

ISLAM-BASED MODERN EDUCATION: THE PARADIGM OF MUHAMMADIYAH EDUCATIONAL CHARITY ENDEAVORS

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ABSTRACT: This article examines the dynamics of Muhammadiyah's educational objectives from the pre-formulation era to the formal formulation era as a creative response to social, political, and scientific change. The establishment of the modern Islamic school "Muhammadiyah" (1911) triggered the founding of the Muhammadiyah organization (1912), which from its inception placed education at the forefront of its movement. This study employs a historical-critical approach using document analysis and literature review of primary and secondary sources related to the evolution of Muhammadiyah's educational objectives across different periods. The findings indicate that while Muhammadiyah's educational goals have undergone several revisions, they maintain a line of continuity with the founding ideals of KH Ahmad Dahlan. From the perspective of national education policy, Muhammadiyah has proven relatively autonomous in formulating its own educational objectives. From the standpoint of modern educational theory, Muhammadiyah's educational orientation most closely aligns with progressive education theory, which emphasizes the continuous reconstruction of experience as a vehicle for advancing social life. With the religiosity of Islam as its foundational pillar, Muhammadiyah's educational character can be concluded as progressive-religious.

Keywords: *educational objectives, Muhammadiyah education, progressive.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between Muhammadiyah and the world of education is particularly special and unique. On one hand, Muhammadiyah is not an educational movement per se, yet the most prominent and deeply-rooted manifestation of its activism is precisely in the field of education. Normatively and conceptually, the identity and distinguishing character of Muhammadiyah is defined as an Islamic movement, a da'wah movement, and a tajdid (renewal) movement [1–3]. Looking back historically, KH Ahmad Dahlan first established an educational institution, and only afterwards was the Muhammadiyah organization formally founded. KH Ahmad Dahlan opened a modern Islamic school named Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Diniyah Islamiyah in December 1911, which served as the embryo of Muhammadiyah's educational enterprise in later years. It was the presence of this modern religious school that inspired Kyai Dahlan to found a modern organization as an umbrella to protect and sustain the newly established school, leading to the founding of the organization known as Muhammadiyah in 1912.

Based on this sequence of historical events, it can be understood that the birth of the Muhammadiyah organization was driven by the need and inspired by the aspiration to develop sound and sustainable educational governance. Through the instrument of organization, the newly established modern religious school would not share the fate of traditional pesantren, which typically declined once their founding kyai passed away. The organization could also mobilize broad public participation for active involvement in Muhammadiyah's charitable works. From this, it is evident that in founding the modern and organized Muhammadiyah, KH Ahmad Dahlan was already thinking in a visionary and anticipatory manner an actualization of his awareness that righteous deeds (deeds of quality) must continually flow and be sustained (amal jariyah, deeds that continue even after the doer's death). This visionary and anticipatory thinking found its grounding in Muhammadiyah. After Kyai Dahlan's leadership, the organization continued to grow and develop. The scope of Muhammadiyah's activities as an Islamic, da'wah, and tajdid movement was not confined solely to education. When its departments (later called majelis) were established in 1917, the four earliest departments were particularly vigorous in prioritizing education, since education in its broadest sense is the key to the progress and glory of any nation, community, or people.

The march of Muhammadiyah's educational charity work has traversed five historical eras with all their accompanying twists and turns: the Dutch colonial era, the Japanese occupation era, the Old Order era, the New Order era, and the current Reform era. Muhammadiyah's education has managed to stand tall across

these ages. Yet each era has produced different challenges, requiring astute navigation. Many educational institutions and organizations of the same age as Muhammadiyah or even much younger have collapsed, unable to withstand the waves of life. Drawing on the foregoing line of reasoning, the hypothesis may be advanced that one of the secrets to Muhammadiyah education's resilience against adversity and socio-economic-political upheaval lies in the breadth, depth, and flexibility of its educational ideals and objectives. Departing from this hypothesis, this article endeavors to document, examine, and reflect upon Muhammadiyah's educational objectives. Such an examination is critically important because it intersects with the effort to reveal the core dynamics the driving factor that has animated Muhammadiyah's education throughout its history. For educational objectives outline, both ideally and practically, what an educational institution seeks to achieve [4]. In the context of past, present, and future, it can be understood that the current face of Muhammadiyah education is in fact the embodiment of past educational ideals and objectives, just as the educational objectives formulated by the present generation will materialize in the future provided there is steadfast commitment to realizing those aspirations.

