

The Historicity of Muhammadiyah: The Idea of Founding Muhammadiyah - Literature Analysis

Khozin¹, Pardin Lasaksi²

¹ Universitas Muhammadiyah Malan

² Universitas Muhammadiyah Luwuk

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the historicity of Muhammadiyah, exploring the ideas of its founding, its historical context, and its impact on Indonesian society. Through a systematic literature review and thematic analysis, this research reveals the basic ideas articulated by Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of Muhammadiyah, by highlighting the theological principles of *tajdid* and *ijtihad*. The historical context section examines the emergence of this movement in the socio-political landscape of the early 20th century in Indonesia, emphasizing the impact of Dutch colonial rule and its relationship with global Islamic reformist movements. This research then assesses Muhammadiyah's impact on Indonesian society, including education, social welfare initiatives, and its broader influence in shaping modern Indonesian Islam. Thematic analysis of scientific works shows Muhammadiyah's role in providing holistic education, encouraging intellectual independence, and overcoming social challenges through social welfare programs. The influence of this movement in shaping progressive interpretations of Islam in cultural and societal discourse is also explored. The synthesis of findings underscores the interconnected nature of Muhammadiyah's basic ideas, historical context, and social impact. This movement emerged as a transformative force, dynamically responding to local and global challenges while remaining rooted in its basic principles. This research contributes to scholarly understanding of Islamic reform movements and provides insight into the complex interactions between theological ideals and societal transformation.

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Corresponding Author:

Name: Pardin Lasaksi

Institution: Universitas Muhammadiyah Luwuk

Jl. KH Ahmad Dahlan, Baru, Luwuk, Kabupaten Banggai, Sulawesi Tengah 94712

Email: pardin.lasaksi@yahoo.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Muhammadiyah, founded in 1912 by Ahmad Dahlan, emerged as a response to perceived challenges to Islamic values in the face of colonial influence[1]. Muhammadiyah has experienced a paradigm shift, starting from the modernist movement to *tajdid* and

the purification movement[2]. This has played an important role in developing the idea of Islamic moderation in Indonesia, which is manifested in educational institutions, social services, alms, and health institutions. [3]. Muhammadiyah nationalism is rooted in religious beliefs and is based on Islam and the

Indonesian socio-historical context[4]. This organization has faced challenges in dealing with views that consider nationalism to be contrary to Islamic teachings[5]. Muhammadiyah's political consciousness has developed over time, with two structures of political reasoning: scripturalist-rationalist as the dominant school and substantive-pragmatic as the marginalized school. In addition, Muhammadiyah has taken steps to carry out internationalization, especially in the education sector, which aims to build world civilization and realize the Islamic mission of rahmatan lil'alamin.

Muhammadiyah, as an Islamic organization, has played an important role in shaping the trajectory of Islam in Indonesia. This organization has contributed to the development of Islamic moderation[2], regional development, and job creation[6]. Muhammadiyah has also been involved in political consciousness, with a trajectory that has evolved from individual consciousness to institutional consciousness[7]. In the field of education, Muhammadiyah has established various levels of education, from informal to formal education, and has succeeded in educating Muslims and the Indonesian nation[8]. Apart from that, Muhammadiyah also focuses on developing teacher competency, issuing normative rules, directions and guidelines, as well as forming social groups and organizations to improve the competency of teachers and Muhammadiyah members.[9]. Overall, Muhammadiyah's efforts to revitalize Islam, advance education, and overcome socio-economic disparities have had a significant impact on the Islamic landscape in Indonesia.

With this background, this research begins a comprehensive exploration of the historicity of Muhammadiyah, focusing on the basic ideas underlying its founding. The aim of this research is threefold: (1) Exploring Basic Ideas: Dissecting and analyzing the theological and educational philosophy articulated by Ahmad Dahlan, founder of Muhammadiyah, provides insight into the core ideas that drove this movement. (2) Understanding the Historical Context: To

study the historical context in which Muhammadiyah emerged, outlining Indonesia's socio-political structure in the early 20th century, the impact of Dutch colonial rule, and the broader global Islamic reformist movement that influenced its birth. (3) Assessing Social Impact: To assess the long-term impact of Muhammadiyah on Indonesian society, especially its contribution to education, social welfare and the formation of modern Indonesian Islam.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *The Idea of Establishing Muhammadiyah*

This literature review begins with a close examination of the basic ideas that shaped Muhammadiyah, as articulated by its founder, Ahmad Dahlan. Scholars such as Azizah Kusumawati and Azyumardi Azra have explored the philosophical and theological dimensions of Muhammadiyah, offering insight into Dahlan's vision[10]. Analysis of primary sources, including Dahlan's writings and speeches, will be carried out to look at main theological perspectives such as tajdid (renewal) and ijtihad (independent reasoning), to explain the religious ideology that is the basis of Muhammadiyah[11].

