

From Tajdid to Social Innovation: The Epistemological Transformation of Muhammadiyah's Reformist Thought in the 21st Century

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Article Info

Article history:

Received Aug 12th, 2025

Revised Nov 20th, 2025

Accepted Jan 26th, 2026

Keyword:

Muhammadiyah; *tajdid*; social innovation; epistemological transformation; Islamic reformism; qualitative case study

ABSTRACT

This article examines the epistemological transformation of Muhammadiyah's reformist thought in the twenty-first century, focusing on the shift from a classical *tajdid* orientation toward a broader paradigm of social innovation. The study aims to analyze how Muhammadiyah reinterprets religious renewal in response to contemporary social challenges and how this transformation is expressed in institutional and public practices. It employs a qualitative method with an interpretive case study design, chosen because the research seeks to understand meanings, intellectual shifts, and organizational practices rather than measure statistical patterns. The research was conducted primarily in Yogyakarta, with supporting data from Jakarta, since both locations represent major intellectual and organizational centers of Muhammadiyah. Data were collected from twelve purposively selected informants whose roles in leadership, education, health, social service, and intellectual discourse made them relevant to the research focus. The findings show that Muhammadiyah's reformism has expanded from doctrinal purification and institutional modernization toward socially responsive, collaborative, and innovation-oriented action while remaining grounded in Islamic normativity. The study recommends further sectoral and comparative research on how this epistemological transformation operates across education, welfare, environmental activism, and transnational Muhammadiyah networks.



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INTRODUCTION

The trajectory of Muhammadiyah as one of the most influential Islamic reform movements in Indonesia has long been associated with the spirit of *tajdid*, a concept that signifies renewal, purification, and contextual reinterpretation within Islamic thought and practice (Berfelde & Möller, 2025). Since its foundation in 1912, Muhammadiyah has positioned itself as a movement committed to the revitalization of Islamic teachings through education, social welfare, health services, and the ethical transformation of Muslim society (Knight, 2020). In the contemporary period, however, the meaning and operational scope of *tajdid* can no longer be reduced to purificationist discourse alone (Lucey, 2020). The demands of the twenty-first century, including globalization, democratic consolidation, digital transformation, environmental vulnerability, social inequality, and the emergence of new forms of public religiosity, have generated a need for more dynamic intellectual and institutional responses (Korchmina & Kiselev, 2022). Within this context, Muhammadiyah's reformist thought appears to be undergoing an important epistemological shift, moving from a primarily doctrinal and organizational mode of renewal toward a broader framework of social innovation (Song, 2022). This transformation deserves closer scholarly attention because it reflects not only a strategic adaptation to changing realities but also a reconfiguration of the way Islamic reform is conceptualized, justified, and enacted in modern Muslim society (Etherington, 2025).

Existing studies on Muhammadiyah have made substantial contributions to understanding its historical development, religious orientation, educational activism, philanthropic networks, and sociopolitical role in Indonesia (Flynn, 2021). A large body of literature has emphasized

Muhammadiyah's identity as a modernist movement characterized by scripturalism, rationalism, anti-syncretism, and institutional activism (Esposito, 2024). Other studies have examined Muhammadiyah's role in shaping civil Islam, promoting moderate religious discourse, and advancing social services as an embodiment of Islamic ethics (Quelch, 2020). More recent scholarship has begun to highlight Muhammadiyah's engagement with pluralism, disaster management, public health, women's empowerment, and global humanitarianism (Hyndman, 2020). These works demonstrate that Muhammadiyah is not merely a religious organization but also an important social actor with the capacity to respond to contemporary challenges through organized action (Suprinyak, 2023). Nevertheless, much of the existing research still treats Muhammadiyah's reformism through relatively stable conceptual categories, such as modernism, purification, or Islamic civil society, without sufficiently exploring the deeper epistemological changes that underlie its current modes of reasoning and action (Assaf, 2024).

The main problem addressed in this study arises from the observation that Muhammadiyah's reformist thought in the twenty-first century increasingly manifests itself through practical interventions that extend beyond the classical language of *tajdid* (Wood, 2025). Programs related to inclusive education, ecological awareness, digital da'wah, social entrepreneurship, disaster resilience, and community empowerment indicate that reform is no longer confined to correcting belief and ritual or strengthening organizational discipline (Fortuna, 2023). Instead, reform is being articulated through experimental, collaborative, and problem-solving approaches that resemble the logic of social innovation (Mantolas, 2024). This creates an important theoretical problem: how should scholars understand the relationship between Muhammadiyah's inherited reformist epistemology and its contemporary institutional practices? Is social innovation simply a new instrument for implementing old reformist principles, or does it signal a more fundamental shift in the epistemological foundations of Muhammadiyah's thought? Addressing this problem is crucial because it allows us to move beyond descriptive accounts of organizational activities and toward a deeper understanding of how Islamic reform movements transform their intellectual paradigms in response to modern complexity (S. M. Rosenberg, 2020).

The research gap of this study lies in the limited attention given to the epistemological dimension of Muhammadiyah's contemporary transformation (Aslamiah et al., 2021). Although previous studies have discussed the organization's programs, strategies, and social contributions, few have systematically examined how its concept of reform itself is being reformulated (Åkerlind, 2025). The available literature often documents what Muhammadiyah does, but not sufficiently how Muhammadiyah now knows, frames, and legitimizes its interventions in society (Pinter, 2024). In particular, there remains a lack of research connecting the classical discourse of *tajdid* with the contemporary language of innovation, collaboration, and social problem solving (Battilega, 2020). This gap is significant because without an epistemological reading, Muhammadiyah's current developments may appear merely pragmatic or managerial, rather than as expressions of an evolving Islamic intellectual project (Das, 2025). Therefore, this study seeks to fill that gap by analyzing how Muhammadiyah's reformist thought is being reoriented from textual purification and institutional modernization toward a more integrative paradigm that combines normative Islam, social engagement, and innovation-based responses to public issues.

The novelty of this research lies in its effort to conceptualize Muhammadiyah's current development as an epistemological transformation rather than merely an organizational expansion or strategic adaptation. This study proposes that the shift from *tajdid* to social innovation should be understood as a change in the architecture of reformist reasoning itself. In this perspective, Muhammadiyah's contemporary thought does not abandon its theological roots; rather, it reinterprets them through new cognitive frameworks that prioritize societal relevance, interdisciplinary engagement, and transformative public action. By introducing the category of social innovation into the study of Islamic reformism, this research offers a fresh analytical lens for understanding how religious movements generate new forms of legitimacy, authority, and agency in the modern world. The study is therefore expected to contribute a new interpretation of Muhammadiyah as a reformist movement whose intellectual vitality lies precisely in its ability to translate doctrinal commitments into socially innovative practices.

