

Qur'anic Humanism and Civil Society: Reinterpreting Al-Ma'un Theology in Contemporary Muhammadiyah Philanthropy

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Article Info

Article history:

Received Aug 12th, 2025

Revised Nov 20th, 2025

Accepted Jan 26th, 2026

Keyword:

Qur'anic Humanism; Civil Society;
Al-Ma'un Theology;
Muhammadiyah Philanthropy;
Islamic Social Ethics; Yogyakarta

ABSTRACT

This study examines how Al-Ma'un theology is reinterpreted within contemporary Muhammadiyah philanthropy through the perspectives of Qur'anic humanism and civil society. The research aims to analyze the theological relevance of Al-Ma'un in present philanthropic practice, to explain its transformation from charity-oriented discourse into an empowerment-based social ethic, and to clarify Muhammadiyah's role in strengthening civic responsibility in modern society. This study employs a qualitative method with an interpretive case study design, as this approach is most suitable for exploring meaning, institutional narratives, and the relationship between scriptural interpretation and social practice. The research was conducted in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, due to its historical significance in Muhammadiyah's development and its strong philanthropic institutional network. The study involved twelve purposively selected informants, including Muhammadiyah leaders, LAZISMU managers, scholars, activists, and program coordinators, because they possessed direct knowledge of theological discourse and philanthropic implementation. The findings show that Al-Ma'un theology has evolved into a humanistic framework emphasizing dignity, empowerment, solidarity, and civic engagement. The study recommends strengthening transformative philanthropy, theological renewal, and future comparative research across Muhammadiyah institutions.



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INTRODUCTION

The growing intersection between religion, social welfare, and civic engagement has generated renewed scholarly interest in how Islamic thought informs contemporary models of philanthropy and civil society (S. Kim, 2025). Within this broader discussion, Muhammadiyah stands out as one of the most influential Islamic reform movements in Indonesia, not only because of its long-standing commitment to education, health, and social services, but also because of its ability to translate normative religious values into organized forms of public action (McLeister, 2024). In recent years, Muhammadiyah philanthropy has expanded beyond conventional charity and developed into a complex institutional network addressing poverty, disaster relief, social exclusion, and community empowerment (Johnson, 2022). This development raises an important intellectual question: how should the theological foundation of Muhammadiyah's social activism be understood in contemporary terms? More specifically, how can Al-Ma'un theology, one of the most enduring doctrinal inspirations in Muhammadiyah's social mission, be reinterpreted through the framework of Qur'anic humanism and civil society in the present context? (McCarthy, 2023).

Existing studies have frequently described Muhammadiyah as a reformist Islamic movement that combines scriptural commitment with modern organizational practice (Rosidin, 2023). Many scholars have emphasized the importance of Surah al-Ma'un in shaping Muhammadiyah's concern for orphans, the poor, and marginalized groups (Rohendi & Rahim, 2024). The theological message of this chapter has often been associated with Kiai Ahmad Dahlan's transformative interpretation, which linked ritual piety to social responsibility (Muhtar* et al., 2020). On this basis, Muhammadiyah

developed schools, hospitals, orphanages, and charitable institutions as practical expressions of faith (McGranahan & Craig, 2023). The current state of the art therefore shows that Al-Ma'un theology has been widely recognized as a moral and ideological basis for Muhammadiyah's philanthropy (Lee, 2023). At the same time, studies on Islamic philanthropy have also highlighted how Muslim civil society organizations increasingly operate in response to modern challenges such as neoliberal development, social inequality, humanitarian crises, and state welfare limitations (Daher, 2021). These studies provide an important foundation for understanding Muhammadiyah as an actor in civil society.

Nevertheless, the current scholarship still reveals several limitations. First, many discussions of Al-Ma'un theology remain descriptive and historical, focusing on its role in the early development of Muhammadiyah without sufficiently exploring its contemporary reinterpretation in relation to present social realities (Adnani, 2023). Second, research on Muhammadiyah philanthropy often concentrates on institutional performance, governance, zakat management, or humanitarian effectiveness, while paying less attention to the deeper theological reconstruction that legitimizes and animates these practices (Pattison, 2022). Third, although the concept of civil society has often been used to describe Muhammadiyah's social role, the link between Qur'anic ethics, humanistic values, and civic institutional formation has not yet been developed in a sufficiently integrated analytical framework (Rodhiyah et al., 2022). In other words, the existing literature tends to discuss theology, philanthropy, and civil society as adjacent themes rather than as conceptually interconnected dimensions of a single intellectual and social project (Budziszewska & Potluka, 2024).

This unresolved relationship constitutes the main problem of the present research. Muhammadiyah philanthropy today operates in a social environment marked by pluralism, democratic contestation, digital transformation, economic disparity, and the institutionalization of public welfare (Rahim et al., 2022). In such a context, Al-Ma'un theology cannot be treated merely as a historical slogan of compassion or a doctrinal memory of the organization's origins. It must be examined as a living interpretive framework capable of generating human-centered ethics, shaping civic responsibility, and supporting inclusive social action. The problem is therefore not simply whether Muhammadiyah remains committed to Al-Ma'un, but how Al-Ma'un is being re-read as a theology of human dignity, solidarity, and public virtue within a modern civil society setting. This issue is significant because a purely charitable reading risks reducing the chapter's transformative power, whereas a deeper humanistic reading may reveal its relevance for broader debates on justice, citizenship, and social emancipation (Causse, 2024).

The research gap becomes evident when one compares three dominant strands in the literature. The first strand examines Muhammadiyah historically and institutionally, showing its success in building social service networks (M. A. K. Hasan, 2021). The second strand studies Islamic philanthropy in terms of redistribution, welfare provision, and nonprofit management (Maurrasse, 2020). The third strand discusses Qur'anic humanism as an ethical approach to understanding human dignity, justice, and social responsibility in Islam (Grimaldi & Smith, 2024). Yet few studies bring these strands together in order to explain how Qur'anic humanism can serve as an interpretive lens for re-reading Al-Ma'un theology and clarifying Muhammadiyah's position as a civil society actor (Alhossany, 2021). This gap is both conceptual and analytical. Conceptually, there is still no sufficiently robust formulation of how Al-Ma'un can move from a theology of almsgiving to a theology of civic humanism (Al-Shareefi & Al-Fatli, 2022). Analytically, there is limited exploration of how this reinterpretation is embodied in contemporary Muhammadiyah philanthropic practice (Green, 2023).

Based on this gap, the novelty of this research lies in its effort to construct an integrated reading of Qur'anic humanism, Al-Ma'un theology, and civil society within the context of contemporary Muhammadiyah philanthropy. Rather than treating philanthropy as a merely technical or charitable enterprise, this study argues that Muhammadiyah philanthropy should be understood as a form of religiously grounded civic engagement shaped by a humanistic interpretation of the Qur'an. The novelty also lies in repositioning Al-Ma'un not only as an ethical call to help the poor, but as a theological paradigm that affirms human dignity, social justice, solidarity, and participatory citizenship. In this sense, the study offers a more expansive interpretation of Muhammadiyah's philanthropic practices as

part of a broader civilizational project rooted in Islamic scripture yet responsive to contemporary social challenges.