Scholarly inquiry into Muhammadiyah's educational objectives has not been extensively undertaken. However, research on Muslim educational thought from the perspective of modern educational theory has been conducted by Muhammad Jawwad Ridla. According to him, there are three main currents of educational thought: conservative, religious-rational, and pragmatic [5]. The majority of Muslim educational figures tend toward the first two currents; the only one who exemplifies the pragmatic-progressive orientation is Ibn Khaldun. Of particular note is Mohamad Ali's conclusion, based on his research into KH Ahmad Dahlan's educational thought, which places it within the progressive-religious school of educational philosophy [6]. Historically, the formal articulation of Muhammadiyah's educational objectives was first carried out in 1936, long after the founder's death in 1923. Has Muhammadiyah's educational vision remained faithful to its founder's ideals? And what is the position of Muhammadiyah's educational objectives within the constellation of national education policy?

II. METHOD

This study employs a historical-critical approach combined with document analysis and systematic literature review. The historical-critical approach was chosen because the primary object of inquiry namely, the dynamics of Muhammadiyah's educational objectives is embedded within a long historical process spanning from the pre-independence era to the present Reform era. This approach enables the

researcher to trace, understand, and interpret the evolution of educational objectives within their respective socio-historical contexts [7–10].

Data collection was conducted through the examination of primary sources including official documents, organizational resolutions, and the educational formulations produced by Muhammadiyah across various congresses as well as secondary sources in the form of books, journal articles, and scholarly works related to Muhammadiyah's educational thought and modern educational theory. Primary sources consulted include official documents of the Muhammadiyah organization from 1914 through 1985, while secondary sources encompass scholarly works from figures such as Mohamad Ali [6], Muhammad Jawwad Ridla [5], Amir Hamzah Wirjosukarto [11], and various other relevant educational theorists including Brameld [12], Brubacher [13], and Knight [14].

Data analysis was carried out through three sequential stages: (1) heuristics, involving the identification and collection of relevant historical sources; (2) source criticism, both external and internal, to assess the authenticity and credibility of the sources; and (3) historical interpretation and historiography, in which the collected and verified data were interpreted and synthesized into a coherent historical narrative [7,9]. To interpret the character of Muhammadiyah's educational objectives, the framework of modern educational theory particularly the theories of perennialism, essentialism, and progressivism as elaborated by Brameld [12] and Barnadib [19] was applied as an analytical lens.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Dimension of Objectives in Muhammadiyah Education

Educational objectives represent the das sollen the normative ideal to be achieved through the process and practice of education. They concern the changes expected in students after undergoing the educational process, both in terms of personal development and social life within which the individual exists. In educational scholarship, discussion of educational objectives falls within the domain of systematic educational science. The factors examined by systematic educational science include: the objective factor, the educator factor, the student factor, the instrumental factor, and the environmental factor. Systematic education is an exposition of thought comprehensively arranged concerning educational problems [15].

The question of educational objectives is a most fundamental issue in education it is, in essence, the very core and essence of education such that its existence

matters far more than buildings or other facilities. Muhammad Quthb, a scholar who devoted great attention to the cultivation of the younger generation, opens his book with a question, or something of a dilemma: which is more important means (tools) or ends (objectives)? Although he does not answer explicitly, Quthb nonetheless affirms the indispensability of objectives [16]. For tools and means may change at any time, while objectives endure. The question of tools or means becomes clearer and more focused once the educational objectives have been formulated. In agreement with Quthb, the French pedagogue Jules Payot, as sharpened by Crijns and Reksosiswojo, asserts that not even the smallest educational problem can be solved without knowing where the purpose of life lies and for what purpose children are to be educated [17]. Both Payot and Quthb emphasize the urgency of objectives, because educational objectives are intertwined with the purpose of life and with the direction in which children's education is to be anchored.

