Epistemology of Islamic Religious Education-Progress in Muhammadiyah Higher Education

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Abstract
This study examines the epistemological foundations of Progressive Islamic Religious Education at Universitas Ahmad Dahlan (UAD), Indonesia, with particular attention to the integration of religious and scientific knowledge through Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyahan (AIK). Using conceptual analysis, the study draws on scholarly literature, official Muhammadiyah documents, and institutional sources related to Islamic education, epistemology, AIK, and Muhammadiyah higher education. The analysis shows that Progressive Islamic Religious Education is grounded in tauhid, the Qur'an and Sunnah, ijtihad and tajdid, wasathiyah, and rahmatan lil 'alamin. At UAD, these epistemological principles are translated into AIK courses, interdisciplinary learning, the integration of Islamic values into research and community service, and the Unification of Nurul 'Ilmi paradigm. AIK therefore functions not merely as a set of religious courses but as an epistemological framework connecting Islamic values, rational inquiry, scientific knowledge, and contemporary social realities. This framework contributes to the development of Islamic Religious Education in Muhammadiyah higher education by positioning religious and scientific knowledge as interconnected domains within teaching, research, and community engagement.

1. Introduction

Human beings are inherently social beings whose interactions contribute to the development of culture and civilization. Civilization itself is a manifestation of progress in the economic, political and technological fields. Meanwhile, culture is a manifestation that is more emphasized in the development of the realms of art, religion, morals and literature (Ichsan, 2020). In Islam, the birth of civilization and culture grows and develops along with the development of Islam itself. One of the substantial aspects that affects this is Islamic religious education. Viewed from a historical perspective, Islamic religious education has made a great contribution in shaping *educated people* through several things. *First*, *Interest Patronage* from the ruling class in developing education. *Second*, the seriousness of schools and universities in conducting studies on science. *Third*, the existence of positive competence in the development of science and civilization through education (Ramayulis, 2011).

In the context of Indonesia, Islamic religious education as a process and material, is faced with the complexity of the problems faced by Muslims. In Indonesia, Islamic Religious Education faces challenges arising from rapid technological change and increasingly rigid interpretations of religious teachings (Suryanegara, 2012). The emergence of these two phenomena has implications for the birth of two types of thought and movements in Islam. One tendency is represented by rigid and textualist religious reasoning, described in some Islamic discourse as al-Khawarij al-Judud (the new Khawarij), which is characterized by scripturalism, rigidity, and intolerance (Syam, 2018). This tendency may lead to the sacralization of human interpretations of religion, in which historically contingent and ijtihadi understandings are treated as unquestionable religious truths. This problem was exacerbated by the birth of the practice of tuberculosis (Superstition, Bid'ah and Khurofat) in the community as a result of the spirit of maintaining tradition and the atticism of modernism.

In addition, many from various circles think that Muslims are trapped in the phenomenon of rigidity that is unable to develop ontological, epistemological and axiological aspects by thinking philosophically by being trapped in the polarization of sacredness towards thought (*Taqdisul Afkar*) that are exclusive, sacred, ideological and alienated from the real world and social dynamics (M Thoyibi et al, 2003). The second problem is the emergence of the direction *al-Mu'tazilah al-judud* (the new Mu'tazilah school) which has a tendency to optimize rational thinking by negating the text. This movement assumes that the Qur'an and Sunnah are irrelevant to the development of the times and are not functional. This movement accepts Western cultural thought and teachings (Arif, 2020). As a result, negative secularism, liberalism, relativism and pluralism emerged.

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On the other hand, the impact of the development of the industrial revolution also had an impact on the fading of geographical barriers and the replacement of the role of human resources with mechanistic modern machines. In addition, the emergence of the era of disruption demands radical and fundamental changes in all aspects of human life that are fast-paced and innovative. This era also resulted in a shift in thinking, *Ideology Mindset*, *Worldview*, and *Creed* community in interpreting a life process. In Kuntowijoyo's eyes, technology will have an impact on the potential emergence of a handful of instant, pseudo-and opiate humans with access to advanced information technology and lead to the birth of humans who are apathetic to reality, such as the emergence of moral degradation, poverty, hedonism and materialism (Kuntowijoyo, 2006). Mulyadhi Kartanegara described that modern human problems will be trapped in a spiritual crisis. Human beings who are isolated and alienated from the non-physical world and spiritual values and alienated from nature and god, causing a divine crisis, a crisis of the soul and an ecological crisis (Kartanegara, 2006). However, the shift from the conventional era to the modern era also has an impact on positive values such as ease of access, transportation, communication and information that is efficient and effective.

Within Muhammadiyah, this epistemological orientation is closely associated with Progressive Islam (Islam Berkemajuan), which emphasizes tajdid (renewal), ijtihad, intellectual openness, and the contextualization of Islamic teachings in response to changing social conditions. Rather than positioning religious knowledge in opposition to modern science, Progressive Islam provides a normative foundation for engaging Islamic teachings with contemporary knowledge and societal challenges. In education, this orientation requires Islamic values to be connected with scientific inquiry and the broader academic disciplines rather than being confined to stand-alone religious instruction. Consequently, Muhammadiyah must be a pioneer of the spirit of progressive Islam by adhering to three main principles which include *'Iadah*, *Tahditsi* and *Ibda'i* So that a dynamic element of worship is realized by considering the development of the times. The term self-progress was initiated by KH Ahmad Dahlan with the statement "*Be a good friend and don't give up on your work for Muhammadiyah*." The statement emphasized efforts to realize the intellectuals or intellectuals of Muhammadiyah (Sidiq, 2016). Progressive Islam is also interpreted with the brilliance of thoughts and actions that surpass its time as an effort to advance society, ummah and nation in accordance with Islamic principles.