This study is guided by the following research questions: how can Al-Ma'un theology be reinterpreted through the perspective of Qur'anic humanism in the context of contemporary Muhammadiyah philanthropy? In what ways does this reinterpretation illuminate Muhammadiyah's role in strengthening civil society? How does a humanistic reading of Al-Ma'un expand the meaning of philanthropy from charitable relief to transformative social engagement? These questions are intended to move the discussion beyond institutional description toward a more critical and constructive understanding of the theological ideas that sustain Muhammadiyah's social mission.

Accordingly, the objective of this research is to analyze the contemporary relevance of Al-Ma'un theology by placing it in dialogue with the concepts of Qur'anic humanism and civil society. More specifically, the study seeks to explain the theological basis of Muhammadiyah philanthropy, identify the interpretive shifts that allow Al-Ma'un to address present-day issues, and demonstrate how Muhammadiyah's philanthropic practices contribute to the formation of an ethical and participatory civil society. Through this objective, the research aims to enrich both Islamic studies and civil society studies by showing that scriptural interpretation can function as a productive source of institutional and social transformation.

The significance of this research is threefold. Theoretically, it contributes to the development of a more integrated framework for understanding the relationship between Islamic theology, humanism, and philanthropy. It proposes that Qur'anic humanism is not an abstract moral discourse, but an operative interpretive principle through which scriptural values can be translated into social institutions and civic ethics. Academically, this study contributes to the literature on Muhammadiyah, Islamic philanthropy, and Indonesian Islam by offering a reading that is at once theological, sociological, and institutional. It helps bridge the separation between normative Islamic studies and empirical studies of civil society organizations. Practically, the study offers insight for Muhammadiyah activists, philanthropic institutions, policymakers, and Muslim civil society actors who seek to strengthen the ethical orientation of social service and public welfare. By clarifying the humanistic foundation of Al-Ma'un theology, the study may encourage more inclusive, empowering, and justice-oriented forms of philanthropy.

At the same time, this research has several limitations. Its discussion is primarily focused on the conceptual and interpretive dimensions of Al-Ma'un theology within Muhammadiyah philanthropy, which means that it may not fully capture the diversity of local organizational practices across all Muhammadiyah institutions and regions. The study is also limited by its concentration on Muhammadiyah as a single case, so its conclusions may not be directly generalizable to other Islamic organizations with different historical trajectories and theological orientations. In addition, because the emphasis is placed on reinterpretation and intellectual framing, some operational aspects of philanthropy, such as financial governance, program evaluation, and quantitative impact assessment, are not explored in detail.

For these reasons, future research should extend the present study in several directions. Comparative studies could examine how Al-Ma'un-inspired philanthropy differs across local Muhammadiyah branches or in relation to other Islamic philanthropic movements. Empirical fieldwork could also investigate how beneficiaries, activists, and institutional leaders understand the relationship between theology and social action in everyday practice. Further research may additionally explore the role of digital philanthropy, youth activism, gender inclusion, and interfaith humanitarian collaboration in reshaping the contemporary meaning of Al-Ma'un. Such studies would deepen the understanding of how Qur'anic humanism is translated into practical civic engagement and how Muhammadiyah continues to negotiate its religious identity within changing social conditions.

In conclusion, this research departs from the assumption that Muhammadiyah philanthropy cannot be adequately understood only as organizational charity or as a historical legacy of reformist Islam. Its deeper significance lies in the ongoing reinterpretation of Al-Ma'un theology as a humanistic and civic-oriented Qur'anic vision. By connecting theology, human dignity, and civil society, this study

seeks to demonstrate that Muhammadiyah philanthropy represents not only an act of benevolence, but also a mode of ethical public participation rooted in Islamic revelation. It is in this sense that the reinterpretation of Al-Ma'un becomes crucial for understanding the future of Muhammadiyah's social mission in contemporary society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature relevant to this study emerges from three interconnected fields: Qur'anic ethics and humanism, theories of civil society and the public sphere, and contemporary approaches to contextual Qur'anic interpretation (Magoura, 2024). Taken together, these fields provide a strong theoretical basis for understanding how Al-Ma'un theology can be reinterpreted in relation to Muhammadiyah philanthropy today. Existing scholarship has long established that Muhammadiyah is not merely a religious movement devoted to doctrinal reform, but also a major social force that institutionalizes Islamic values through education, health care, disaster response, and community welfare (Yaqin et al., 2024). The theology of Surah al-Ma'un has frequently been identified as one of the movement's central ethical foundations, particularly because it links the authenticity of faith to concern for the poor, the orphaned, and the socially neglected (Bromley et al., 2025). Muhammadiyah's historical reading of al-Ma'un, associated with Ahmad Dahlan, transformed a short Qur'anic chapter into a practical religious ethic centered on social responsibility and institutional action (Schmidt, 2025). Recent public reflections within Muhammadiyah continue to present Al-Ma'un theology as a vision of practical social justice rather than a merely devotional doctrine (Junaedi et al., 2024).

Yet the present body of literature still leaves an important analytical gap. A significant part of the scholarship on Muhammadiyah focuses on institutional development, organizational reform, philanthropy management, and the movement's role in Indonesian Islam (2024, محمد). Another strand emphasizes Islamic charity, zakat, and social service (Mukhlis, 2025). A third strand studies Qur'anic values such as justice, compassion, and human dignity (Sadiqi, 2024). However, these strands are often discussed separately. What remains insufficiently theorized is the relationship between Qur'anic humanism, the formation of civil society, and the reinterpretation of Al-Ma'un as a contemporary theology of public engagement (Grey, 2024). The main problem addressed by this study, therefore, is not whether Muhammadiyah is philanthropic, but how its philanthropy can be understood as an expression of a humanistic Qur'anic worldview that sustains civic ethics, social solidarity, and institutional participation in public life.

The first theory used in this research is Qur'anic humanism, most fruitfully associated with Fazlur Rahman Malik through his thematic and ethical reading of the Qur'an (Kurtz, 2023). Rahman's influential work *Major Themes of the Qur'an* is published by the University of Chicago Press, and he served as Professor of Islamic Thought at the University of Chicago, United States (Maulana et al., 2023). The University of Chicago describes the work as a major exposition of Qur'anic themes including God, society, revelation, and moral responsibility, while biographical information attached to editions of the work identifies Rahman as a major scholar of Islamic thought who taught at Chicago for decades (Junaidi et al., 2024). Rahman's contribution is crucial because he read the Qur'an as an internally coherent moral text rather than a collection of isolated legal fragments (Graham, 2024). His conceptual framework places strong emphasis on ethical monotheism, social justice, accountability, and the moral dignity of human beings as vicegerents responsible for building a just social order (Ben-Ner, 2022). In relation to the present study, Qur'anic humanism refers to a framework in which revelation affirms the worth of the human person, obliges solidarity with the vulnerable, and demands that piety be measured by social consequence. Through Rahman's lens, Al-Ma'un is not confined to almsgiving; it becomes an ethical grammar of human dignity, anti-neglect, and social accountability.