Brubacher asserts that there are at least three functions of objectives in the educational process: to provide direction in the educational process; to motivate, or serve as the driving energy in realizing the values or ideals being pursued; and to serve as a criterion for evaluating the educational process [13]. It is difficult to imagine an educational process without objectives: it would proceed without direction or orientation, its practitioners and learners would be unmotivated and lacking the energy to move toward their aspirations, and there would be no frame of reference or criterion by which to re-evaluate the journey of the educational process resulting in an aimless, incoherent education without a clear beginning or end.

The educational objective referred to in this discussion is the general (ultimate, total, complete) educational objective in Langeveld's typology that is, the educational objective that animates every act of educating in every condition and situation, and which must be attended to in every place where the educational process is carried out [18].¹ Technically, the general objective serves as the direction and reference point for policymakers, educational administrators, school principals, and teachers as they conduct the teaching and learning process in the classroom. This means the general objective must be broken down and translated into specific educational objectives for instance, those relating to levels of education or into individual subject areas.

The process of formulating educational objectives involves considerations so complex and intricate that a change at one point will affect other points, ultimately altering the formulation of the objectives themselves. George R. Knight illustrates the complexity of objective formulation as follows: in general, there are two

dominant factors the philosophical or worldview factor, which is relatively permanent, and the contextual factor, which is relatively changeable. The philosophical factor encompasses metaphysical convictions (e.g., religious or secular), axiological convictions, and epistemological convictions. Context, meanwhile, encompasses political dynamics, economic conditions, social forces, and the expectations of families and communities. The school context also contributes, including teachers' thinking, students' conditions, curricular orientations, and so on [14]. From Knight's explanation, it is clear that understanding and analyzing educational objectives is no simple matter, for reading an educational objective is not merely a matter of listing desires and aspirations or a worldview it must be aligned with the socio-economic-political context that appears to stand outside education, yet in reality profoundly influences the educational process itself.

Educational objectives are in direct contact with, or are a manifestation of, the worldview of an individual or a nation. Because each nation's worldview differs, it is entirely appropriate that each nation-state should have different educational objectives consonant with the diversity of their aspirations and worldviews. Even within a single nation, various educational objectives may emerge, reflecting different focuses and emphases in the conduct of education as is the case with Muhammadiyah's educational objectives, as a religious-social community and organization situated within the territory of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).

This diversity of educational objective formulations is given broad latitude, provided they do not contradict the national educational objectives and the state's foundation: Pancasila. Examples of educational objectives that contradict Pancasila include communist education that produces atheists, or ultra-nationalist (transnationalist) education that aspires to establish a separate state within the NKRI. Beyond these limits, private education whether religious or nationalist in orientation is given broad space by the State as a form of community participation in the collective effort to educate the nation. Education organized by Muhammadiyah must be read as a form of community participation in enlightening the life of the nation.

Educational Objectives From the Perspective of Modern Educational Theory

As explained above, the framework used to interpret Muhammadiyah's educational objectives draws on modern educational theory, particularly progressive educational theory. To that end, the following section briefly explains educational objectives as viewed through various modern educational

philosophies and theories. In summary, the concept of educational objectives according to different educational theories is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Educational Objectives According to Modern Educational Theory

Philosophical Root	Theory	Objective
Idealism	Perennialism: <i>education as cultural regression</i>	To educate students to become rational persons (<i>rational person</i>), returning to the spirit of the Middle Ages as the intellectual foundation of humanity.
Idealism and Realism	Essentialism: <i>education as cultural conservation</i>	To educate students to become capable and useful human beings; to transfer values stored in the external repository into the individual child.
Pragmatism	Progressivism: <i>education as cultural transition</i>	To educate the individual according to the child's interests and needs; the continuous reconstruction of experience, enabling the growth of an intelligent person who is actively involved in solving social problems encountered in life.

Source: Adapted and developed by the author from Ornstein & Levine [20]; Barnadib [19], Brameld [12].

