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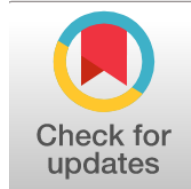

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Progressive Islamic Teaching and Learning: Integrating Knowledge and Practice for Societal Advancement

Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Islam Progresif: Mengintegrasikan Pengetahuan dan Praktik untuk Kemajuan Masyarakat

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Abstract

This conceptual study explores the paradigm of progressive Islamic teaching and learning, addressing the disconnection between traditional teachings and modern science, which hinders their societal relevance. Fueled by the "progressive Islam" paradigm initiated by Muhammadiyah, this research advocates for integrating Islamic doctrines and practices with scientific knowledge to enhance individual and societal well-being. Employing a conceptual survey, the study analyzes existing literature to propose that modern teaching methods should be employed to facilitate a deeper understanding, practical application, and reflection of Islamic teachings. The study's implications underline the significance of fostering a harmonious integration between Islamic education and modern knowledge, contributing to the advancement of both individual growth and social progress.

Highlight:

- Societal Disconnection Addressed: This study explores the paradigm of progressive Islamic teaching, bridging the gap between traditional teachings and modern science, crucial for enhancing societal relevance.
- Integration for Well-being: Fueled by the "progressive Islam" paradigm, the research advocates for merging Islamic doctrines and practices with scientific knowledge to bolster individual and societal well-being.
- Modernization of Education: Through a conceptual survey, the study emphasizes the importance of utilizing contemporary teaching methods to enable a comprehensive grasp, practical implementation, and thoughtful contemplation of Islamic teachings,

thereby contributing to individual growth and societal advancement.

Keyword: Progressive Islamic Teaching, Modern Science, Societal Relevance, Integrating Knowledge, Teaching Methods

Introduction

The "Progressive Islam" concept promoted by Muhammadiyah since the 46th Muktamar Muhammadiyah in 2010 in Yogyakarta characterizes the Muhammadiyah organization as a progressive, modern and dynamic Islamic movement [1]. If one traces the roots of "Progressive Islam" in Muhammadiyah, it has existed since the initiator KH. Ahmad Dahlan. M Syoedja' said that KH A. Dahlan had tried to harmonize religious activities with the study of natural sciences, namely astronomy related to measuring the Qibla direction, even though Ahmad Dahlan had to conflict with traditionalist religious leaders at that time [2].

The understanding of Islam in "Progressive Islam" is no different as all Muslims believe it is the religion brought by the Prophets from Adam to Muhammad. The essence of his teachings is to unite Allah as the only God without associating partners with him. Belief in the existence of Allah, angels, books, messengers, the last day, and destiny is the fundamental Islamic belief referred to by the Prophet Muhammad as "faith" or as it was known later by the Khalaf scholars (scholars who lived after Salaf the first three generations of hijriyyah) with the term "'aqīdah." While the understanding of progress is, of course, in harmony with Islamic teachings because, in the belief of the Muhammadiyah movement, if Islamic teachings are understood, taught, and practised correctly, they will give birth to progress. And vice versa, if Islamic teachings are understood, taught, and practised wrongly, it will result in setbacks. The correct understanding of Islam concerns more than Allah and supernatural things. Accurate knowledge of Islam must affirm the truth produced through the study of sciences [1]. Therefore progressive Islam is not a new understanding or, in the language of its religion, it is called bid'ah, but it is an understanding that should be towards Islam.

Because of the importance of a correct understanding of Islam, it is necessary to explain the concept of Islamic teaching from a progressive perspective. Because if teacher blunder in teaching Islamic doctrine, there will be misconceptions about Islam, and it will not produce progress. The content in Islamic education is often alienated from science, thus creating a distance between religious studies and science lessons in many Islamic educational institutions. In addition, Islamic teaching is usually only a theory and religious ritual without implications for social life. Of course, the alienation of Islamic studies from science lessons and the absence of impact of Islamic teaching for social practice is a setback in education.

So in this paper, I will explain how the content in teaching and learning Islam is from a progressive Islam perspective. Then I will explain Islam's education and learning method from a progressive Islamic perspective.

Method

This study uses a literature study approach to explore various references related to Islamic Learning and the concept of progressive Islam. The author will examine all relevant books and journals to develop a new conception of how progressive Islam can become a paradigm in Islamic education, especially those related to classroom learning activities. Researchers will use content analysis as a stage, including reading, understanding, identifying data, grouping data, displaying data and drawing conclusions to explore the concepts of progressive Islamic teaching and learning.

Result and Discussion

Education transmits specific characteristics, skills and knowledge related to learning and teaching. Therefore education has two essential aspects, namely content containing character, skills, knowledge, and methods that make the transmission process more efficient. So in this section, I will discuss the content and teaching and learning methods from a progressive Islamic perspective.