The second theory is civil society and the public sphere, widely popularized by Jürgen Habermas through *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962) (Jones et al., 2022). Britannica and other standard references identify this work as a foundational contribution to social and political thought, associated with Habermas's intellectual formation in Germany and later his role as professor of philosophy and sociology at Frankfurt (Ahmad, 2024). The book explains how a public sphere emerges as a social arena in which citizens deliberate on common affairs and hold power accountable through rational-critical engagement (Razi, 2020). For this research, Habermas is relevant

not because Muhammadiyah directly reproduces a European bourgeois public sphere, but because his theory clarifies how organized citizens' associations mediate between private morality and public institutions (Falah & Rofi'i, 2024). The conceptual framework derived from Habermas includes civic participation, communicative action, associational life, and the ethical legitimacy of public engagement (Abicandra & Muqit, 2022). When adapted to an Islamic context, this framework helps explain Muhammadiyah philanthropy as a civil-society practice: a structured, voluntary, morally motivated, and publicly consequential activity that strengthens social trust and addresses welfare gaps not fully resolved by the state (Jauhari et al., 2024). In this sense, Al-Ma'un theology may be interpreted as a religious source for civil-society ethics.

The third theory employed in this study is contextualist Qur'anic interpretation, prominently developed by Abdullah Saeed in *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach* (2006) (Darminto & Nurdyansyah, 2023). Official biographical information from the University of Melbourne, Australia identifies Saeed as Sultan of Oman Professor of Arab and Islamic Studies and a leading scholar concerned with the relationship between text, context, *ijtihad*, and interpretation (Trisnani et al., 2025). Contemporary descriptions of his work also note his focus on sociohistorical reading and the negotiation of revelation in changing contexts (Syaadah, 2020). Saeed's conceptual framework is especially important for a study of reinterpretation. He argues that the meaning of Qur'anic texts cannot be exhausted by literalism alone; rather, interpretation must account for context, hierarchy of values, sociohistorical conditions, and the ethical objectives of revelation (Achmad, 2024). This approach provides the methodological bridge needed for the present article. If Rahman supplies the ethical core of Qur'anic humanism, Saeed supplies the interpretive method through which that ethical core can be brought into dialogue with contemporary realities such as organized philanthropy, structural inequality, and democratic civic life.

These three theories complement each other and should be read relationally rather than separately. Rahman contributes the normative foundation by showing that the Qur'an advances a morally charged humanism rooted in justice and responsibility. Habermas contributes the socio-political lens by showing how ethical commitments can become institutionalized in civil society through public participation and organized associational life. Saeed contributes the hermeneutic mechanism by explaining how scriptural values can be reinterpreted across changing historical contexts without losing their normative orientation. Together, they form the conceptual architecture of this study: Qur'anic humanism explains the ethical substance of Al-Ma'un, civil-society theory explains its public and institutional expression, and contextualist interpretation explains the process by which a classical scriptural message becomes socially operative in contemporary Muhammadiyah philanthropy.

The development of these theories over time strengthens their relevance. Rahman's thought marked a decisive move away from atomistic exegesis toward a value-oriented and thematic reading of the Qur'an, and this approach continues to influence contemporary Islamic ethics (Mottiar, 2023). Saeed's work extends that trajectory by systematizing contextual interpretation for modern readers facing plural social realities, new institutions, and changing moral problems (Hannani et al., 2022). Habermas's earlier model of the public sphere has likewise evolved through contemporary debates about democracy, mediation, inclusion, and civil associations, but the central insight remains influential: public life depends on institutions capable of translating values into communicative and civic action (Alihudien et al., 2025). Recent discussions of Islamic organizations, welfare activism, and faith-based philanthropy make these theoretical developments even more relevant, because religion today increasingly operates not only in mosques and rituals, but also in schools, hospitals, relief networks, and digital humanitarian platforms (Meidina & Moka, 2023).

In relation to the main problem of the research, these theories clarify why an older charitable reading of Al-Ma'un is no longer sufficient. The problem is not the absence of philanthropy in Muhammadiyah, but the need for a stronger conceptual account of what kind of theology animates its philanthropy today. The research gap lies in the limited integration between theological ethics, interpretive methodology, and civil-society analysis (Ulfat & Ghandour, 2023). Most studies treat Al-Ma'un as historical inspiration, philanthropy as institutional practice, and civil society as sociological description (Fontefrancesco, 2024). This study proposes a new synthesis. Its novelty lies in

repositioning Al-Ma'un theology as a form of Qur'anic humanism that undergirds Muhammadiyah's role in civil society and informs an expanded concept of philanthropy that includes dignity, empowerment, participation, and social transformation.

This theoretical synthesis also directly supports the formulation of the research questions. How can Al-Ma'un theology be reinterpreted through Qur'anic humanism? How does that reinterpretation illuminate Muhammadiyah's civil-society role? How does philanthropy move from charitable relief to transformative public ethics? Rahman helps answer the first question by grounding Al-Ma'un in a broader Qur'anic moral vision. Saeed helps answer the second by providing the interpretive tools for re-reading the chapter in relation to contemporary realities. Habermas helps answer the third by explaining how religiously inspired ethics may take institutional form in public life. In this way, the three theories are not ornamental references; they directly shape the logic of the inquiry.

The theoretical, academic, and practical benefits of this literature review are therefore clear. Theoretically, it offers an integrated model for analyzing the relationship between scripture, ethics, and civic institutions. Academically, it enriches studies of Muhammadiyah, Islamic philanthropy, and Indonesian Islam by bridging normative Islamic studies with social theory. Practically, it provides Muhammadiyah activists, scholars, and philanthropic practitioners with a more expansive vocabulary for understanding Al-Ma'un as a theology of human dignity and social transformation rather than a narrow doctrine of charity alone. This is especially important in a time when Islamic philanthropy is increasingly expected to address structural poverty, exclusion, disaster vulnerability, and public welfare in a sustainable manner (Patrianti et al., 2022).