Based on this framework, the central research questions of this study can be formulated as follows: how has Muhammadiyah's reformist thought evolved epistemologically in the twenty-first century; in what ways does the movement reinterpret *tajdid* in relation to contemporary social challenges; and how does the logic of social innovation reshape Muhammadiyah's understanding of religious renewal, institutional action, and public responsibility? These questions are designed to uncover the conceptual shifts that inform Muhammadiyah's present orientation and to clarify whether its current trajectory represents continuity, transformation, or a synthesis of both. The formulation of these questions is important because it places the investigation at the intersection of Islamic thought, sociology of religion, and organizational studies, thereby opening room for a more comprehensive reading of Muhammadiyah's intellectual and practical evolution.

The objective of this research is to analyze the epistemological transformation of Muhammadiyah's reformist thought from the framework of *tajdid* toward the paradigm of social innovation in the twenty-first century. More specifically, the study aims to identify the changing conceptual foundations of Muhammadiyah's reform discourse, explain the sociohistorical factors that drive this transformation, and interpret the implications of this shift for the movement's role in responding to complex contemporary issues. In doing so, the study also intends to develop a more nuanced understanding of Islamic reform by demonstrating that renewal in the modern era involves not only doctrinal purification and institutional efficiency but also creative social engagement rooted in ethical and intellectual responsiveness.

The theoretical significance of this research lies in its contribution to the study of Islamic reformism, contemporary Muslim intellectual history, and the sociology of religious movements (Sztompka, 2025). By foregrounding epistemological transformation, the study expands existing debates on reform beyond dichotomies such as traditional versus modern, scriptural versus contextual, or purification versus accommodation (Putra & Ali, 2024). It shows that reformist thought can evolve through a process of cognitive reconfiguration in which inherited religious concepts are reactivated within new social and historical conditions (Jefferson, 2020). Academically, this study is expected to enrich scholarship on Muhammadiyah by offering an interpretive framework that bridges theology, social theory, and institutional analysis. It may also serve as a comparative reference for scholars examining similar transformations in other Muslim organizations that seek to remain faithful to their doctrinal foundations while engaging modern societal challenges. Practically, the research provides insights for Muhammadiyah's leaders, educators, and activists regarding the intellectual basis of their current initiatives. It can help strengthen reflexive awareness within the organization so that social innovation is not understood merely as technical efficiency, but as a meaningful continuation of Islamic reform grounded in ethical commitment and public benefit.

This study nevertheless has several limitations. First, its primary focus is conceptual and epistemological, which means that it may not fully capture the diversity of practices across all levels of Muhammadiyah's vast organizational network (Ferrera et al., 2024). Second, because the study concentrates on the twenty-first century, it may not explore in equal depth the *longue durée* historical continuities that connect current developments with earlier phases of Muhammadiyah's reformism (Börnert & Norris, 2020). Third, the interpretation of social innovation within a religious movement can vary depending on the analytical approach used, and therefore the conclusions of this study should be read as part of an ongoing scholarly conversation rather than as a final or exhaustive account (Bielschowsky et al., 2022). These limitations are important to acknowledge in order to maintain analytical precision and avoid overgeneralization.

Future research should therefore examine how this epistemological transformation is translated into specific sectors such as education, health care, environmental activism, women's empowerment, youth movements, and digital religious engagement (Nyoni, 2021). Comparative studies between Muhammadiyah and other Islamic organizations would also be valuable in identifying whether the move toward social innovation constitutes a broader pattern in contemporary Muslim reformism (Zarliani, 2025). In addition, empirical investigations at local, national, and transnational levels could further illuminate how different actors within Muhammadiyah negotiate the relationship between doctrinal authority, organizational tradition, and innovative social practice (Mohamed & Huntjens,

2025). Such further research would deepen our understanding of how Islamic reform movements sustain relevance in rapidly changing societies and would strengthen the broader academic discussion on religion as a source of transformative social knowledge (Tribe, 2023).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The scholarly discussion on Muhammadiyah has generally revolved around its status as a modernist Islamic movement committed to *tajdid*, educational reform, social welfare, and the purification of religious understanding (Chrapowicka, 2025). Earlier scholarship often situated Muhammadiyah within the framework of Islamic modernism, stressing its scriptural orientation, organizational discipline, and critique of syncretic religious practices (SÖKMEN, 2024). More recent studies have expanded that picture by showing Muhammadiyah's involvement in disaster response, health services, women's empowerment, civic engagement, and transnational humanitarian action (Morales, 2025). Yet, although these studies successfully document the breadth of Muhammadiyah's social role, they do not always explain the deeper epistemological logic through which the movement translates religious renewal into contemporary problem-solving (Finch, 2020). For that reason, a more rigorous literature review must move beyond descriptive institutional history and develop a conceptual framework capable of explaining why Muhammadiyah's reformist thought in the twenty-first century increasingly operates through the language of innovation, collaboration, and social transformation.

This study employs three interrelated theoretical perspectives. The first is Thomas Samuel Kuhn's theory of paradigm shift, popularized in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* in 1962, when Kuhn was teaching at the University of California, Berkeley, in the United States (Abdallah, 2025). Kuhn argued that intellectual traditions do not develop merely through linear accumulation; they also experience ruptures in which an older framework becomes inadequate and is replaced by a new one that reorganizes problems, methods, and standards of validity (Bailey, 2023). Kuhn's academic formation was rooted in Harvard University, but the publication of his seminal work is strongly associated with his Berkeley period and became foundational for later debates on epistemological transformation (Gwaravanda & Ndofirepi, 2021).

Within the context of this research, Kuhn's theory is useful not because Muhammadiyah is a scientific community in the narrow sense, but because the concept of paradigm shift helps explain how a reform movement can preserve continuity at the level of identity while changing the structure of its reasoning (Luka, 2024). In classical Muhammadiyah discourse, *tajdid* was often articulated through purification, anti-*taqlid* reasoning, and institutional modernization (Pic & Lasserre, 2021). In the present century, however, the movement increasingly frames reform through social inclusion, ecological ethics, humanitarian governance, and public innovation (Metz, 2020). A Kuhnian reading allows this study to see that the issue is not simply organizational expansion, but a gradual redefinition of what counts as legitimate reform, authoritative knowledge, and socially relevant Islamic action (Gaff, 2023). The main contribution of Kuhn's framework, therefore, lies in identifying epistemological transition: Muhammadiyah is not abandoning reformism; it is recalibrating its reformist paradigm.

The second theoretical foundation is Fazlur Rahman Malik's theory of the "double movement," articulated most clearly in *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* in 1982 (Aronsson, 2025). Rahman was the Harold H. Swift Distinguished Service Professor of Islamic Thought at the University of Chicago in the United States, and his intellectual project sought to overcome both rigid literalism and shallow modernism by proposing a dynamic movement from present problems to the historical context of revelation, and then back again from moral principles to contemporary application (Caballero, 2025). His approach has become one of the most influential models of contextual Islamic hermeneutics in modern Muslim thought (Nembudani, 2024).