In fact, the dynamics of Muhammadiyah citizens are not only tied to the puritan-modernist group, but also multivariatory. As stated by Munir Mulkhan, there are four typologies of Muhammadiyah members, namely pure Islamic groups, al-ikhlas groups (puritan-tolerant Islam), neo-traditionalists (Muhammadiyah-NU), and neo-syncretists (Muhammadiyah-nationalists and Marhaenis-Muhammadiyah) (Mulkhan, 2013). In its development, new variants began to emerge such as Musa (Muhammadiyah-Salafi), Krismuha (Kristen-Muhammadiyah) and Kosmuha (Cosmopolitan-Muhammadiyah). This phenomenon has become an opportunity and challenge for Muhammadiyah.

The dynamic dynamics of Islamic religious education are actually not understood holistically for the academic community of Ahmad Dahlan University. This can be empirically seen by the gap between religious and general knowledge that runs independently. In other words, Islam is considered as a territory of the hereafter, not part of worldly problems. The impact of AIK subjects is still limited to being a course taught in the classroom without an element of Islamic interconnection in the course. As a result, AIK courses are considered as an obligation only and tend to be scriptural and not accommodating to the development of the times. This is in contrast to the spirit of *tajdid* or progress which has three basic meanings. *First*, it is interpreted by the concept *of i'adah* which subtransially emphasizes the conservation aspect of Islamic teachings, especially in the field of faith and mahdah worship. The spirit of purification of religious teachings is the main basis in realizing kaffah Muslims. *Second*, the principle *of tahditsi*, where the dynamics of the development of religious scientific thought and discourse need to be developed to answer the challenges of the times. *Third*, *ibda'i* which emphasizes the creative aspect. In the context of religion, it seeks to bring up ideas and products that support the essence of religion. The second problem is the lack of religious awareness culture. This is indicated by the awareness of worship in the academic community.

There are at least several studies that conduct studies related to progressive Islam *First*, Muhammad Kahfi's research with the title The Role of Muhammadiyah as a Progressive Islamic Movement in the Modern Era. The results of the study show that Muhammadiyah's contribution as a progressive Islamic movement includes several things: 1) this movement has the courage to express pure and healthy thoughts based on the Qur'an and hadith.2) implementing the ethos of al-Ma'un and Al-'Asr in real actions in life. This is evidenced by the massive construction of educational institutions, hospitals, and orphanages. 3) inculcate universal human values in life. 4) Optimizing intellect to develop Islamic insights. 5) Responsive in the face of changing times (Kahfi, 2020). *Second,* research by Mundzirin Yusuf and Hendro Widodo with the title Progressive Islam from the perspective of Muhammadiyah. The results of the study show that Islam progressed in Muhammadiyah in fact existed in AD/ART Muhammmadiyah in 1912 and 1914. Along with its development, it was again popular at the 47th Muhammadiyah Congress in Makassar.

The term progressive includes the values of truth, goodness, justice, peace, prosperity, welfare and the virtue of life for humans. The actualization of progressive Islam in Muhammadiyah is manifested in six strategic

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steps. 1) realizing civil society through the development of the quality and quantity of branches as a basis for empowerment and strengthening. 2) to become the basis for ideological development with the aim of instilling intellectual, religious and reform values (tajdid) to enlighten society. 3) improving the quality of Muhammadiyah human resources. 4) realizing Muhammadiyah's charity and social practice through jama'ah-based empowerment, economy, and independence programs. 5) Realizing an enlightenment movement that advances, liberates, and empowers the people and the nation based on community. 6) to develop the central role of Muhammadiyah in the global and international realm (Mundzzirin Yusuf, 2019).

Entering the second century, efforts to realize progressive Islam in Muhammadiyah were manifested by the Enlightenment Treatise in 2019 at the Tanwir session in Bengkulu and the 2022 Progressive Islamic Treatise (RIB) in Solo. The revitalization of epistemology in Muhammadiyah education in the second century is something that needs to be done considering the existence of two problematic entities faced by Muslims, namely the impact of technological developments and the emergence of conservation of thought. Based on these problems, there are three problem formulations. *First*, how is the concept of epistemology built at Ahmad Dahlan University. *Second*, how the actualization of the epistemology of Islamic religious education based on Islamic values progresses. *Third*, how to actualize epistemology in Muhammadiyah universities.

2. Method

This study employed qualitative conceptual analysis to examine the epistemological foundations of Progressive Islamic Religious Education and their articulation within the academic context of UAD. Conceptual analysis was selected because the study seeks to clarify the meaning, characteristics, relationships, and institutional articulation of key concepts rather than to measure variables or evaluate educational outcomes empirically (Kahn & Zeidler, 2017). The analysis focused on the conceptual relationships among Progressive Islam, Islamic Religious Education, AIK, and the integration of religious and disciplinary knowledge at UAD.