In educational theory, at least three modern educational theories are widely recognized: perennialism, essentialism, and progressivism [12,19], as briefly presented in Table 1. Drawing on a cultural approach, Brameld explains that perennialism's educational orientation is regressive, seeking to return to and preserve the great values and ideas of the Middle Ages, with the educational objective of producing rational (intellectual) human beings. Unlike perennialism's regressive orientation, essentialism's educational orientation is conservative. Its educational objective is to preserve the noble, enduring values that have long persisted in society. The task of education is therefore to transfer those noble values into students so that they may live in a conservative society that holds those values in high esteem.

Finally, progressivism takes an educational orientation distinct from both the regressive perennialists and the conservative essentialists. Progressivism is oriented toward progress, where educational objectives must take the child's interests into account. The progressive educational objective is to produce intelligent human beings individuals who grow fully in all their potential and who continually develop their capacities by applying them to understand and solve social problems on an ongoing basis. In short, the educational objective according to progressivists is the continuous reconstruction of experience.

It is important to clarify the distinction between the rational person envisioned by perennialist education and the concept of the intelligent person envisioned by progressive education. A rational person is one capable of understanding and assimilating the great works of medieval authors. An intelligent person, by contrast, is one whose capability lies in understanding and solving the social problems that confront both themselves and the broader social environment. Social life advances step by step when social problems can be solved. Yet because life's problems perpetually arise and grow more complex, the effort and struggle to resolve social challenges knows no end. It is through this process of problem-solving that social life advances; conversely, when too many life problems remain unresolved, social life stagnates, or even deteriorates and collapses.

The Dynamics and the Character of Muhammadiyah's Educational Objectives as an Educational Paradigm

As mentioned above, the formulation of educational ideals and objectives reflects dimensions that are complex and far-reaching. This awareness is important to emphasize when tracing the educational objectives of the Muhammadiyah organization. From a socio-historical perspective, Muhammadiyah's educational objectives cannot be separated from the dynamics of national development. Broadly speaking, the development or dynamics of Muhammadiyah's educational objectives can be divided into two eras: the pre-formulation era and the formal formulation era. In the pre-formulation era, educational objectives already existed but had not yet been articulated explicitly and formally, as the organization's objectives were still merged with its educational objectives. Direct explanations from KH Ahmad Dahlan could serve as a guide or compass indicating the orientational direction of Muhammadiyah's educational objectives. In other words, in the pre-formulation era, educational objectives existed they simply had not yet been formally and explicitly articulated.

In KH Ahmad Dahlan's view, the educational objective was: *dadiyo kyai sing kemajuan, lan aja kesel-kesel anggonmu nyambut gawe kanggo Muhammadiyah*

[11] roughly translated as: become a progressive scholar (ulama), and never tire of working and striving for Muhammadiyah. These words of Kyai Dahlan can be interpreted to mean that, in his view, Muhammadiyah's educational objective was to realize and cultivate a religious human being a Muslim who masters both "religious sciences" and "general sciences" such that individually, all of their potential and innate capacity grows optimally, enabling them to become an intelligent person: one who is willing to struggle and work to solve socio-communal problems and drive progress. Thus, in brief, the progressive kyai is a scholar who is willing to engage with and capable of resolving the social and life problems faced by the community. For, in Kyai Dahlan's view, the truth of both religion and knowledge must be tested "pragmatically" that is, in terms of functional utility for solving the life problems that arise one after another.

This interpretation finds its point of convergence with the organization's objectives, which during this era also served as Muhammadiyah's educational objectives. For clarity, the following presents the revised formulation of those objectives. Muhammadiyah's objectives as formulated in 1921 included [11]:

1. To advance and promote the teaching and instruction of the Islamic religion in the Dutch East Indies.
2. To advance and promote a way of life in accordance with the will of the Islamic religion among its members (all of its associates).