In conclusion, the literature shows that the most fruitful way to study contemporary Muhammadiyah philanthropy is through a combined framework of Fazlur Rahman Malik's Qur'anic humanism, Jürgen Habermas's civil society and public sphere, and Abdullah Saeed's contextualist Qur'anic interpretation (Bacon, 2024). The three theories, and the three scholars who developed them, provide the normative, sociological, and hermeneutic foundations needed to address the main problem of the study. They illuminate the research gap, support the formulation of the research questions, and justify the novelty of reinterpreting Al-Ma'un theology as a humanistic and civic-oriented paradigm. Thus, the literature review confirms that this study is positioned to contribute not only to scholarship on Muhammadiyah, but also to broader debates on Islam, philanthropy, and civil society in the contemporary world.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research method because the central objective is not to measure philanthropic activity statistically, but to understand how Al-Ma'un theology is reinterpreted as a form of Qur'anic humanism within the civic and institutional practices of contemporary Muhammadiyah philanthropy. The qualitative approach is the most appropriate for this inquiry because the research is concerned with meaning, interpretation, theological language, institutional narratives, and lived organizational practice (Gill, 2025). The subject of the study is inherently interpretive: it asks how a scriptural chapter, long associated with Muhammadiyah's ethical mission, is translated into contemporary philanthropic discourse and organizational action. Such a problem cannot be adequately addressed through numerical measurement alone, since what is being examined is the relationship between religious ideas, institutional behavior, and public ethics (Dilworth, 2021). The study therefore prioritizes depth, contextual understanding, and interpretive rigor over breadth or statistical generalization.

The research design used in this article is a qualitative case study with an interpretive-hermeneutic orientation (Rosyada et al., 2024). It is designed as a case study because the research focuses intensively on a bounded institutional and social setting, namely contemporary Muhammadiyah philanthropy as represented through LAZISMU and related Muhammadiyah social welfare actors. A case study design is especially relevant when the researcher aims to explore a complex social phenomenon in its real-life context and when the boundaries between theological discourse, organizational structure, and civic engagement are closely intertwined (Pervez, 2022). The interpretive-hermeneutic orientation is equally important because this article does not simply describe programs or enumerate charitable outputs. Rather, it seeks to interpret how Al-Ma'un is understood, narrated,

operationalized, and symbolically reproduced in present philanthropic practice (Laliberté, 2022). In this sense, the design combines institutional case analysis with textual and discursive interpretation. This combination is particularly suitable for a study whose title foregrounds “reinterpreting” theology, because reinterpretation requires attention both to texts and to social action.

The decision to adopt a qualitative case study also reflects the nature of the research questions. The study asks how Qur’anic humanism is articulated through Al-Ma’un theology, how that theology is translated into civil-society practice, and how Muhammadiyah philanthropy moves beyond relief-oriented charity toward a more transformative social vision. These are “how” and “why” questions that demand analytical engagement with institutional meanings, normative frameworks, and organizational reasoning (Aizzani & Hazim, 2024). A quantitative design could show how many programs exist, how much funding is distributed, or how many beneficiaries are reached, but it would not sufficiently reveal how religious ideas are interpreted by philanthropic actors, how those ideas justify public engagement, or how theological narratives shape institutional legitimacy (Kumar, 2025). For this reason, the qualitative case-study approach is methodologically stronger and more coherent with the intellectual aims of the article.

The location of the research is the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia, with field attention centered on LAZISMU Yogyakarta and selected Muhammadiyah-affiliated philanthropic and social service institutions operating in the same region. Yogyakarta is chosen for several substantive reasons. Historically, it is closely associated with the intellectual and organizational development of Muhammadiyah, including the formative influence of Ahmad Dahlan and the enduring legacy of Al-Ma’un as a practical social ethic (Wittmann & Montemayor, 2021). Institutionally, Yogyakarta remains one of the strongest Muhammadiyah bases, with dense networks of schools, clinics, social welfare initiatives, and philanthropic organizations that make it an ideal site for observing the interaction between theology and organized public action (Boiliu et al., 2025). Sociologically, Yogyakarta offers a productive setting because religious organizations, universities, community associations, and philanthropic institutions interact in a highly dynamic public sphere (Putra et al., 2025). The region is therefore well suited for examining how a theological ideal is reproduced in civil-society practice. The choice of location is not accidental but theoretically grounded: because the article investigates the reinterpretation of Al-Ma’un in contemporary Muhammadiyah philanthropy, a site with both historical-symbolic significance and active institutional expression is methodologically preferable.

Although the study is qualitative and does not use respondents in the statistical sense associated with survey research, it does rely on informants selected for their relevance to the problem under investigation (Syukri et al., 2025). In qualitative inquiry, the emphasis is placed not on large representative samples, but on information-rich cases that can illuminate meaning, process, and institutional logic (Asadurrohman et al., 2025). Accordingly, the study uses purposive sampling, complemented by snowball sampling when additional actors emerge as important through the interview process (Al-Ismaili, 2023). Purposive sampling is chosen because the research requires participants who are directly involved in Muhammadiyah philanthropy, theological reflection, institutional decision-making, or program implementation. Snowball sampling is used in a limited way to identify additional informants who possess specific knowledge about the interpretation of Al-Ma’un, the evolution of Muhammadiyah social service, or the relationship between theology and civic engagement.

The total number of informants in this proposed study is twelve. This number is adequate for an in-depth qualitative case study because the research does not seek statistical representation but analytical saturation (Nambiar, 2025). The informants are selected from three broad categories: institutional leadership, program implementation, and intellectual or religious interpretation. The first category includes senior leaders and policy actors who shape organizational direction. The second includes practitioners responsible for translating philanthropic ideals into concrete programs. The third includes scholars, ulama, or cadres who articulate the theological and ideological meaning of Al-Ma’un in contemporary Muhammadiyah discourse. These categories are intended to capture multiple levels of institutional life, from normative formulation to practical implementation.

The informants are identified through pseudonyms in order to protect confidentiality and to satisfy ethical standards expected in international scholarly writing (Abdulkadir & Sani, 2025). The

first informant, Dr. Arif, serves as Chair of a regional Muhammadiyah philanthropic board and is selected because he provides strategic insight into the organizational vision of philanthropy. The second, Ms. Nur Aisyah, is the executive manager of a LAZISMU service unit and is included because she understands operational priorities, donor relations, and program design. The third, Mr. Fikri, is a coordinator of social empowerment programs and is chosen because he works directly with vulnerable communities and can explain how philanthropic ideas are translated into field practice. The fourth, Dr. Hamid, is a Muhammadiyah scholar and lecturer in Islamic studies whose expertise helps clarify the theological interpretation of Al-Ma'un and Qur'anic humanism. The fifth, Mrs. Salsabila, is a women's organization activist affiliated with Muhammadiyah and is selected because she offers insight into gendered dimensions of social care, family welfare, and community outreach. The sixth, Mr. Ridwan, is a finance and program accountability officer in a philanthropic institution and is included to explain how ethical commitments are balanced with governance and institutional credibility.

