

# The Role of Muhammadiyah Youth in Strengthening Nationalism and Civic Involvement

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## Abstract

This article examines how Muhammadiyah youth organizations contribute to nationalism and civic involvement in Indonesia. Rather than treating nationalism as a verbal declaration or youth participation as episodic volunteering, the review conceptualizes both as outcomes of a long organizational formation process. The corpus covers historical studies of Muhammadiyah, research on Hizbul Wathan, Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah, Pemuda Muhammadiyah, and Nasyiatul 'Aisiyyah, as well as scholarship on civil society, humanitarian action, political consciousness, education, and progressive Islam. The synthesis identifies six interconnected mechanisms: staged cadre formation across the life course; constitutional and plural national identity; disciplined leadership practice; social service and humanitarian participation; non-partisan political literacy; and gendered spaces of young women's agency. These mechanisms operate through an organizational ecology linking schools, campuses, religious communities, welfare institutions, and public networks. The review proposes a Muhammadiyah youth civic-formation model in which religious identity becomes nationally constructive when translated through service, deliberation, institutional responsibility, and encounters with social diversity. The evidence also reveals limitations: most studies are local and descriptive, civic outcomes are rarely measured longitudinally, and risks of ceremonial nationalism, partisan capture, urban bias, and digital polarization remain underexamined. The article concludes that Muhammadiyah youth strengthen nationalism less by reproducing state slogans than by converting Islamic commitments into organized public responsibility. Their distinctive contribution lies in combining ideological formation, civic skills, and practical service within a non-partisan but politically literate organizational tradition.

**Keywords:** Muhammadiyah youth; nationalism; civic involvement; youth organizations; citizenship; political education; Indonesia

## INTRODUCTION

Youth organizations occupy an ambiguous position in democratic life. They can reproduce inherited identities without critical reflection, but they can also function as schools of citizenship in which young people learn to deliberate, organize, serve, and enter public life. This ambiguity is especially important in Indonesia, where religious associations have historically mediated relations between individuals, communities, and the state. Youth participation in such associations is rarely limited to formal political activity.

It includes education, volunteering, mutual aid, disaster response, community development, cultural production, policy discussion, and the formation of public leadership. Consequently, an analysis of youth nationalism must move beyond attitudes toward flags, ceremonies, and patriotic symbols and ask how young people acquire durable capacities for public responsibility (Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Sherrod et al., 2010).

Muhammadiyah provides a significant case because it combines a national religious movement, a large educational network, autonomous youth organizations, and extensive social services. From its early development, the movement joined Islamic renewal with modern schooling, organizational discipline, social welfare, and participation in the making of Indonesian public life (Alfian, 1989; Fuad, 2004; Nakamura, 2012).

Its institutional environment exposes young people to a sequence of associations: Hizbul Wathan in scouting and school-based character formation; Ikatan Pelajar Muhammadiyah in secondary education; Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah in universities; Pemuda Muhammadiyah among young men; and Nasyyiatul 'Aisyiyah among young women. These bodies are formally distinct, yet they share a wider Muhammadiyah ideological and organizational ecosystem.

This staged structure matters analytically. Nationalism is not transmitted only through a single lesson or campaign. It is cultivated through repeated participation in organizational routines, rituals, discussions, leadership contests, community projects, and service activities. Young members learn how to chair meetings, manage conflict, speak in public, design programs, collect funds, work with communities, and negotiate organizational rules. These apparently ordinary practices are politically significant because they create the competencies required for civic involvement. The process resembles what civic engagement research describes as the accumulation of civic skills and efficacy through voluntary associations, but it occurs here within an explicitly Islamic framework (Putnam, 2000; Youniss et al., 2002).

The relationship between Islam and nationalism is central to this formation. Muhammadiyah's official position presents the Indonesian state as a legitimate national covenant and a field of moral responsibility, expressed in the formulation of Pancasila Indonesia as *Dar al-'Ahdi wa al-Syahadah*: a state built on agreement and a sphere in which citizens must bear ethical witness through constructive action (Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2015).

This perspective does not dissolve religious identity into secular nationalism. Instead, it interprets national belonging as an arena for realizing justice, welfare, knowledge, and public benefit. Youth organizations inherit this double orientation: commitment to Islamic values and responsibility for a plural political community.

Existing literature offers important but fragmented evidence. Historical studies explain how Muhammadiyah's schools, associations, and welfare institutions created modern Muslim subjects and contributed to Indonesian civil society (Fuad, 2002; Nakamura, 2012). Studies of Hizbul Wathan examine nationalism and character formation through scouting activities (Rosyada & Danial, 2018). Research on Nasyyiatul 'Aisyiyah highlights organizational autonomy, women's public identity, political participation, and economic empowerment (Amaliatulwalidain, 2019; Diwanti et al., 2019; Syamsiyatun, 2007).

Work on Pemuda Muhammadiyah documents locally organized productive waqf and community welfare initiatives (Bahri, 2016). Studies of Muhammadiyah's political consciousness, humanitarian activism, and progressive Islamic orientation provide the

broader context in which youth civic engagement is situated (Al-Hamdi, 2013, 2020; Baidhawiy, 2015; Latief & Nashir, 2020; Qodir et al., 2020).

