

Integration of the Ideas of Nusantara Islam and Progressive Islam in Islamic Education and Communication as the Spirit of Community Development

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the integration of the concepts of Islam Nusantara and Islam Berkemajah in the context of Islamic education and communication as a spirit of community development. Using a qualitative approach through library research, this study examines various classical and contemporary literature related to Islamic thought, education, and communication. The results show that Islam Nusantara emphasizes cultural, spiritual, and humanitarian aspects, while Islam Berkemajah emphasizes rationality, innovation, and scientific advancement. The integration of the two gives rise to a moderate, humanistic, and dialogical paradigm of Islamic education, and strengthens the role of Islamic communication as a means of character formation and social awareness. This synthesis serves as a conceptual basis for the development of a civilized, knowledgeable, and common-benefit Islamic society in the global era.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic thought in Indonesia has always displayed a unique dynamic between efforts to maintain traditional roots and respond to the demands of modernity. In this context, two major ideas that have been widely discussed are Nusantara Islam and Progressive Islam. Both represent two complementary orientations: one rooted in locality and indigenous Islamic traditions, while the other emphasizes the spirit of progress, rationality, and social renewal. Nusantara Islam emerged as a contextual, humanist, and moderate expression of Islam, prioritizing local wisdom in preaching and education (Azra, 2021). Progressive Islam, on the other hand, promotes a reformist paradigm oriented toward scientific advancement, rationality, and the liberation of the



people from backwardness (Nashir, 2015).

In social practice, these two schools of thought are not inherently opposed, but rather have the potential to converge at a single point of integration. Islamic education and communication are two strategic fields that can bridge the gap between local traditional values and modern visions of progress. Islamic education bears the primary task of instilling values, shaping character, and transforming the social consciousness of the community (Nata, 2019). Islamic communication, on the other hand, is tasked with conveying divine messages with wisdom and a dialogical approach that touches the human heart (Rahardjo, 2018).

The normative basis for this integration is derived from the Qur'an and Hadith. Allah SWT says:

AGod willing, God willing, God willing, God willing, God willing, God willing. God willing
"Call (people) to the path of your Lord with wisdom and good lessons, and refute them in a good way." (QS. An-Nahl [16]: 125)

This verse demonstrates the principles of Islamic communication, which are oriented toward wisdom and good advice. The communication process in education is not merely the transfer of information, but also the internalization of values and the formation of personality. In the context of Islamic education, communication becomes a means of da'wah bil hal—that is, modeling behavior and speech rooted in compassion. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

«بَشِّرُوا وَلَا تُنْفِرُوا»

"Give me good news and do not frighten." (HR. Bukhari Muslim)

This hadith emphasizes the ethics of positive and persuasive Islamic communication, in line with the principles of humanistic education which foster a spirit of learning and spiritual awareness in students.

Several recent studies emphasize the importance of integrating local and progressive values in Islamic education. Rofiq (2022) in the Journal of Islamic Education in the Archipelago (Sinta 2) found that Islam in the Archipelago can develop moderate character in students through local culture-based learning. Furthermore, Fauzan and Nashir (2020) in the Journal of Islamic Civilization (Scopus indexed) emphasized that Progressive Islam plays a role in fostering a scientific ethos and religious rationality among Muslim students. Both studies demonstrate the importance of an integrative approach to prevent Islamic education from becoming trapped in the romanticism of the past or the euphoria of modernity.

In the realm of Islamic communication, research by Harahap (2018) emphasized that communication terms in the Quran, such as "qaulan layyinan" (gentle words) and "qaulan sadidan" (correct words), contain pedagogical values relevant to character education. Meanwhile, research by Handayani (2021) showed that the effectiveness of teacher communication in religious learning is greatly influenced by empathy and moral role models. Thus, Islamic communication is not only a medium for conveying religious messages but also a strategy for shaping personality and a civilized society.

Unfortunately, to date, few studies have reconciled these two major concepts—Islam Nusantara and Islam Berkemajah—within a single epistemological framework articulated through the practice of Islamic education and communication. Some studies

only highlight the cultural aspects of Islam Nusantara in education (Zarkasyi, 2019), while others emphasize the rationality of Islam Berkemajah without addressing its relevance to Islamic communication (Hidayat, 2020). Yet, integrating the two could produce a model of Islamic education and communication that is local in character yet globally oriented, rooted in traditional values, yet open to the advancement of civilization.