This study employs a conceptual analysis method as a qualitative approach to examine the epistemology of Islamic Religious Education and its progress within Muhammadiyah higher education institutions. Conceptual analysis is considered appropriate because this research focuses on understanding theoretical foundations, philosophical perspectives, and the development of knowledge construction in Islamic Religious Education rather than measuring quantitative variables (Kahn & Zeidler, 2017). In the context of this study, the method is relevant because epistemology concerns the nature, sources, validity, and development of knowledge, particularly in relation to how Islamic Religious Education is understood and implemented within Muhammadiyah higher education. Through this approach, the research seeks to provide a deeper and more systematic understanding of the philosophical and educational dimensions underlying the progress of Islamic Religious Education in Muhammadiyah universities.

The conceptual corpus consisted of scholarly and institutional sources relevant to Progressive Islam, Islamic educational epistemology, AIK, and the educational framework of Muhammadiyah and UAD. Sources were included when they met at least one of the following criteria: (1) they explained the normative or epistemological foundations of Progressive Islam; (2) they discussed the philosophy, curriculum, or educational orientation of AIK in Muhammadiyah higher education; (3) they addressed the relationship between Islamic knowledge and modern scientific or disciplinary knowledge; or (4) they documented the articulation of these principles within the academic context of UAD. Priority was given to official Muhammadiyah and institutional documents for normative and policy-related concepts, while peer-reviewed articles and scholarly books were used to interpret and contextualize these concepts academically. Sources that were unrelated to the conceptual focus of the study or merely mentioned Muhammadiyah or Islamic education without substantive discussion of these themes were excluded (Hammond & Wellington, 2012).

The analysis process began by identifying the central concepts related to the epistemology of Islamic Religious Education, including the sources of knowledge, educational objectives, and the relationship between Islamic teachings and modern scientific development. The researcher then examined different theoretical perspectives regarding Islamic epistemology and educational progress within Muhammadiyah higher education institutions. In relation to the theme of this study, this stage is essential because Muhammadiyah has historically emphasized the integration of Islamic values, rational thinking, and modern education as part of its educational movement. Therefore, conceptual analysis helps explain how Muhammadiyah higher education institutions construct educational knowledge and respond to contemporary educational challenges while maintaining Islamic principles.

Furthermore, the researcher compared similarities and differences among previous studies and theoretical viewpoints to identify conceptual patterns, educational orientations, and gaps in the literature regarding Islamic Religious Education in Muhammadiyah universities. This comparative analysis strengthens the theoretical discussion by clarifying which perspectives are most relevant to understanding the progress and transformation of Islamic education in Muhammadiyah higher education. Conceptual analysis is particularly useful for explaining conceptual boundaries, theoretical relationships, and educational paradigms within Islamic

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studies (Amina & Nurkhazhi, 2023). Through this process, the study develops a more coherent explanation regarding the epistemological foundations that shape Islamic Religious Education in Muhammadiyah institutions.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Epistemological Concept of Islamic Religious Education-Progressive

The term "Epistemology of Islamic Religious Education-Progress", has three substantive aspects consisting of the words epistemology, Islamic religious education and progress. Epistemology itself comes from the word *episteme* which has the meaning of knowledge and the word *Logos* which means science. Judging from the terminological aspect, the term epistemology is a discipline that conducts critical, evaluative, and normative studies of knowledge. The word critical emphasizes the activity of testing, assuming, and questioning approaches, methods, and results in acquiring knowledge. The term evaluation is an activity to assess attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and theories of truth so that it can be accounted for by reason. Meanwhile, the term normative is an effort to emphasize and internalize aspects of knowledge norms (Sari, 2020). Epistemology is also defined as the philosophical study that emphasizes the discourse of the structure, origin, methodology, and purpose of knowledge (Burhanuddin, 2018). Epistemology is a branch of philosophy that examines the nature of human knowledge, both in terms of its source, character, validity, and how knowledge is obtained (Mujahidin, 2013).

Discourse related to epistemology in Islam cannot be separated from the dynamics of scientific discourse consisting of various typologies. *First*, the stratified intellect in the perspective of Ibn Sina which has several levels consisting of *'Aql al-Hayula* (Materially) *'aql bil malakah* (Potential) *'aql bi' fi'li* (Of course) and *'aql mustafat* (Rational/Essential Reason) (Parlaungan, 2021). *Second*, the rationalism of As-Syatibi which substantially conducts studies related to *Maqashid Shari'ah*, through three approaches, namely critical analysis of prohibitions and orders, the study of *Illat* Law and Categorization *Maqhasid Ashliyyah* with *Maqashid Tabi'ah* (Ro'uf, 2013). *Third*, Ibn Thufail's thought is related to the transmission of knowledge through several steps. Through Sense by optimizing the five senses, through the optimization of the intellect in acquiring knowledge and transmitting knowledge by means of *Kasyaf, Mustafa*, science (spiritual light). (Mun'im, 2012). In the modern era, the revitalization of epistemology in Islam with the emergence of criticism of the formation of Arabic reasoning which includes epistemology *Hero*, *Burhani and 'Irfani*.