What remains insufficiently synthesized is how these organizational arenas work together as a citizenship model. Youth studies often isolate a single branch, school, city, or program. Nationalism studies frequently measure attitudes without explaining the organizational experiences that produce them. Political studies concentrate on elite behavior, while service-oriented research describes successful programs without connecting them to civic identity. Gender research demonstrates the importance of autonomous women's organization but is not always integrated into general accounts of Muhammadiyah youth. A systematic thematic synthesis is therefore needed to connect ideological formation, organizational practice, civic skills, and public outcomes.

This article asks three questions. First, through what mechanisms do Muhammadiyah youth organizations cultivate nationalism? Second, how do those mechanisms translate into civic involvement rather than merely internal organizational loyalty? Third, what tensions limit the capacity of youth organizations to form inclusive and democratically responsible citizens? The article argues that Muhammadiyah youth contribute through a national civic-formation ecology.

This ecology links ideological education, disciplined association, service experience, political literacy, gendered leadership spaces, and public networks. Its effectiveness depends not on ideological instruction alone but on the translation of values into repeated, socially consequential practice.

## METHOD

This study employed a qualitative thematic systematic review. The design was chosen because the research question concerns a dispersed institutional process rather than the effectiveness of a single intervention. The evidence base combines historical scholarship, organizational studies, qualitative case studies, survey research, political analysis, and institutional documents. The review was informed by the transparency principles of PRISMA, the JBI approach to mixed and textual evidence, and thematic synthesis procedures, but it was not presented as a clinical intervention review (Aromataris & Munn, 2020; Moher et al., 2009; Thomas & Harden, 2008).

The publication boundary was December 31, 2020. This boundary maintains consistency with the broader research series from which this article was developed and captures the major pre-pandemic literature on Muhammadiyah youth, civil society, political consciousness, and social action. Searches were conducted on August 3, 2026 through publisher journal portals, Garuda, university repositories, and official Muhammadiyah sources. Search combinations included "Muhammadiyah youth," "*Pemuda Muhammadiyah*," "*Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah*," "*Nasyiatul Aisyiyah*," "*Hizbul Wathan*," "nationalism," "citizenship," "political education," "civic engagement," "social participation," "humanitarian," and "youth leadership." Backward citation tracing was used to identify historical and theoretical works repeatedly cited by the more recent studies.

Sources were included when they met at least one of four conditions: they directly examined a Muhammadiyah youth organization; they analyzed youth-relevant institutional mechanisms such as schooling, cadre formation, humanitarian service, or political education; they provided historical evidence about Muhammadiyah's relationship with Indonesian nationalism and civil society; or they supplied an official normative framework for national responsibility. Sources that mentioned Muhammadiyah only incidentally, lacked identifiable authorship, were published after 2020, or discussed youth religiosity without organizational or civic relevance were excluded.

The final analytical corpus contained nineteen sources: thirteen peer-reviewed articles or conference papers, four academic books, and two official Muhammadiyah documents. Five sources directly addressed youth branches or programs, while the remainder supplied historical, political, educational, humanitarian, or ideological context. The review intentionally combined direct and contextual evidence because the civic effects of youth organizations cannot be interpreted independently of the broader movement that provides their institutions, symbols, mentors, and public opportunities.

A structured extraction matrix recorded publication year, source type, organization or institutional arena, research design, definition of nationalism or civic involvement, mechanism of youth formation, reported outcomes, and methodological limitations. The analysis proceeded in three stages. First, descriptive mapping identified the temporal and thematic distribution of the corpus. Second, line-by-line coding generated categories such as organizational discipline, service, political literacy, gendered autonomy, public leadership, pluralism, and community problem-solving. Third, the categories were integrated into a model linking organizational settings, formative mechanisms, civic capacities, and public outcomes.

Quality was assessed through source-appropriate criteria rather than a single numerical scale. Historical and conceptual works were judged by source transparency, interpretive coherence, and relevance. Empirical studies were assessed for clarity of sampling, data collection, analytic procedure, and evidentiary support. Institutional documents were treated as normative primary sources rather than independent proof of implementation. The review therefore distinguishes between what Muhammadiyah officially intends, what local studies observe, and what the synthesis infers across sources.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