2.2 *Muhammadiyah Historical Context*

Muhammadiyah, as an Islamic organization, has played an important role in promoting Islamic moderation in Indonesian society[2]. The activities of these organizations, such as educational institutions, social services, alms, and health institutions, have contributed to the development of moderate Islam in the country[12]. However, Muhammadiyah has faced obstacles in spreading Islamic moderation, especially from internal Muslim circles who view it as a threat to the Islamic faith.[1]. The Dutch colonial period also had a significant impact on the development of Islamic civilization in Indonesia, with challenges in the fields of education, politics, economics and

da'wah.[3]. Muhammadiyah nationalism is rooted in religious beliefs and is based on Islam and the Indonesian socio-historical context [13]. In addition, Muhammadiyah has contributed to the formation of the Indonesian constitution, with the idea of Islamic democracy influencing the development of Pancasila.

3. METHODS

Systematic Literature Review

This research adopts a systematic literature review methodology to ensure a structured and comprehensive analysis of scientific works, primary sources and contemporary writings related to the historicity of Muhammadiyah. This process involves three main stages:

- a. Identification of Relevant Literature: This research began by systematically identifying relevant literature through academic databases, libraries and online repositories. A comprehensive search strategy was used, using keywords such as "Muhammadiyah", "Ahmad Dahlan", "Islamic reform", and "Indonesian Islam". The aim is to capture various perspectives on the founding ideas of Muhammadiyah, its historical context and social impact.
- b. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria: Inclusion and exclusion criteria were created to filter sources based on their relevance to the research objectives. Primary sources, including Ahmad Dahlan's writings and speeches, are prioritized to gain insight into the founder's original ideas. Secondary sources, such as scientific articles, books, and monographs, are selected based on their academic rigor, relevance, and contribution to the research themes.
- c. Thorough Examination of Selected Literature: The selected literature will be thoroughly examined to obtain key insights and arguments

relating to the historicity of Muhammadiyah. This involves critical analysis of the content, identifying recurring themes, and assessing the methodological approaches used by the different authors. A systematic literature review ensures a comprehensive understanding of existing scholarship on Muhammadiyah.

Primary and Secondary Sources

A combination of primary and secondary sources forms the backbone of this research. Primary sources include writings, speeches and documents produced by Ahmad Dahlan during the founding period of Muhammadiyah. These sources offer direct insight into the thinking, intentions, and ideological underpinnings of the movement. Secondary sources include scientific articles, books and monographs written by historians, theologians and scholars who have studied Muhammadiyah from various perspectives. The integration of primary and secondary sources ensures a thorough and nuanced analysis of the historicity of Muhammadiyah.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to organize and synthesize the information gathered from the literature review. The identified literature is categorized thematically, thus allowing a systematic exploration of the main topics related to the founding ideas of Muhammadiyah, the historical context of its founding, and its social impact. Thematic analysis helps reveal patterns, relationships, and overarching narratives that contribute to a comprehensive understanding of Muhammadiyah's role in shaping Indonesian Islam.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Basic Ideas of Muhammadiyah

An examination of Muhammadiyah's basic ideas, rooted in the intellectual legacy of its founder, Ahmad Dahlan, reveals the deep theological landscape that shaped the movement's identity and mission. Thematic analysis of Ahmad Dahlan's writings and

speeches reveals his consistent emphasis on two basic principles: *tajdid* (renewal) and *ijtihad* (independent reasoning)[14]. Dahlan views *tajdid* as a means to revitalize Islamic thought and practice in response to contemporary challenges, recognizing the need for Islam to adapt without sacrificing its core principles[1]. *Ijtihad*, on the other hand, serves as the cornerstone of Muhammadiyah's intellectual framework, encouraging its followers to engage in independent reasoning and critical thinking.[15]. Dahlan's vision for a dynamic and intellectually vibrant Islamic community is rooted in these principles, allowing for the interpretation of religious texts in a modern context while maintaining a balance between tradition and progressivism.[16]. The synthesis of these findings underscores the unique blend of tradition and progressivism in Muhammadiyah's basic ideas[17].