Terms *Hero* It is a discourse of thought that is dominated by the use of text authority (NASH), in understanding text as a source of knowledge. This is done by understanding the meaning of dzahir to the text or through the medium of tafsir rules (Damanik, 2019). As for epistemological reasoning *Burhani* is an epistemological reason that emphasizes the optimization of logic by considering *Stuttgart* logical conceptions based on sensory experience) and *Tasydid* (The process of proving the truth of the concept *Stuttgart*) (Khairina, 2016). While *Irfan.* is knowledge obtained through intuition or *Ma'rifah*. This reasoning was developed by the Sufis who emphasized the esoteric aspect with the pattern *Kasyf, Irfani* and spiritual. Epistemological reasoning '*Irfani* has three stages consisting of *Kasyaf, Illuminati* and *Düsseldorf* (Abshor, 2018).

The discourse related to Islamic religious education can be reviewed from two perspectives. *First*, Islamic religious education is interpreted as a set of subjects taught in educational institutions which include the subjects of the Qur'an, hadith, faith, jurisprudence, history and morals (Aziz, 2020). *Second*, Islamic religious education as a process of internalizing Islamic values and knowledge to students neglecting guidance, teaching, nurturing, teaching and supervision to develop their potential and realize the perfection of life in this world and the hereafter. According to Hazimi and Abu Lubabah, education has a definition:

ويمكن تعريف التربية: بأنها تنشئة الإنسان شيئاً فشيئاً في جميع جوانبه، ابتغاء سعادة الدارين، وفق المنهج الإسلامي.

"The process of human development is gradual in all aspects, to find happiness in two places of abode (this world and the hereafter) in accordance with the Islamic manhaj (Hazimi, 2000)"

التربية بقوله : هي : (عبارة عن نقـــل الحضارة من جيل الى جيل ، حتى يظـــل الانسان في المستوى الرفيع الذي وصل اليه ، ويتمثـــل هذا المستوى في الآداب والعلـــوم والفنون والصناعات) [1] .

The transmission of civilization from one generation to the next so that humans reach the highest degree, both including aspects of manners, science, art and products (Husein, 1977).

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The embryo of progress in Muhammadiyah was actually initiated by KH Ahmad Dahlan with the statement "*Be a good friend and don't give up on your work for Muhammadiyah*." The statement emphasized efforts to realize the intellectuals or intellectuals of Muhammadiyah (Sidiq, 2016). In addition, the characteristic of progressive Islam has been enshrined in the Muhammadiyah AD/ART in 1912 which states that Muhammadiyah is intended to promote religious matters to its members. This was also explained in the ADR/ART of Muhammadiyah in 1914 which stated that Muhammadiyah advances and makes life happy (Yusuf, 2019). In the process, the terms Islam progressed, became an Islamic idea that was declared at the Congress in Yogyakarta in 2010. The term progressive is a way of view, creed, and ideology that is substantially and systematically a manifestation of thinking that positions Muhammadiyah as a reform movement that has consistency in efforts to advance the life of the people, the nation, and the world of humanity (Qodir, 2019). As *Harakah Da'wah* and *Tajdid* with culture *moderate-wasathiyah,* Muhammadiyah is very aware that in order to overcome the stagnation of Muslims in various aspects, there is a need for enthusiasm *ijtihad* and *Tajdid* (renewal). Consequently, Muhammadiyah must be the initiator and locomotive of the spirit of Islam to progress by adhering to three main principles which include *'Iadah (*conservation, *Tahditsi* (innovation) and *ibda'I* creation) so that Islam can be realized that is able to answer the challenges of the times (Ichsan, 2019).

Based on the Progressive Islamic Treatise (RIB), the meaning of progressive Islam is a pluralism *Tajdid* (renewal) in the ideology of the ummah and religious teachings. *Tajdid* contributing to answering and solving the problems of the people and giving birth to innovations, ideas and new ideas to realize a better and advanced life in accordance with the development of the times. Muhammadiyah has an open view and attitude towards developments and emphasizes the reinterpretation of Islam in order to provide religious insight *Fress* without changing the basis of religious teachings. Spirit *Tajdid* Trying to rediscover the essence of religion, without negating the authenticity of religious teachings. Muhammadiyah tries to unravel the attitudes and views that shackle the narrow and anti-change understanding of Islam. Muhammadiyah is here to carry out the mission *Islah* and *Tajdid* by making Islam as a foothold, guidance and spirit in the pursuit of change, which is manifested in the form of movements, thoughts, and services (Treatise on Progressive Islam, 2023).

According to Shuja', there are at least five main foundations of progressive Islam. *First*, based on pure tauhid. *Second*, understand the Qur'an and Sunnah in depth and comprehensively. *Third*, realizing solutive and functional charity. *Fourth*, oriented to current and future problems and views. *Fifth*, are moderate, cooperative and tolerant (Yusuf, 2019). Normatively, Muhammadiyah adheres to reformist-modernist (renewal), displays the characteristics of progressive Islam, combines purification (purification) and development (dynamism) and is intermediate (*Wasithiyyah*) in believing, understanding and implementing the teachings of Islam, so that Islam is always actual and becomes a religion for civilization (*Din al-Hadharah*). The characteristics of progressive Islam in Muhammadiyah are found in the table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of Progressive Islam (Treatise on Progressive Islam, 2023)