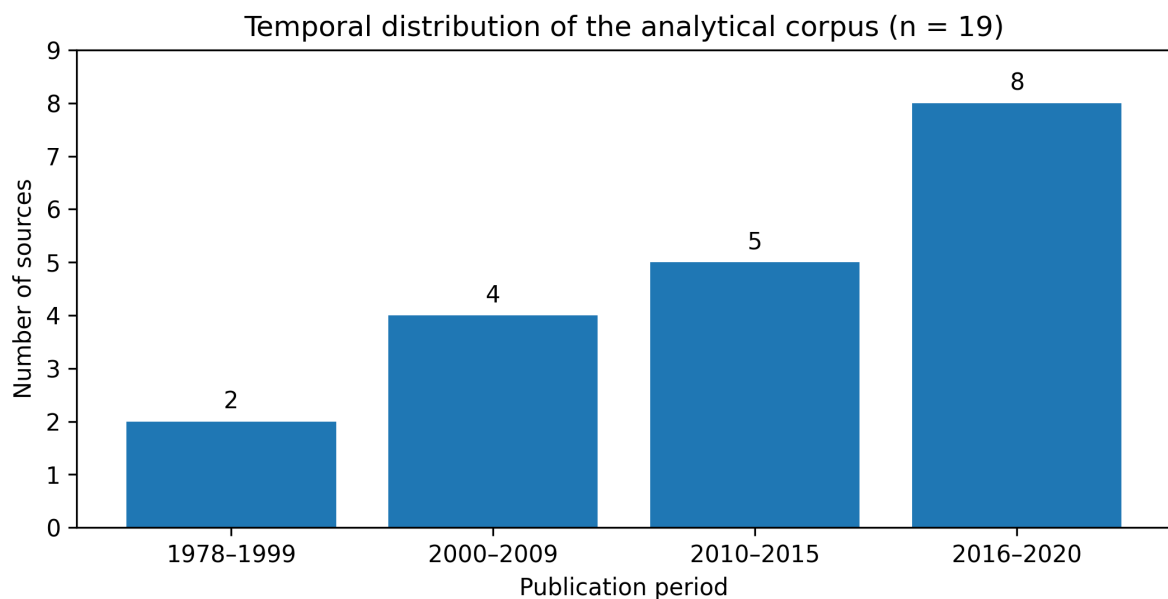
### 1. Characteristics of the Analytical Corpus

The corpus is temporally concentrated after 2010, reflecting increased scholarly attention to Muhammadiyah's civil-society role, progressive Islamic discourse, humanitarian action, and autonomous organizations. Earlier works provide the historical architecture: modern schooling, associational discipline, political negotiation, and welfare institutions. Later studies move closer to specific mechanisms, including

women's organizational autonomy, productive waqf, political participation, scouting, and the relationship between local activism and national or global engagement.

The direct youth evidence remains uneven. *Nasyiatul 'Aisyiyah* is represented through studies of autonomy, gendered political participation, and economic self-development. *Hizbul Wathan* is examined through case-based nationalism education. *Pemuda Muhammadiyah* appears through a community welfare initiative. Studies of *Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah* are less visible in indexed peer-reviewed literature before 2020, even though institutional and repository materials indicate its role in religious formation and political education. This imbalance is itself a result: public claims about youth contribution are broader than the available comparative evidence.

Most empirical studies are local, descriptive, and cross-sectional. They document mechanisms and perceived outcomes but rarely compare participants with nonparticipants, follow members across organizational stages, or measure later civic behavior. The literature is therefore strongest for explaining how civic formation is intended and practiced, but weaker for establishing causal effects. The synthesis treats reported benefits as patterned evidence rather than universal outcomes.



*Figure 1. Temporal distribution of the analytical corpus*

*Table 2. Core analytical corpus and principal contribution*

| Source                | Type / arena            | Youth or civic mechanism                      | Principal contribution                             |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Peacock (1978)</b> | Book; reformist culture | Purification, disciplined modern organization | Explains cultural style behind organized activism. |

| Source                             | Type / arena                     | Youth or civic mechanism                          | Principal contribution                                         |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Alfian (1989)</b>               | Book; political history          | Movement-state negotiation and cadre politics     | Links religious reform with national political development.    |
| <b>Hefner (2000)</b>               | Book; civil Islam                | Associational pluralism and democratization       | Provides the civic-society framework.                          |
| <b>Fuad (2002)</b>                 | Article; civil society           | Institutional autonomy and public service         | Identifies potential and limits of Muhammadiyah civil society. |
| <b>Fuad (2004)</b>                 | Article; education               | Modern schooling and Muslim public formation      | Shows education as a pathway into modern citizenship.          |
| <b>Syamsiyatun (2007)</b>          | Article; Nasyyatul 'Aisyiyah     | Women's autonomy and organizational identity      | Demonstrates gendered spaces of youth agency.                  |
| <b>Nakamura (2012)</b>             | Book; local movement history     | Long-term associational socialization             | Shows how local networks reproduce civic commitment.           |
| <b>Al-Hamdi (2013)</b>             | Article; political attitudes     | Elite diversity and political literacy            | Clarifies non-monolithic political orientation.                |
| <b>Baidhawry (2015)</b>            | Article; disaster response       | Humanitarian volunteering and public trust        | Connects faith-based service with civic responsibility.        |
| <b>PP Muhammadiyah (2015)</b>      | Official document                | National covenant and ethical witnessing          | Supplies the movement's normative nationalism.                 |
| <b>Bahri (2016)</b>                | Article; Pemuda Muhammadiyah     | Productive waqf and village welfare               | Shows youth-led community problem-solving.                     |
| <b>Rosyada &amp; Danial (2018)</b> | Conference paper; Hizbul Wathan  | Scouting, discipline, and nationalism             | Documents experiential nationalism education.                  |
| <b>Amaliatulwalidain (2019)</b>    | Article; Nasyyatul 'Aisyiyah     | Gender policy participation                       | Shows young women's engagement in local policy.                |
| <b>Diwanti et al. (2019)</b>       | Article; Nasyyatul 'Aisyiyah     | Economic organization and self-development        | Links organizational participation with agency.                |
| <b>Al-Hamdi (2020)</b>             | Article; political consciousness | Religious reform and national political awareness | Explains historical roots of political consciousness.          |