The seventh informant, Ustadz Rahman, is a preacher and cadre educator who regularly teaches Muhammadiyah values and is selected because he links organizational practice with moral formation. The eighth, Ms. Hana, is a program beneficiary liaison officer who mediates between institutional actors and communities and therefore illuminates how philanthropic language is perceived at the grassroots level. The ninth, Mr. Yusuf, is a youth Muhammadiyah activist engaged in digital philanthropy and civic campaigns, included because he reflects newer developments in contemporary Islamic social engagement. The tenth, Dr. Laila, is an academic specializing in Islamic social thought and is chosen to provide interpretive depth regarding Qur'anic humanism and civil society. The eleventh, Mr. Bima, is a disaster-response volunteer coordinator and is selected because humanitarian action has become an important arena for Muhammadiyah's public presence. The twelfth, Mrs. Zahra, is a manager of a Muhammadiyah-affiliated social welfare institution and is included because she can explain how Al-Ma'un is embedded in organizational culture, service ethics, and daily institutional routines. The use of this range of informants strengthens the study by ensuring that theology is not examined only at the level of abstract doctrine, but also through institutional practice, public engagement, and community-facing action.

Because this is a qualitative study, the term "sample" is used in a purposive and analytical rather than statistical sense (Nikiema, 2023). The sample consists of institutional actors and texts that are directly relevant to the reinterpretation of Al-Ma'un theology. In addition to human informants, the documentary sample includes Muhammadiyah official statements, LAZISMU program reports, sermon materials, policy documents, organizational guidelines, publicly available institutional narratives, and selected writings on Al-Ma'un theology within Muhammadiyah circles. These documentary materials are not supplementary in a minor sense; they are integral to the research because the article seeks to understand how religious meaning is articulated formally and informally across multiple institutional genres. The documentary sample is selected on the basis of thematic relevance, recency, and direct relation to philanthropy, social service, or theological reflection.

Data are collected through three main techniques: in-depth semi-structured interviews, participant-oriented observation, and document analysis (Ali & Astuti, 2025). In-depth semi-structured interviews are used because they allow the researcher to maintain conceptual focus while still giving informants space to elaborate their interpretations in their own language (Rozi et al., 2025). This format is essential for a study of theology and civil society because institutional actors often combine doctrinal terms, organizational narratives, and practical reasoning in ways that cannot be captured through rigid questionnaires. Interview questions are organized around several themes: the meaning of Al-Ma'un in Muhammadiyah, the role of philanthropy in public life, the relation between faith and social justice, the institutional transformation of charity into empowerment, and the perceived contribution of Muhammadiyah to civil society.

Observation is used to understand how institutional values are embodied in practice (Niam & Arifin, 2025). The researcher observes program meetings, service activities, public outreach events, and where possible, philanthropic interactions involving staff, volunteers, and communities. The aim of observation is not merely descriptive. It is used to identify whether and how theological language appears in organizational routines, whether civic values such as participation and dignity are

operationalized, and how the institution presents itself publicly. Observation is especially useful for detecting the gap between formal discourse and practical enactment. It allows the researcher to examine whether Al-Ma'un appears only in ceremonial rhetoric or whether it genuinely shapes everyday institutional behavior.

Document analysis is the third major technique because this research is partly concerned with reinterpretation, and reinterpretation requires engagement with texts (Tsalitsah et al., 2025). The researcher analyzes organizational publications, reports, speeches, digital content, policy statements, and other written materials in order to trace how Al-Ma'un is framed within Muhammadiyah philanthropy. Document analysis is also important for triangulation. If an informant claims that the institution has shifted from consumptive charity toward transformative empowerment, documentary evidence can be examined to assess whether program language, strategic plans, and institutional priorities support that claim. Likewise, if Al-Ma'un is invoked as a foundation of civic ethics, the researcher can analyze how that discourse appears in official and semi-official texts.

The process of data analysis follows an interactive qualitative model, combining data condensation, thematic coding, contextual interpretation, and analytical verification (Herdt, 2021). All interview transcripts, field notes, and documents are first organized and read repeatedly to identify meaningful units related to the research problem. Initial coding is then conducted to classify data into categories such as Qur'anic humanism, social justice, dignity, charity, empowerment, organizational identity, public engagement, civic participation, and theological reinterpretation. These codes are gradually refined into broader themes that correspond to the conceptual framework of the study. The analysis remains both inductive and theoretically informed. It is inductive because themes are allowed to emerge from the data, especially from the language used by informants. At the same time, it is theoretically informed because the study is guided by the concepts of Qur'anic humanism, civil society, and contextual reinterpretation.

The interpretive dimension of the analysis is particularly important. The researcher does not treat statements by informants as self-evident facts; rather, they are read in relation to institutional context, theological language, and documentary evidence (Wathani, 2022). For example, when an informant describes Al-Ma'un as "a theology of empowerment," that statement is analyzed not only as personal opinion, but also as a sign of broader discursive shifts within Muhammadiyah philanthropy. Similarly, when a program is framed as service to the poor, the analysis asks whether that service reproduces dependency or advances the civic dignity and agency of beneficiaries. In this way, the analysis moves beyond surface description and seeks to reveal the underlying logic of reinterpretation.

The validity and trustworthiness of the study are strengthened through triangulation, member reflection, and prolonged engagement with the field (H.-J. Kim, 2025). Triangulation is conducted by comparing interview data, observation, and documentary evidence. If a theme appears consistently across these sources, its analytical credibility is strengthened. Member reflection is used selectively by returning key interpretive points to several informants to ensure that the researcher has not misunderstood institutional language or theological nuance. Prolonged engagement, within the practical limits of the project, allows the researcher to become familiar with organizational routines, internal vocabulary, and the symbolic importance of Al-Ma'un within Muhammadiyah discourse. These strategies do not eliminate interpretation; rather, they improve its rigor and transparency.

Ethically, the study respects confidentiality, informed participation, and institutional sensitivity (Ikrima et al., 2024). All personal names are replaced with pseudonyms unless participants explicitly authorize attribution. Positions are reported only to the extent necessary for analytical clarity. Informants are informed that the study is academic in purpose and that their views will be interpreted in relation to broader institutional and theological questions. Because the research involves religious institutions and normative discourse, ethical sensitivity is especially important. The aim is not to judge theological authenticity in a doctrinal sense, but to analyze how theological ideas function in institutional and civic settings.

The technique for drawing conclusions in this research is inductive-interpretive conclusion building, supported by thematic synthesis and constant comparison across data sources (Azimi et al.,

2023). Conclusions are not drawn from isolated quotations or single observations. Instead, they emerge from repeated comparison between interviews, field observations, and documents, as well as between empirical findings and the theoretical framework. The researcher first develops provisional interpretations from recurring themes, then tests these interpretations against contradictory or less supportive data. This comparative process is essential because it prevents overly selective reading and ensures that conclusions are grounded in the broader pattern of evidence. The final conclusions are drawn when thematic saturation has been reached and when the interpretive claims are supported by converging data. In methodological terms, the study does not seek universal law-like findings; it seeks credible, well-grounded, and transferable insights into how Al-Ma'un theology is reinterpreted in the sphere of Muhammadiyah philanthropy.

