



Muhammadiyah's Religious Ideology and the Challenges of Transnationalism in Islamic Religious Education in Indonesia

Nurul Hidayah^{1*}, Faridi Faridi², Hikmatulloh Hikmatulloh³

^{1,2} Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia

³ SDN 01 Kucur, Indonesia

Corresponding author: nurulhidayahumm@gmail.com *

Abstract. *The growing influence of transnational Islamic movements on Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesia has emerged as a new challenge for local religious organizations such as Muhammadiyah. This study aims to explore how Muhammadiyah, as a modernist Islamic movement, responds to transnational religious ideologies within the educational domain. Employing a qualitative approach through literature review, this research analyzes scholarly articles, major books, and official Muhammadiyah documents. The findings indicate that Muhammadiyah actively defends its progressive Islamic ideology through strategies such as strengthening higher education, internationalizing institutions, and revitalizing cadre development. Muhammadiyah's ideological stance, rooted in wasathiyah (moderation) and inclusivity, is pivotal in countering the infiltration of transnational ideologies, which tend to be radical and intolerant. This study underscores the importance of reinforcing PAI curricula based on moderate Islamic values as a strategic step in preserving national Islamic identity.*

Keywords: *Ideology; Islamic Religious Education; Muhammadiyah; Transnationalism; Wasathiyah*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the past two decades, the Islamic world has undergone significant ideological transformations driven by globalization and advancements in communication technologies, which blur national boundaries (Yumitro et al., 2023; Hidayatullah, 2018; Hidayah et al., 2024). One major implication is the increasing influence of transnational Islamic movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood (IM), Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), and Salafism on the discourse and practice of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesia (Muthohirin et al., 2022; Ikhsan, 2019). Data from the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) and the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag RI) indicate a significant rise in radicalism-related activities in the educational sector since the Reform Era, particularly through non-government-affiliated campus and pesantren organizations (BNPT, 2023; Kemenag, 2018).

These transnational movements often propagate religious ideologies that clash with Indonesia's moderate and tolerant societal character (Hidayatullah, 2018). Some even espouse political agendas and ideologies that are at odds with the Pancasila and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (Wahid, 2009). This situation poses a serious concern for local Islamic organizations, including Muhammadiyah, which has long been recognized as a progressive modernist Islamic movement committed to enlightening da'wah (Nashir, 2007).

2. THEORY

Several studies have shown increased scholarly attention to the ideological dynamics and strategic responses of local Islamic organizations, particularly Muhammadiyah, to the wave of transnationalism. For instance, Kurniawan et al., (2024) highlighted the transformation of Muhammadiyah's educational institutions, including the adoption of the pesantren system, as a strategy to counter foreign ideological penetration in Islamic education. (Thahir, 2024) discussed the opportunities and challenges of Muhammadiyah's internationalization efforts, especially in promoting moderate Islamic values abroad.

Roviana et al., (2023) emphasized the importance of fostering multicultural understanding in Muhammadiyah's higher education institutions to prevent susceptibility to exclusive religious ideologies. Similarly, Anwar et al., (2023) explored curriculum adaptation in Islamic education to contemporary contexts, including the integration of moderate values into the Merdeka and K-13 curricula.

Internal efforts to strengthen Islamic values are also evident in the study by Dewi et al., (2024), which highlights the role of prophetic leadership in protecting pesantren students from transnational ideologies. Nugroho, (2023) examined the geopolitical aspects of education as part of Muhammadiyah's strategic mission to build global influence for progressive Islam.

Conversely, Khoirudin & Saputra, (2018) reviewed the relevance of Moeslim Abdurrahman's ideas and Muhammadiyah's role in advancing transformative, contextually responsive, and character-driven Islamic education. (Husna et al., 2023) provided a comparative analysis showing how the two largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia respond differently to transnationalism, though both remain committed to moderate Islam.

Intriguingly, Muttaqien & Surwandono, (2024) presented a comparative analysis between the internationalization strategies of Muhammadiyah and the Gulen movement in Turkey, exploring their adaptability to national governmental systems. Finally, Asroor, (2019) described how Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) have become at the forefront of mainstreaming moderate Islam amid the exclusive and politicized ideological trends of transnational movements.