| Source                            | Type / arena                                 | Youth or civic mechanism                        | Principal contribution                                  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Khoirudin et al. (2020)</b>    | Article; education and social reconstruction | Humanitarian and cosmopolitan ethos             | Broadens nationalism toward humanistic citizenship.     |
| <b>Latief &amp; Nashir (2020)</b> | Article; local-global engagement             | Humanitarian networks and public diplomacy      | Shows civic action beyond national boundaries.          |
| <b>Qodir et al. (2020)</b>        | Article; progressive movement                | Response to social problems                     | Frames service and reform as progressive public action. |
| <b>PP Muhammadiyah (2010)</b>     | Official movement document                   | Ideology, organizational discipline, and action | Provides the normative architecture of cadre formation. |

## 2. A Staged Organizational Ecology of Youth Formation

The first theme is that Muhammadiyah youth formation operates through an organizational ecology rather than a single association. The ecology begins in schools and community settings, extends through student and university organizations, and continues into young-adult bodies. Each arena offers different tasks and levels of responsibility. Scouting emphasizes discipline, cooperation, physical activity, and practical service. Student organizations introduce deliberation, literacy, and public communication. University organizations intensify ideological discussion and political awareness. Pemuda Muhammadiyah and Nasyyatul 'Aisyiyah provide wider community, professional, economic, and policy roles.

This staged ecology helps explain why organizational participation can influence citizenship. Civic capacities are cumulative. A young person who repeatedly joins meetings, camps, study circles, elections, committees, and community programs encounters public responsibility as a practice rather than an abstract virtue. Nakamura's local history shows that Muhammadiyah's durability rests on dense networks of families, schools, mosques, and associations that reproduce commitment across generations (Nakamura, 2012). Fuad's analysis of education similarly shows that Muhammadiyah schooling was not only an instructional project; it created modern Muslim subjects able to participate in organized social life (Fuad, 2004).

The ecology also creates role progression. Younger participants observe senior cadres, receive bounded responsibilities, and later become organizers or mentors. Such progression supports civic efficacy because members learn that institutions can be changed through procedure, persuasion, and collective effort. Yet the process is not automatic. Where activities become ceremonial, leadership is monopolized by a small circle, or mentorship is weak, organizations may reproduce compliance rather than initiative. The civic value of structure depends on whether members are allowed to deliberate, make decisions, experience consequences, and reflect on public problems.

### **3. Nationalism as Ethical and Constitutional Attachment**

The second theme concerns the meaning of nationalism. The reviewed literature does not support a narrow equation between nationalism and state-centered symbolism. Muhammadiyah's historical relationship with Indonesia was formed through education, welfare, political negotiation, and participation in national movements (Alfian, 1989; Fuad, 2002). In contemporary normative language, the nation is a covenant that must be maintained through ethical witness and constructive work (Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2015). National attachment is therefore connected to justice, knowledge, welfare, and the protection of a plural society.

Hizbul Wathan offers the clearest youth-specific example. Rosyada and Danial (2018) found that scouting activities at a Muhammadiyah school cultivated nationalism through disciplined group practice, responsibility, cooperation, and the interpretation of national symbols. The important mechanism is experiential. Ceremonies and symbols acquire meaning when they are embedded in collective tasks and service. Nationalism becomes a disposition to cooperate, respect shared rules, and accept responsibility for the community.

This ethical interpretation can reduce the tension between religious commitment and national belonging. The youth member is not asked to choose between Islam and Indonesia; religious values are translated into obligations toward Indonesian society. The translation is supported by the movement's progressive and humanitarian discourse, which treats the advancement of society as a religious concern (Qodir et al., 2020). Khoirudin et al. (2020) further locate Muhammadiyah's educational mission within a humanitarian and cosmopolitan horizon. Nationalism in this framework is open rather than exclusionary: commitment to the nation is compatible with service to humanity and learning from other societies.

However, the literature also suggests a distinction between declared and enacted nationalism. Organizations can repeat constitutional formulas while failing to engage inequality, corruption, intolerance, or violence. Enacted nationalism requires members to connect national ideals with concrete problems. Youth programs become civic when they ask who is excluded, whose rights are threatened, and what collective action is possible. This shifts nationalism from emotional loyalty to public accountability.

### **4. Leadership, Discipline, and Deliberative Competence**

The third theme is leadership formation. Muhammadiyah youth organizations are schools of organizational competence. Members learn administration, meeting procedure, public speaking, program design, fundraising, reporting, and conflict management. These skills are not politically neutral. They enable individuals to enter community organizations, professional associations, electoral institutions, and public administration. Civil-society scholarship has long emphasized that voluntary

associations provide citizens with transferable civic skills (Putnam, 2000). The Muhammadiyah case adds an ideological and intergenerational dimension because organizational competence is framed as religious service.

Discipline is central but potentially ambivalent. Scouting, cadre training, and structured programs can cultivate reliability, endurance, and collective orientation. They can also encourage excessive hierarchy if obedience is not balanced by questioning. Muhammadiyah's internal culture contains both bureaucratic discipline and traditions of debate. Al-Hamdi's studies show substantial political diversity among Muhammadiyah elites, indicating that shared organizational identity does not necessarily produce a single political preference (Al-Hamdi, 2013). Youth education is civically productive when it prepares members to disagree without fragmenting the organization.