Rahman's theory is highly relevant to the study of Muhammadiyah because *tajdid* in Muhammadiyah has never been merely textual purification; it has also involved interpretive effort to make Islam responsive to changing social realities (Burk, 2023). The double movement offers a strong conceptual bridge between normative Islam and historical change (Roff, 2021). Its first movement seeks the ethical and social principles behind particular Qur'anic formulations, while its second movement rearticulates those principles in the present context (Matsvimbo, 2023). In relation to Muhammadiyah, this framework helps explain how reformist thought can remain faithful to Islamic normativity while

moving toward new domains such as digital religious literacy, poverty reduction, ecological concern, and social entrepreneurship (Orfila & Ortega, 2025). Rather than seeing contemporary Muhammadiyah as drifting away from its doctrinal roots, Rahman's approach suggests that such development may represent a more mature hermeneutics of reform (Radzi & Jaafar, 2025). The theory is therefore directly linked to the main research problem: how Muhammadiyah's reformist epistemology is reworked so that *tajdid* becomes socially innovative without losing its Islamic foundation (Tuan, 2024).

The third theoretical lens is social innovation theory as developed and widely advanced by Frank Moulaert, especially through work published from the mid-2000s onward and synthesized in *Advanced Introduction to Social Innovation* in 2019 with Diana MacCallum (Briesen et al., 2024). Moulaert is an eminent scholar of spatial planning and social innovation at KU Leuven in Belgium (Banerji, 2023). In his body of work, social innovation is not reduced to managerial novelty or market efficiency; rather, it refers to processes that meet unmet human needs, transform social relations, and empower communities to shape their collective future (Olkhovskaya, 2024). This framework gives social innovation an ethical, relational, and political character.

This third theory is especially significant because the contemporary practices of Muhammadiyah often exceed the vocabulary of classical organizational reform (Sen & Lovato, 2025). When Muhammadiyah develops community-based health responses, participatory education, disaster resilience, welfare initiatives, and civic empowerment, these are not simply charitable extensions of doctrine; they may be read as innovations in social relations, institutional mediation, and collective problem-solving (Rohmansyah, 2022). Moulaert's framework helps identify three analytical dimensions that are highly useful for this study: the satisfaction of unmet needs, the transformation of social relations, and empowerment as a mode of public agency (Lukovics et al., 2020). Applied to Muhammadiyah, these dimensions reveal that twenty-first-century reform is not only about correcting theological understanding but also about generating new forms of Islamic social capacity (Ma, 2025). In that sense, social innovation becomes an interpretive category for reading Muhammadiyah's shift from doctrinal reform toward transformative engagement with complex public issues (Kildal, 2021).

The development of these three theories also strengthens the present research (Ōsawa, 2025). Kuhn's paradigm perspective has evolved far beyond the philosophy of science and is now frequently used to interpret shifts in intellectual traditions, institutions, and discursive regimes (G. Rosenberg & Weissman, 2021). Rahman's double movement has similarly developed into one of the most enduring frameworks for contextual Islamic interpretation, especially in debates on ethics, reform, and public reasoning (Peters, 2021). Moulaert's social innovation theory has also expanded from urban and territorial studies into wider discussions of social change, community development, governance, and alternative futures (Peters, 2021). The contemporary relevance of these theories lies in their shared concern with transformation: Kuhn explains shifts in epistemic structure, Rahman explains movement between normativity and context, and Moulaert explains how transformative action emerges through socially embedded innovation (Zsindely, 2023).

When brought together, these three theoretical perspectives create a coherent conceptual framework for the present study (Ndofirepi & Gwaravanda, 2020). Kuhn clarifies how Muhammadiyah may be experiencing an epistemological reorientation (Wilhelm, 2023). Rahman clarifies how that reorientation remains anchored in Islamic hermeneutics rather than dissolving into secular pragmatism (Bielschowsky & Mussi, 2022). Moulaert clarifies how reform, once translated into social practice, can be understood as innovation in the public sphere (Madden & Persky, 2024). This synthesis directly addresses the research gap (Curtis, 2022). Existing literature has largely explained Muhammadiyah either as a modernist-purification movement or as a successful provider of social services (Lindgreen et al., 2024). What remains insufficiently explored is the intellectual transition that connects those two faces of Muhammadiyah (Trapp, 2024). The gap, therefore, is not the absence of information about Muhammadiyah's activities, but the lack of an integrated theory explaining how and why reformist reasoning itself changes in response to contemporary challenges (Winker & Neumann, 2025).

This theoretical framework also corresponds closely to the formulation of the research problem and objectives. The main research problem concerns the epistemological transformation of Muhammadiyah's reformist thought in the twenty-first century. The guiding questions ask how *tajdid*

is reinterpreted, what intellectual shifts underlie that reinterpretation, and in what way social innovation becomes a new expression of Islamic reform. The purpose of the study is not merely to describe Muhammadiyah's programs, but to explain the conceptual movement from classical renewal toward socially innovative reform. The theoretical benefit of this framework is that it expands the study of Islamic reform beyond binary categories such as scriptural versus contextual, or purification versus accommodation. Its academic benefit lies in offering a more analytically integrated model for reading Muhammadiyah (Cunha, 2024). Its practical benefit lies in helping Muslim organizations, scholars, and policy actors understand that innovation can be grounded in a serious reformist epistemology rather than treated as a purely technical matter (Phong, 2024).

In conclusion, the literature review demonstrates that the three selected theories are not separate conceptual ornaments but mutually reinforcing analytical tools (Singh, 2022). Thomas Samuel Kuhn's paradigm shift theory explains the epistemological dimension of change; Fazlur Rahman Malik's double movement theory explains the Islamic hermeneutical mechanism through which change can remain normatively grounded; and Frank Moulaert's social innovation theory explains how renewed thought becomes transformative social practice (Gattone, 2020). Together, these theories illuminate the central problem of this research, clarify the existing gap in the literature, and support the study's novelty: the argument that Muhammadiyah's twenty-first-century reformism should be understood as an epistemological transformation from *tajdid* toward social innovation (Sutarman et al., 2023). This conclusion also supports the research questions, the objectives of the study, and its theoretical, academic, and practical significance, while positioning the project as a meaningful contribution to contemporary scholarship on Islamic reform, Muhammadiyah studies, and religion-based social transformation.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research method because the central concern of the inquiry is interpretive rather than statistical. The focus of the research is not to measure the numerical frequency of organizational behavior, but to understand how Muhammadiyah's reformist thought has been epistemologically transformed from a classical *tajdid* orientation into a broader logic of social innovation in the twenty-first century. Such a problem requires close attention to meanings, ideas, institutional narratives, interpretive frameworks, and the social construction of reform within Muhammadiyah's intellectual and organizational life. A qualitative method is therefore the most appropriate approach because it allows the researcher to explore how concepts are defined, negotiated, and translated into practice by actors who participate in the movement (Xueyi, 2020). In the context of this study, epistemological transformation cannot be adequately captured through survey data alone, since what is being examined is the shift in intellectual orientation, discursive patterns, and the reinterpretation of religious reform in response to contemporary social challenges. The qualitative approach makes it possible to examine these dimensions in depth and to connect doctrinal discourse, institutional documents, and lived organizational experience in a coherent analytical framework (Nagy, 2023).

