

# Inventing Dahlan's Concept of Progressive Approach and Its Implication in Dealing with Misbehaving Students at Schools

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**Abstract.** In the efforts to set the society free from oppression, ignorance and misery, KH Ahmad Dahlan who established Muhammadiyah, made efforts through humanistic approach based on the main mission of prophet Muhammad: to provide mercy and kindness to all humans and nature. This article aims to explore the efforts applied by KH Ahmad Dahlan in educating his students and its implications in recent education to resolve the issues at schools. This article is the result of research with analytic descriptive approach in which the data were collected through library research of articles on journals, manuscripts, magazines, and literature books about KH Ahmad Dahlan. The data were analyzed in analytic descriptive, which is through: finding pattern or theme, finding scientific relation among the thoughts of figures, classifying the thoughts of figures, concluding those thoughts, then formulating the results in order to generalize the thoughts of KH Ahmad Dahlan. Based on the analysis, the research found that KH Ahmad Dahlan applied progressive approach in educating the misbehaving students. The education was carried out by training the students' inner sensitivity (empathy), without violence (patience, sincerity), by listening to students' voice, teaching with fun methods, and by encouraging students to think critically and reflectively.

Keyword: humanism, progressive, misbehaving students, critical, reflective

## INTRODUCTION

In humanistic approach, students are often seen as subjects who are free in determining their life goals, also responsible for their lives and others. The essence of this approach is to humanize humans, which is in this case, a whole-competent- and respectable human who respect cultural diversity, and so on. School is a place to educate children to achieve these goals. Thus, the objective of children's education at school is not only to learn a set of knowledge, but also to socialize with others. This is in line with the objective of education in 2003, those were: developing abilities and forming the characters and civilization in order to educate a nation which aimed to develop students who are religious, kind, healthy, knowledgeable, competent, creative, independent, democratic, and responsible.

The success of students in learning values and morals have an impact on their future life in society. Consequently, schools must create an atmosphere that allows students to learn the values that have been set. Security, calm, and harmonious relationship with teachers and peers are the main keys so that the learning process can be

maximized. Factors which interfere with learning must be minimized by teachers and school principals. One of the factors which interferes with the teaching and learning process is bullying. Bullying occurs because of violating the existing values. As stated by Muliani & Pereira (2018), bullying constitutes an attitude or behavior that is unpleasant to others which is repeated verbally, physically, or socially resulting in physical or psychological harm. While Glew, Rivara, & Feudtner (2007) explain that bullying is an aggressive behavior in which a child or group hurts or disturbs others who are considered weak or powerless to fight back. Bullying, both physical and non-physical, has negative effects in the short and long term. Violence at schools nowadays is categorized into 3 types, namely: violence among friends, violence from teacher to student, and violence from student to teacher. *Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia* (KPAI) or Children Protection Commission of Indonesia noted the existence of 24 violence cases at schools. The perpetrators were both students and teachers. Violence resulted in obstruction of teaching and learning process. The traumatic students would feel uncomfortable at schools, while bullied teacher would find difficulty in helping students to achieve the learning goals maximally. Some previous studies has revealed the causes of violence at schools. Zakiyah, Humaedi, Santoso (2017) revealed that bullying occurred by the influence of individuals, families, playgroups, and the bully's community environment. Meanwhile Herawati dan Deharnita (2019) mentioned that bullying occurred by several factors, including family disharmony (82.3%), the lack of attention from a school towards the other schools (46.8%), and peer ridicule (77.2%). In the psychological perspectives, Damanik (2019) revealed that violence from student to teacher was category of student delinquency which indicates students' misbehavior. In the educational view, this violence was caused by the offense of both values and norms, and lead to unequal social interactions which include: respect for teachers, tolerance among friends, and the decline in the way teachers treat students. This declining moral values indicated the lower humanism at schools.

The learning approach currently implemented should include aspects of humanism. Humanism is often equated with rationalism and liberalism, as the result of the renaissance. However, each of those ideas have different goals. Rationalism promotes sense/thought, while liberalism focuses on competitive competition. Otherwise, humanism is a method implemented as an effort to reinforce the human side.

Humanism is divided into several different concept. O'Neil divided humanism into 2 ideologies, namely conservative ideology which adheres to fundamentalism, intellectualism, and conservatism; and liberalism which is divided into liberalism, liberationalism, and anarchism. This research discussed the concept of humanism formulated by KH. Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of Muhammadiyah, which made its concept different from secular ideology. As stated by Ali Syari'ati, humanism is a philosophical idea that views humans as noble beings. Meanwhile, education has goals of human safety and perfection.