No	Characteristics	Remarks
1	Based on Tauhid (al-Mabni 'ala al-Tauhid)	Tauhid constitutes the fundamental theological basis of Progressive Islam. It affirms the oneness of Allah while orienting religious commitment toward ethical and social responsibilities, including the pursuit of justice, the reduction of inequality, and the promotion of the common good.
2	Sourced from the Qur'an and al-Sunnah (al-Ruju' ila al-Qur'an wa al-Sunnah)	The Qur'an and Sunnah constitute the primary normative sources of Islamic teachings. Their interpretation requires intellectual engagement and contextual understanding so that Islamic principles remain relevant to changing social realities.
3	Reviving Ijtihad and Tajdid (Ihya' al-Ijtihad wa al-Tajdid)	*Ijtihad* and *tajdid* provide the intellectual foundations for interpreting Islamic teachings in response to contemporary challenges. They combine purification in matters of faith and worship with renewal and dynamization in social, educational, cultural, scientific, and other dimensions of human life.
4	Developing Wasathiyah (Tanmiyat al-Wasathiyah)	The Qur'an hints that Muslims are *the wasathan ummatan* (middle ummah) who have superior and moderate consequences. In other words, Islam rejects all forms of extremism, both in the form of excessive attitudes and actions (*ghuluww*) and attitudes and acts of neglect (*tafrith*). *Wasathiyah* instills a balance between individual and societal entities, aspects of birth and mind, worldly and ukhrawi problems, without tolerance for political secularism or moral permissiveism. The understanding *of wasathiyah* is manifested in a strong stance, respect for diversity, eliminating *takfiri behavior*, advancing society, considering reality, rejecting fanaticism, and not making it difficult in religious practices.
5	Creating Blessings for the Whole World (Tahqiq al-Rahmah li al-'Alamin)	Progressive Islam seeks to actualize Islam as a source of mercy for humanity and the wider creation. This principle is expressed through commitments to peace, justice, social welfare, environmental responsibility, and the advancement of human civilization.

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These characteristics provide the normative and epistemological foundations of Progressive Islamic Religious Education. The Qur'an and Sunnah function as its primary normative sources, while ijtihad and tajdid enable these sources to be interpreted in dialogue with reason, scientific knowledge, and changing social realities. Tauhid provides its theological orientation, wasathiyah shapes its approach to religious and intellectual diversity, and rahmatan lil 'alamin directs knowledge toward ethical and socially transformative purposes. Progressive Islamic Religious Education can therefore be understood as an epistemological framework that connects revelation, rational inquiry, scientific knowledge, and contextual interpretation rather than treating religious and disciplinary knowledge as separate domains.

3.2. Islamic Religious Education Advances AIK Discourse

Education from the perspective of Muhammadiyah is an effort to prepare an environment where a person can grow as a person who is aware of the presence of Allah swt as God and masters science, technology and art (IPTEKS). By having spiritual intelligence *Makrifat* (faith/tauhid) and mastery of science and technology, a person is expected to have competence so that he can meet the needs of life, be resilient, care for others, *Amar Ma'ruf nahi* munkar, have human values in life, be friendly to the environment and behave fairly, civilized and prosperous by always worshipping Allah. Muhammadiyah education is a modern Islamic education by integrating religious aspects with real life. In addition, Muhammadiya education accommodates and integrates the aspect of faith with holistic progress. Muhammadiyah education is expected to be able to produce an educated generation of Muslims by integrating spiritual-social aspects and having *Skill* to face the challenges of the times (Higher Education Council, 2013).

Viewed from the theological aspect, progressive education in Muhammadiyah emphasizes efforts to humanize, liberate, emancipation and transcendence. Humanization is an effort to activate the humanist side of humans through social transformation towards intellectual transformation. In other words, Muhammadiyah education always directs education to the goal of developing divine human character by freeing from the shackles of ignorance, poverty and backwardness and caring about social problems. Liberation is an educational effort to free the shackles of stagnant mindsets, trapped in TBS (superstition, bid'ah and superstition) and develop a creative, innovative and progressive mindset. Emancipation is an educational effort in realizing education that can be accessed by everyone regardless of religious, cultural, economic and gender backgrounds. This education also seeks to eliminate injustice and discrimination against certain groups. Adapatu transcendence is an educational effort in realizing *And then there's the Smash Bros.* by instilling aspects of faith, morals and morals (Ismunandar, 2020).

For Muhammadiyah, education is not only an instrument in providing scientific insights, but also has a vision and mission. Muhammadiyah's educational vision "The formation of human learners who are devout, have noble character, progress and excel in science and technology as a manifestation of tajdid da'wah amar ma'rufnahi munkar" (Muhammadiyah Central Higher Education Council, 2013). The educational mission of Muhammadiyah includes efforts to purify the aspects of monotheism, revitalize Islamic teachings sourced from the Qur'an and Sunnah, realize Islamic life both personally, family and community, and make Muhammadiyah educational institutions as centers for education, da'wah and cadres (Kossah, 2022). Consequently, Muhammadiyah education must apply three main aspects. *First*, reconstructing scientific epistemology in accordance with the identity of Muhammadiyah as part of the foundation of epistemology in learning. *Second*, develop innovative and creative learning. *Third*, creating a physical and social environment with the climate of al-Islam and Muhammadiyahan (Ali, 2010).