A. Progressive Islamic Teaching and Learning Content

To understand content related to progressive Islamic education, we need to know what kind of Islam is correct. Islam as a religion is one, but the understanding of how Islam is very diverse. Some groups believe Islam is contrary to Western progress. Usually, these groups reject music, TV, social media and others with religious arguments because they come from the West. Other groups accept Western progress without criticism, so they will take and even support Western ideologies contrary to Islam. From the perspective of Muhammadiyah, the two views are not progressive understandings of Islam because they have in common, namely being extreme and following a thought without thinking about its origins. From the beginning, the religious style of Muhammadiyah firmly stated itself as a tajdid or renewal movement, which was interpreted as purification in aqidah and shari'ah and as dynamic in the development of human life.

Tajdid, defined as the purification of Islamic teachings or tajrid, is by upholding monotheism or oneness of Allah, freeing humans from shirk (polytheism), and associating partners with Allah with other worshipers in concept and practice. So, according to Hasnahwati et al., from the start, Muhammadiyah rejected superstition, khurafat (belief

in things that don't make sense and cannot be proven true), and bid'ah (something new invented in religion) because these three things will lead to shirk [3].

Purification according to Muhammadiyah, does not mean rejecting the thoughts of classical scholars. For Muhammadiyah, the thinking of classical ulama is a valuable legacy that needs research, but without being constrained by their conflict of view. The opinion debate among classical scholars for Muhammadiyah needs to seek the strongest argument, known as the tarjih method. Therefore in Muhammadiyah, all religious practices are continuously verified by the Muhammadiyah ijtihad called the Tarjih Council. Then, if the differences of opinion between madhabs can unite, Muhammadiyah will combine the two, called tawfiq. As Yusuf Al-Qardawi says, there are three methods when the text is conflicting: Al-jam' wa t-tawfiq means integration and compromise, Tarjih means seeking the strongest, and Naskh means erasing the previous text with the last one [4].

There have been debates and conflicts between madhab scholars; in this regard, Muhammadiyah does not care about it all. For example, in matters of aqidah, there has been a conflict between Ash'ariyyah and Hanabilah that has occurred until now. The Hanabilah group strongly rejects the conception of the twenty attributes of God from the Ash'ariyyah perspective [5], while the Ash'ariyyah reject the division of monotheism into three according to Hanabilah [6]. For Muhammadiyah, the concept of Allah from the Ash'ariyyah and Hanabilah perspectives is equally essential, so in the book Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyahan, published by the Pimpinan Wilayah Muhammadiyah East Java, aqidah thinking from these two streams is taught [7]. The acceptance of two madhabs shows that progressive Islamic thought from the perspective of Muhammadiyah requires a wasatiyah or middle attitude in religious belief.

Muhammadiyah's religious thinking differs from the traditionalists who reject the use of reason and science in understanding religion. The treatise on progressive Islam stated that the progress of science and technology has a fundamental role in advanced life. For "progressive Islam", religious practices that leave and set aside science and technology are underdeveloped religions because science and technology can be a tool for understanding religious texts. In this case, Muhammadiyah utilizes astronomy to align the Qibla and find out the beginning of the month of Qamariyyah.

Tajdid also means dynamics: improvement, development, modernization. When applied in morality and muamalah dunyawiyah, religious practices must lead humans to progress in all aspects of life, such as philosophy, politics, economics, society, education, and culture. At this level, tajdid in religious practice is not just a ritual; religious thoughts and movements must influence life. Therefore, Muhammadiyah, in its "Progressive Islamic Treatise", is dedicated to five things, namely serving the people, serving the nation, serving humanity, serving the global, and serving the future. Service is related to all human life, from improving people's quality of politics, economy, law, and democracy to upholding human rights, women's empowerment, child protection, disaster management and so on [1]. KH. A. Dahlan himself, the inspiration for this thinking, made theological preaching to eradicate poverty. Referred to by the next Muhammadiyah community as Al-Ma'un theology [8], [9]. Zuly Qodir mentioned the thoughts of KH. A. Dahlan on the matter of zakat fitrah requires that the distribution must rotate to people in need [10].

Regarding the development of progressive Islamic teaching and learning content, content in Islamic religious education must also have a progressive nature, that the content of progressive Islamic teaching and learning must refer to the sources of Islamic teachings, namely the Al-Qur'an and As-Sunnah. The inheritance of the scholars, also known as turath, is a consideration for educational content with the principles of tolerance and wasatiyah. Of course, at the initial level, students do not need to be taught the problems of debates between madhabs, both aqidah and fiqh. In Al-Ghazali's opinion, it is enough for children at an early age to be taught the basics of the pillars of Islam and Faith and strengthen them with the Al-Qur'an and Hadith. Then at a higher level of education, when a person is ready, he may study debates between madhabs [11], [12].

The development of content in Islamic teaching and learning must also link religious practices with science because belief as a normative truth in Islam is always in harmony with the rational-empirical truth in science. So teaching content must always connect beliefs in aqidah and law in fiqh with science. For example, the explanation of taharah must also be associated with hydrology (the science of water) or geography, as discussed by the Tarjih Council [13]. Likewise, the prayer problem can be related to mathematics and geography to determine the Qibla direction [14]. So teaching and learning in religious rituals discuss more than just the classical debate.