Reading and interpreting the above objective formulation must be done in its historical and contextual light. The term *pengajaran* (teaching) derives from the root word *pengajar* (educator, kyai, ulama, scholar, intellectual), while *pelajaran* (instruction/learning) derives from *pelajar* (student, santri, undergraduate). From this understanding, it can be concluded that the leaders, members, and sympathizers of Muhammadiyah at that time could be divided into two groups: teachers and learners who were striving earnestly to study and learn Islam in an atmosphere of joyfulness and progressiveness. A joyful learning atmosphere is one free from pressure, violence, and coercion. Joy emerges when all participants (learners) can express their ideas with full responsibility and learn according to their interests. At this point, the intellectual movement ideas of A. Syafii Maarif, as well as Kuntowijoyo's concept of the Islamicization of knowledge within Muhammadiyah, have a solid historical foundation for the early Muhammadiyah movement was a broad-dimensioned movement of public learning and community education.

The term "advancing" (*memajukan*) served as an antithesis to the backwardness of native Muslim communities, including the educational backwardness

manifested in the practices of traditional pesantren at the time. This means that the teaching-learning process was not only to be conducted in a joyful atmosphere, but also that the knowledge gained must be practiced and applied in life, so as to drive social change and progress. Knowledge was not merely for its own sake it was to be applied to improving social life. This is explicitly emphasized in objective number two: to develop a way of life in accordance with an Islamic understanding that is joyful and progressive.

Reviewing Muhammadiyah's educational objectives in the context of their time the early twentieth century it is clear that they represented a tremendous leap far ahead of the era. At that time, social polarization and hierarchy were very evident, and educational objectives reflected this. The santri class, known for their religiosity, centered their children's education in the pesantren and oriented their scholarship toward Mecca, while the priyayi class, known for their secular orientation, sent their children to Dutch schools and looked to the Netherlands as their intellectual lodestar.

The educational objective of the pesantren was solely to produce Islamic scholars, while the educational objective of Dutch schools was to equip students with the life skills needed to enter the modern world. In other words, those who studied in the pesantren were not taught secular general knowledge, while those in Dutch-Western schools were only equipped with secular knowledge without religious instruction. This dualism in the educational system ultimately produced a dichotomous social order, divided between the religious santri class and the secular priyayi class. One of the reasons for Muhammadiyah's educational presence was to dissolve this social dichotomy. Therefore, Muhammadiyah's educational objective of producing a progressive kyai and an intellectual ulama/scholarly intellectual was entirely appropriate.

Turning now to the discussion of the formal formulation era. It should be noted that the formal formulation of Muhammadiyah's educational objectives was fundamentally an effort to understand and re-actualize the educational ideals that had been inscribed and championed by Kyai Dahlan as the organization's founder. This means that the formal formulation retained a line of continuity with the founder's ideas, rather than standing as something entirely independent.

In brief, the evolution of Muhammadiyah's educational objectives across different periods is displayed in Table 2. From this table, it can be seen that in the formal formulation era, the concept of becoming a "Muslim person" is cited explicitly, except in the Betawi formulation, which refers to "becoming a Muslim with a fervent spirit." The concept of the Muslim person is consonant with the term

“Kyai” as understood by Kyai Dahlan. Meanwhile, the elaboration of the Muslim person concept such as phrases like “possessing noble character, capability, and self-confidence” is in harmony with the concept of “progressiveness” in Kyai Dahlan's view. Finally, the concept of “being useful to society and the State” echoes Kyai Dahlan's vision: *aja kesel-kesel anggonmu nyambut gawe kanggo Muhammadiyah*. For according to Kyai Dahlan, working for Muhammadiyah means striving for the advancement of society and social life not for the glorification of leaders or personal enrichment.

From the foregoing discussion, the connecting threads between Kyai Dahlan's conception of educational objectives and the formal formulation of Muhammadiyah's educational objectives can be identified. There are at least three such threads: religiosity (kyai/Muslim person), optimal personal growth (progressiveness, noble character, capability, self-confidence), and usefulness (being beneficial, functional, pragmatic) or the application of religion and knowledge to understand and resolve social life challenges so as to bring about social progress. The latest formulation, “the formation of a learning person,” is closer to the 1921 Muhammadiyah organizational objective: “To advance and promote the teaching and instruction of Islam.” This concept places greater emphasis on the process (instrumental dimension) for achieving the ultimate educational objective.