Based on the decision of the 46th Muhammadiyah Congress, there is a decision related to the revitalization of Muhammadiyah education which contains the formulation of Muhammadiyah's educational philosophy consisting of several points (see figure 1). *First*, related to the nature of education. For Muhammadiyah, environmental preparation education in transforming the essence of human beings as servants who comprehensively master science and technology, have spiritual awareness, contribute to social problems and actualize *Amar Ma'ruf is A Man Who Is Unhappy*. Muhammadisyah education is a modern education that integrates science and is oriented towards the life of this world and the hereafter. *Second*, reaffirming the vision and mission of Muhammadiyah education that has been explained earlier. *Third*, there are basic values of Muhammadiyah education (NDPM) which are based on several values such as being sourced from the Qur'an and Sunnah, hoping for the pleasure of Allah, applying the principles of deliberation, reviving *Tajdid* Supporting the Poor and the Moderates. *Fourth*, there are various aspects of education which include educators, learners, learning, curriculum, managerial, organization and community (Arifin, 2015).

One of the characteristics of the development of epistemology in Muhammadiyah/Aisiyyah Higher Education (PTM/PTMA) is the strengthening of al-Islam and Muhammadiyah through AIK (Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyahan) courses and the integration of AIK in all aspects of academic community activities in Muhammadiyah universities (Zalik Nuryana, 2017). The spirit of AIK is manifested by the actualization and transformation of values in daily life. In addition, through the *Hero*, *Burhani*, *Irfani* and interconnective, the entire academic community is able to understand and practice epistemological reasoning (Hermawan, 2023). Unlike other universities, the AIK (Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyahan) course consists of the AIK I-IV course.

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Substantially, AIK I is oriented towards the realization of Muslim scholars who are able to know themselves and their God and understand the essence, function and purpose of their lives according to the Qur'an and sunnah. AIK II is oriented in forming Muslim scholars who are obedient in carrying out worship, mu'amalah and beneficial to the environment. AIK III is oriented towards the formation of organizational cadres who are amar ma'ruf nahi munkar. AIK IV is oriented towards the formation of scholars (ulul albab) (Muhammadiyah Central Higher Education Council, 2013).

Substantially, AIK as a course is Islamic knowledge that normatively and historically includes various courses of faith, morals, Al-Quran-hadith, fiqh, and Muhammadiyah. Every Muhammadiyah university (PTM) is given the right to innovate the numenklatur and the naming of courses according to the peculiarities of the university (Hasanuddin, 2022). AIK material is also the spirit of Muhammadiyah education which is oriented towards efforts to integrate science, build character, build cadres and form Islamic personalities (Dacholfany, 2021). As for AIK learning, there are various paradigms both in theological, philosophical, substantive and methodological aspects as found in the table 2.

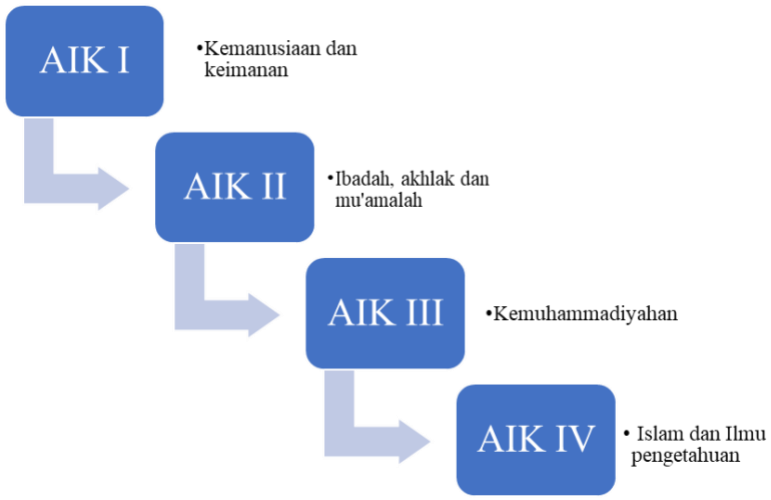


Figure 1. AIK Courses (Muhammadiyah Central Higher Education Council, 2013)

Table 2. AIK's New Paradigm (Muhammadiyah Central Higher Education Council, 2013)

Reconstructed Aspects	Current Reality	Expected Aspects
Theological and Philosophical Aspects		
Religious Thought	Centered and sourced on divine values	Focused and oriented towards divine and humanitarian values
Diksursus Related to God	Emphasizing the aspects of uluhiyah and mulkiyah	More comprehensive both aspects of uluhiyah, mulkiyah, rububiyah and social monotheistic values
Paradigm Related to the Prophet	Uswah hasanah	To become uswah hasanah and role model in life
The Ideal Human Perspective	Serves as khalifatullah	Functions as a caliph who is responsible for managing the universe
Life Views	Irradiant to spiritual-mystical values	Oriented towards ascetic life patterns
Substantive Aspects		
The Purpose of Al Islam and Muhammadiyahan	Having religion	To be a human being who has religiosity and is oriented towards progressive values
Direction of Al Islam and Muhammadiyahan	Fear and obedience to Allah	Obey Allah and be kind to fellow human beings
Basic Material of Al Islam and Muhammadiyahan	Consists of the subjects of faith, morals, worship and history	Oriented to normative teachings (creed, morals, worship and history) and the system of life in Islam (God, nature, man)
The Nature of Al Islam and Muhammadiyah	Separate from courses other than AIK	Connected and integrated with other courses
Methodological Aspects		
Educational Model	Educator-oriented education model	The educational model is oriented towards educators and learners
The Role of Lecturers	Teachers and managers	Role models and leaders in the classroom
Educational Methods	Science transfer	Transforming science and developing critical thinking
Educational Evaluation	Results-oriented	Process, results and feedback oriented