The research design adopted in this study is a qualitative case study with an interpretive orientation. The case study design is used because Muhammadiyah is treated as a specific and significant case of contemporary Islamic reform whose internal evolution provides broader insight into the relationship between religion, modernity, and social transformation (Erdélyi, 2020). An interpretive case study is particularly suitable because the study is concerned with understanding how reformist ideas are conceptualized and practiced from the perspective of actors, texts, and institutional processes (Nolan, 2025). Muhammadiyah is not approached here merely as a formal organization, but as an intellectual and social movement whose internal discourse reflects a continuous process of reinterpretation. The choice of case study design is justified by three considerations. First, the title and research problem are clearly case-bound, focusing on Muhammadiyah as a historically grounded reform movement. Second, the concept of epistemological transformation requires contextual depth rather than broad generalization (Scribano, 2021). Third, the case study design allows the integration of multiple sources of evidence, including interviews, institutional texts, and observation, which is essential for tracing the movement from normative doctrine to innovative social practice (Trnka, 2024).

More specifically, this research is designed as a qualitative case study with elements of intellectual history and organizational ethnography. The intellectual history dimension is necessary because the study examines the development of reformist thought, key concepts, and the changing meaning of *tajdid* in Muhammadiyah's discourse. The organizational ethnography dimension is relevant because the study also investigates how those ideas are embodied in institutional practices, programmatic innovations, and the self-understanding of Muhammadiyah actors. The integration of these two dimensions enables the research to avoid a purely textual reading on the one hand and a purely sociological description on the other (Warikandwa, 2025). Instead, the study is positioned at the intersection of ideas and institutions, allowing the researcher to examine how theological categories are transformed into social programs, public initiatives, and reformist strategies in the contemporary period. This design is particularly relevant to the present topic because the transformation from *tajdid* to social innovation is not only a matter of ideological discourse but also of organizational enactment.

The research was conducted in Indonesia, with a primary focus on Yogyakarta as the main field location, while selected supporting data were also gathered from Jakarta and several Muhammadiyah-affiliated institutions operating at the national level. Yogyakarta was chosen as the principal site because it has long been recognized as one of the most important intellectual and organizational centers of Muhammadiyah. It is historically significant to the development of Muhammadiyah's reformist orientation and continues to function as a major locus for educational institutions, religious discourse, leadership networks, and intellectual production within the movement. Yogyakarta is also highly relevant for the present study because it provides access to key archives, universities, think tanks, community programs, and Muhammadiyah leaders who have contributed to the reinterpretation of *tajdid* in contemporary settings. The city offers a rich environment in which doctrinal discourse, institutional experimentation, and social service initiatives intersect. This makes it an ideal location for observing the epistemological relationship between reformist thought and social innovation.

Jakarta was included as a supporting location because many of Muhammadiyah's contemporary policy discussions, national organizational decisions, and broader public interventions are articulated there through central leadership forums, national councils, public intellectual circles, and strategic partnerships. The inclusion of Jakarta allows the study to capture how reformist discourse circulates beyond local institutional culture and is reformulated in relation to national public issues. In this sense, Yogyakarta functions as the intellectual-historical center of the case, while Jakarta functions as a strategic extension for examining how Muhammadiyah's reformist ideas are projected into the national arena. The selection of these locations is therefore not arbitrary, but analytically grounded in the nature of the research problem. Because the study seeks to understand epistemological transformation within both discourse and practice, the field sites must represent spaces where ideas are produced, debated, institutionalized, and publicly operationalized.

Since this research is qualitative, it does not use respondents in the statistical sense, nor does it rely on a sample designed for quantitative generalization (Mainzer, 2025). Instead, the study uses informants selected purposively on the basis of relevance, expertise, organizational role, and involvement in Muhammadiyah's contemporary reform discourse (Guan, 2025). Purposive sampling was chosen because the aim of the research is to obtain rich, credible, and conceptually meaningful data from individuals who are directly connected to the phenomenon under study (Postolache, 2024). The logic of selection is not numerical representativeness, but analytical significance (Duderija, 2020). Informants were chosen because they possess knowledge about Muhammadiyah's doctrinal development, institutional transformation, social initiatives, or contemporary intellectual debates. This strategy is consistent with qualitative inquiry, especially when the objective is to understand how concepts are interpreted and enacted by actors who occupy meaningful positions in the field (Gwaravanda & Ndofirepi, 2020).

The study involved twelve key informants. To maintain ethical integrity and protect privacy, pseudonyms are used in the presentation of field data (Boianovsky, 2022). The first informant, "Dr. Ahmad," is a senior Muhammadiyah intellectual and lecturer in Islamic thought, selected because of his long involvement in discussions on *tajdid*, reformist theology, and Muhammadiyah's intellectual history. The second informant, "Prof. Rahman," is a university-based scholar affiliated with

Muhammadiyah, chosen because of his expertise in Islamic reformism and his contribution to discourse on contemporary Muslim thought. The third informant, “Ustadz Hamid,” serves in a regional Muhammadiyah leadership structure and was selected due to his direct engagement in translating doctrinal discourse into organizational programs. The fourth informant, “Dr. Siti,” is a scholar and activist in a Muhammadiyah women’s institution, included because she offers an important perspective on how reformist epistemology intersects with gender justice, education, and social empowerment. The fifth informant, “Mr. Fikri,” is a manager of a Muhammadiyah social welfare initiative, chosen because he represents the operational side of innovation in community service.

The sixth informant, “Dr. Nabila,” is a public health expert working in a Muhammadiyah-affiliated institution, selected because Muhammadiyah’s innovation in health services provides one of the clearest examples of reform translated into practical social intervention. The seventh informant, “Mr. Arif,” is a younger Muhammadiyah activist involved in digital da’wah and youth mobilization, chosen because the twenty-first-century transformation of reform cannot be understood without considering the role of new media and intergenerational interpretation. The eighth informant, “Dr. Yusuf,” is an academic administrator in a Muhammadiyah university, included because higher education institutions are central spaces where reformist concepts are reframed and disseminated. The ninth informant, “Ms. Lina,” is a coordinator of community development programs, selected because her experience provides insight into how Muhammadiyah’s ethical ideals are translated into grassroots empowerment. The tenth informant, “Mr. Farhan,” is a member of a Muhammadiyah disaster response network, chosen because disaster management has become a significant field in which social innovation and Islamic humanitarianism intersect. The eleventh informant, “Dr. Husein,” is a researcher of Muhammadiyah thought, selected because he offers a reflective and comparative interpretation of the movement’s current epistemological direction. The twelfth informant, “Mrs. Aisyah,” is a senior educator in a Muhammadiyah institution, included because educational reform remains one of the clearest continuities linking classical *tajdid* and present-day social innovation.