In sum, this methodology is designed to match the intellectual demands of the study. A qualitative case-study design is chosen because the research investigates meaning, interpretation, and institutional practice rather than numerical trends. Yogyakarta is selected as the research location because of its historical, institutional, and civic relevance to Muhammadiyah and the living legacy of Al-Ma'un. The informants are purposively chosen because they occupy positions that illuminate theological, organizational, and practical dimensions of philanthropy. Interviews, observation, and document analysis are combined to ensure depth and triangulation, while the analysis proceeds through thematic and interpretive stages that connect empirical data with the study's conceptual framework. Through this methodological design, the article is able to examine Muhammadiyah philanthropy not simply as charitable administration, but as a contemporary site where Qur'anic humanism, Al-Ma'un theology, and civil society intersect in productive and meaningful ways.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study show that contemporary Muhammadiyah philanthropy can no longer be understood merely as an institutional mechanism for redistributing charity or as a historical continuation of early reformist piety. Instead, the research reveals that Muhammadiyah philanthropy, particularly as articulated through Al-Ma'un theology, has developed into a dynamic moral and civic framework that combines Qur'anic humanism, organized social action, and the ethical logic of civil society. The principal problem identified in this research was the limited conceptual understanding of how Al-Ma'un theology is reinterpreted in contemporary Muhammadiyah philanthropy. Previous discussions frequently treated Al-Ma'un either as a symbolic doctrinal heritage or as a motivational slogan behind charitable activities (Lovász & Pető, 2025). By contrast, the present findings indicate that Al-Ma'un functions in a more expansive way: it serves as a theological vocabulary of human dignity, institutional compassion, public responsibility, and social transformation. This result confirms that the main problem of the study is not the absence of philanthropy in Muhammadiyah, but the need to explain the deeper theological and civic meaning of that philanthropy in contemporary settings.

The data gathered through interviews, observation, and document analysis demonstrate that informants consistently interpret Al-Ma'un as a theological command that links religiosity with practical care for vulnerable people. However, the meaning of care itself has undergone significant expansion. In the earlier paradigm, care was often equated with almsgiving, direct relief, and the provision of basic needs. In the contemporary Muhammadiyah context, the findings show a stronger emphasis on empowerment, community resilience, social inclusion, and institutional sustainability. Informants described philanthropic work not simply as helping the poor, but as restoring dignity, increasing self-reliance, and enabling broader participation in social life. This shift is central to the reinterpretation of Al-Ma'un. The chapter is no longer understood only as a condemnation of neglect, but as a call to build structures that prevent neglect from recurring. Such a move reflects a transition from charitable morality to transformative civic ethics.

This transformation can be explained through the first theory used in this study, namely Qur'anic humanism associated with Fazlur Rahman Malik (Dwivedy, 2021). The findings strongly support Rahman's ethical reading of the Qur'an as a moral vision oriented toward justice, responsibility, and human dignity (Al-Kohlani, 2023). In practice, Muhammadiyah philanthropic actors do not frame beneficiaries merely as passive recipients of generosity. Rather, they increasingly speak of them as subjects whose dignity must be protected and whose capabilities should be developed. This finding is

significant because it shows that the theological energy of Al-Ma'un lies not only in compassion, but also in the recognition of the human person as morally significant. The poor, orphans, disaster victims, and marginalized communities are not treated solely as objects of pity, but as persons whose deprivation constitutes a failure of social ethics. In this respect, the results directly address the main problem of the study by showing that contemporary Muhammadiyah philanthropy is rooted in a humanistic understanding of revelation rather than a narrow distributive model of charity.

The second theory, civil society and the public sphere, associated with Jürgen Habermas, also helps explain the findings (S. Hasan, 2022). Muhammadiyah philanthropy operates through organized institutions, public communication, voluntary participation, and broad social trust. The study found that LAZISMU and related Muhammadiyah bodies are perceived not merely as religious charities but as civic institutions that mediate between personal faith and public welfare. Their activities involve donors, volunteers, managers, beneficiaries, educational institutions, and local communities in ways that strengthen associational life. This reflects a civil-society function in which religious values become organized forms of public action outside the direct control of the state, yet still contribute to social welfare and public ethics (Jakobson et al., 2022). The findings therefore suggest that Al-Ma'un theology in the Muhammadiyah context is not confined to personal piety or mosque-based discourse. It becomes an institutional language through which Muhammadiyah participates in the moral construction of public life. This finding addresses the research gap identified earlier, namely the lack of integration between theology and civil-society analysis. The study shows that Al-Ma'un theology is not only about benevolence; it is also about building an ethical public sphere through organized civic engagement.

The third theory, contextualist Qur'anic interpretation, associated with Abdullah Saeed, is especially useful in explaining how this reinterpretation takes place (Chen, 2021). The results reveal that Muhammadiyah actors do not simply repeat classical formulations of charity. Instead, they reinterpret Al-Ma'un in light of contemporary challenges such as urban poverty, disaster vulnerability, educational inequality, health access, digital fundraising, and sustainable empowerment programs. The data indicate that scriptural meaning is mediated through present institutional realities. This supports Saeed's argument that the Qur'an must be read through attention to context, hierarchy of values, and contemporary application (Dacholfany et al., 2020). The reinterpretation of Al-Ma'un in Muhammadiyah philanthropy is therefore not an abandonment of the text, but an extension of its ethical purpose into new social conditions. This finding is central to the article's novelty because it shows that theological reinterpretation is not merely an academic exercise; it is institutionally enacted through welfare programs, empowerment initiatives, public accountability, and civic partnerships.

The table below summarizes the major themes of the findings based on the qualitative data collected from interviews, observation, and documents.

Main Finding	Empirical Indication from Field Data	Theoretical Link	Interpretive Meaning
Al-Ma'un is understood as a theology of dignity	Informants emphasize empowerment, not only charity	Qur'anic Humanism (Fazlur Rahman Malik)	Philanthropy is grounded in the moral worth of the human person
Philanthropy functions as organized civic engagement	LAZISMU and Muhammadiyah institutions mediate between donors, volunteers, and communities	Civil Society/Public Sphere (Jürgen Habermas)	Religious ethics are institutionalized in the public sphere
Scriptural meaning is adapted to current social realities	Programs address education, health, disaster response, and sustainable livelihoods	Contextualist Interpretation (Abdullah Saeed)	Al-Ma'un is re-read through contemporary needs and ethical priorities

Main Finding	Empirical Indication from Field Data	Theoretical Link	Interpretive Meaning
Shift from consumptive aid to empowerment	Program language stresses resilience, training, and capacity-building	Combined three-theory synthesis	Compassion is transformed into long-term social responsibility
Muhammadiyah philanthropy strengthens social trust	Public accountability and institutional legitimacy are repeatedly stressed	Civil society and humanistic ethics	Faith-based institutions contribute to civic solidarity
Al-Ma'un serves as organizational identity	Staff and leaders invoke Al-Ma'un in institutional discourse and program justification	Humanism plus contextual interpretation	Theology shapes both symbolic legitimacy and practical direction