The synthesis of these basic ideas highlights Muhammadiyah's main goals, namely intellectual rejuvenation and individual empowerment. By fighting for *ijtihad*, Ahmad Dahlan attempted to break through intellectual stagnation, promoting a mindset of active engagement with Islamic teachings. This commitment to independent reasoning not only seeks to adapt Islam to changing times but also aims to empower individuals to think critically about their faith.

Muhammadiyah's theological landscape, as revealed through thematic analysis, positions this movement as a catalyst for intellectual empowerment in Indonesian Islam. This synthesis highlights how these basic ideas became the foundation for Muhammadiyah's distinctive role as an agent of theological revival and intellectual independence.

The discussion of Muhammadiyah's basic ideas does not only cover theological principles, but also includes its broader impact on the identity and mission of this movement. By championing intellectual reform and engagement, Muhammadiyah positions itself as a transformative force in Indonesian Islam. This synthesis explains how these ideas not only shaped the

movement's core principles, but also informed its mission to address the social challenges of its time.

The examination of Muhammadiyah's basic ideas concludes with a comprehensive understanding of how *tajdid* and *ijtihad*, as articulated by Ahmad Dahlan, became the intellectual foundation for the movement's unique identity. This synthesis provides a strong foundation for exploring the historical context and social impact of Muhammadiyah in the next section, which offers insight into the complex interactions between theological ideals and the broader socio-religious landscape.

Muhammadiyah Historical Context

An exploration of Muhammadiyah's historical context delves into the complex socio-political landscape of early 20th century Indonesia, unraveling the complex interactions between colonial rule, global Islamic reformist currents, and local responses. Thematic analysis of historical records, including the works of scholars Howard M. Federspiel and Greg Barton, highlights the severe challenges faced by Muslims under Dutch colonial rule. This synthesis reveals a narrative of religious and cultural upheaval, as colonial policies sought to shape and, in some cases, suppress indigenous religious practices. This contextual understanding underscores the tumultuous environment in which Muhammadiyah emerged, which required a response to protect and revitalize Islamic values in the face of external pressures.

This synthesis underlines the role of the Dutch colonial government as a forum that forged the conditions for the birth of Muhammadiyah. The movement that was born in this forum can be seen as a response to the challenges posed by colonial policies which had an impact on religious and social dynamics. This thematic exploration establishes connections between the emergence of Muhammadiyah and the broader socio-political struggles of the time, depicting the movement as a dynamic response to the colonial landscape.

This thematic analysis goes beyond local challenges to include a global dimension, linking Muhammadiyah to broader Islamic reformist movements. This synthesis reveals a tapestry woven with influences from thinkers such as Nursi and Abduh, illustrating how Muhammadiyah was not only a local response but also an integral part of the global discourse on Islamic reform. This connection places Muhammadiyah within broader intellectual currents, where ideas and inspiration transcend geographical boundaries.

The historical context of Muhammadiyah, as synthesized from various scholarly perspectives, highlights the adaptive nature and resilience of this movement in facing colonial challenges. This synthesis explains how Muhammadiyah, influenced by local and global factors, emerged as a response that not only rejected external pressures but also actively sought to rejuvenate and preserve Islamic values in the Indonesian context.

The Impact of Muhammadiyah on Indonesian Society

The study of Muhammadiyah's impact on Indonesian society includes exploration of various aspects, including education, social welfare initiatives, and its broader influence in shaping modern Indonesian Islam. Muhammadiyah has had a significant impact on the educational landscape in Indonesia, as highlighted by thematic analysis of scientific works. The movement's commitment to holistic education, which integrates religious and secular knowledge, has led to the establishment of schools that promote intellectual empowerment[2]. Muhammadiyah's influence in education is not only limited to the establishment of institutions, because its educational philosophy has formed a generation of individuals who are able to think critically, in line with the vision of the *ijtihad* movement[1]. Muhammadiyah's enduring influence not only contributes to academic knowledge but also fosters intellectual independence[5].

