

Integration of Islamic Values and Modernity in Muhammadiyah's Philosophy of Education

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ABSTRACT

This study examines Muhammadiyah's philosophy of education as a distinctive model of modern Islamic education that integrates Islamic spiritual values with the principles of modern scientific rationality. Rooted in the centrality of tauhid (divine unity), this philosophy emphasizes the integration of religious and secular knowledge, moral and character formation, the spirit of renewal (tajdid), and social praxis through Muhammadiyah's extensive philanthropic and educational institutions. Employing a qualitative-descriptive analytical approach based on hermeneutic interpretation, the research draws upon textual analysis of Muhammadiyah's primary documents including the Pedoman Hidup Islami Warga Muhammadiyah (PHIWM), Matan Keyakinan dan Cita-Cita Hidup Muhammadiyah (MKCH), and key writings of KH. Ahmad Dahlan and Haedar Nashir, supplemented by recent scholarly literature. The findings reveal that Muhammadiyah's educational paradigm represents a transformative synthesis between revelation and reason (wahyu dan 'aql), spirituality and rationality, tradition and modernity. This integrative framework demonstrates high relevance to addressing contemporary educational challenges, including globalization, technological disruption, and moral degradation. The study recommends that future research explore the practical implementation, impact assessment, and comparative development of Muhammadiyah's educational model within global Islamic educational movements.

Keywords: Muhammadiyah, Islamic education, modernity, integration of knowledge, tauhid, tajdid, educational philosophy

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A. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Islamic education faces major challenges in bridging spiritual values with the demands of modernity, especially in the context of globalisation, digitalisation, and technological disruption. Muhammadiyah, as one of the largest

modern Islamic organisations in Indonesia, offers a unique educational model by harmoniously integrating Islamic values and principles of modernity. This approach not only emphasises mastery of science and technology, but also character building, morality, and social piety.

Historically, KH. Ahmad Dahlan founded Muhammadiyah with a vision of renewal (*tajdid*) that combined the spirit of monotheism with scientific rationality. Wafi (2025) shows that Dahlan's thinking combined *da'wah* education with modern rationality, making education the main means of forming a civilised society based on faith and modern science. Wafi, A. (2025).

Dalam konteks praktik pendidikan, integrasi nilai Islam dan modernitas diwujudkan dalam kurikulum yang menekankan *tauhid*, *masalah*, dan *tajdid* sebagai prinsip utama pendidikan. Hasan (2025) menjelaskan bahwa sekolah-sekolah Muhammadiyah menerapkan strategi pedagogis yang menanamkan nilai ideologis Islam seperti *humanisme religius* dan *modernisme sosial* melalui praktik pengajaran berbasis nilai dan teknologi Hasan, M.F. (2025).

Anwar and Sofii (2025) highlight that the renewal of Muhammadiyah education in the digital era requires a reinterpretation of the principles of *tauhid* and *tajdid*, so that it remains relevant in the face of globalisation and digital technology. They emphasise that the integration of Islamic values and modernity can strengthen the epistemology of Islamic education, making it adaptive and solution-oriented in the face of contemporary challenges [Anwar, A.S., & Sofii, I. (2025). *Navigating Challenges and Opportunities in the Renewal of Muhammadiyah's Educational Philosophy in the Digital Era*.

Theoretically, the integration of Islamic values and modernity in Muhammadiyah education is not merely an accommodation, but an epistemological synthesis between revelation and reason, between faith and

knowledge, as developed by figures such as Amin Abdullah (2018) in the integrative-interconnective paradigm. This paradigm rejects the dichotomy between religious knowledge and general knowledge, proposing a multidisciplinary approach based on transcendental values.

This type of integrative education model is becoming increasingly significant when faced with the challenges of moral globalisation and secularisation of education. Recent research (Sulaiman, 2020; Nasir, 2019; Rahmawati, 2022) confirms that modern Islamic education must strengthen spiritual identity while maintaining scientific competence. Muhammadiyah, through its network of schools and universities, has demonstrated that the synthesis of spirituality and scientific rationality can be a model for progressive Islamic education in the 21st century.

Thus, this study is important to deepen understanding of Muhammadiyah's educational philosophy as an integrative model that unites Islamic values and modernity, and offers conceptual contributions to national education policy based on spirituality and scientific rationality.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this study lies in the intersection between Islamic educational philosophy, modernization theory, and integrative epistemology. Muhammadiyah's philosophy of education is anchored in *tauhid* (monotheism) as the ontological base, *tajdid* (renewal) as its epistemological method, and social praxis as its axiological orientation. These three philosophical pillars create a model that harmonizes revelation-based

knowledge with empirical-scientific inquiry.