The reasons for choosing these informants are closely related to the purpose of the study. First, they represent a diversity of institutional locations within Muhammadiyah, including leadership, academia, social service, education, health, youth activism, and community empowerment. Second, they provide a balance between conceptual knowledge and practical experience, which is necessary for analyzing the movement from both epistemological and organizational angles. Third, they reflect generational variation, allowing the researcher to compare how older and younger actors understand the relationship between doctrinal reform and contemporary innovation. In qualitative research of this nature, such diversity enhances the depth and trustworthiness of the findings because it makes possible a more nuanced interpretation of continuity and change within the movement. The number of twelve informants was considered sufficient because the data reached a point of thematic saturation, where recurring patterns, conceptual convergences, and contrasting perspectives had become analytically clear.

The primary data of the study were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and limited non-participant observation (Sarfraz, 2023). Semi-structured interviews were selected because they provide a balance between thematic focus and conversational flexibility (Alencastro & Seabra, 2020). The researcher prepared guiding questions related to *tajdid*, reformist thought, social innovation, institutional change, and Muhammadiyah’s response to contemporary social challenges, but also allowed informants to elaborate their views in their own language. This technique is particularly useful for uncovering epistemological assumptions, conceptual distinctions, and reflective narratives that may not surface in standardized questionnaires. The interviews were conducted face-to-face whenever possible, and in several cases supported by online communication for clarification and follow-up. Each interview was recorded with consent, transcribed, and reviewed carefully in order to preserve analytical accuracy.

Document analysis constituted another major source of data. The documents examined included official Muhammadiyah statements, congress decisions, organizational guidelines, educational materials, program reports, public speeches, scholarly publications by Muhammadiyah intellectuals, and relevant policy documents from affiliated institutions. These documents were selected because the

research seeks to understand not only what Muhammadiyah actors say in interviews, but also how reformist discourse is institutionalized and publicly articulated. Document analysis was necessary for tracing shifts in language, emphasis, and conceptual framing across different layers of Muhammadiyah's contemporary thought. It also functioned as an important means of triangulation, allowing the researcher to compare verbal accounts with textual evidence. In a study dealing with epistemological transformation, documents are not secondary supplements; they are central sites in which the movement's evolving self-understanding is expressed.

Limited non-participant observation was also used to complement the interviews and documents. The researcher attended selected public discussions, academic forums, seminars, and institutional activities in Muhammadiyah-related settings in order to observe how reformist discourse is communicated, debated, and enacted. This form of observation was not designed to produce a full ethnography, but to enrich contextual understanding and to identify the practical settings in which ideas of renewal and innovation are performed. Observation helped the researcher recognize the everyday language of actors, the symbolic framing of organizational events, and the interaction between doctrinal vocabulary and practical concerns. In studies of religious movements, such observational insight is important because formal documents alone may not capture the full social life of concepts.

The data analysis in this study was carried out through a qualitative thematic and interpretive procedure (Duperré, 2021). The analysis began with repeated reading of interview transcripts, field notes, and institutional documents to identify major categories related to reform, *tajdid*, epistemology, social engagement, innovation, institutional change, and public responsibility. These categories were then coded and grouped into broader themes that reflected the central concerns of the study (Becker, 2021). The researcher subsequently interpreted these themes through the lens of the three theoretical frameworks employed in the research, namely paradigm shift, contextual Islamic hermeneutics, and social innovation theory. Through this process, the analysis moved from descriptive coding to conceptual explanation (Sorel, 2021). In other words, the aim was not only to identify what informants said, but to explain how their statements reflected broader shifts in Muhammadiyah's way of framing religious reform.

To ensure trustworthiness, the study applied several strategies commonly recognized in qualitative research. Credibility was strengthened through triangulation of interviews, documents, and observation. Prolonged engagement with the field and repeated reading of materials enabled the researcher to develop contextual sensitivity. Member-oriented clarification was used in selected cases to confirm important interpretations with informants. Dependability was enhanced by maintaining a clear record of data collection and analytical steps. Confirmability was supported by reflexive attention to the researcher's interpretive position, especially because the topic concerns a living religious movement with normative and historical significance. Transferability was approached not through statistical generalization, but through thick description, allowing readers to determine the relevance of the findings to comparable contexts of Islamic reform.

The technique of drawing conclusions in this study followed an inductive-interpretive logic (Wee & Lee, 2020). Rather than beginning with fixed propositions to be statistically tested, the researcher built conclusions gradually by relating empirical patterns to the conceptual and theoretical framework of the study. The process of conclusion drawing involved data reduction, thematic synthesis, theoretical interpretation, and comparative reflection across sources. First, the researcher identified recurring meanings in the data. Second, these meanings were organized into interpretive themes, such as the redefinition of *tajdid*, the expansion of reform into social sectors, the role of institutional creativity, and the emergence of innovation-oriented public reasoning. Third, these themes were connected to the broader research questions in order to explain the epistemological movement from doctrinal reform to social innovation. In this sense, the conclusions are not merely summaries of statements by informants, but analytically grounded interpretations derived from a systematic comparison of discourse, practice, and theory (Akçay & Kyriakoulakos, 2025).

In methodological terms, this approach is appropriate because the study seeks to produce a conceptually rich explanation rather than a statistically generalizable claim (Korenblat, 2023). The emphasis on purposive informants, interpretive analysis, and triangulated evidence is justified by the

nature of the research problem, which concerns the intellectual transformation of a major Islamic movement. Through this qualitative case study design, the research is able to capture how Muhammadiyah's reformist thought is rearticulated in the contemporary period, how actors themselves understand this shift, and how social innovation emerges as an extension of religious renewal rather than as a rupture from it (Berrett, 2024). The method thus supports the overall objective of the study by providing a rigorous pathway to analyze the transition from *tajdid* to social innovation as an epistemological transformation within twenty-first-century Muhammadiyah.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that Muhammadiyah's reformist thought in the twenty-first century has undergone a significant epistemological transformation (Widiastuti et al., 2022). The transformation does not imply a rejection of *tajdid* as the classical foundation of Muhammadiyah's reformist identity, but rather a rearticulation of *tajdid* into a broader, more socially responsive, and innovation-oriented framework (Tsepukh, 2025). The core research problem addressed in this study concerns how Muhammadiyah has moved from a relatively doctrinal understanding of renewal toward a model of reform that engages complex public issues through institutional creativity, collaborative action, and socially embedded problem solving (C. Westmont, 2022). The empirical evidence gathered from interviews, documents, and observation demonstrates that Muhammadiyah's contemporary reformism is increasingly understood not only as purification of belief and rationalization of religious practice, but also as the generation of practical solutions to social, educational, humanitarian, environmental, and civic challenges. This finding directly answers the central problem of the study by showing that the movement's current trajectory is best interpreted as an epistemological shift in the meaning, scope, and operational logic of reform (V. C. Westmont, 2022).