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As for the learning process, AIK emphasizes interactive, holistic, integrative, scientific, contextual, thematic, effective, collaborative, and student centered. Interactive, that graduate learning outcomes are obtained through two-way interaction activities carried out between lecturers and students which are carried out interactively. Scientific where graduate learning achievements are carried out and produced through learning methods by emphasizing and emphasizing scientific approaches. This approach is carried out with the aim of creating an academic atmosphere that is based on scientific norms, values, and principles, considering religious values and national values. Contextual where the learning process is arranged and implemented by relating students' ability to solve problems in the real world to be relevant to the context of the discussion. Thematic where the learning process is adjusted according to the scientific theme in a particular study program. This activity is carried out associated with real phenomena through various approaches, inter-multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary, so as to produce graduates who understand the material comprehensively. Effective where the results of the learning process can be produced efficiently and effectively, so that graduates who have appropriate competencies are realized. Collaborative where learning is carried out together, through the involvement of educators with students and between participants, thus creating collaboration in the learning process. Student-centered where learning activities are oriented towards increasing potential by encouraging students to independently construct knowledge and skills. Holistic which is learning that relates between one material and the development of all aspects of student potential (Ahmad Muttaqin et al., 2020).

The preceding discussion represents the normative and conceptual framework of Muhammadiyah education as formulated in Muhammadiyah educational guidelines and related scholarly literature. Such principles establish what AIK and Progressive Islamic education are expected to achieve, but they should not automatically be interpreted as evidence of uniform implementation across all Muhammadiyah higher education institutions. The following discussion therefore shifts from this normative framework to its institutional articulation at Universitas Ahmad Dahlan. The analysis focuses on documented academic structures and practices at UAD, including AIK courses, curriculum and learning plans, research and community service, academic activities, and the Unification of Nurul ‘Ilmi paradigm.

3.3. AIK and the Unification of Nurul 'Ilmi as an Elaboration of Progressive Islam in Muhammadiyah Universities

At Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, the normative principles of AIK are articulated through a university-specific curricular structure. AIK learning includes courses addressing the Qur’an and Hadith, faith and morality, Muhammadiyah studies, and interdisciplinary Islam. UAD also provides complementary certification courses, including Tahsin al-Qur’an and Fiqh of Worship as compulsory components, alongside elective areas such as Arabic, premarital studies, TPQ teaching, qibla direction measurement, hadith digitization, Islamic inheritance, digital da‘wah, sermon practice, and umrah guidance. This curricular structure illustrates how the broader Muhammadiyah AIK framework is adapted to UAD’s institutional and academic context.

The aspect of AIK epistemological development at Ahmad Dahlan University is described through the learning planning process described in the RPS (Learning Implementation Plan). In AIK learning at UAD, there are three paradigms oriented towards aspects of conservation, regeneration and innovation. In the conservation plain, the development of Qur'an and hadith courses as well as creed and morals refers to the norms that are built by the text which in the process is contextualized through learning activities. The aspect of cadre regeneration is actualized through Muhammadiyah courses which are theoretically taught Muhammadiyah materials and practically through autonomous organizations such as IMM, Hizbul Wathan and Tapak Suci Muhammadiyah. Meanwhile, innovation as part of the context of progressive Islam is mniversized in interdisciplinary Islamic courses where each study program has a concentration according to its field.

For example, within the medical study program, interdisciplinary Islamic learning provides a space for medical knowledge to be examined in relation to Islamic ethical and normative perspectives. This example demonstrates that knowledge integration at UAD is intended to occur within disciplinary contexts rather than exclusively within stand-alone religious courses (see Figure 2).

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9-12	Sub-CPMK2: Mampu menganalisa prinsip Islam terhadap isu kedoteran dan farmasi CPMK 3 (C4)	9. Definisi Shihah, Quran dan Hadits tentang kesehatan. Prinsip Islam terkait Ilmu kedokteran, meliputi: Konsep Kedharuratan, berobat, dan perawatan, Profesi dokter, apoteker dan perawat 10. Tinjauan islam tentang masalah kedokteran, meliputi: urogenital, penyakit saraf, ilmu bedah, kedokteran gigi, kedokteran jiwa 11. Tinjauan Islam terhadap masalah kesehatan khusus, meliputi: Vaksinasi, donor darah, khitan, merokok, pemakain alkohol untuk campurn obat, Euthanasia 12. Islam dan Kefarmasian, sejarah perkembangan farmasi dalam Islam, apoteker muslim/ tokoh dokter muslim, penelitian mutakhir tentang kesehatan dan obat-obatan.	Bentuk pembelajaran: Kuliah/Seminar Model pembelajaran: FGD Metode pembelajaran: Small Group Discussion Pengalaman belajar: Group Discussion Mahasiswa menelaah materi yang telah disiapkan Dan kemudian mendiskusikan konsep Kesehatan dan kefarmasian serta isu yang berkembang dari keduanya	Tatap Muka (40') Tugas Terstruktur (60') X 4	• Non Test (FGD)	9. Ketepatan menjelaskan definisi kesehatan dalam Islam 10. Mampu menjelaskan tinjaun islam tentang maslah kedokteran 11. Mampu menjelaskan masalah khusus dalam kesehatan 12. Mampu mendefinsiskan kefarmasian dan menegtahui isu-isu mutkahir dalam pengobatan	30%
13-14	Sub-CPMK3: Mampu merancang Proposal penelitian tentang kesehatan berbasis nilai-nilai keislaman CPMK 1 (C5)	12. Menyusun Proposal Penelitian 13. Presentasi Proposal Penelitian islam dan kesehatan/farmasi	Bentuk pembelajaran: Kuliah/Seminar Model pembelajaran: WP/Presentatiom Metode pembelajaran: Writing Practive Pengalaman belajar: Mahasiswa menuliskan gagasannya terkait integrasi keilmuwan menurut laatrbelkang mereka dan mempresentasikannya	Tatap Muka (100') X 2	Evaluasi Akhir Semester	13. Mampu merancang proposal dalam bidang kesehatan dan kefarmasian dalam Islam 14. Mampu merancang mempresentasikan rancangan proposal yang telah di tulis	40 %