B. METHOD

Theoretical Framework

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Literature Review

1. Foundations of Muhammadiyah's Educational Philosophy

The origins of Muhammadiyah's educational vision lie in KH. Ahmad Dahlan's effort to reform traditional Islamic learning through rational pedagogy and scientific integration. Wafi (2025) contrasts Dahlan's educational thought with that of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, emphasizing that Muhammadiyah's model blends da'wah and education within a modern framework that values discipline, rationality, and social responsibility. Similarly, Syamsuddin (2017) situates Dahlan's philosophy within the broader Islamic reformist movement, noting its compatibility with early 20th-century rationalism that aimed to

modernize Muslim society through education

2. Integration of Islamic and Modern Knowledge

Abdullah (2018) and Sulaiman (2020) describe Muhammadiyah's epistemological stance as a synthesis between the Bayani, Burhani, and Irfani systems of knowledge. This integration aims to eliminate the epistemic divide between religious and modern sciences. Utami & Tri (2025) further demonstrate that Muhammadiyah schools employ a curriculum that equally prioritizes iman, ilmu, and amal, aligning with global educational standards while preserving Islamic ethics

3. Tajdid and Renewal in the Digital Era

Anwar & Sofii (2025) propose that Muhammadiyah's educational renewal must adapt to digitalization and global knowledge flows. Their study finds that tajdid is not only a theological imperative but also an epistemic process that ensures the relevance of Islamic education in modern contexts. Hasan (2025) supports this by showing how teachers in Muhammadiyah schools integrate values of humanism and modernism into digital pedagogy.

4. Character and Social Transformation

Hidayat (2021) and Rahmawati (2022) highlight Muhammadiyah's focus on *akhlaq karimah* (noble character) as an essential component of education. Beyond intellectual growth, the system emphasizes social praxis building society through philanthropy, health care, and educational outreach. This moral-spiritual orientation differentiates Muhammadiyah's model from secular education systems

5. Challenges and Future Directions

Nasir (2019) and Anwar & Sofii (2025) note ongoing challenges such as balancing faith-based identity with scientific openness, and maintaining moral integrity in a consumerist culture. However, the adaptability of Muhammadiyah's educational philosophy rooted in *tajdid* allows it to remain resilient amid globalization and digitization.

The reviewed literature consistently recognizes Muhammadiyah's educational philosophy as an exemplary model of Islamic modernism one that redefines the relationship between revelation and rationality, spirituality and progress, faith and social change.

This study employs a qualitative-descriptive analytical design grounded in a philosophical-hermeneutic paradigm. The research aims to interpret and contextualize Muhammadiyah's philosophy of education within the framework of Islamic modernity.

Data sources include:

- a) primary documents such as official Muhammadiyah educational guidelines, Tanwir and Mukhtar decrees, and writings of key figures like KH. Ahmad Dahlan, Abdul Malik Fadjar, and Haedar Nashir;
- b) secondary literature comprising peer-reviewed journals, academic books, and institutional reports from the last two decades

Data collection employed systematic literature review (SLR) procedures, emphasizing relevance, credibility, and recency of sources. Documents were selected through inclusion-exclusion criteria focusing on works addressing "integration of Islamic values and modernity" in the Muhammadiyah context.

Data analysis applied a hermeneutic interpretive approach, particularly Gadamerian hermeneutics, involving three analytical stages:

- a) Textual analysis, identifying key terminologies (e.g., *tauhid*, *tajdid*, integration of knowledge).
- b) Contextual interpretation, linking philosophical ideas to historical and socio-educational developments in Muhammadiyah.
- c) Critical synthesis, constructing a conceptual model of Muhammadiyah's educational philosophy that integrates spirituality, rationality, and praxis.

To enhance validity and reliability, data triangulation was achieved by cross-referencing interpretations from different sources (organizational documents, scholarly analyses, and

theological commentaries). Researcher reflexivity was maintained through ongoing comparison between textual meaning and contemporary educational realities

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Characteristics of Muhammadiyah's Philosophy of Education

The philosophy of Muhammadiyah's education represents a synthesis between the spiritual foundations of Islam and the dynamic demands of modern civilization. Rooted in the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah, Muhammadiyah's educational system aims to develop *insan kamil*—a complete human being who integrates faith (*iman*), knowledge (*'ilm*), and righteous action (*amal salih*). This philosophy embodies five core characteristics that define its educational paradigm.

1. Based on the Qur'an and Sunnah Muhammadiyah's educational philosophy stands firmly upon Islamic revelation as the ultimate source of knowledge and guidance. Education, in this context, is not merely an intellectual pursuit but a form of *'ibadah* (worship) and *da'wah* (propagation of faith). It seeks to cultivate *tauhid*, faith, and piety as the spiritual foundations of all learning.