Deliberative competence requires more than the ability to speak. It includes listening, evaluating evidence, revising positions, and distinguishing organizational principles from partisan interests. This is especially important in election periods, when youth organizations may become attractive channels for political recruitment. Non-partisan political literacy does not prohibit political discussion. It seeks to ensure that political choices are made by informed citizens without converting the organization into a party instrument. The distinction parallels Muhammadiyah's wider citizenship model: organizational independence coexists with the political rights of individual members.

Leadership pipelines also create unequal opportunities. Urban campuses and large branches have more access to training, networks, and public platforms than rural or peripheral branches. Men may receive more visible political opportunities, while women's organizations carry a disproportionate burden of social and family programs. A credible analysis of youth leadership must therefore examine who advances, whose work remains invisible, and whether organizational experience translates into public influence for diverse members.

## **5. Civic Involvement through Social Service and Humanitarian Action**

The fourth theme is service as a bridge between identity and citizenship. Muhammadiyah's public legitimacy has been built substantially through schools, clinics, philanthropy, disaster response, and community development. Youth organizations enter this service infrastructure as volunteers, organizers, fundraisers, and local innovators. Service exposes members to needs beyond their immediate peer group and converts moral language into practical responsibility.

Bahri's (2016) study of productive waqf initiated by Muhammadiyah youth in Longkeyang is instructive. The project emerged from concern about organizational stagnation and village welfare. Young activists mobilized small contributions, built a management body, acquired productive land, and connected the initiative to scholarships and local development aspirations. The program illustrates civic involvement as community problem-solving. It is neither state politics nor private

charity alone. It creates an institution, manages collective resources, and seeks durable social benefits.

Disaster response provides another mechanism. Baidhaw (2015) describes Muhammadiyah's faith-based disaster management as an organized combination of religious motivation, professional capacity, and public service. Youth participation in such settings can generate empathy, practical competence, and contact across social boundaries. Latief and Nashir (2020) show that Muhammadiyah's humanitarian engagement also operates transnationally, linking local activism with global concerns. For young members, humanitarian work can expand nationalism beyond defensive identity toward confidence in contributing to regional and global public goods.

Service is not automatically emancipatory. It can reinforce paternalism when communities are treated as passive recipients, and it can become a branding exercise when reflection and accountability are absent. Civic learning is stronger when service includes community participation, analysis of structural causes, transparent management, and opportunities for youth to evaluate outcomes. The literature contains many descriptions of activities but limited evidence about whether participants develop lasting democratic commitments. Future research should therefore distinguish activity counts from civic transformation.

## **6. Political Literacy and Non-Partisan Public Participation**

The fifth theme is political literacy. Muhammadiyah youth do not operate outside politics; they operate under an organizational norm that seeks to prevent formal partisan capture. The wider movement has a long history of political engagement, withdrawal, redefinition, and moral advocacy (Alfian, 1989; Al-Hamdi, 2020). Youth organizations inherit this history through discussions of Pancasila, democracy, public policy, leadership, and social justice.

Political literacy has at least three dimensions. The first is institutional literacy: understanding the constitution, elections, public agencies, and the distinction between state, party, and civil society. The second is critical literacy: identifying oligarchy, corruption, discrimination, intolerance, and policy failure. The third is ethical literacy: evaluating political action through justice, public benefit, and organizational integrity. When these dimensions are combined, young people can participate without reducing politics to candidate support.

The reviewed sources indicate multiple participation channels. Nasyiatul 'Aisyiyah has engaged gender-sensitive policy issues at the local level (Amaliatulwalidain, 2019). Muhammadiyah youth have initiated community welfare institutions (Bahri, 2016). The movement's broader civil-society role includes advocacy, education, pluralism, and humanitarian diplomacy (Fuad, 2002; Latief & Nashir, 2020). These channels demonstrate that civic involvement is wider than electoral participation, although electoral rights and public office remain legitimate individual choices.

The main risk is boundary confusion. Youth leaders may use organizational networks for personal candidacy, while members may interpret non-partisanship as a ban on political criticism. Both tendencies weaken citizenship. Partisan capture damages public trust and internal diversity; political silence abandons the organization's moral responsibility. The stronger model is principled political engagement: issue-based, transparent, evidence-informed, and institutionally independent.

## **7. Young Women's Agency and Gendered Citizenship**

The sixth theme is the importance of autonomous spaces for young women. Nasyiatul 'Aisyiyah demonstrates that youth civic formation is gendered. Syamsiyatun (2007) shows how the organization negotiated autonomy and developed an image of young Muslim womanhood that retained family responsibilities while expanding women's education, organization, and public role. This negotiation was not peripheral to citizenship; it concerned who could speak, lead, and define the social responsibilities of Muslim women.

Later studies show the diversification of this agency. Amaliatulwalidain (2019) examines participation in gender-responsive policy, while Diwanti et al. (2019) analyze economic activities intended to develop members' self-potential. These arenas cultivate public voice, economic confidence, negotiation skills, and institutional networks. They also challenge an implicit male model of youth activism centered on formal politics and visible leadership.