Muhammadiyah has had a significant impact on social welfare initiatives in Indonesia. The organization has been actively involved in regional development, job creation, and education[6]. Muhammadiyah has also played a role in promoting Islamic moderation through educational institutions, social services and health institutions[1]. This organization has been committed to addressing social problems and providing solutions, especially in the fields of education and health[2]. Muhammadiyah's efforts in social welfare are rooted in its theological and philosophical foundations, and aim to meet the broader socio-economic needs of Indonesian society[18]. Overall, Muhammadiyah has emerged as a proactive agent of positive change, contributing to the development and welfare of society[5]. Its impact on social welfare is in line with its mission to address intellectual and social challenges.

Muhammadiyah, as an Islamic organization, plays an important role in shaping modern Indonesian Islam. The organization promotes the idea of Islamic moderation and emphasizes the primary goals of Islamic law rather than its legal consequences[2]. Muhammadiyah has experienced a paradigm shift over time, evolving from a modernist movement to a *tajdid* and purification movement[1]. Although it does not officially recognize the existence of Sufi orders, Muhammadiyah acknowledges the existence of Sufism discourse and practice among its figures and members[19]. Muhammadiyah nationalism is rooted in religious beliefs and is based on Islam and the Indonesian socio-historical context[3]. Muhammadiyah provides legal assistance based on transcendental values, emphasizing divine values originating from religious teachings and philosophy[20]. Overall, Muhammadiyah's influence extends beyond religious practice, shaping progressive interpretations of Islam and contributing to the ongoing evolution of Islam in Indonesia.

Synthesis of Findings

The synthesis of the results of this research shows that there is a complex interaction between Muhammadiyah's basic ideas, historical context, and social impact. The theological foundations of *tajdid* and *ijtihad*, driven by Ahmad Dahlan's vision, laid the intellectual foundation for a movement that transcended local challenges and engaged in a global discourse on Islamic reform. Placed in the historical context of Dutch colonialism, Muhammadiyah emerged as a dynamic response to societal challenges, demonstrating adaptability and resilience.

Muhammadiyah's diverse impact on Indonesian society, from education to social welfare and the formation of modern Islam, marks a movement that is deeply embedded in the fabric of the nation. This synthesis underlines Muhammadiyah's role as a transformative force that responds to the needs of its time while remaining rooted in its basic principles.

Discussion

The findings of this research provide a significant contribution to scientific discourse on the Islamic reform movement and the development of Indonesian Islamic history. Muhammadiyah's basic ideas, rooted in a commitment to intellectual rejuvenation, resonated with broader trends in Islamic reformist thought. The historical context of this movement, linked to global currents, explains its adaptive nature and its role as a product of local challenges and international intellectual exchange. Muhammadiyah's impact on Indonesian society, as discussed through education, social welfare, and the formation of modern Islam, positions the movement as a key player in nation-building.

This discussion explores the implications of Muhammadiyah's contribution, not only in historical retrospect but also in its ongoing role in shaping contemporary Indonesia.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, an exploration of the historicity of Muhammadiyah reveals a movement that is deeply embedded in the tapestry of Indonesian history. Its basic ideas, as articulated by Ahmad Dahlan, signify a commitment to intellectual rejuvenation and individual empowerment through *tajdid* and *ijtihad*. The historical context shaped by Dutch colonial rule and global Islamic reformist currents, positions Muhammadiyah as a dynamic response to diverse challenges.

Muhammadiyah's impact on Indonesian society has been multifaceted and long-lasting. This movement's contribution to education, social welfare, and the formation of modern Indonesian Islam shows its role as a catalyst for positive change. Muhammadiyah's ability to adapt, foster intellectual independence, and meet the needs of society places it as a formidable and transformative force.

This research contributes to a broader understanding of Islamic reform movements, by emphasizing the dynamic interaction between theological ideals and societal developments. The historicity of Muhammadiyah, as revealed through this research, invites further exploration of the role of religious movements that continue to develop in shaping the socio-religious landscape of a nation.

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