Figure 2. One of the Interdisciplinary Scientific Discourses in the Medical Study Program

In addition, the development of epistemology at Ahmad Dahlan University is carried out through the integration of AIK in research and community service. Beyond classroom learning, the articulation of AIK at UAD also extends to research and community service. AIK-oriented research and community engagement provide opportunities for lecturers and students to examine Islam and Muhammadiyah in relation to social, educational, cultural, scientific, economic, and other contemporary issues. This orientation expands AIK from a classroom-based subject into an academic perspective that can inform knowledge production and social engagement. Research and community service therefore constitute important arenas in which the epistemological principles of Progressive Islam can interact with empirical problems and disciplinary knowledge.

The development of epistemology at Universitas Ahmad Dahlan is also carried out through four main movements, namely the da'wah movement, the tajdid movement, the science movement and the charity movement. All academic and non-academic activities within UAD are oriented towards da'wah activities both in the form of strengthening the capacity of AIK and efforts to introduce Islamic teachings. This activity was actualized through Baitul Arqam, PLP, thematic KKN, and ORTOM activities. The tajdid activities are carried out through the downstream of research results and PkM which are integrated with AIK so that the research results and PkM are functional. The Science Movement is a juxtaposition of the reasoning of *bayani*, *burhani* and *irfani* epistemology through lecture activities, discussions, MBKM, research, PkM and studies. Meanwhile, the charity movement is realized through recitation activities, KKN activities, social assistance and PkM.

Efforts to integrate AIK in all aspects of academic and non-academic activities are also carried out by UAD by developing "unification of nurul 'science' in the development of integrative, interconnective and contextual epistemological aspects. The scientific basis at Ahmad Dahlan University is oriented towards *nuurul anwar*, which is the values of monotheism shown in the first layer. As for the second layer, it is the integration and interconnection of qauliyah and kauniyyah verses with the support of UAD's work ethos, which is innovative, professional and dedicative in the third layer. While the fourth layer is an elaboration of the three UAD ethos consisting of 12 UAD ethos. While the fifth layer is a form of unification of knowledge by conducting multidislipliner, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary studies based on the recognition of progress, people, nationality, humanity, universality and science. For example, the hadith related to the cleanliness *of At-thahuru satrul iman* which is part of the chapter on cleanliness and ablution in the hadith book is generally defined by the urgency of cleanliness and self-purification. The word satrul iman is defined by part or half of faith. Judging from the unification of nurul 'ilmi, half of faith can be understood in a safe context. Cleanliness is not only related to physical cleanliness, but cleanliness from destructive nature, heinous acts and preserving the existence of cleanliness as an effort to maintain health.

4. Conclusion

This study conceptualizes Progressive Islamic Religious Education at Universitas Ahmad Dahlan through three interconnected dimensions. First, its epistemological foundation is grounded in tauhid, the Qur'an and Sunnah, *ijtihad* and *tajdid*, *wasathiyah*, and *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, which connect normative religious sources with rational inquiry, scientific knowledge, and contemporary social realities. Second, AIK provides an educational

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articulation of this epistemology by extending Islamic learning beyond stand-alone religious instruction and connecting it with intellectual formation, disciplinary knowledge, and social responsibility. Third, at UAD, these principles are institutionally articulated through AIK-related curricula and learning plans, interdisciplinary learning, research and community service, academic activities, and the Unification of Nurul 'Ilmi paradigm. The conceptual contribution of this study lies in positioning Progressive Islamic Religious Education not merely as the transmission of religious knowledge but as an epistemological framework that integrates revelation, reason, empirical inquiry, and disciplinary knowledge. In the context of Muhammadiyah higher education, the UAD case illustrates how the normative principles of Progressive Islam can inform a more integrative, contextual, and interdisciplinary model of Islamic Religious Education, although further empirical research is needed to examine how this epistemological framework is enacted in academic practice.

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Data Availability

The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Declaration on AI Use

The authors declare that no artificial intelligence (AI) or AI-assisted tools were used in the preparation of this manuscript.

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