

Muhammadiyah as a progressive islamic movement

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Abstract

The Progressive Islamic Movement represents the ideological and theological paradigm of Muhammadiyah, integrating the purity of Islamic teachings with the spirit of scientific advancement, social reform, and civilizational development. In practice, Progressive Islam is manifested through the movement of da'wah amar ma'ruf nahi munkar), educational modernization, social services, and community empowerment. The implementation of this concept is evident in various Muhammadiyah charitable efforts in education, health, and socio-economic sectors, all managed professionally and inclusively.

Keywords: modernization, muhammadiyah, progressive islam.

Abstrak

Gerakan Islam Berkemajuan merupakan paradigma ideologis dan teologis Muhammadiyah yang memadukan kemurnian ajaran Islam dengan semangat kemajuan ilmu pengetahuan, pembaruan sosial, dan pembangunan peradaban. Islam Berkemajuan diwujudkan melalui gerakan dakwah amar ma'ruf nahi munkar, modernisasi pendidikan, pelayanan sosial, dan pemberdayaan masyarakat. Implementasi konsep tersebut tampak nyata dalam berbagai amal usaha Muhammadiyah di bidang pendidikan, kesehatan, dan sosial-ekonomi yang dikelola secara profesional dan inklusif.

Kata kunci: islam berkemajuan, modernisasi, muhammadiyah

1. Introduction

Globalization has led to encounters between different civilizations and cultures. Such encounters often create an atmosphere that supports intellectual development, technology, and artistic creativity. This happens because globalization forces various nations, communities, and individuals to introspect, redefine, and rebuild their identities in order to adapt to various challenges and new environments (Burhani, 2016).

In line with this, advances in modern science and technology not only offer various conveniences and comforts in life, but also open up opportunities for more sophisticated crimes if science and technology are misused. Technological capabilities in the field of genetic engineering, for example, have opened up opportunities for humans to be bought and sold like

animals and fruits. Similarly, advances in telecommunications, while providing convenience, can also be misused to support criminal networks and other activities (Abudin, n.d.).

In modern society, the most fundamental problem is a failure to understand science. This can occur due to the influx of various Western ideas, namely liberalism and secularism, into contemporary sciences. An inaccurate understanding can lead to wrong actions in everyday life. This can result in a person not finding happiness, but rather suffering and misery. For example, in this modern era where knowledge, technology, and information are rapidly developing, humans should be able to achieve happiness and peace of mind. However, on the contrary, various difficulties, suffering, anxiety, and emptiness of the soul continue to occur within humans, and even the natural environment is becoming increasingly damaged. For this reason, a cosmopolitan understanding is needed, namely the progressive Islam initiated by Muhammadiyah to balance intellectual, spiritual, and emotional needs.

The term Progressive Islam only recently emerged when Kiai Syuja's (1882-1962) personal notes about his teacher, Kiai Dahlan, were discovered. The original manuscript was initially titled Muhammadiyah and Its Founder, and was later published as a book entitled *Islam Berkemajuan: The Story of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan and Muhammadiyah in its Early Days* (Syuja', 2009). In its interpretation, it has a deep meaning. For example, the idea of progress is referred to from the spirit, especially the expression of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan; "dadijo kiai sing kemadjoean, odjo kesel anggonmu njamboet gawe kanggo Muhammadiyah", which means "always think ahead, be visionary, always one step ahead of the current situation." (Burhani, 2016).

Muhammadiyah is a modernist and reformist Islamic movement whose ethos or philosophy is based on the 107th surah of the Quran, Al-Ma'un, which seeks to eliminate the culture of *bit'ah*, superstition, and *kurafat* that exist in society. Muhammadiyah dares to express healthy and pure thoughts based on the Quran and Hadith. In its development, Muhammadiyah developed the term "progressive Islam," which seeks to develop the ethos of Surah Al-A'shr, not only talking about the obligation to support the poor, but also the obligation to form a major civilization. The dimension of time is dominant in Al-A'shr, and this is what humans need to live in an era where time has become very relative, especially due to the acceleration of communication and transportation technology (Burhani, 2016).

Muhammadiyah is one of the oldest and largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia and cannot escape the demands for change brought about by globalization. Muhammadiyah is an Islamic movement that formally advocates the promotion of good deeds and the prevention of evil. However, Muhammadiyah can also be described with various identities such as Modern Islam, Moderate Islam, Pure Islam, and Progressive Islam. In this article, the author will specifically describe the role of Muhammadiyah as a modern Islamic movement in Indonesia.

2. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research method to explore and describe the characteristics of Muhammadiyah as a progressive Islamic movement. The qualitative approach is chosen because it allows the researcher to understand the meaning, values, and ideas underlying Muhammadiyah's reformist orientation within the context of Islamic thought and social change in Indonesia. The research adopts a descriptive qualitative design, focusing on presenting an in-depth description of Muhammadiyah's ideology, activities, and contribution to the modernization of Islam. The purpose is not to test hypotheses but to interpret and analyze the essence of Muhammadiyah's "Islam berkemajuan" (progressive Islam) concept as reflected in its organizational practices and intellectual discourse.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. *The Concept of Progressive Islam from the Perspective of Muhammadiyah*

The concept of Progressive Islam is Muhammadiyah's ideological and theological paradigm that integrates Islamic teachings with an orientation towards scientific progress, civilization, and social renewal. Muhammadiyah understands Islam as a religion that is not only normative and ritualistic, but also contains transformative values that encourage social change for the better. Islamic teachings are seen as a source of inspiration for progress through the principles of monotheism, justice, knowledge, humanity, and community empowerment. Therefore, Progressive Islam rejects stagnation, blind imitation, and fatalism that can hinder the development of the ummah (Yusra, 2018).

Theologically, this idea is rooted in the thinking of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, who emphasized the importance of *tajdid* or renewal as the core of the Muhammadiyah movement. *Tajdid* is understood in two forms, namely purification (purification of faith) and intellectual dynamics (development of modern thinking). These two dimensions guide Muslims to return to the Qur'an and Sunnah while utilizing reason and science as means of building civilization. This thinking was then formulated more formally in the Muqaddimah Anggaran Dasar Muhammadiyah (Preamble to the Muhammadiyah Constitution) and reinforced at the 47th Muhammadiyah Congress in Makassar (Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2015). The term Progressive Islam became widely known after it was raised as the main theme at the 47th Muhammadiyah Congress in 2015 in Makassar. Din Syamsuddin emphasized that the vision of Progressive Islam needs to be internalized by all Muslims in Indonesia. This concept reflects Muhammadiyah's worldview of Islam as *dīn al-had ārah*, a religion that brings progress and builds civilization. From a contemporary perspective, Qodir et al. (2023) explains that Progressive Islam is an integration of spirituality, common sense, and a progressive ethos. Islam is not merely a religion that regulates ritual life, but a civilizational force that emphasizes the importance of social progress, public ethics, and the development of science. Thus, Progressive Islam is a religious paradigm that is responsive to the changing times, without abandoning the purity of faith and the basic values of Islamic teachings.

3.2. *Background of Progressive Islamic Preaching*

The Islamic organization founded by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan in 1912 in the city of Yogyakarta has a place in the hearts of the people, among other things, because of its pioneering role in establishing educational institutions and social welfare programs, which are considered modern and truly capable of advancing and fulfilling the needs of the community. According to Haedar Nasir, this pioneering spirit and concrete actions are characteristic of this Islamic movement. Muhammadiyah has become important and strategic because it has presented a reformist and action-oriented form of Islam (Nashir, 2000). In the hands of Muhammadiyah, Islam underwent a transformation that took root in the early 20th century. Abdul Mu'ti, in the introduction to the book (Syuja', 2009), outlines six foundations of progressive Islam that characterize Muhammadiyah, namely: (1) Purification of Islamic teachings, (2) *ijtihad*, (3) Modernization of Education, (4) Scientific charity, practical knowledge, (5) The Movement of Preaching Good and Forbidding Evil, and (6) cultural preaching.

For Muhammadiyah, cultural da'wah is an effort to instill Islamic values in all aspects of human life while still paying attention to the potential and character of humans as cultural beings. The ultimate goal is the realization of a true Islamic society, as envisioned by Muhammadiyah. The focus of cultural da'wah lies in the process of raising awareness of faith,

so that people are willing to accept and practice Islamic teachings comprehensively, including aqidah, akhlak, ibadah, and muamalah, while taking into account the stages of social change that occur amid cultural, economic, and political diversity in society. Through this process, it is hoped that an ideal Islamic society can be achieved gradually and sustainably.

3.3. Key characteristics of progressive Islam

Progressive Islam has a number of characteristics that guide the Muhammadiyah movement in the religious, social, and national spheres. The first characteristic is purity of faith, which is the foundation of all aspects of life. Tawhid is not only understood as recognition of Allah, but also as an ethical principle that rejects shirk, superstition, and religious practices that are not in accordance with the Qur'an and Sunnah. The purification of faith aims to produce a rational, integrity-driven community that is not trapped in rigid thinking. (Arifin et al., 2022).