Apart from humanism, education is also implemented through progressive approach. Based on the research conducted by Prasetyarini, Hikmat, and Thoyibi (2020), teachers advised bullying students by giving lectures, and not the reflective one. This kind of approach did not make students aware of the issue. Therefore they must be taught to reflect in order to be able to understand, study, and overcome the problem they faced. This reflective thinking is a progressive concept. This is based on the concept that humans are basically good at taking steps towards progress (progressive).

This article aimed to explore the concept of "humanism and progressive" formulated by KH Ahmad Dahlan and project the implementation of this concept in schools as an effort to create free-violence schools.

## METHOD

This article was the result of a simple research using an analytic descriptive approach, which was an effort to explore facts, results, and ideas of a person by using the strategy of collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and generalizing the conducted research. This research was a type of literature (library research) with the data in the form of journals, manuscript, magazines, and library books. Those data were collected through documentation method. Meanwhile, to analyze the data, the author used descriptive analysis technic, by the steps: finding patterns or themes, finding logical relationship between thoughts of the founding figures, classifying those thoughts, concluding those thoughts, and formulating the results in order to generalize the thoughts of the figure.

## 1. The Concept of Humanism According to KH. Ahmad Dahlan

In the perspective of Western thought, humanistic is a learning approach that was born as a reaction toward behavioristic approach. Behavioristic theory put students as passive object who learn mechanically through habituation. The word “humanistic” means “humanity” which is adopted from the Latin, *humanus*, which means “human’s characters” or human nature. Meanwhile, the word “humanism” can be interpreted as a person’s view toward something that emphasizes human dignity and abilities. Behaviorist pioneers included Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, David Kolb, Peter Honey and Mumford, and Jurgen Habermas. As stated by Komara (2014), in humanism theory, students are the core of learning with teachers as learning facilitator. The aspects of attitude and knowledge are the requirements to achieve the goal of self-actualization in a supportive environment. Basically, humans are special creatures who have potential and motivation to develop themselves and behavior. The implication of this statement is that every individual has freedom for self-development and its actualization. Students as the core learning interpret the process of their learning experiences independently in order to be able to understand their potential positively and reduce negative self-potential.

As written by Sarnoto and Muhtadi (2019), humanistic education in the Holy Qur’an is based on four views. First, every educational activity is conducted only to get Allah’s blessing. Second, religious knowledge is different from general knowledge. Third, humans have freedom to develop knowledge. Fourth, knowledge is learned integratively in order to be beneficial to daily life. This education has purpose to encourage students to actualize their potential in order to be creative, independent, and fear of Allah.

Humanistic education in Islam is based on the main mission of Prophet Muhammad, which is to give love and kindness to all humans and nature. This concept was used by Ahmad Dahlan as the basis for humanistic educational thinking. He used Surah Ali Imran verse 104 as a modern theological basis for solving problems in human life which contain the values of transcendental humanist education.

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ



Meaning:

Let there be a group among you who call ‘others’ to goodness, encourage what is good, and forbid what is evil—it is they who will be successful. (QS. Ali Imran 104)

According to Hamka (1983: 29), surah Ali Imran verse 104 is “*al amru bi al alma’ruf wa nahyu an al mungkar*” which means encourage to do good things and forbid evils. Encouraging means lecturing. Human life will be meaningful and dynamic with lecturing, therefore, there must be humans who are able to encourage others to do good things and forbid evils.

## 2. Progressive Thinking

The approach to progressive education which adheres to pragmatic philosophical ideology views that philosophy should not only be focused on mere metaphysical concepts, but must be based on experience, investigation, and analysis of experience in a critical way. This thinking grows practical education concept, which is conducted directly or as known as *learning by doing* (Hadiwijono, 1983). Teaching methods suggested in this progressive education are as follows: based on children’s practical experience in real life, encouraging children to work in team (Ali, 2017).

In line with Dewey’s, KH Ahmad Dahlan’s movement in education emphasized sharp thinking and social sensitivity. He argued that education should hone children’s inner sensitivity (emphaty), be carry out without violence (patience, sincerity), be participatory (listening to what children want), use fun methods, and encourage children to think critically and reflectively. This view was reflected from his figure in doing *ijtihad* in overcoming the problems of misbehaving students in his era.