Autonomous organization can be understood as a civic incubator. It creates a setting in which young women practice leadership without being consistently displaced by senior or male actors. At the same time, autonomy can become isolation if women's issues are confined to a separate organizational sphere and excluded from mainstream decision-making. The civic contribution is strongest when internal empowerment is connected to cross-organizational authority, public policy, and equitable access to resources.

Gendered citizenship also broadens the substance of nationalism. Health, care work, family welfare, child protection, economic security, and freedom from violence are national issues, not merely private concerns. By bringing these matters into public programs and policy advocacy, young women's organizations redefine national responsibility around everyday life and social reproduction.

## **8. From Local Association to Digital and Translocal Publics**

A final cross-cutting theme is the expansion of civic space. The pre-2020 literature documents Muhammadiyah's movement from local associations toward national and global networks, particularly through education, humanitarianism, and digital communication (Latief & Nashir, 2020). Youth are positioned at the intersection of these spaces. They can translate local experience into wider advocacy, connect community

problems with national debates, and form solidarities beyond organizational boundaries.

Digital media increases reach but changes the conditions of formation. Offline organizations teach patience, procedural accountability, and face-to-face negotiation. Digital platforms reward speed, visibility, and polarization. The literature before 2020 offers only limited direct evaluation of this transition. The synthesis therefore treats digital engagement as a conditional amplifier. It can strengthen civic involvement when anchored in organizational ethics, verified information, and offline service. Without those anchors, it may turn nationalism into performative outrage and reduce political literacy to partisan content circulation.

Translocal engagement also raises the question of openness. Youth organizations can function as bonding communities that strengthen internal solidarity, but democratic citizenship requires bridging relations with different religious, ethnic, and ideological groups. Muhammadiyah's humanitarian and cosmopolitan discourse provides resources for such bridging (Khoirudin et al., 2020). The organizational test is whether young members encounter diversity through collaboration rather than only through abstract instruction.

*Table 3. Thematic synthesis of Muhammadiyah youth civic formation*

| Theme                                 | Evidence pattern                                                                | Civic mechanism                                                                 | Analytical caution                                             |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Staged organizational ecology</b>  | Youth bodies span school, campus, and young adulthood.                          | Repeated responsibility accumulates civic skills and efficacy.                  | Structure can become ceremonial or hierarchical.               |
| <b>Ethical nationalism</b>            | National covenant is linked to justice, welfare, and plural responsibility.     | Religious commitment is translated into constitutional public ethics.           | Declared nationalism may not become problem-solving action.    |
| <b>Leadership and deliberation</b>    | Cadre training, meetings, scouting, and program management.                     | Discipline, public speaking, administration, and disagreement management.       | Urban, class, and gender inequalities shape access.            |
| <b>Service and humanitarianism</b>    | Waqf, welfare, disaster response, and community programs.                       | Empathy and collective efficacy grow through practical service.                 | Charity may become paternalistic or promotional.               |
| <b>Political literacy</b>             | Issue discussion, advocacy, policy engagement, and individual political rights. | Members learn to participate without subordinating the organization to parties. | Partisan capture and political silence are competing risks.    |
| <b>Gendered citizenship</b>           | Autonomous young women's organization, policy work, and economic empowerment.   | Protected leadership space develops agency and public voice.                    | Autonomy can become segregation from central authority.        |
| <b>Digital and translocal publics</b> | Local activism connects with national and global networks.                      | Communication expands reach, solidarity, and advocacy.                          | Digital polarization can weaken deliberation and verification. |

The synthesis therefore distinguishes three levels of outcome. The first is identity outcome: members understand themselves as Muslims, Muhammadiyah cadres, and Indonesian citizens. The second is capacity outcome: they acquire knowledge, skills, confidence, and networks. The third is behavioral outcome: they volunteer, deliberate, advocate, vote, lead institutions, or solve community problems. Many studies demonstrate the first two levels more clearly than the third. Treating these levels separately prevents organizational loyalty from being automatically interpreted as civic contribution and provides a more precise agenda for evaluation.

Across the organizations, the category Angkatan Muda Muhammadiyah also creates an informal coalition space. It allows youth bodies with different constituencies to coordinate campaigns, public statements, cadre events, and social programs without erasing their institutional autonomy. This horizontal coordination may strengthen bridging skills because participants must negotiate different organizational cultures and priorities. At the same time, coalition activity can magnify internal competition over visibility and leadership. The civic effect depends on whether joint action is organized around public issues and transparent roles rather than symbolic unity or elite bargaining.

## Discussion

The synthesis suggests that Muhammadiyah youth strengthen nationalism through an interaction of identity, competence, and practice. None of these elements is sufficient alone. Ideological education without public practice may produce slogans. Skills training without ethical orientation may produce technically competent but opportunistic elites. Volunteering without reflection may produce episodic charity. The distinctive potential of the Muhammadiyah ecology lies in combining all three: an Islamic-national normative framework, organizational skills, and repeated service in public institutions.

