

The Muhammadiyah Diaspora And The Future Of Islamic Religious Education Moderation

Muchamad Zainal Mubarak^{1*}

ABSTRACT

This article discusses the role of the Muhammadiyah diaspora in shaping the direction of Islamic moderation, particularly in the context of the future of Islamic religious education in Indonesia. The Muhammadiyah diaspora, which is spread across various countries, not only carries progressive Islamic values but also serves as an agent for promoting wasathiyah (moderate) Islam that is adaptable to global contexts. This study aims to describe the Muhammadiyah diaspora in various regions, both nationally and internationally, and to analyze the factors driving the spread of Muhammadiyah communities beyond their places of origin. The study highlights how the cross-cultural experiences of Muhammadiyah diaspora members can serve as a source of innovation in curriculum development and learning methods for Islamic religious education that are more inclusive, dialogical, and relevant to contemporary challenges. Through a qualitative approach and literature review, this article demonstrates that strengthening diaspora networks and internalizing the values of moderation they promote have the potential to transform Islamic religious education from a normative-doctrinal orientation toward a more reflective and transformative format. Thus, the Muhammadiyah diaspora can become a strategic force in addressing the need for Islamic education reform that is more open and oriented toward global peace. The findings of this study show that the Muhammadiyah diaspora not only acts as a global dakwah agent but also as a source of inspiration for renewing Islamic religious education in Indonesia to be more inclusive, adaptive, and focused on peace and civilizational advancement.

Keywords: Muhammadiyah Diaspora, Islamic Moderation, Islamic Religious Education

1 Introduction

Islamic religious education in Indonesia has experienced substantial transformation in response to the dynamics of globalization, social change, and increasingly complex ideological challenges. Among the key religious organizations contributing significantly to this transformation is Muhammadiyah. Established in 1912, Muhammadiyah is widely recognized as a modernist Islamic movement that synthesizes Islamic teachings with a commitment to rationality and scientific advancement. Over the past few decades, Muhammadiyah's role has extended beyond the national context, establishing a growing international presence through the diaspora of its cadres, the dissemination of its intellectual discourse, and the establishment of educational institutions across various countries[1].

The phenomenon of the Muhammadiyah diaspora, institutionally manifested through the establishment of Muhammadiyah Special Branch Leaders (Pimpinan Cabang Istimewa Muhammadiyah or PCIM) abroad, reflects the expansion of progressive and moderate Islamic values. PCIMs have been established in various countries such as Egypt, Australia, the Netherlands, Japan, and the United States. These diaspora communities are not merely religious groups living abroad; they actively contribute to promoting Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin (Islam as a mercy to all creation), strengthening the Indonesian Islamic identity, and developing contextual and moderate models of Islamic education[2].

Amid increasing challenges in Islamic education—including radicalism, intolerance, and religious polarization—there is a growing urgency to mainstream religious moderation within the educational

¹ Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang

*Alamat korespondensi: mubarakzainal527@gmail.com

system. Moderation does not merely signify taking a middle position, but rather entails a critical, adaptive, and constructive attitude toward the changing times. Through its Progressive Islam approach, Muhammadiyah offers both a theological and practical framework for formulating an educational model that balances text and context, faith and reason, as well as tradition and innovation [1].

Against this backdrop, it is essential to conduct an in-depth examination of how the Muhammadiyah diaspora serves as a strategic force in shaping the future of Islamic religious education that is both moderate and inclusive, at both national and global levels.

2 Research Methods

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design using a library research approach. Library research involves the collection of data or scholarly works relevant to the research object. It focuses on gathering information from literature or studies conducted to address a particular problem, with an emphasis on critical and in-depth analysis of relevant library materials [3]. Data were collected through the analysis of official Muhammadiyah documents, recent scholarly journals, and activity reports of the Muhammadiyah diaspora (PCIM) for the 2020–2025 period

3 Results and Discussion

Definition and Context of the Muhammadiyah Diaspora

Etymologically, the term diaspora originates from the Greek word *diaspeirein*, which means "to scatter in various directions." In the context of religious organizations, diaspora refers to the dispersion of a community, members, or values of a group to regions beyond their homeland. The Muhammadiyah diaspora refers to the spread of Muhammadiyah members, ideas, and institutional activities abroad, which are formally organized under the structure of the Special Branch Leadership of Muhammadiyah (Pimpinan Cabang Istimewa Muhammadiyah or PCIM).