These studies generally affirm Muhammadiyah's significant role in preserving a moderate Islamic identity amidst the tide of transnationalism. However, most existing research tends to focus on institutional transformation, internationalization strategies, multicultural education, and leadership. There is still a scarcity of in-depth studies specifically analyzing Muhammadiyah's ideological responses to the infiltration of transnational movements within

the context of PAI, particularly concerning cadre development and the reassessment of ideological values within its autonomous bodies and educational institutions.

The novelty of this study lies in its critical approach to Muhammadiyah's ideological response within the realm of Islamic education, emphasizing the reaffirmation of *wasathiyah* and progressive values in facing the expansion of intolerant transnational Islamic thought. Thus, this article fills the gap in the literature that predominantly centers on institutional dimensions and elaborates on the strategic ideological aspects relevant to policy and praxis in Muhammadiyah's PAI.

The research question addressed in this study is: How does Muhammadiyah's ideological stance and strategy respond to the infiltration of transnational Islamic movements within the context of Islamic Religious Education in Indonesia?

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative approach using library research methods ((Zed, 2014). According to Creswell (2014), this method is suitable for in-depth exploration of social phenomena through texts and documents. Data were sourced from national and international journal articles, books, and official Muhammadiyah documents. These sources were selected based on their relevance and contribution to the discourse on contemporary Islamic education and ideology.

Data analysis employed content analysis techniques (Moleong, 2017) by identifying key themes such as ideology, Islamic education, and transnationalism. Literature review focused on publications from the past seven years, while also incorporating foundational theories from classical sources for comparison.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Muhammadiyah's Islamic Education Ideology

Muhammadiyah views Islamic education not merely as a vehicle for the transmission of religious knowledge, but as a strategic means to cultivate the ideal human being—faithful, knowledgeable, and morally upright (Zukdi, 2020; Yusufpati, 2024). According to the Compilation of Tarjih Decisions and Muhammadiyah's Creed and Life Aspirations (MKCHM), education must integrate faith, knowledge, and action within a unifying theological framework that is enlightening (Tajdid, 2018); (Muhammadiyah, 2024).

Muhammadiyah acknowledges that education must be responsive to temporal and contextual changes. Hence, in confronting global shifts, including the surge of transnational

Islamic ideologies, Muhammadiyah emphasizes wasathiyah values as the core of its educational system. The PAI curriculum in Muhammadiyah does not only teach jurisprudence and theology, but also nurtures social awareness, national identity, and critical thinking (H. Nashir, 2007; Ali, 2016; Hidayah et al., 2024). This stands in stark contrast to the legalistic and anti-national approaches typical of many transnational movements (Wahid, 2009).

Muhammadiyah's Ideological Resilience Strategies

Muhammadiyah's ideological resilience is institutional and proactive, implemented through the strengthening of higher education rooted in moderate Islam, domestic cadre scholarship programs, and the reconstruction of the PAI curriculum based on progressive values (Muthohirin & Suherman, 2020). In this context, Muhammadiyah Central Board Decree No. 149/Kep/I.O/B/2006 serves as the policy foundation for integrating ideological vision across all organizational and educational arms of Muhammadiyah (Wahid, 2009).

Further, (Kurniawan et al., 2024) demonstrated that Muhammadiyah enhances its educational infrastructure through the revitalization of pesantren and the establishment of Islamic study centers attuned to ideological issues. This illustrates Muhammadiyah's ability to construct a system capable of resisting external ideologies without resorting to a defensive posture.

Muhammadiyah and Transnational Ideological Infiltration

The early 2000s marked the emergence of HTI, IM, and Salafi influence in Muhammadiyah-affiliated campuses and youth organizations. These movements infiltrated through cadre training, exclusive da'wah narratives, and mobilization of alumni educated abroad (Suprianto, 2020; Biyanto, 2024). Muhammadiyah responded by repositioning cadre development programs such as Darul Arqam and Baitul Arqam, and involving ideologically and intellectually strong figures (Basinun, 2018; Junaidi & Jannah, 2018).