This combination can be described as enacted civic nationalism. The adjective enacted emphasizes that national belonging is demonstrated through responsibility for shared institutions and social problems. The model differs from ethnic nationalism because membership is not based on ancestry. It differs from purely state-centered nationalism because civil society retains autonomy and the right to criticize. It also differs from privatized religiosity because faith is expected to generate public benefit. The Dar al-'Ahdi wa al-Syadah formulation supplies the normative bridge: Indonesia is a covenant to be protected and a field in which religious citizens prove their commitments through constructive action (Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2015).

The model also clarifies the relationship between internal solidarity and inclusive citizenship. Youth organizations need bonding capital because members require trust, shared language, and mutual support. Yet bonding becomes democratically valuable only when it enables bridging. Service programs, disaster response, university networks, policy coalitions, and intercommunity collaboration can place members in contact with people outside Muhammadiyah. These encounters test whether ideological identity supports empathy and cooperation or hardens into organizational exclusivism. Fuad's (2002) assessment of Muhammadiyah's potential and limits as civil society remains relevant: institutional strength can support democracy, but size and autonomy do not automatically guarantee pluralism or internal participation.

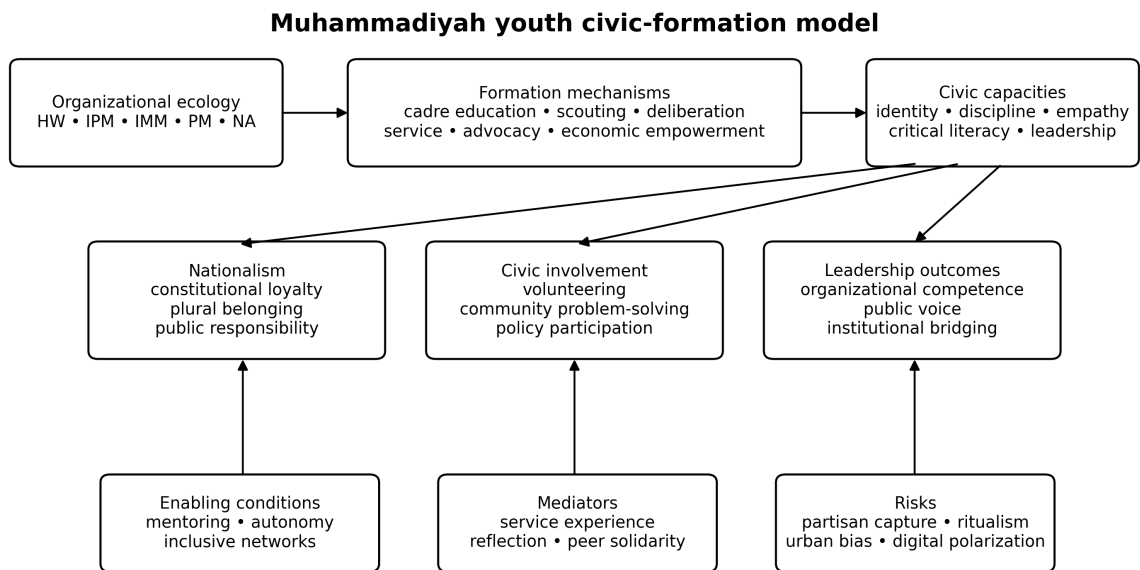
The staged ecology also contributes to leadership reproduction. Muhammadiyah can produce public leaders because it offers early and repeated opportunities to manage organizations. However, leadership pipelines create a normative challenge. Are leaders accountable to members and communities, or do organizations become platforms for

personal advancement? A citizenship model requires transparent selection, rotation, mentoring, financial accountability, and protection from partisan instrumentalization. Otherwise, youth organizations risk reproducing the elite politics they claim to reform.

The gender findings modify conventional accounts of civic formation. Nasyiatul 'Aisyiyah shows that autonomous organization can expand citizenship by giving young women the authority to define issues and develop leadership. This is not a supplementary women's component; it changes the meaning of public life by foregrounding care, family welfare, economic independence, and gender-responsive policy. Yet equality requires more than a separate organization. Women's civic expertise must influence shared Muhammadiyah institutions, resource allocation, and national leadership.

The evidence also supports a distinction between organizational participation and civic outcome. Membership, attendance, and program completion are inputs. Civic outcomes include political knowledge, tolerance, efficacy, volunteering beyond the organization, policy participation, ethical leadership, and sustained concern for public goods. Most reviewed studies infer outcomes from activities or participant perceptions. A stronger research agenda would use longitudinal designs, comparative samples, behavioral indicators, and mixed methods to determine which experiences produce durable effects.

Finally, the model should not romanticize youth. Young activists can reproduce polarization, misinformation, gender hierarchy, and patronage. The organizational ecology is best understood as an opportunity structure. It provides settings in which civic capacities may develop, but outcomes depend on mentors, internal democracy, the quality of reflection, exposure to diversity, and the incentives surrounding leadership. The same network that mobilizes humanitarian aid can also mobilize partisan loyalty. The same discipline that supports service can suppress criticism. The civic contribution is therefore conditional and must be continually renewed.



*Nationalism is treated as an enacted civic orientation, not merely a declared sentiment.*

*Figure 2. Integrative model of Muhammadiyah youth civic formation*

### Conceptual Propositions

The thematic synthesis supports six propositions that can guide empirical testing. They are not causal conclusions from the existing corpus; they are theoretically grounded statements derived from recurrent patterns and gaps.