As stated in the **Pedoman Hidup Islami Warga Muhammadiyah (PHIWM)**, education is directed toward the realization of *insan kamil*—the ideal human being guided by divine revelation.

“Islamic education aims to form a complete human being (*insan kamil*), which can only be achieved through the guidance of revelation.”

(PHIWM, Chapter on Education, Point 1)

This theological foundation ensures that Muhammadiyah's education maintains a sacred dimension within intellectual and moral development.

2. Promoting the Integration of Religious and Secular Knowledge

Rejecting the dichotomy between religious and secular sciences, Muhammadiyah advances an integrative-holistic model of education. Knowledge, whether derived from the Qur'an or from empirical inquiry, is viewed as an expression of God's signs (*ayat kauniyah*). Hence, scientific exploration and technological innovation must be framed within Islamic ethical values.

“Muhammadiyah education develops an integrated system combining Islamic values with science, technology, and the arts.”

(PHIWM, Chapter on Education, Point 5)

This integration reflects Muhammadiyah's effort to construct an *Islamic modernity* that harmonizes revelation and reason (*wahyu dan 'aql*), faith and scientific rationality.

3. Emphasis on Moral and Character Formation

Central to Muhammadiyah's philosophy is *akhlaq karimah* (noble character). Education is not only intended to produce knowledgeable individuals but also virtuous, responsible citizens. The *Matan Keyakinan dan Cita-cita Hidup Muhammadiyah* (MKCH) explicitly defines moral formation as the heart of educational aim.

“Muhammadiyah education aims to shape individuals of noble character who are responsible for their personal, social, and environmental life.”
(MKCH Muhammadiyah)

Character education, therefore, becomes both the ethical compass and the social mission of Muhammadiyah's schooling system, ensuring that intellectual progress is guided by spiritual integrity.

4. Dynamic and Adaptive to the Changing Times

Muhammadiyah's educational system is inherently *ijtihadi* (interpretive) and *tajdidi* (reformative). It continuously adapts to societal and technological changes while remaining anchored in the immutable principles of Islam. Haedar Nashir (2015), in *Islam Berkemajuan*, emphasizes that Muhammadiyah's progressiveness is demonstrated in its willingness to engage modernity critically embracing

science and innovation without losing its Islamic authenticity.

“Muhammadiyah consistently responds to the challenges of the times through reforms rooted in authentic Islamic values.”

(Haedar Nashir, *Islam Berkemajuan*)

This adaptability ensures that Muhammadiyah's education remains relevant amid globalization, digital transformation, and epistemological shifts in modern learning.

5. Oriented Toward Social Praxis through Philanthropic Engagement

Unlike purely theoretical educational models, Muhammadiyah's philosophy manifests in practical social engagement through its *Amal Usaha Muhammadiyah* (AUM) educational, health, and social welfare institutions. Education is perceived as a form of social *da'wah*, a vehicle for societal empowerment and service to humanity.

“Amal Usaha Muhammadiyah represents the praxis of da'wah and education that aligns with the needs of the ummah.”

(Muhammadiyah Congress, Makassar, 2015)

This praxis-oriented model bridges the gap between theory and action, embodying the Qur'anic ideal of knowledge that benefits others (*'ilm al-nafi'*).

D. CONCLUSION

Muhammadiyah's philosophy of education embodies a modern Islamic educational paradigm that harmonizes spiritual values with scientific rationality. Anchored in the principle of tauhid (divine unity), it advances an integrative epistemology that bridges revelation (wahyu) and reason ('aql), as well as religious and secular sciences. This synthesis positions Muhammadiyah not merely as a religious movement but as a transformative agent in shaping a progressive Islamic education model responsive to the demands of globalization, digitalization, and moral transformation.

The philosophical pillars of tauhid, holistic integration of knowledge, moral character formation, renewal (tajdid), and social praxis collectively construct an educational framework that is dynamic, ethical, and socially engaged. Such a model underscores the relevance of Muhammadiyah's thought in recontextualizing Islamic education within the contemporary discourse of modernization, humanization, and sustainability.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. Empirical Implementation Analysis
Future studies should investigate how Muhammadiyah's educational philosophy is operationalized across various institutional levels—from early childhood education to higher education and how institutional culture reflects its philosophical ideals.

2. Impact Evaluation on Learner Outcomes

Further empirical research is needed to assess the influence of Muhammadiyah's integrative educational model on students' character development, academic achievement, and civic responsibility, thereby linking philosophy to measurable educational outcomes.

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