In addition to Surah Ali Imran, KH. Ahmad Dahlan taught humans to free themselves from oppression through his interpretation toward Surah Al-Ma'ūn. KH Ahmad Dahlan taught educators not to only deliver knowledge to their students, but also encourage them to implement those knowledge in daily life. In this case, education does not only teach cognitive aspect, but affective aspect as well. KH Ahmad Dahlan taught his students to think critically and be emphatic towards any issue around them in a humanist way, or called as in a reflective way.

Conducting education activity called *Fathul-Ashar Miftahu-Sa'adah*. In this activity, KH Ahmad Dahlan guided youths with problem ages. The problematic category referred to group of homeless and unemployed youths. The approach adopted was applied differently in each era, and was different from our society perception and habit. In mentoring those misbehaving youths, KH Ahmad Dahlan applied a fun method. The youth were initially asked to do anything according to their interest, such as playing music and picnic. Over time, those youths were given religious knowledge. This method were effective in mentoring those youths in learning. The fact proved that those youths could recognize their mistake through intelligent guidance. His learning was similar to what was developed by Paulo Freire, it was through problematization and awareness. From that learning, the homeless and unemployed youths began to become aware and gradually change their life style. Some of them, then, became activists of this movement.

The 'Mobile Teachers' program reflected the nature of prophecy who gave change toward kindness. In this program, KH Ahmad Dahlan wanted to show that teachers and students have the same position as humans in front of the Almighty. Progressive thought was reflected by KH Dahlan who tried to change Indonesians' perspective *timba golek sumur* (Javanese saying which means students should find their teacher in learning) into *sumur golek timba* (teacher can come to students to motivate them learning). The previous perspective (*sumur golek timba*) was perceived inappropriate for kyai (Islamic teacher) because it was considered to impose the authority of a *Kiai*. In the 'Mobile Teacher' program, KH Dahlan visited community homes to motivate students to study religion. The prophetic manifestation displayed by this great Kyai was the "Mobile Teacher Movement" which later developed into tabligh, namely recitations in the villages. This religious activity is a socio-religious work with a different trend from K.H. Ahmad Dahlan in his time.

As a mujtahid, KH Ahmad Dahlan's thinking was based on Al-Qur'an and as-Sunnah as well as sharp thinking. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan in overcoming the problems that surround him is Surah al-Ma'un and Ali Imron 104. Many thinkers call his efforts to make progressive changes referred to as "transformative theology" in contemporary Islamic discourse. In the view of KH Ahmad Dahlan, Islamic religious education is not just carrying out a series of ritual worship but also must make serious efforts to overcome the problems that exist around it.

### **3. The Implication of KH Ahmad Dahlan's Humanism and Progressive Concept in Dealing with Students' Misbehavior in Schools**

KH Ahmad Dahlan's concept of humanism and progressive implies that to deal with students' misbehavior, teachers should listen in the students' voice through dialogue, guiding them patiently, sincerely, and teaching with fun, and encourage them to think critically and reflectively.

#### **a. Listening to Students' Voice Dialogue**

The method implemented by KH Ahmad Dahlan is to ignite students' sensitivity and deal with misbehaving students through dialogue, take walks, and implement Al Maun's letter directly in the community. This method is a participatory method. As stated by Sudjana (2000), participatory learning is a learning strategy by involving the activeness of all parties including teachers and students in the learning process. The characteristics of participatory learning include being humanist and horizontal. Humanist refers to the process of coaching students to take place in an open, intimate, directed, mutual respect, mutual help, and mutual learning. Meanwhile, horizontal means that guidance is carried out communicatively in an equal way between the teacher and the child. Teachers want to listen to students' voices well, so that teachers can easily guide students.