This underscores that Muhammadiyah's success in maintaining its ideological integrity largely depends on grassroots actors—cadres capable of navigating between organizational loyalty and global ideological challenges (Subando et al., 2023); (Sabila et al., 2023).

Wasathiyah Approach and Cultural-Based Moderation

Muhammadiyah's engagement with transnational discourse is not confrontational but grounded in value selection and cultural engagement (Kossah et al., 2022). Haedar Nashir refers to this as "substantive Islam"—a framework bridging text and context, Sharia and universal humanity (R. Redaksi, 2023).

This moderation is embodied in intellectual forums like Tarjih Studies, publications by Suara Muhammadiyah, and digital da'wah content targeting urban youth and university students (Romadlan, 2024; Redaksi, 2024). Internationally, Muhammadiyah educational institutions in Malaysia and Australia serve as platforms for value diplomacy rather than mere institutional expansion (Nugroho, 2023).

5. CONCLUSION

This study has critically examined Muhammadiyah's ideological and strategic responses to the infiltration of transnational Islamic movements within the framework of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesia. The findings demonstrate that Muhammadiyah applies a comprehensive and structured approach, rooted in wasathiyah (moderation), progressive Islamic thought, and a strong national orientation.

Strategically, Muhammadiyah reinforces its ideological resilience through the development of moderate Islamic higher education institutions, the revitalization of cadre training systems, and the integration of inclusive and contextual Islamic values into the PAI curriculum. These strategies are supported by the establishment of responsive pesantren, the institutionalization of cultural-based da'wah, and international networking that prioritizes value diplomacy over organizational expansion.

Rather than adopting a confrontational stance, Muhammadiyah chooses a selective, adaptive, and ideologically grounded approach in filtering the values of transnational Islamic ideologies. This model not only strengthens Muhammadiyah's internal ideological integrity but also contributes to the broader effort of preserving Indonesia's moderate Islamic identity.

In conclusion, Muhammadiyah's ideological position and strategic actions reflect a proactive engagement in safeguarding Islamic education from radical influences, while promoting a vision of Islam that is moderate, inclusive, and aligned with national values. This research affirms the significance of ideological strengthening in Islamic educational institutions as a central pillar in countering transnational religious radicalism.

REFERENCES

- Ali, M. (2016). Membedah Tujuan Pendidikan Muhammadiyah. *Profetika: Jurnal Studi Islam*, 17(01), 43–56. <https://doi.org/10.23917/PROFETIKA.V17I01.2099>
- Anwar, S., Ishomuddin, I., & Faridi, F. (2023). Dynamics of the Islamic Education Curriculum in Madrasah: Study K-13 and Merdeka Curriculum. *JIE (Journal of Islamic Education)*, 8(2), 266–282. <https://doi.org/10.52615/jie.v8i2.365>