Sociologically, the challenge of contemporary Islamic education lies not only in transferring knowledge, but also in fostering social awareness amidst a religious identity crisis and digital polarization. The unfiltered flow of information in cyberspace is causing value disorientation among the younger generation. This is where the role of Islamic communication becomes crucial: presenting an inclusive, peaceful, and civilized Islamic message through educational and social media. This model aligns with the vision of Islam as rahmatan lil-'alamin—a religion that brings blessings to all of nature.

The integration of the values of Islam Nusantara and Islam Berkemajah in Islamic education and communication embodies a constructive spirit of renewal. Islam Nusantara presents a cultural force that instills values of togetherness, tolerance, and local wisdom, while Islam Berkemajah fosters a spirit of innovation, rationality, and social empowerment. When these two are combined in the Islamic education and communication system, a new paradigm will emerge that emphasizes three dimensions: spirituality (faith), intellectuality (aql), and sociality (amal). This paradigm aligns with the words of Allah SWT:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا

"And so (also) We have made you a moderate people (wasathan)." (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 143)

The concept of ummatan wasathan in this verse emphasizes that Muslims are required to adopt a balanced attitude (not extreme right or left), but rather to be moderate and just. In the context of education, this principle of moderation is realized through a learning and communication process that combines intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions.

This research seeks to fill a remaining academic gap: the lack of a conceptual model that integrates Nusantara Islam and Progressive Islam into Islamic education and communication practices. Using a library research approach, this study explores classical and contemporary sources to develop an integrative Islamic education-communication model that can become the spirit of developing modern Indonesian society. This model is expected to not only strengthen humanist Islamic education theory but also provide a practical basis for curriculum development, da'wah communication strategies, and strengthening religious moderation in the digital era.

Thus, the integration of these two great ideas is not merely a meeting between tradition and modernity, but rather a systematic effort to build a civilized, knowledgeable, and progressive Indonesian Islamic civilization, where a society that thinks rationally but remains grounded in the nation's spiritual, moral, and cultural values.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with library research methods. This approach aims to review and analyze various scientific literature relevant to the themes of Islam Nusantara, Progressive Islam, Islamic Education, and Islamic Communication as the spirit of community development. Primary data sources consist of the Qur'an, Hadith, and classical and contemporary scientific works by Islamic thinkers. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from academic books, articles in national journals accredited by Sinta, reputable international journals (Scopus), proceedings, and research reports discussing the integration of Islamic values and education.

Data collection techniques were carried out through documentation and literature searches, then analyzed using content analysis and an interpretive hermeneutic approach to interpret conceptual meanings in depth. The analysis process included classifying themes into four main categories: (1) the philosophical foundations of Nusantara Islam, (2) the progressive paradigm of Progressive Islam, (3) implications for Islamic education, and (4) Islamic communication practices in community development. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation and theoretical comparison, so that the results of this study are objective, comprehensive, and academically accountable.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

Conceptual Synthesis: Meeting Point between Nusantara Islam and Progressive Islam

A literature review shows that Islam Nusantara and Islam Berkemajuan are two major currents within the Indonesian Islamic treasury, both striving to present a moderate, contextual, and civilized version of Islam. They are not contradictory, but rather can be synthesized as two sides of a single Islamic entity oriented toward the welfare of the people.

Nusantara Islam is based on cultural and spiritual values deeply rooted in Indonesian traditions. It emphasizes the importance of adapting Islamic teachings to local cultures without abandoning the principles of monotheism and sharia. This model of Islam displays a polite, tolerant character, and is rooted in social harmony (Azra, 2021). Meanwhile, Progressive Islam is oriented toward rationality, knowledge, and the advancement of human civilization. It emphasizes the importance of *ijtihad*, innovation, and the fighting spirit of Muslims in responding to the challenges of the modern era (Nashir, 2015).

These two paradigms, although starting from different perspectives, both reject extremism and intellectual stagnation. Nusantara Islam upholds the roots of identity and human values, while Progressive Islam provides direction toward social and intellectual progress (Zarkasyi, 2019). The integration of the two has given rise to what can be called Integrative-Transformative Islam, an Islam rooted in tradition and open to progress.