The first major result concerns the changing meaning of *tajdid* in Muhammadiyah's internal discourse. Earlier formulations of *tajdid* in Muhammadiyah were strongly associated with purification, anti-superstition campaigns, scriptural orientation, and institutional modernization (Yousfi et al., 2023). Those elements remain important, but the data show that contemporary actors within Muhammadiyah increasingly interpret *tajdid* through the language of relevance, responsiveness, public benefit, and societal transformation. Informants repeatedly described reform as the capacity to connect Islamic normative commitments with emerging social realities. In this sense, *tajdid* is no longer understood merely as correction of doctrine or ritual, but as the renewal of Muslim responsibility in a changing world (Lu, 2023). This finding is particularly important because it reveals that the organization's intellectual center of gravity has shifted from a mainly defensive or corrective mode toward a constructive and interventionist one (Atitwa et al., 2025). Such a shift reflects a movement from preserving reformist identity to expanding reformist agency.

This result can be meaningfully explained through the first theory used in this research, namely Thomas Samuel Kuhn's theory of paradigm shift (Liu, 2023). When applied to Muhammadiyah, Kuhn's perspective helps illuminate that the observed change is not simply an accumulation of new programs or activities, but a transformation in the structure of reformist reasoning itself (Fawole, 2024). The data show that the criteria by which reform is recognized and legitimized have changed. In the earlier paradigm, reform was strongly measured through doctrinal clarity, scriptural fidelity, and organizational discipline (Villela, 2022). In the contemporary paradigm, reform is also measured by social effectiveness, ethical responsiveness, inclusiveness, and the capacity to solve concrete public problems (Mungwini, 2020). This does not mean that the earlier criteria disappeared; rather, they are now embedded within a wider epistemological framework (Al-Zayed, 2025). The implementation of this shift can be seen in Muhammadiyah's expansion into fields such as disaster mitigation, health outreach, environmental activism, digital education, and community empowerment. These sectors are not peripheral add-ons to Muhammadiyah's identity; they have become new arenas in which reform is defined and enacted (Somee et al., 2025). The main problem of the study is therefore answered through a Kuhnian lens: Muhammadiyah's twenty-first-century reformism displays a paradigm-level transition from a primarily purification-centered logic toward an innovation-oriented public Islam (Intaratat, 2022).

A second major finding is that this epistemological shift remains anchored in Islamic normativity rather than becoming merely managerial or secularized (Kettler et al., 2021). The data reveal that Muhammadiyah actors continue to justify social innovation through Qur'anic ethics, prophetic values, and the movement's long-standing reformist principles. What has changed is not the abandonment of normativity, but the way normativity is interpreted and translated into action (Hidayat & Prastowo, 2021). Informants consistently emphasized that reform must remain faithful to Islamic teachings, yet they also insisted that fidelity cannot be reduced to literal repetition of inherited formulas. Instead, it requires contextual intelligence, institutional adaptation, and moral creativity (Hiremath, 2025). This finding is critical because it avoids a false dichotomy between doctrinal continuity and social innovation (Odeba et al., 2022). The transformation observed in Muhammadiyah is neither a conservative retreat nor a break with tradition. It is a hermeneutical reworking of reform in response to modern complexity.

This second result is best explained by the second theory employed in the study, namely Fazlur Rahman Malik's theory of the double movement (Oyebamiji & Ezeala, 2024). Rahman's conceptual framework clarifies how Muhammadiyah moves from scriptural and ethical foundations to contemporary applications without losing its reformist legitimacy. The first movement, which involves identifying the moral and social principles behind religious texts, is visible in Muhammadiyah's insistence that Islamic reform is rooted in justice, public welfare, compassion, education, and social responsibility. The second movement, which recontextualizes those principles in the present, is visible in Muhammadiyah's responses to present-day issues such as poverty, ecological degradation, health crises, digital fragmentation, and civic vulnerability. The implementation of this hermeneutical movement is particularly visible in the organization's educational institutions, public health networks, community welfare programs, and humanitarian interventions. The result is an operational model in which *tajdid* becomes not only a theological claim but a method of contextual moral action (Chiam, 2025). This directly addresses the study's research questions about how Muhammadiyah reinterprets *tajdid* in the contemporary era and how that reinterpretation shapes its public role.

A third important finding is that Muhammadiyah's reformist thought is increasingly enacted through collaborative, problem-solving, and socially innovative mechanisms (Tyrranen, 2025). The study found that contemporary Muhammadiyah initiatives often involve cross-sector partnerships, community-based interventions, professionalized service systems, and adaptive institutional responses. Rather than limiting reform to sermons, doctrinal guidance, or internal organizational policy, Muhammadiyah now frequently enters public space as a producer of social solutions. Informants described this as a form of "living reform," where religious renewal is tested by its ability to improve social conditions and empower communities. This orientation is visible in disaster response, village empowerment, hospital governance, educational inclusion, youth mobilization, and civic mediation. The findings show that innovation in Muhammadiyah is not primarily understood as technological novelty, but as a new way of organizing social relations and institutional responsibility around ethical goals (Ismuni et al., 2024).

This third finding is illuminated by the third theory used in the study, namely Frank Moulaert's theory of social innovation (Çelik, 2025). Moulaert's emphasis on meeting unmet needs, transforming social relations, and empowering communities resonates strongly with the empirical pattern observed in Muhammadiyah (Cristea et al., 2024). The movement's contemporary initiatives are not only service-oriented; they also produce new forms of participation, institutional learning, and public engagement. For example, the data show that Muhammadiyah's humanitarian programs often connect religious values with professional management and community collaboration. Its educational institutions increasingly integrate social empowerment, critical citizenship, and ethical leadership into their missions. Its community development programs demonstrate that reform is being operationalized through participatory empowerment rather than merely top-down instruction. The implementation dimension here is crucial. Social innovation in Muhammadiyah is not abstract discourse; it is embodied in institutions, programs, networks, and everyday practices (Paul, 2023). This explains how Muhammadiyah's reformism has expanded beyond internal correction toward societal transformation, thereby addressing the main gap identified in the literature.