The results also clarify the gap problem highlighted in the introduction and literature review. Earlier studies often presented Muhammadiyah philanthropy as successful, expansive, and socially influential, yet they did not fully explain the theological reconstruction that enables such philanthropy to remain relevant in changing historical conditions (Langdon et al., 2023). The current research shows that the gap lies in the under-theorized relationship between scripture, institutional form, and civic purpose. The empirical evidence confirms that Muhammadiyah does not merely preserve Al-Ma'un as an inherited doctrine; it reconstructs its meaning through organizational discourse and practice. This reconstruction is visible in the move from direct relief toward empowerment, from individual compassion toward institutional responsibility, and from internal religious obligation toward broader public ethics. In this way, the three theories work together to clarify the gap. Rahman explains the ethical substance of human dignity, Habermas explains the public and civic institutionalization of that ethic, and Saeed explains how the reinterpretation remains faithful to Qur'anic values while responding to contemporary problems.

The findings also provide direct answers to the research questions. The first question asked how Al-Ma'un theology can be reinterpreted through the perspective of Qur'anic humanism in the context of contemporary Muhammadiyah philanthropy. The answer, based on the data, is that Al-Ma'un is now interpreted not only as a command to give, but as a call to affirm dignity, prevent structural neglect, and cultivate socially responsible institutions. This interpretation is humanistic because it treats vulnerability as a violation of the moral order envisioned by the Qur'an. The second question asked how this reinterpretation illuminates Muhammadiyah's role in strengthening civil society. The findings show that Muhammadiyah philanthropy creates networks of solidarity, volunteerism, public trust, and welfare provision that function as pillars of civil society. The third question asked how a humanistic reading of Al-Ma'un expands the meaning of philanthropy from charitable relief to transformative social engagement. The evidence clearly indicates that contemporary Muhammadiyah actors increasingly define successful philanthropy not by the amount distributed alone, but by the extent to which programs generate self-reliance, resilience, inclusion, and social participation.

These findings also confirm the research objectives. The first objective was to analyze the contemporary relevance of Al-Ma'un theology in relation to Qur'anic humanism and civil society. The study demonstrates that Al-Ma'un remains highly relevant precisely because it can be interpreted in ways that speak to modern welfare challenges and public institutional life. The second objective was to identify interpretive shifts that allow Al-Ma'un to address present-day issues. The findings reveal at least three such shifts: from relief to empowerment, from pious sentiment to public responsibility, and from doctrinal memory to institutional strategy. The third objective was to explain how Muhammadiyah philanthropy contributes to ethical and participatory civil society. Here the evidence is equally strong,

showing that Muhammadiyah's philanthropic bodies not only provide services but also cultivate civic habits such as trust, responsibility, collaboration, and social accountability.

In theoretical terms, the findings generate several important contributions. First, they support and extend the relevance of Qur'anic humanism by showing that scriptural ethics can be institutionally embodied (Fuqaha et al., 2025). The humanistic values of dignity, solidarity, and justice are not left at the level of abstract interpretation; they are translated into concrete models of welfare and empowerment. Second, the findings enrich civil-society theory by demonstrating that Islamic philanthropic organizations can function as morally grounded civic actors, not merely faith-based charities (Amin et al., 2024). Muhammadiyah's philanthropy shows that religious institutions may strengthen public life rather than withdraw from it. Third, the findings illustrate the practical utility of contextualist interpretation. The reinterpretation of Al-Ma'un is not speculative theology; it is a lived hermeneutic in which the Qur'an is made socially operative in new contexts. Taken together, these contributions form the novelty of the study: a three-theory synthesis that explains Muhammadiyah philanthropy as the intersection of moral scripture, contextual interpretation, and civic institutionalization.

The practical significance of the findings is equally important. For Muhammadiyah activists and philanthropic practitioners, the results provide a clearer conceptual foundation for designing programs that are ethically coherent and socially transformative. If Al-Ma'un is understood as a theology of dignity rather than merely a theology of donation, then program priorities must move toward empowerment, inclusion, and long-term impact. This has implications for beneficiary engagement, volunteer training, and institutional evaluation. Programs should not only ask whether aid has been delivered, but whether human capability, participation, and social dignity have been strengthened. For policymakers and civil-society actors more broadly, the findings show that faith-based philanthropy can serve as a strategic partner in addressing welfare gaps and strengthening civic solidarity. This practical value is grounded in the three theories: Rahman's framework deepens the ethical orientation of care, Habermas clarifies the public role of associational institutions, and Saeed provides the interpretive flexibility needed for practical adaptation.

The academic benefits of the study are also substantial. The findings contribute to the literature on Muhammadiyah by moving beyond descriptive accounts of institutional growth and toward a deeper analysis of the theological ideas animating that growth. They contribute to Islamic studies by showing how Qur'anic interpretation can be studied not only in exegetical texts but also in organizational life. They contribute to social theory by providing a non-Western and religiously grounded case of civil-society formation. In this sense, the study helps bridge a gap between normative Islamic scholarship and empirical research on institutions. It demonstrates that theology, far from being detached from social life, can function as a productive force in shaping welfare institutions, public ethics, and civic participation.

When discussed in relation to previous research, the findings both confirm and revise earlier conclusions. Prior studies correctly identified Muhammadiyah as an organization deeply committed to social welfare and inspired by Al-Ma'un (Kawadza, 2022). They also accurately observed the growth of Muhammadiyah's philanthropic infrastructure and its responsiveness to public needs (F.Y., 2020). However, many of those studies did not sufficiently theorize the shift from charity to civic empowerment (Kings, 2022). The present findings build on earlier work by showing that contemporary Muhammadiyah philanthropy is not simply expanding in scale; it is also evolving conceptually. The move toward empowerment, institutional accountability, and public participation suggests a more developed theological orientation than earlier descriptive studies captured. Thus, the current research does not reject previous findings, but deepens them by revealing the interpretive logic beneath institutional practice.

The discussion of the main problem is therefore sharpened by comparison with prior studies. Earlier work documented Muhammadiyah's social activism, but this study explains why that activism has continuing moral force. It does so by showing that Al-Ma'un remains a living theology precisely because it is continuously re-read through present social realities. The discussion of the gap problem also becomes clearer in light of previous findings. Earlier scholarship often assumed the theological

relevance of Al-Ma'un without analyzing its contemporary reconstruction. The current research fills that gap by tracing how humanism, civil society, and contextual interpretation converge in practical institutional life. Likewise, the discussion of the research questions becomes richer when linked to previous studies: what was formerly described as charitable activism is now better understood as a theological-civic formation.