The second characteristic of the Muhammadiyah movement is its orientation towards science, *ijtihad*, and rational thinking. Muhammadiyah rejects blind imitation and instead encourages Muslims to have a critical, contextual, and relevant understanding of religion in line with the developments of the times. For Muhammadiyah, mastery of science and knowledge not only serves as a means of intellectual advancement, but is also part of worship and a form of human responsibility as caliphs on earth. Therefore, the concept of Progressive Islam promoted by Muhammadiyah emphasizes the importance of education, research, and innovation as the main pillars in building a superior and competitive society. Through the development of science and rational thinking, Muslims are expected to be able to play an active role in creating civilizational progress while maintaining Islamic values in every aspect of life. The third characteristic of the Progressive Islam movement is its emphasis on humanistic values, social justice, and support for the weak. This concept affirms that Islamic teachings must be manifested in tangible forms that benefit all of humanity regardless of ethnicity, religion, or social status. Thus, Islam is not only a spiritual teaching, but also a moral force that promotes justice and social welfare. In addition, Progressive Islam also has moderate (*wasathiyah*) characteristics, is cosmopolitan, and civilized. This attitude enables Progressive Islam to become a bridge for dialogue between diverse religions, cultures, and social groups. These values were then formulated and officially ratified in the Makassar Congress Tanfidz document, which became a guideline for the Muhammadiyah movement in facing the challenges of modern and global life.

3.4. Implementation of progressive Islam in Muhammadiyah's charitable activities

The application of the concept of Progressive Islam in the Muhammadiyah movement is clearly evident through various charitable activities carried out in the fields of education, health, social welfare, economics, and community empowerment. In the field of education, Muhammadiyah has managed more than 170 universities, 1,500 schools, and a number of modern Islamic boarding schools throughout Indonesia. All of these educational institutions were built with a spirit of renewal and integrate religious and general knowledge (Inamullah & Lestari, 2023).

For Muhammadiyah, education is the main means of producing a generation that is knowledgeable, moral, and capable of bringing progress to society. Through this approach, the values of Progressive Islam are realized in a tangible way, namely by making education an important pillar in building an advanced and civilized Islamic civilization.

In the field of health, Muhammadiyah manages hundreds of hospitals, clinics, and various health care facilities that are oriented towards the principles of professionalism and humanitarian values. These health services are not only intended for Muhammadiyah

members, but are also open to the entire community, including those who are less fortunate. This shows that the concept of Progressive Islam is not only applied in the field of education, but also realized through concrete actions in the humanitarian sector. Through inclusive and equitable health services, Muhammadiyah strives to bring Islamic values that benefit all people regardless of their social or religious background (Isma & Ponirin, 2013). The implementation of Progressive Islam is also evident through various community empowerment programs run by Muhammadiyah institutions such as Lazismu, MDMC (Muhammadiyah Disaster Management Center), and the Community Empowerment Council. These programs include disaster management, poverty alleviation, social advocacy, and economic empowerment for the wider community. Through modern, transparent, and professional management, Muhammadiyah proves that Islamic values can be realized in the form of concrete social actions that are relevant to the needs of the times. This shows that Progressive Islam is not merely a theological concept, but a real movement that contributes directly to building the welfare and progress of society.

4. Conclusion

Based on the discussion of the concept of Progressive Islam from the perspective of Muhammadiyah, it can be concluded that Muhammadiyah positions Progressive Islam as a theological, social, and cultural paradigm that affirms that Islam is a religion that encourages the advancement of civilization, the strengthening of science, and social transformation. This paradigm is not only based on the purification of Islamic teachings (tajdīd), but also on social renewal that is responsive to the dynamics of the times. Progressive Islam was born as a synthesis between the normative values of the Qur'an and Sunnah and the demands of modernity, resulting in a rational, inclusive, and humanistic view of Islam (Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2015). The main characteristics of Progressive Islam include a commitment to tawhid, respect for knowledge, an ethos of ijtihad, strengthening the welfare of the ummah, and an orientation towards social justice. These principles consistently form the basis for the Muhammadiyah movement in carrying out its da'wah amar ma'ruf nahi munkar, whether in the fields of education, health, social services, or community empowerment.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our gratitude to all parties who have been involved in the preparation of this paper, as well as those who have helped to bring it to completion.

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