Table 2. Muhammadiyah Educational Paradigm Across the Ages

Phase	Muhammadiyah Educational Paradigm
Pre-Formulation	Educational objective according to KH Ahmad Dahlan: “ <i>Dadiyo kyai sing kemajuan, lan aja kesel-kesel anggonmu nyambut gawe kanggo Muhammadiyah</i> ”. Become a progressive scholar (ulama-intellectual), and tirelessly engage in charitable deeds (work) for Muhammadiyah (the advancement of social life).
Formal Formulation	Muhammadiyah Objective in the Era of KH Ahmad Dahlan (1914 Formulation): To disseminate Islamic religious instruction to the indigenous population within the residency of Yogyakarta and to advance the Islamic religion among its members. 1921 Formulation: To advance and promote the teaching and instruction of the Islamic religion in the Dutch East Indies. To advance and promote a way of life in accordance with the will of the Islamic religion among its members (all of its associates). Betawi (Jakarta) Formulation, 1936: To guide Indonesian children

Phase	Muhammadiyah Educational Paradigm
	to become Muslims with a fervent spirit and deep devotion, with refined character and keen intellect. Healthy and vigorous in body. Earning their own livelihood, so that all of this brings great benefit and high value for themselves and also for the community at large. Pekajangan (Pekalongan) Formulation, 1954: To form Muslim persons of noble character, capable, self-confident, and beneficial to society. Ujungpandang Formulation, 1971: The realization of Muslim persons of noble character, capable, self-confident, and beneficial to society and the state. 1985 Formulation: The realization of Muslim persons who are pious, of noble character, self-confident, patriotic, and beneficial to society and the State, striving toward the realization of an excellent, just, and prosperous society blessed by Allah SWT.

Source: Adapted and developed by the author from various sources.

Having explained Muhammadiyah's process of formulating its educational objectives within the constellation of national education, the next step is to interpret the character of Muhammadiyah's educational objectives using the framework of modern educational theory. The preceding theoretical section presented the diversity of educational objectives as viewed through three modern educational theories: essentialist, perennialist, and progressivist. Essentialist educational theory tends to be conservative and traditional in character, seeking to preserve the noble values that have long endured in social life. The ideal personal model according to essentialist theory is the traditionalist, who holds high the traditional values deeply embedded in society.

Perennialist educational theory has a regressive orientation, seeking to return to the great ideas formulated by the thinkers of the Middle Ages, such as Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274 CE). The ideal human model envisioned by perennialists is the rational person of high intellectuality one capable of grasping the great concepts and ideas formulated by medieval thinkers. Finally, progressive educational theory is oriented toward the advancement (progress) of social life. The ideal personal model according to this theory is the intelligent person capable of resolving the problems confronting both themselves and their community. Unlike essentialists who ground themselves in tradition, and perennialists who cling firmly to great ideas, progressivists ground themselves in experience as the primary pillar for solving life's problems.

Measured against these three modern educational theories, Muhammadiyah's educational objectives most closely align with progressivist educational theory. This can be demonstrated through the following concepts: “*kyai sing berkemajuan*” (a progressive scholar); “*aja kesel-kesel anggonmu nyambut gawe kanggo Muhammadiyah*” (never tire of working for Muhammadiyah); “advancing and promoting a way of life”; “being beneficial to society”; and so forth. Although Muhammadiyah's educational objectives are oriented toward and more closely aligned with progressive educational theory, it must be noted that the foundation of Muhammadiyah's education is religious specifically, a progressive Islam. Progressivism, by contrast, is secular in character. Therefore, in brief, it can be concluded that the character of Muhammadiyah's educational objectives is progressive-religious.

IV. CONCLUSION

From the entire foregoing discussion, three brief conclusions can be drawn. First, Muhammadiyah's educational objectives have undergone several changes, which can broadly be divided into a pre-formulation era and a formal formulation era. The several modifications made still demonstrate points of continuity with KH Ahmad Dahlan's educational ideals. Second, in formulating its educational objectives, Muhammadiyah has been relatively autonomous when juxtaposed with the formulation of national educational objectives. Third, from the standpoint of modern educational theory, the character of Muhammadiyah's educational objectives most closely aligns with progressive educational theory; however, because its foundation is religious, the character of Muhammadiyah's education is progressive-religious.

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