- Asroor, Z. (2019). Islam Transnasional vs Islam Moderat: Upaya NU dan MD dalam Menyuarakan Islam Moderat di Panggung Dunia. *AT-TURAS: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, 6(2), 31–73. <https://doi.org/10.33650/at-turas.v6i2.807>
- Basinun, B. (2018). Modernisasi Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia: Respon Muhammadiyah Terhadap Model Pendidikan Barat. *At-Ta'lim : Media Informasi Pendidikan Islam*, 16(2), 255. <https://doi.org/10.29300/ATTALIM.V16I2.837>
- Biyanto, B. (2024, July 17). Muhammadiyah dan Salafisme. <https://pwmu.co/366288/07/17/muhammadiyah-dan-salafisme/>
- BNPT. (2023). Laporan Kinerja Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme Tahun 2023.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed methods Approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE. https://books.google.co.id/books?id=4uB76IC_pOQC&printsec=copyright&hl=id#v=onepage&q&f=false
- Dewi, C. K., Mukhlis, F., & Muthohirin, N. (2024). Analyzing Educational Prophetic Leadership in Disruption Era in Muhammadiyah Pesantren: Implementation and Relevance. *At-Ta'dib*, 19(2), 291–311. <https://doi.org/10.21111/attadib.v19i2.11964>
- Hidayah, H., Sa'ad, S., & Rosa, A. (2024). Transnational Islamic Movements In Indonesia. *Profetika: Jurnal Studi Islam*, 25(01), 55–66. <https://doi.org/10.23917/profetika.v25i01.2494>
- Hidayatullah, A. S. (2018). Eksistensi Islam Kultural di Tengah Gempuran Gerakan Islam Transnasional. *Jurnal Ilmu Agama: Mengkaji Doktrin, Pemikiran, Dan Fenomena Agama*, 19(1). <https://doi.org/10.19109/jia.v19i1.2380>
- Husna, L. I., Ichsan, Y., Amadea, N. S. F., & Yusro, W. (2023). Education Development in Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama from Time to Time. *At-Taqaddum*, 15(1), 6–13. <https://doi.org/10.21580/at.v15i1.10507>
- Ikhsan, M. A. (2019). Al-quran dan Deradikalisasi Paham Keagamaan di Perguruan Tinggi: Pengarusutamaan Islam Washatiyah. *Al-Bayan: Jurnal Ilmu al-Qur'an Dan Hadist*, 2(2), 98–112. <https://doi.org/10.35132/albayan.v2i2.71>
- Junaidi, M., & Jannah, R. (2018). Revitalisasi Ideologi Muhammadiyah dalam Penguatan Kader Persyarikatan. *Tajdida: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Gerakan Muhammadiyah*, 16(2), 103–116. <https://journals.ums.ac.id/index.php/tajdida/article/view/7621>
- Kemenag, D. P. (2018, August 2). Kemenag, Kemendikbud, dan BNPT Jalin Sinergi Pencegahan Paham Radikal dan Intoleran. <https://pai.kemenag.go.id/berita/kemenag-kemendikbud-dan-bnpt-jalin-sinergi-pencegahan-paham-radikal-dan-intoleran-xGY9u>

- Khoirudin, A., & Saputra, S. E. (2018). Internationalization of Transformative Islamic Education: Moeslim Abdurrahman, Transformative Islam and Muhammadiyah. ISEEDU: Journal of Islamic Educational Thoughts and Practices, 2(2), 1–30.
- Kossah, A. U., Benyal, H. S., & Romelah, R. (2022). Islam Berkemajuan: Muhammadiyah Sebagai Pembaharu Pendidikan Dalam Laju Zaman. TARLIM: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam, 5(1), 67–79. <https://doi.org/10.32528/tarlim.v5i1.7149>
- Kurniawan, D., Maksum, Muh. N. R., & Mustofa, T. A. (2024). Transformation of Educational Intitutional in the Muhmmadiyah Organization. Proceeding ISETH (International Summit on Science, Technology, and Humanity), 399–407. <https://doi.org/10.23917/iseth.3844>
- Muhammadiyah, P. P. (2024). Kepribadian Muhammadiyah dan Matan Keyakinan dan Cita-Cita Hidup Muhammadiyah (1st ed., Vol. 1). Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah.
- Muthohirin, N., Kamaludin, M., & Mukhlis, F. (2022). Prosiding The Annual Conference on Islamic Religious Education Transformasi Pendidikan Islam Salafi: Implikasi terhadap Multikulturalisme di Indonesia. 2. <http://acied.pp-paiindonesia.org/index.php/acied/1>
- Muthohirin, N., & Suherman, S. (2020). Resiliensi Pesantren Terhadap Ekstrimisme Kekerasan Berbasiskan Agama dan Implikasinya terhadap Masyarakat Pesisir Lamongan. J-PAI: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam, 7(1). <https://doi.org/10.18860/jpai.v7i1.11887>
- Muttaqien, A. I., & Surwandono, S. (2024). Comparative Analysis of Gulen Movement and Muhammadiyah: Their Internationalization Strategies and Integration with Governmental Systems. Jurnal Hubungan Internasional, 13(1), 31–46. <https://doi.org/10.18196/jhi.v13i1.17998>
- Nashir, H. (2007). Manifestasi Gerakan Tarbiyah : Bagaimana Sikap Muhammadiyah ? Suara Muhammadiyah.
- Nugroho, D. A. (2023). Upaya Internasionalisasi Muhammadiyah Melalui Sektor Pendidikan. Ganaya : Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Humaniora, 6(1), 85–98. <https://doi.org/10.37329/GANAYA.V6I1.2020>
- Redaksi, T. (2024, May 21). Generasi Milenial dan Gen Z Cenderung Menyukai Model Dakwah yang Efektif dan Efisien. <https://muhammadiyah.or.id/2024/03/generasi-milenial-dan-gen-z-cenderung-menyukai-model-dakwah-yang-efektif-dan-efisien/>
- Romadlan, S. (2024, September 5). Praktik Moderasi Muhammadiyah melalui Media Online. <https://suaramuhammadiyah.id/read/praktik-moderasi-muhammadiyah-melalui-media-online>