The research gap highlighted earlier concerned the tendency of previous studies to describe Muhammadiyah either as a modernist-purification movement or as a successful social service organization, without adequately explaining the intellectual transformation connecting those two dimensions (Maitra et al., 2023). The present findings address that gap by demonstrating that the movement's practical expansion is inseparable from a shift in reformist epistemology (Francese & King, 2024). Previous scholarship successfully documented Muhammadiyah's educational activism, philanthropic role, and civic significance, but the current study shows that these domains now function as epistemic sites in which reform is redefined (Leshner & Brook, 2021). The gap problem is therefore resolved by showing that Muhammadiyah's social initiatives are not merely pragmatic extensions of an old doctrine (Mekic, 2021). Rather, they represent a reformulated understanding of what renewal means in the present era. Through Kuhn, the study identifies a paradigm shift; through Rahman, it clarifies the interpretive continuity of that shift; and through Moulaert, it explains how the shift becomes socially productive. The three theories thus work together to close the analytical gap between doctrinal reform and contemporary social innovation.

The following table summarizes the principal findings of the study in relation to the research problem, theoretical framework, implementation, and contribution.

Core Finding	Empirical Indication	Linked Theory	Practical Implementation	Relation to Research Problem and Gap
<i>Tajdid</i> is redefined from doctrinal correction toward socially responsive reform	Informants describe reform as relevance, public benefit, and responsiveness to contemporary issues	Thomas S. Kuhn's paradigm shift theory	Expansion into education, welfare, disaster response, and ecological initiatives	Shows that Muhammadiyah's change is epistemological, not merely organizational
Normative Islamic foundations remain central in contemporary reform	Actors continue to justify programs through Qur'anic ethics and Muhammadiyah's reformist principles	Fazlur Rahman's double movement theory	Contextual reinterpretation of Islamic values in health, education, and civic programs	Explains continuity between classical <i>tajdid</i> and present-day innovation
Social innovation has become a key mode of Muhammadiyah's public action	Programs emphasize unmet needs, empowerment, collaboration, and adaptive institutional response	Frank Moulaert's social innovation theory	Community development, humanitarian governance, participatory service delivery	Fills the gap by linking reformist thought to practical social transformation
Reform is increasingly institution-based and interdisciplinary	Universities, hospitals, schools, and social bodies act as producers of reform	Kuhn, Rahman, and Moulaert in synthesis	Cross-sector partnerships, professionalized service systems, youth and digital engagement	Answers how Muhammadiyah's epistemology is enacted through organizational practice
Contemporary Muhammadiyah combines continuity and change	Classical identity persists while methods and priorities evolve	Integrated three-theory framework	Ethical continuity with adaptive strategies	Clarifies the novelty of the study: reformism as epistemological transformation

The findings also answer the formulation of the research problem in a direct and systematic manner. The first research question asked how Muhammadiyah's reformist thought has evolved epistemologically in the twenty-first century. The answer, based on the data, is that the movement has shifted from a narrower emphasis on purification and modernization toward a more integrative framework in which reform includes social relevance, innovation, and institutional problem solving. The second question asked in what ways Muhammadiyah reinterprets *tajdid* in relation to contemporary social challenges. The findings show that *tajdid* is now interpreted as the creative actualization of Islamic ethics in response to issues such as poverty, health inequality, environmental crisis, humanitarian emergency, and digital transformation. The third question asked how the logic of social innovation reshapes Muhammadiyah's understanding of religious renewal, institutional action, and public responsibility. The data indicate that social innovation introduces a more collaborative, adaptive, and impact-oriented form of reform in which institutions are expected not only to preserve values but also to produce solutions. Each of these answers is grounded in the three-theory framework used in the research and supported by qualitative evidence from the field.

The study's objective was to analyze the epistemological transformation of Muhammadiyah's reformist thought from the framework of *tajdid* toward the paradigm of social innovation. The results show that this objective has been achieved in several ways. First, the study identified the changing conceptual foundations of reform by demonstrating the broadening meaning of *tajdid*. Second, it explained the mechanisms of continuity and change by showing how Islamic normativity is reinterpreted through contextual reasoning. Third, it interpreted the social and institutional consequences of this transformation through the lens of social innovation. The implementation of these findings is clear: Muhammadiyah's hospitals, schools, universities, social service bodies, environmental programs, and disaster response units are not simply service providers, but sites where a transformed reformist epistemology is being enacted. The objective of the study is therefore fulfilled not only conceptually but also empirically, since the findings reveal both the intellectual logic and the practical manifestations of the transition under investigation.

The theoretical benefit of the study lies in its contribution to a more nuanced understanding of Islamic reformism (Gremaud & Marcondes, 2022). Previous debates often framed reform in binary terms, such as scriptural versus contextual, modernist versus traditionalist, or purity versus accommodation. The present findings challenge these binaries by showing that Muhammadiyah's contemporary reformism operates through continuity within transformation. Through Kuhn's theory, the study contributes a model for identifying epistemological change in religious movements. Through Rahman's theory, it demonstrates that reform remains normatively grounded even when it becomes highly adaptive. Through Moulaert's theory, it expands the study of Islamic movements into the domain of social innovation and public problem solving. The theoretical contribution, therefore, is not only to Muhammadiyah studies, but also to broader discussions on religion, social change, and the production of public knowledge.

The academic benefit of the study is equally significant. The findings provide a new analytical vocabulary for examining Muhammadiyah beyond the categories of modernism and philanthropy. They suggest that the movement should also be studied as an evolving epistemic community whose institutions produce ideas, ethical rationalities, and practical innovations. This opens new directions for future scholarship in Islamic studies, sociology of religion, organizational studies, and Southeast Asian studies. It also provides a useful comparative framework for examining other Muslim reform movements that are negotiating similar tensions between doctrinal continuity and social adaptation. By integrating three theories into a single interpretive structure, the study offers a more comprehensive academic model for understanding how Islamic organizations remain relevant in rapidly changing societies.

The practical benefit of the study lies in its relevance for Muhammadiyah leaders, educators, policy actors, and community practitioners. The findings suggest that social innovation should not be viewed as a secondary technical domain detached from Muhammadiyah's theological identity. On the contrary, it emerges as a legitimate and even necessary expression of *tajdid* in the contemporary era. This insight has practical implications for organizational planning, leadership development, curriculum

design, institutional collaboration, and social policy engagement. If reform is understood as socially innovative action grounded in Islamic ethics, then Muhammadiyah can strengthen its public role without experiencing an identity crisis. The study therefore provides a conceptual basis for practical decision-making and institutional self-reflection. It encourages actors within Muhammadiyah to see innovation not as a departure from tradition, but as the contemporary extension of its reformist mission.

In the discussion dimension, the findings of this study can be linked to earlier research while also extending it. Previous studies have shown that Muhammadiyah has long been associated with modernist reform, educational activism, and disciplined institutional development. Other research has highlighted its role in civil Islam, social welfare, and humanitarian service. The present study confirms those earlier findings but adds a deeper interpretive layer. It shows that the expansion of Muhammadiyah's social role is not adequately explained by organizational efficiency alone. Instead, that expansion reflects a deeper transformation in how reform is imagined and justified. This discussion is important because it connects the present findings to the literature while also clarifying the study's novelty. Earlier scholars described Muhammadiyah's activities; the current study explains the epistemological movement that gives those activities a new reformist meaning.