Finally, progressive Islamic teaching and learning content must make Islamic teachings have an impact on changing society for the better. Like teaching fiqh, the chapter on zakat and alms must foster a spirit of philanthropy [15]. The chapter on marriage fiqh must address social issues regarding opposite-sex relationships, such as free sex and early marriage [16]. Perhaps the chapter on faith in Allah can be linked to environmental and living things [17].

B. Progressive Islamic Teaching and Learning Method

The progressive Islamic teaching and learning method certainly differs from the classical one, which emphasizes lecture and memorization methods. Az-Zarnuji formulated the classical Islamic education method in his famous book At-Ta'lim wa l-Muta'alim. Mustafa and Meliani summarize Al-Zarnuji's perspective teaching methods namely

understanding (al-fahm), memorizing (al-hifdh), contemplating (at-taamul), taking notes (at-ta'liq), repeating (at-tikrar), question and answer (al-mudhakara), and the method of debate (al-munazarah) [18]. This result is in line with Hery's research of classical Islamic methods, namely memorization, al-sama' and al-qira'ah (listening and reading), al-imla' (dictation), muzakarah (remembering), and munazarah (debate method) [19]. In the Indonesian context, the classical Islamic learning method is usually the teacher reads a book, and then students give notes on translating the text using pegon Arabic. This method is called bandungan. After that, the student reads the results of his reading or memorization in front of the teacher, called sorogan. Today the application of these two methods still exists in traditional Islamic boarding schools [20].

Applying the classical method in Indonesia has many problems, especially in teaching Arabic grammar, namely Nahwu. In Mawaddah's opinion, there are several problems in teaching Nahwu with the classical method in the modern era, including students who study with this method do not yet have good Arabic skills, students who lack understanding of Javanese and are not familiar with Javanese Pegon, teaching methods are still very traditional so that students become bored, and students find it difficult to understand the text as a whole because the translation process is done in words [21].

KH. A. Dahlan, when he came to Indonesia with progressive Islamic thought, made changes not only in religious belief but also in educational thinking. He renewed the classical method commonly used in madrasah by incorporating techniques of discussion, question and answer, and even the use of violin and musical instruments. Because of that, as told by H. M. Syoedja', KH. A. Dahlan was branded an infidel and accused of having converted to Christianity [2]. However, in the current reality in Indonesia, madrasahs are used to teaching marching bands, violin, guitar, etc.

Among the principles of Muhammadiyah ijtihad are mabadi' al-khamsah, or five issues that have been formulated since 1935, thoroughly discussed on December 29, 1954-January 3, 1955, in the Special Conference of the Tarjih Council, and ratified in 1964. The five main issues are al-din, al -dunya, al-'ibadah, sabilillah, and al-qiyas (ijtihad). From this division, Muhammadiyah seems secular because it separates religious and world affairs. In this regard, Asjmuni Abdurrahman explained that the meaning of world affairs based on the hadith "you know better about your world affairs" shows that we cannot renew religious matters related to the law of worship and mu'amalah. However, in world affairs, such as the development of technology and science, these matters may be innovated according to human desires and needs [22]. Likewise, the method of teaching and learning practice is separate from religious affairs, so innovating in it is necessary.

Progressive Islamic teaching and learning methods must adopt the most up-to-date methods, stick to the old ways and refuse to change a form of decline [23]. Lecture and memorization methods are considered old-fashioned because they tend to be one-way from teacher to student, and the student memorizes the text even though they may not understand its meaning. Ann Luther criticized this method, saying that this traditional method will only create low-level thinking skills because students are only required to memorize and follow the knowledge contained in the text without developing upper-level thinking skills. Luther suggests leaving ancient methods and using methods that can bring out student and teacher collaboration and foster critical thinking skills [24].

Progressive teaching and learning methods must also utilize modern technology. Many platforms can support the teaching and learning process. Nusaibah and Bustam mention applications supporting education, including Canva, Toontastic, Lectora, KineMaster, Powtoon, Prezi, Wondershare, Filmora, and Sigil [25]. The utilization of this technology, according to Salsabila et al., can develop learning so that it is attractive, practical, and up-to-date [26].

Conclusion

Progressive Islamic teaching and learning in terms of content needs to teach the oneness of Allah purely without associating it with other gods. Religious teaching content must bring about a wasatiyah or mid attitude. Next, teaching and learning content must integrate Islamic doctrines and practices with science. Then in the teaching process, it is necessary to look for the implications of Islamic doctrine and practice for improving individual and social life.

Then in terms of progressive Islamic teaching and learning methods, it is necessary to abandon the old ways and innovate using the latest techniques. Teaching and learning methods are not religious affairs that the teacher cannot change but are world affairs that he can innovate. Modern teaching and learning methods can foster critical thinking skills or high-level thinking and utilize technological media so that students can understand and reflect on Islamic doctrines and practices well.

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