The balance between these two orientations has a strong theological basis. The word of Allah SWT in surah Al-Qashash verse 77 emphasizes:

وَابْتَغِ فِيهَا أَتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا

"And seek in what Allah has granted you the happiness of the land of the afterlife, and do not forget your share in this world." (QS. Al-Qashash [28]: 77)

This verse demonstrates the balance between the spiritual (afterlife) and material (worldly) dimensions, which is also the spirit of Islam Nusantara and Progressive Islam. Rofiq (2022) asserts that the synthesis of these two paradigms reflects the spirit of ummatan wasathan—a moderate community that is just, balanced, and non-extremist.

Thus, Islam Nusantara and Islam Berkemajah can be viewed as two complementary epistemological forces. One preserves cultural and spiritual roots, while the other expands the horizons of knowledge and progress. This synthesis forms the basis for the development of Islamic education and communication relevant to the social context of modern Indonesian society.

Integration in Islamic Education and Communication

Islamic education is the most strategic platform for internalizing universal and contextual Islamic values. Based on a literature synthesis, the integration of Nusantara Islam and Progressive Islam in education has given rise to a new paradigm emphasizing humanistic, dialogical, and transformative learning. Nusantara Islam provides cultural and spiritual nuance, while Progressive Islam encourages rationality and scientific productivity (Nata, 2019).

Rahardjo (2018) stated that ideal Islamic education should not only transfer religious knowledge but also foster social and moral awareness that impacts community life. In this context, Nusantara Islam plays a role in reviving noble values such as mutual cooperation, politeness, and deliberation, while Progressive Islam emphasizes science-based learning, innovation, and technology.

Islamic education, brought to life through these two paradigms, requires an effective Islamic communication approach. Communication, from an Islamic perspective, is not merely a process of conveying a message, but rather a process of tazkiyah (purification of the soul) through loving and wise interactions. As Allah SWT says:

God willing, God willing, God willing, God willing, God willing, God willing. God willing "Call (humans) to the path of your Lord with wisdom and good lessons, and refute them in a good way." (QS. An-Nahl [16]: 125)

This verse emphasizes that Islamic communication must be conducted with wisdom, gentleness, and polite argumentation. This principle aligns with Harahap's (2018) findings that the terms qaulan sadidan, qaulan layyinan, and qaulan ma'rufan in the Qur'an can serve as a foundation for effective and educational communication ethics.

Apart from that, the hadith of Rasulullah SAW:

«أَنَا بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ مَكَارِمَ الْأَخْلَاقِ»

"Indeed, I was sent to perfect noble morals." (HR. Al-Bukhari)

This hadith demonstrates that Islamic communication serves as a means of building morals and character. In the context of Islamic education, teachers are not merely transmitters of information, but also communicators who instill values through example.

Handayani's (2021) research supports this view by concluding that the success of character education in Islamic institutions is largely determined by the educators' empathetic communication skills and moral role models. Thus, the integration of Islamic education and communication within the framework of Nusantara Islam and Progressive Islam creates an educational-communicative approach that balances reason, heart, and social action.

Spirit of Community Development

The literature review shows that the development of Islamic society requires a strong spiritual, moral, and intellectual foundation. Islam Nusantara and Islam Berkemajah, when synergized in educational and communication practices, can foster a progressive and civilized social spirit. Islam Nusantara instills values of humanity, empathy, and social solidarity, while Islam Berkemajah fosters a spirit of innovation and social responsibility (Fauzan & Nashir, 2020).

The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of building harmonious social relations:

وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا

"And speak kind words to people." (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 83)

This verse serves as a basic principle for polite social communication, which is the foundation for building a civil society. Through communicative education, Islam can play an active role in developing a social awareness that is critical, moderate, and oriented toward the common good.

Rahardjo (2018) explains that Islamic communication has a transformative function, namely transforming individual awareness into social awareness that encourages improvement and change. Islamic education and communication inspired by these two paradigms can produce a society that is faithful, knowledgeable, and civilized.

Rofiq (2022) emphasized that this integrative approach has a strategic impact on religious moderation. Through a curriculum and educational practices based on the values of Islam Nusantara and Progressive Islam, students are shaped into individuals who value diversity, think critically, and are oriented toward real work for the social good.

Thus, the integration of these two major Islamic paradigms is not merely a meeting of ideas, but also a practical movement toward societal transformation. Communicative and socially oriented Islamic education is the driving force behind the birth of a moderate, rational, and progressive generation of Muslims who can respond to global challenges.