- Roviana, S., Masduki, Y., Yusutria, Y., & Long, A. S. (2023). Addressing Multicultural Misconceptions: A Study at Muhammadiyah Higher Education Institutions. *JURNAL PENDIDIKAN ISLAM*, 12(1), 1–14.
- Sabila, A. M., Nurhakim, N., & Romelah, R. (2023). Muhammadiyah Renewal In The Frame of Islamic Education and Social Change. *Ta'lim: Jurnal Studi Pendidikan Islam*, 6(1), 86–101.
- Subando, J., Samsuri, M., & Muslimin, E. (2023). Konstruksi Ideologi Muhammadiyah: Fondasi Pengembangan Instrumen Pengukuran Kekuatan Ideologi Muhammadiyah. *Pawarta: Journal of Communication and Da'wah*, 1(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.54090/pawarta.v1i1.143>
- Suprianto, G. (2020, May 21). Ideologi Muhammadiyah dalam Intaian Paham Transnasional. <https://pwmu.co/148913/05/21/ideologi-muhammadiyah-dalam-intaian-paham-transnasional/>
- Tajdid, M. T. dan. (2018). Himpunan Putusan Tarjih 3 (S. Anwar, Ed.; 1st ed., Vol. 1). Suara Muhammadiyah.
- Thahir, P. S. (2024). Muhammadiyah Goes International? Challenges and Opportunities. *Jurnal Muhammadiyah Studies*, 9(1), 47–67. <https://doi.org/10.22219/jms.v9i1.36120>
- Redaksi, R. (2023, March 25). Haedar Nashir Sebut Islam Berkemajuan Harus Paralel dengan Indonesia Berkemajuan. <https://www.umy.ac.id/haedar-nashir-sebut-islam-berkemajuan-harus-paralel-dengan-indonesia-berkemajuan>
- Wahid, A. (2009). *Ilusi Negara Islam: Ekspansi Gerakan Islam Transnasional di Indonesia* (A. Wahid, Ed.; 1st ed., Vol. 1). The Wahid Institute.
- Yumitro, G., Febriani, R., Roziqin, A., & Oktaviani, S. (2023). Jaringan Radikalisme Di Jawa Timur Pasca Reformasi. *JISIERA*, 6(1), 83–104.
- Yusufpati, M. H. (2024, November 16). Tujuan Pendidikan Muhammadiyah, KH Ahmad Dahlan: Jadilah Kiai yang Maju. <https://www.jakartamu.com/tujuan-pendidikan-muhammadiyah-kiai-ahmad-dahlan-jadilah-kiai-yang-maju-3423>
- Zed, M. (2014, June). *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan*. Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=zG9sDAAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=id#v=onepage&q&f=false>
- Zukdi, I. (2020, October 26). Merancang Model Pembelajaran Al-Islam Kemuhammadiyah Kekinian. <https://web.suaramuhammadiyah.id/2020/10/26/merancang-model-pembelajaran-al-islam-kemuhammadiyah-kekinian/>