rabiul Akhir 1362 H / April 21, 1943 CE, he founded the Nahdlatul Banat Diniyah Islamiyah (NBDI) madrasa, specifically for the education of girls. These two madrasas are the first madrasas on the island of Lombok that continued to develop and are the forerunners of all madrasas under the Nahdlatul Wathan organization. Specifically, the names of these madrasas are immortalized as the name of the Dar al-Nahdlatain Nahdlatul Wathan pesantren. The term 'Nahdlatain' is derived from the names of these two madrasas (Nasri, 2015).



**Figur 3-4: Female students of Nahdlatul Banat Diniyah Islamiyah Madrasah and male students of Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyah Islamiyah Madrasah at Syaikh Zainuddin NW Anjani Islamic Boarding School are currently performing a communal prayer (Shalwatan) commemorating National Heroes Day in 2023**

An interesting historical analysis of these two madrasas, as mentioned above, states that the struggle of a figure cannot be separated from social-cultural conditions. Clearly, the names of these madrasas, if interpreted etymologically, Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyah Islamiyah, are names that originate from the Arabic language. The madrasa's name consists of four words: Nahdlah, meaning movement, struggle, and awakening; Wathan, meaning homeland, nation, or country; Diniyah, meaning religion; and Islamiyah, meaning Islam. Before the two madrasas NWDI and NBDI were born, the first name of the madrasa was al-Mujahidin pesantren, meaning "fighters" (Nasri, 2015).

The al-Mujahidin pesantren, founded by TGKH. M. Zainuddin Abdul Madjid, was initially established after his return from Mecca. The al-Mujahidin pesantren, theologically, was the first institution or place established for education. According to the account of one of his students, who was also a

student in the al-Mujahidin pesantren three years after its establishment, the al-Mujahidin pesantren was an Islamic educational institution for learning and studying yellow book teachings (nahu sarf, fiqh, and other books). However, when analyzed with a social-cultural approach to Lombok during colonial rule, the name given to the al-Mujahidin pesantren is inseparable from the conditions where Lombok had long been colonized by the Dutch and Japanese. It can be concluded that in addition to the al-Mujahidin pesantren as a place for learning Islamic religion, it also served as a place to instill the spirit of resisting colonizers because, in Islamic concepts, defending the homeland is obligatory (Fahrurrozi, 2019).

The spirit reflected in TGKH. M. Zainuddin Abdul Madjid, affectionately known as Father Maulana Syaikh, did not stay idle. His role in fighting for independence, both in the struggle for moral social values that were still backward in terms of education and the spirit to fight for independence from the hands of

colonial rulers, played a crucial role. Indonesia, in general, and Lombok, specifically, were in a state of colonization by Dutch and Japanese forces. These two conditions formed the background of his thinking, leading to the actualization of an Islamic educational institution (Kraan, 2009).

The essence of the name gives spirit and reflects the psychological atmosphere and socio-cultural conditions of that time, especially those related to the jihad (struggle) slogans to ignite the spirit of patriotism in resisting the penetration of Dutch and Japanese colonialism. It also aimed to empower education to enlighten a society that was experiencing moral, ethical, and moral decadence far from conventional religious values (Farida, 2020).

## DISCUSSION

The results of this research depict the significant role of Madrasah Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyah Islamiyah (NWDI) in the efforts to revitalize Islamic education amid the changing challenges of time, especially during the colonial period. Madrasah NWDI is the result of the struggle of Tuan Guru Kiai Haji Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid (known as Maulana Syaikh), who recognized the importance of education in igniting the spirit of struggle and preparing the younger generation to face colonization. This research shows that Madrasah NWDI, founded in 1937, has undergone a long journey in preserving religious values, nationalism, and the spirit of struggle of national heroes in its educational curriculum. Moreover, Madrasah NWDI played a crucial role in bridging the transition from Dutch colonization to Japanese colonization and preparing for Indonesia's independence.

In a historical context, Madrasah NWDI functions as an educational center that promotes Islamic teachings and nurtures the spirit of nationalism and patriotism. Besides providing religious education in a visible (zhahirah) manner, Madrasah NWDI also develops the spiritual dimension by teaching religious values, morality, and the spirit of struggle to its students. The research results also highlight how Madrasah NWDI has maintained and inherited the spirit of Indonesia's national heroes in its curriculum and Islamic education. NWDI students are taught about the spirit of struggle, courage, and love for the homeland as an integral part of their education.

This research also reveals that Madrasah NWDI has rapidly growing branches established by alumni of Madrasah NWDI and Nahdlatul Banat Diniyah Islamiyah (NBDI). This reflects the positive impact of the education received by NWDI students, who later disseminate these values to other regions in Lombok. The Nahdlatul Wathan organization, founded in 1953 by Maulana Syaikh, also plays a crucial role in coordinating various madrasas under its umbrella. The organization focuses on education, social activities, and Islamic

preaching, serving as a unifying platform for these madrasas.

This research successfully demonstrates that Madrasah NWDI is an inspirational example of how historical, religious, and national values can be integrated into modern education. Madrasah NWDI has preserved and revived the values of Indonesian nationalism and religion in its Islamic education, remaining relevant amid changing times. Overall, the research findings prove that Madrasah NWDI has a crucial role in maintaining and reviving national spirit, religious values, and the spirit of struggle in the context of Islamic education. Madrasah NWDI continues to make a meaningful contribution to facing the ever-changing challenges of time and supporting social changes and the development of Islamic education in Indonesia.

## CONCLUSION

This research successfully reveals the crucial role of Madrasah Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyah Islamiyah (NWDI) in the efforts to revitalize Islamic education amid the changing challenges of time, particularly during the colonial period. Madrasah NWDI, founded in 1937 by Tuan Guru Kiai Haji Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid, has undergone a long journey in preserving and integrating the values of Indonesian national heroes into its Islamic education. Through both visible (zhahirah) and spiritual (rohaniyah) approaches, the madrasa has effectively spread the spirit of struggle, courage, and love for the homeland to its students. The implications of this research underscore the importance of understanding and preserving historical, religious, and national values in modern education. Madrasah NWDI serves as an inspirational example of how Islamic education can play a key role in reviving the legacy of national heroes during the colonial period while remaining relevant in the face of changing times. Operational suggestions include continued support for education that integrates nationalistic and religious values and promotes a spirit of diversity in the context of Islamic education.

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