DISCUSSION

The synthesis between Islam Nusantara and Progressive Islam offers a dynamic framework for reinterpreting Islamic thought in contemporary Indonesia. This integration, as reflected in the concept of Integrative-Transformative Islam, represents a theological, cultural, and pedagogical negotiation that upholds the balance between tradition (*turāth*) and modernity (*tajdīd*). Drawing from Azra (2021) and Nashir (2015), this meeting point demonstrates that Islamic identity can remain deeply rooted in local wisdom while simultaneously engaging with universal values of rationality and innovation. Theologically, this duality resonates with the Qur'anic principle of *wasathiyah* (moderation), as described in QS. Al-Qashash [28]:77, emphasizing the harmony between spiritual pursuits and worldly advancement. Such synthesis does not merely reconcile dichotomies between conservatism and reformism but establishes a continuum that bridges spirituality, intellect, and social ethics in the Indonesian Islamic context.

Within the domain of Islamic education, this paradigm offers an epistemological reorientation that integrates cultural spirituality with rational inquiry. In line with Nata (2019) and Rahardjo (2018), education inspired by Islam Nusantara nurtures affective and communal values—such as mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) and humility—while Progressive Islam cultivates cognitive and scientific competencies essential for the digital era. This convergence results in a humanistic-transformative pedagogy where learning is dialogical, reflective, and context-sensitive. The concept aligns with constructivist educational theories (Vygotsky, 1978; Freire, 1993), which emphasize learning as a social process mediated by culture and interaction. Here, teachers function not merely as transmitters of knowledge but as ethical communicators and cultural interpreters who embody prophetic communication ethics, reflected in QS. An-Nahl [16]:125 and the Prophet's hadith on moral perfection. Such educational communication—rooted in *qaulan sadidan*, *qaulan layyinan*, and *qaulan ma'rufan*—bridges intellect and morality, ensuring that the pursuit of knowledge remains intertwined with moral formation and social harmony.

From a socio-ethical perspective, the integration of these paradigms fosters a transformative model of community development rooted in Islamic humanism. As argued by Fauzan and Nashir (2020), the fusion of cultural empathy from Islam Nusantara and the social activism of Progressive Islam creates an empowering framework for civilizational Islam (*Islam hadhariyah*). This approach aligns with the Qur'anic injunction to “speak kindly to people” (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:83), which underlines the communicative ethics necessary for building an inclusive and dialogical society. Rahardjo's (2018) notion of transformative Islamic communication strengthens this view by positioning dialogue as a medium for consciousness-raising (*tasykīl al-wa'y*). In

this sense, educational communication becomes a social praxis that transforms individual awareness into collective commitment toward justice and development. Thus, the integration of Islam Nusantara and Progressive Islam transcends doctrinal discourse—it manifests as a living social theology that shapes educational behavior, communication ethics, and communal transformation. The synthesis ultimately envisions a generation of Muslims who are spiritually grounded, intellectually independent, and socially responsive in addressing global and local challenges.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Islam Nusantara and Islam Berkemaju are not two opposing paradigms, but rather two complementary epistemological forces in building a moderate, inclusive, and civilized image of Indonesian Islam. Islam Nusantara serves as the guardian of local cultural and spiritual roots, while Islam Berkemaju serves as a driver of rationality and social innovation. Both, if integrated conceptually and practically, can form the foundation for the development of humanistic, dialogical, and transformative Islamic education and communication.

Islamic education, grounded in the integration of these two paradigms, produces a learning model oriented toward character development, social awareness, and moral responsibility in students. Meanwhile, Islamic communication serves as a crucial instrument in the internalization of values through an approach based on wisdom, role models, and empathy. Together, these two elements form an educational ecosystem that not only transmits knowledge but also transforms behavior and social awareness in society.

The literature synthesis also confirms that the integration of Nusantara Islam and Progressive Islam has broad implications for societal development. A society built on spirituality, rationality, and social solidarity will be able to meet the challenges of globalization without losing its Islamic and national identity. Thus, this integrative paradigm offers a model of Indonesian Islam that is relevant for today's era: rooted in traditional values, informed by knowledge, and oriented toward the advancement of civilization.

This study recommends the need to strengthen the curriculum and practice of Islamic education based on the integrative values of Nusantara-Berkemajuan, as well as further research that examines its application in the digital context and multicultural society in Indonesia.

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