The discussion of research objectives similarly benefits from this connection to earlier studies. Previous research helped establish the historical and institutional importance of Muhammadiyah philanthropy, thereby creating the foundation for the present inquiry. Building on that foundation, this study fulfills its objective by demonstrating how Al-Ma'un theology is reinterpreted as a civic and humanistic paradigm. It also clarifies the theoretical benefit of integrating three theories rather than relying on one. Without Rahman, the ethical depth of Al-Ma'un might be reduced to general compassion. Without Habermas, its institutional and public dimensions might remain underexplained. Without Saeed, the mechanism of reinterpretation would remain vague. The synthesis of these theories is therefore not only methodologically useful but intellectually necessary.

The findings also illuminate the practical and academic benefits in relation to earlier studies. Past scholarship often emphasized philanthropy's visible outcomes, such as social services and humanitarian assistance. The current study adds that the quality of those outcomes depends on the theological and civic imagination guiding them. Institutions informed by a strong humanistic reading of Al-Ma'un are more likely to design programs that protect dignity, cultivate agency, and sustain social trust. Academically, the study demonstrates that qualitative research on faith-based organizations can generate conceptual innovation, especially when it is theoretically integrated and grounded in institutional practice.

Overall, the results confirm that the novelty of this study lies in presenting Al-Ma'un theology as a bridge concept between Qur'anic humanism and civil society within contemporary Muhammadiyah philanthropy. This reinterpretation responds directly to the main problem, fills the identified research gap, answers the research questions, and fulfills the study objectives. It also generates clear theoretical, practical, and academic benefits. Theologically, it shows that the Qur'an's humanistic ethic remains socially generative. Institutionally, it shows that Muhammadiyah philanthropy is a form of organized public morality. Academically, it offers a model for studying Islamic philanthropy not only as a financial or managerial phenomenon, but as a field of interpretive and civic transformation.

In summary, the findings of this study demonstrate that contemporary Muhammadiyah philanthropy should be understood as a living arena in which Qur'anic humanism, civil-society ethics, and contextual interpretation intersect. Al-Ma'un theology is reinterpreted from a narrow emphasis on charitable giving into a wider paradigm of dignity, empowerment, public participation, and moral responsibility. Through this reinterpretation, Muhammadiyah philanthropy emerges not simply as an act of benevolence, but as an institutional embodiment of an Islamic vision of humane and participatory social life. This is the central contribution of the study, and it provides a strong basis for the concluding section of the article.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that contemporary Muhammadiyah philanthropy should be understood not merely as an institutional extension of Islamic charity, but as a dynamic and evolving expression of Qur'anic humanism embodied in civil-society practice. Based on the findings and discussion, the reinterpretation of Al-Ma'un theology emerges as the central analytical key for understanding how Muhammadiyah translates scriptural ethics into organized forms of social engagement. The study demonstrates that Al-Ma'un is no longer interpreted only as a moral injunction to assist the poor and care for orphans in a limited charitable sense. Rather, it has been rearticulated as a broader theological framework that affirms human dignity, social justice, collective responsibility, and institutional compassion. In this regard, Muhammadiyah philanthropy represents a mode of religious action that connects faith, ethical obligation, and public participation in a coherent and socially productive manner.

The findings further indicate that the main problem addressed in this research, namely the limited conceptual understanding of the theological meaning of Muhammadiyah philanthropy in the

contemporary period, can be answered by situating Al-Ma'un within a wider framework of Qur'anic humanism and civil society. The study shows that Muhammadiyah philanthropic institutions do not operate solely as channels for the distribution of aid, but as civic actors that mediate between religious values and public welfare. Their programs, organizational narratives, and social initiatives reveal a significant interpretive shift from consumptive charity toward empowerment-oriented philanthropy. Such a transformation is visible in the increasing emphasis on resilience, capacity-building, social inclusion, and long-term welfare strategies. Consequently, the contribution of Muhammadiyah philanthropy lies not only in its practical service to society, but also in its role in constructing an ethical public sphere shaped by Islamic moral commitments.

In relation to the three theories used in this study, the conclusion reinforces the significance of their integration. The perspective of Qur'anic humanism clarifies that the deeper moral substance of Al-Ma'un lies in the recognition of human worth and in the obligation to oppose neglect, humiliation, and exclusion. Civil-society theory explains how these ethical commitments are institutionalized through voluntary associations, public trust, and organized social participation. Contextualist Qur'anic interpretation demonstrates how a scriptural message can be re-read in response to changing social realities without losing its normative force. The synthesis of these three theoretical perspectives provides the study's main intellectual contribution. It allows Muhammadiyah philanthropy to be understood not only as a charitable institution, but also as an interpretive, ethical, and civic project rooted in the Qur'an and expressed through modern organizational forms.

The study also concludes that the previously identified research gap has been meaningfully addressed. Earlier scholarship tended to discuss Al-Ma'un as a historical symbol of Muhammadiyah identity or to analyze philanthropy in terms of institutional performance and social service delivery. While these approaches remain valuable, they often left underexplored the theological reconstruction that makes Muhammadiyah philanthropy relevant to contemporary issues. This research fills that gap by showing that the reinterpretation of Al-Ma'un is not rhetorical but substantive. It is reflected in institutional priorities, programmatic language, public engagement, and the transformation of charity into a more comprehensive ethic of empowerment. The research therefore confirms that Muhammadiyah's philanthropic practice is sustained by an active process of theological renewal rather than by the passive preservation of inherited doctrine.

The conclusions also answer the research questions and confirm the achievement of the study objectives. Al-Ma'un theology is reinterpreted through Qur'anic humanism by emphasizing dignity, justice, and solidarity as central features of faith-based social action. This reinterpretation illuminates Muhammadiyah's role in strengthening civil society by showing how religious commitments generate organized forms of welfare provision, social trust, and participatory public ethics. It also expands the meaning of philanthropy beyond direct relief by positioning empowerment, inclusion, and institutional responsibility as core expressions of Islamic compassion. Thus, the objectives of explaining the theological basis of Muhammadiyah philanthropy, identifying interpretive shifts in Al-Ma'un theology, and analyzing Muhammadiyah's contribution to civil society have been fulfilled through the empirical and theoretical findings of the study.

From a broader perspective, this study affirms that Muhammadiyah philanthropy should be seen as a living arena in which revelation, ethics, and public life intersect. The reinterpretation of Al-Ma'un demonstrates that Islamic theology can remain deeply relevant when it is engaged with contemporary realities and embodied in institutions committed to human welfare. The conclusion of this research is therefore not simply that Muhammadiyah continues the legacy of social charity, but that it reconstructs that legacy into a more expansive model of humane, participatory, and transformative social responsibility. In this sense, contemporary Muhammadiyah philanthropy represents an important example of how Islamic thought can contribute to civil society through a theology that is scripturally grounded, morally substantive, and socially responsive.

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