*Table 4. Propositions for research on Muhammadiyah youth and citizenship*

| Proposition                                                                                                                          | Expected mechanism                                                             | Empirical implication                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>P1. Repeated participation across organizational stages strengthens civic efficacy more than one-off ideological instruction.</b> | Role progression and accumulated responsibility.                               | Compare members with different duration and cross-organization trajectories.     |
| <b>P2. Service experience mediates the relationship between Islamic identity and inclusive nationalism.</b>                          | Contact with public needs translates values into responsibility.               | Measure whether reflective service predicts tolerance and public-goods behavior. |
| <b>P3. Organizational non-partisanship supports political participation when paired with issue-based political literacy.</b>         | Institutional independence protects diversity while preserving citizen rights. | Examine election-period behavior, advocacy, and boundary enforcement.            |
| <b>P4. Autonomous young women's organizations increase civic agency when linked to shared decision-making structures.</b>            | Protected leadership practice plus access to wider authority.                  | Track women's movement from internal leadership to policy and public office.     |
| <b>P5. Digital engagement improves civic involvement only when anchored in offline deliberation and service.</b>                     | Organizational accountability moderates platform incentives.                   | Compare digital-only activism with hybrid organizational participation.          |
| <b>P6. Mentoring quality and exposure to diversity condition whether discipline produces democratic leadership.</b>                  | Critical reflection prevents obedience from becoming authoritarianism.         | Assess branch-level differences in mentoring, inclusion, and civic outcomes.     |

### Practical and Institutional Implications

For Muhammadiyah youth organizations, the review implies that nationalism education should be integrated with community problem-solving. Cadre modules can connect Pancasila, Islamic ethics, and national history with local policy analysis, service learning, and public deliberation. Participants should not only memorize organizational principles but use them to assess concrete issues such as inequality, corruption, intolerance, environmental damage, and digital misinformation.

Second, organizations should treat civic learning as a progression. Younger members need bounded responsibilities and visible pathways to leadership. Senior cadres should function as mentors rather than gatekeepers. Program evaluation should record not only attendance but also skill growth, initiative, collaboration across differences, and continued public participation.

Third, non-partisanship requires enforceable safeguards. Organizational facilities, symbols, membership data, and events should not be used for candidate mobilization without transparent rules. At the same time, youth forums should not avoid political questions. They should develop policy literacy, fact-checking, ethical debate, and the ability to distinguish issue advocacy from party endorsement.

Fourth, gender inclusion must be institutional rather than ceremonial. Nasyyatul 'Aisyiyah's leadership and policy expertise should be connected to joint decision-making, budgets, and national agendas. Care, health, protection from violence, and economic security should be recognized as central civic issues. Finally, digital engagement should be tied to offline service and accountability so that public communication reflects verified experience rather than performative polarization.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

This review has four limitations. First, the source base is uneven across organizations. Nasyyatul 'Aisyiyah and Hizbul Wathan have clearer pre-2020 empirical coverage than Ikatan Pelajar Muhammadiyah, Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah, and Pemuda Muhammadiyah. Second, much of the evidence is localized and descriptive. The synthesis cannot estimate the magnitude of organizational effects or generalize across all branches. Third, official documents articulate intended values but cannot establish implementation. Fourth, the 2020 cutoff excludes later research on pandemic volunteering, digital activism, climate action, and contemporary youth polarization.

Future research should construct a comparative, longitudinal program. It should follow members from school to university and young adulthood; compare active members, inactive members, and nonmembers; measure civic knowledge, tolerance, efficacy, volunteering, and political behavior; and examine differences by gender, region, class, and organizational role. Digital ethnography should be combined with observation of offline activities. Comparative work with other Indonesian Muslim youth organizations would clarify which outcomes are specific to Muhammadiyah's organizational ecology and which reflect broader associational effects.

### **CONCLUSION**

Muhammadiyah youth organizations contribute to nationalism and civic involvement through a layered process of formation. The contribution does not rest primarily on patriotic rhetoric. It emerges from repeated participation in schools, scouting, student associations, women's organizations, community programs, humanitarian networks, and public discussions. Across these arenas, young people acquire identity, discipline, empathy, organizational competence, political literacy, and opportunities for leadership. Islamic commitment becomes nationally constructive when it is translated into

constitutional responsibility, service to plural communities, and accountable participation in public life. The synthesis identifies a national civic-formation ecology in which Hizbul Wathan, student organizations, Pemuda Muhammadiyah, and Nasyiatul 'Aisyiyah perform different but connected functions. Service mediates between ideology and inclusion; organizational autonomy protects non-partisan participation; and gendered spaces can expand the range of citizens who gain public voice. These strengths are conditional. Ceremonial nationalism, partisan capture, hierarchical training, unequal access, and digital polarization can weaken civic outcomes. The next stage of scholarship should therefore move from descriptive accounts of activities to comparative evidence about lasting citizen formation. Muhammadiyah youth are most significant not when they claim to represent the nation, but when they develop the capacity to care for its institutions, deliberate across differences, and solve public problems

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