#### **b. Patience, sincerity, and fun**

Education is the responsibility of parents, teachers, and society. The way adults educate children will affect children's behavior, so that if adults educate with violence, the children will also do the same. As implied in the

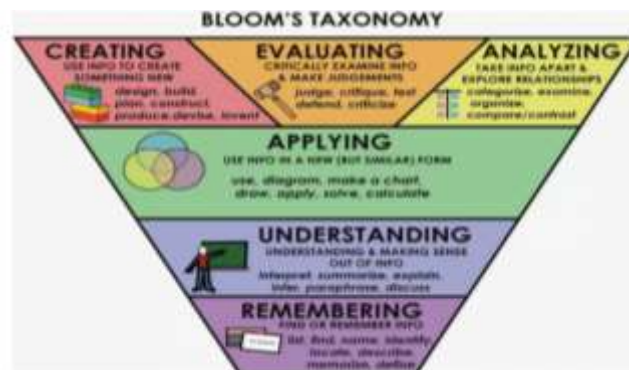
Al Quar'an, education is carried out on the basis of seeking the pleasure of Allah, so teaching must be done with patience, using various strategies according to the characteristics of the child. The activity carried out by KH Dahlan is by inviting children to go around before inviting children to discuss teaching teachers to be patient and teaching children with fun methods. Darmansyah (2010) in DePorter (2000) explains the notion of a fun learning strategy as a way or effort made by teachers to create an effective learning environment, prioritizing children's affective aspects, facilitating children in active learning, and facilitating the learning process. As for Berk (1998), fun learning refers to a pattern of thought or the way a teacher designs and manages the delivery of material in a way that makes it easier for children to learn in a way that is not boring. Deporter, Reardon and Singer (1999) say that fun learning is an effort made by the teacher to change the child's learning environment into a place that encourages children's motivation to learn, participate, and get opportunities for discussion.

### c. Critical Thinking

As stated above, KH Ahmad Dahlan taught humans to free themselves from oppression through his interpretation of Surat Al Maun. KH Dahlan taught the educators by repeating it until they understood the contents of the letter. With his wisdom, the students are able to identify the problems that occur around them. This activity was carried out by KH Ahmad Dahlan and taught teachers to think critically.

Educational experts and psychologists define critical thinking skills with a variety of concepts. Perry (1981) says that critical thinking is concerned with reflective assessment, cognitive abilities, logical thinking skills, and problem-solving abilities. Facione (1990) defined critical thinking as a cognitive process, a purposeful self-regulatory assessment that has two components: cognitive skills (interpretation, analysis, conclusion, evaluation, explanation and self-regulation) and a motivational component (disposition to critical thinking). Meanwhile, Facione, Facione and Giancarlo (1997) classify critical thinking as a skill to analyze, evaluate, conclude, deductive, and inductive.

The activities carried out by KH Ahmad Dahlan teaches teachers to guide children to think critically in solving problems at hand. Critical thinking does not only analyze existing problems but also encourages children to solve their problems. The critical thinking process taught by KH Ahmad Dahlan is in accordance with the category of High Order Thinking Skills known as HOTS. As in the chart below, thinking skills are at the top level, namely analysis, valuation, and creativity.



### d. Reflective

As explained earlier, KH Ahmad Dahlan held an activity called 'Fathul-Ashar Miftahu-Sa' by educating young people who were considered 'naughty' by inviting dialogue from heart to heart. The dialogue by KH Ahmad Dahlan was carried out by asking what they were doing, why they did naughty things, how to find a way out of their problems and so on. This strategy is able to make the young people aware of what they are doing and get back on the right path. In fact, many of these troubled youth are active in Muhammadiyah.

This youth awareness process teaches teachers to do reflective thinking in solving problems. In reflective thinking, children have the awareness and ability to actively control their learning, access previously unknown knowledge, and how they meet their own knowledge needs (Sezer, 2008). Critical thinking skills involve several thinking skills that are intended to get the desired results. Reflective thinking helps to integrate these thinking skills by

assisting assessment (Shermis, 1999). The important role of reflective thinking is to act as a tool to encourage thinkers during problem solving situations because it provides an opportunity to rethink what has been done and think of the most effective way to achieve the goals that have been set (Rudd, 2007). So, educators can apply reflective strategies to guide students in thinking critically (Shermis, 1999).

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

From the results of the analysis above, it can be concluded that the humanist approach taught by KH Dahlan is implemented to free humans from the shackles of ignorance, poverty and misery. Education is carried out not by violence but by making students sensitive to problems and guiding children to find their own solutions to the problems they are facing. Education is carried out by training the child's inner sensitivity (empathy), is carried out without violence (patience, sincerity), is participatory (listening to children's voices), with fun methods, and encourages children to think critically and reflectively. This approach can be used as an example in guiding students with problems by awakening them, guiding them to understand, realize and seek solutions to find the best way to do good.

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