PCIM is the official representation of Muhammadiyah abroad, playing a strategic role in preaching, education, and cultural diplomacy. According to data from the Muhammadiyah Central Board (PP Muhammadiyah), by 2024, more than 25 PCIM branches have been established in various countries, including Australia, Egypt, Japan, the Netherlands, the United States, and South Korea [2]. The existence of this diaspora symbolizes the internationalization of the progressive Islamic movement, which not only focuses on traditional preaching but also on strengthening education and cross-cultural cooperation.

The Role of the Muhammadiyah Diaspora in Islamic Education

The Muhammadiyah diaspora plays an important role in the development of Islamic education based on moderate values. Through PCIM activities, Muhammadiyah organizes schools, teacher training, regular study sessions, and curriculum development that adapts to both local and global contexts. In Australia, for example, Muhammadiyah is active in interfaith dialogue programs, Islamic teacher training, and academic seminars at prominent universities.[4].

One of the main strengths of the Muhammadiyah diaspora is its ability to bridge Islamic values with the demands of modern society. The Islamic education developed by the diaspora is not merely focused on teaching *fiqh* and creed, but also emphasizes global ethics, social responsibility, and the enhancement of science and technology literacy. This aligns with the vision of Progressive Islam, which places knowledge and practice at the core of transformative Islamic education.

Islamic Moderation in the Perspective of Muhammadiyah

Islamic moderation in Muhammadiyah's perspective is not a compromise of values, but a religious approach that is rational, inclusive, and contextual. This concept is explicitly outlined in Muhammadiyah's official documents such as the *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan*, which emphasizes the importance of making Islam a mercy to all creation through a just, tolerant approach grounded in universal human values [5]. In education, Muhammadiyah's values of moderation are implemented through:

- An integrated curriculum combining religious and general knowledge,
- Strengthening Islamic character that is open to differences,

- The use of scientific and critical approaches in understanding religious texts.

Through this approach, Muhammadiyah strives to create a Muslim generation that is religious, intellectual, and socially conscientious. Moderation is not only an ideological theme but also a pedagogical principle throughout the entire Muhammadiyah education system, both domestically and within its diaspora network

Challenges and Prospects of the Globalization of Muhammadiyah Education

Although it has made significant progress, the Muhammadiyah diaspora faces several challenges, including:

- The complexity of assimilating into local cultures,
- Limited human resources and funding,
- Regulatory challenges in the host countries[6].

Nevertheless, the opportunities for the globalization of Islamic education through the Muhammadiyah diaspora are also very significant. Strengthening networks among PCIM branches, international collaboration with global educational institutions, and the use of digital technology in learning are important prospects for advancing the role of the diaspora as agents of transformative moderate Islamic education.

The Concept of Islamic Moderation in Education

Islamic moderation, or wasathiyah, is a religious approach that rejects extremism—whether in the form of radicalism or liberalism—and emphasizes a balance between traditional values and modernity. In the context of Islamic education, moderation serves as a key principle to guide students toward a deep understanding of religion while remaining open to diversity and contemporary developments[7]. Education based on Islamic moderation emphasizes three main dimensions:

1. Cognitive A religious understanding grounded in evidence and rationality,
2. Affective The internalization of values such as tolerance and empathy among religious communities,
3. Psychomotor Social practices oriented toward peace and justice.

Muhammadiyah has made the principle of moderation an integral part of its educational philosophy, as explicitly stated in the Risalah Islam Berkemajuan document. In this context, religious education is not merely the transmission of textual knowledge, but also the formation of a dynamic and adaptive Muslim personality.

The Integration of Islamic Moderation into the Muhammadiyah Curriculum

Muhammadiyah schools and universities in various countries integrate moderation into their curricula through an interdisciplinary approach. For example, Muhammadiyah University in Malaysia and PCIM Egypt have developed teaching modules that combine inclusive Quranic interpretation, interfaith studies, and contemporary Islamic philosophy. This innovation is a response to the challenges of contemporary education, which requires students to be not only academically competent but also spiritually and socially mature..