This also has direct implications for the problem of the research gap. The gap was not an absence of descriptive material about Muhammadiyah, but an absence of integrated explanation. The discussion section therefore shows that the three theories collectively provide what previous literature lacked. Kuhn explains why a conceptual break or reordering is visible. Rahman explains how this reordering remains faithful to Islamic ethical foundations. Moulaert explains how the result of that transformation is visible in socially innovative practice. In this way, the present study does not merely add another case description to Muhammadiyah scholarship; it offers an interpretive synthesis that makes sense of current developments in a theoretically robust way. This is precisely where the novelty of the study lies.

The discussion further shows that the findings have implications for the formulation of research questions and research goals. The research questions were designed to uncover whether Muhammadiyah's current orientation represents continuity, change, or a synthesis of both. The findings clearly support the third option. Muhammadiyah's reformism in the twenty-first century is neither a simple continuation of its earlier doctrinal style nor a radical discontinuity from it. It is a synthesis in which continuity of ethical foundations coexists with change in epistemological orientation and practical method. This synthesis answers the research questions, fulfills the research objectives, and validates the usefulness of the three-theory framework. It also reinforces the broader claim that Islamic reform movements can remain normatively grounded while becoming socially innovative and publicly transformative.

Taken together, the results and discussion show that Muhammadiyah's epistemological transformation from *tajdid* to social innovation is not incidental, superficial, or merely rhetorical. It is a substantive reconfiguration of reformist thought in which doctrinal commitment, contextual interpretation, and social problem solving become mutually reinforcing dimensions of a new reform paradigm. This conclusion addresses the main problem of the study, resolves the identified gap, answers the research questions, fulfills the stated objectives, and demonstrates clear theoretical, academic, and practical benefits. Most importantly, it shows that Muhammadiyah's twenty-first-century reformism should be understood not only as a legacy of Islamic modernism, but also as a living epistemology of socially engaged renewal. In that sense, the movement's contemporary significance lies in its ability to transform reform from a discourse of correction into a practice of creative, ethical, and institutionally grounded social innovation.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Muhammadiyah's reformist thought in the twenty-first century has undergone a meaningful epistemological transformation, moving from a predominantly classical understanding of *tajdid* toward a more expansive and socially engaged paradigm of innovation. Based on the findings and discussion, this transformation should not be interpreted as a rupture with Muhammadiyah's historical identity, but rather as a reconfiguration of the intellectual and practical meaning of reform itself. The research demonstrates that *tajdid*, which was once primarily associated

with purification, doctrinal correction, scriptural rationality, and institutional modernization, is now increasingly understood within Muhammadiyah as a framework for responding creatively to contemporary social realities. In this sense, reform is no longer confined to the internal domain of religious correction, but is extended into the public sphere through interventions in education, health, humanitarian action, environmental concern, social welfare, and community empowerment.

The results of the study show that the central problem of the research, namely the epistemological transformation of Muhammadiyah's reformist thought, can be understood through the widening of the conceptual boundaries of *tajdid*. Contemporary Muhammadiyah actors do not abandon the movement's reformist foundations, but reinterpret them in ways that emphasize relevance, ethical responsiveness, and social problem solving. The discussion reveals that this shift is not merely organizational or technical in character. Rather, it involves a deeper change in how reform is conceptualized, justified, and operationalized. Muhammadiyah now tends to regard reform as successful not only when it preserves doctrinal clarity, but also when it produces tangible social benefit, strengthens public responsibility, and empowers communities to face complex modern challenges. This conclusion confirms that the transformation observed in Muhammadiyah is epistemological because it affects the underlying logic through which reform is defined and legitimized.

The findings also make clear that continuity remains a decisive feature of this transformation. Although Muhammadiyah has moved toward a more socially innovative reform agenda, the study confirms that its normative Islamic foundations remain central. The discussion indicates that contemporary programs and institutional initiatives are still grounded in Qur'anic ethics, prophetic values, and the long-standing reformist commitments of the organization. What has changed is the interpretive mechanism through which those commitments are translated into public action. The classical vocabulary of renewal has been expanded so that Islamic reform becomes closely connected to contextual reasoning, institutional adaptability, and collaborative engagement with contemporary issues. This continuity within change is one of the most important conclusions of the study, because it shows that Muhammadiyah's movement toward social innovation should be read as a mature extension of its reformist heritage rather than as a departure from it.

The research further concludes that Muhammadiyah's present-day significance lies in its ability to transform reformist thought into organized social action. As shown in the results, the movement's educational institutions, health networks, social welfare bodies, humanitarian programs, and community development initiatives function not only as service mechanisms but also as sites where a renewed understanding of Islamic reform is enacted. The discussion demonstrates that social innovation within Muhammadiyah is not limited to technological novelty or administrative efficiency. Instead, it involves the creation of new social relations, participatory practices, and institutional responses oriented toward public benefit. This means that Muhammadiyah's epistemological transformation is visible not only in discourse but also in implementation. The movement's reformism has become increasingly practical, interdisciplinary, and public in orientation, making it more capable of addressing the demands of contemporary society while retaining its religious legitimacy.

Another important conclusion derived from the findings and discussion is that the three theoretical perspectives used in the study successfully illuminate the nature of this transformation. The paradigm shift perspective helps explain that Muhammadiyah is not simply expanding its activities, but is moving toward a new framework for understanding reform. The contextual Islamic hermeneutic perspective explains how the organization preserves fidelity to Islamic normativity while adapting to changing historical conditions. The social innovation perspective shows how that adaptation becomes socially productive through institutions, community engagement, and collaborative action. Taken together, these perspectives confirm that Muhammadiyah's contemporary reformism is best understood as a synthesis of doctrinal continuity, interpretive renewal, and socially innovative practice. This integrated conclusion strengthens the originality of the research and supports the claim that Muhammadiyah should be studied not only as a modernist Islamic movement, but also as an evolving epistemic and social actor in the twenty-first century.

In sum, the study concludes that the transformation from *tajdid* to social innovation represents a significant reorientation in Muhammadiyah's reformist thought, one that expands the meaning of

renewal from theological correction to ethical and socially grounded intervention. The results and discussion consistently indicate that this transformation addresses the main research problem, answers the research questions, and demonstrates that Muhammadiyah's reformism today is marked by continuity of principles alongside change in method, emphasis, and public function. Therefore, Muhammadiyah's contemporary contribution should be understood as the production of a reformist epistemology that is both faithful to Islamic values and responsive to modern social realities. This conclusion confirms that in the twenty-first century, Muhammadiyah's reformist thought no longer operates solely as a discourse of purification, but increasingly as a framework for creative, ethical, and institutionally grounded social innovation.

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