The Strategic Role of the Muhammadiyah Diaspora in the Moderation of Islamic Education

The Muhammadiyah diaspora, particularly in pluralistic countries such as Australia, Japan, and the Netherlands, plays a strategic role as an agent of Islamic moderation. Through both formal and non-formal educational activities, the Muhammadiyah diaspora promotes Islam as a religion that is tolerant and harmonious with local cultures [8].

Concrete examples of these activities include:

- Public discussions and seminars on Islam and democracy,
- Multicultural education based on universal values in Muhammadiyah educational institutions abroad,
- The publication of books and learning modules on moderate Islam in foreign languages,

- Cross institutional collaboration with non-Muslim educational institutions to build mutual understanding.

This role of the diaspora demonstrates that Islamic education is not limited to the domestic sphere, but can serve as a bridge for cultural and spiritual diplomacy on the international stage.

By strategically leveraging these opportunities, the Muhammadiyah diaspora holds great potential to lead a new wave of Islamic education that is inclusive, progressive, and transnational.

4 Conclusion

This paper demonstrates that the Muhammadiyah diaspora plays a significant role in promoting Islamic moderation through education, both at the national and international levels. The presence of the Special Branch Leadership of Muhammadiyah (PCIM) in various countries not only represents religious identity but also serves as an agent of transformation for inclusive, tolerant, and progressive Islamic values.

The concept of Islamic moderation in Muhammadiyah's view is not merely about taking a "middle ground" position, but rather represents a rational, contextual, and solution-oriented approach to addressing contemporary challenges. Through an integrative curriculum, dialogical teaching methods, and strong character values, Muhammadiyah has proven that Islamic education can shape a generation of Muslims who are intelligent, open-minded, and socially responsible.

Amid global dynamics, the Muhammadiyah diaspora has succeeded in becoming a pioneer in developing Islamic religious education that is relevant to the needs of the global community, without losing its theological and ideological roots. Through academic activities, cultural outreach, and cross-institutional collaborations, this diaspora has emerged as a vital force in advancing the practice of Islamic moderation on the world stage.

References

1. P. S. Thahir, "Muhammadiyah Goes International? Challenges and Opportunities," *J. Muhammadiyah Stud.*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 47–67, 2024, doi: 10.22219/jms.v9i1.36120.
2. L. Herlina and PP Muhammadiyah, "Risalah Islam Berkemajuan (Keputusan Mukhtar Ke-48 Muhammadiyah Tahun 2022)," *Widya Balina*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 6–13, 2022.
3. D. Sugiyono, *Metode penelitian kuantitatif kualitatif dan R&D*. 2010.
4. A. Saefurohman, "Muhammadiyah Australia College: Antara Internasionalisasi Dan Multitrack Diplomacy," *Jisiera J. Islam. Stud. Int. Relations*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 107–127, 2023, doi: 10.5281/zenodo.10031282.
5. S. Ahmad, "Moderasi Beragama Perspektif Buya Syafii Maarif dan Lukman Hakim Saifuddin: Sebuah Kajian Komparatif, Konseptual, Dan Implementatif," *SALAM J. Sos. dan Budaya Syar-i*, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 917–928, 2023, doi: 10.15408/sjsbs.v10i3.33887.
6. A. Anzalman, S. K. Elhusein, A. Lahmi, D. Asmaret, D. Dahlan, and T. Thaheransyah, "Muhammadiyah Berkemajuan: Najib Burhani Prespektif," *Innov. J. Soc. Sci. Res.*, vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 18193–18209, 2024.
7. F. Mubarak, "Konsep Neo Sufisme dalam Pengembangan Moderasi Beragama di Indonesia," *Iktisyaf J. Ilmu Dakwah dan Tasawuf*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 01–20, 2022, doi: 10.53401/iktsf.v4i1.73.
8. M. Z. Anam, A. N. Munir, and R. R. Hidayat, "Muhammadiyah Diaspora Diplomacy in Protecting Indonesian Migrant Workers in Malaysia," *J. Hub. Int.*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 1–18, 2022, doi: 10.18196/jhi.v11i1.12533.

CITATION:

Muchamad Zainal Mubarak (2025). The Muhammadiyah Diaspora And The Future Of Islamic Religious Education Moderation. *OASE*, 7(2), 391–394.