Islamic Philanthropy and Muhammadiyah’s Contribution to the Covid-19 Control in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT
Philanthropy is one of the most significant Islamic teachings, and it has been practiced by Muhammadiyah, one of Indonesia’s moderate Islamic organizations. As the pandemic of Covid-19 broke out, many parties – including Muhammadiyah – were motivated to get involved in handling it. This research aims to reveal the consistency of Muhammadiyah in Islamic philanthropy through what has been done and is being done to overcome the Covid-19 pandemic and the extent of its impact in the broader community. For this purpose, the descriptive-analysis method is employed in its writing. Among the findings of this study is that in the Covid-19 issue, Muhammadiyah has contributed significantly and continues to take a significant role in overcoming it. Among other things, Muhammadiyah has formed the Muhammadiyah Covid-19 Command Center (MCCC), which is a special team formed to handle Covid-19. This team has been working since it was founded and continues to work on this case. The results of the work included assistance in the field of health, education, and the social sector. Besides, through the Tarjih and Tajdid Assembly, Muhammadiyah has provided religious guidance for its members during this pandemic so that they are not confused about practicing worship. The impact of these programs and actions is that the members of Muhammadiyah, and in general, the wider community, receive significant assistance in the health, education, social and religious fields.

Keywords: Consistency, Muhammadiyah, Islamic Philanthropy, Covid-19, Indonesia.

ABSTRAK
Filantropi adalah salah satu ajaran Islam yang paling signifikan, dan telah dipraktikkan oleh Muhammadiyah, salah satu organisasi Islam moderat di Indone-


INTRODUCTION

Coronavirus disease 19 (Covid-19) is an infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus. This new virus and infection were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. The phenomenon similar to pneumonia with unknown causes was first reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) office in China on December 31, 2019. WHO declared the outbreak as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on January 30, 2020. On February 11, 2020, WHO announced the name for the new coronavirus disease: Covid-19. Before Covid-19, the disease was called as the new coronavirus 2019 or 2019-nCoV. Covid-19 is now a global pandemic affecting many countries.

To overcome Covid-19, the Government of Indonesia has established a Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) Handling Task Force, and it has to coordinate interagency activities to prevent and mitigate the impact of new coronaviruses in Indonesia. This task force was formed on March 13, 2020, based on Presidential Decree No. 7 of 2020 concerning the Task Force for the Acceleration of Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) and is under and directly responsible to the President of Indonesia. Also, the task force is within the scope of the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB), involving other ministries, institutions, and government units such as the Ministry of
Health, the Indonesian National Police, the Indonesian National Armed Forces, and regional governments. Additionally, the task force was formed not only at the national level but also at the provincial and district/city levels. Head of the National Disaster Management Agency Doni Monardo was appointed as the chief executive of the task force, while the Coordinating Minister for Human Development and Culture Muhadjir Effendy was appointed as head of the steering committee.

Until now, on May 26, 2020, the Indonesian government is still struggling to overcome Covid-19. Despite many developed and implemented policies and strategies, and substantial funds have also been disbursed to overcome Covid-19, the government’s efforts have not yet produced encouraging results so that the impact of Covid-19 increasingly burdens all fields: health, social, religious, economic, and others. The development of the Covid-19 pandemic case in Indonesia as of May 26, 2020, was as follows: 23,165 people were confirmed positive, 5,877 patients recovered, and 1,418 people died. Also, 65,748 people were monitored as Monitored People (ODP), and 12,022 people were treated as Patients Under Supervision (PDP). The data were taken from 34 provinces and 406 districts/cities in the country. Considering the very rapid spread of Covid-19, the Muhammadiyah Central Leaders responded by immediately formed the Muhammadiyah Covid-19 Command Center (MCCC) on March 14, 2020. Based on the Declaration of Muhammadiyah Central Leadership Number 02/MLM/I.0/H/2020 about the Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19), MCCC has to coordinate the implementation of the program and action to handle Covid-19. Muhammadiyah encourages the government to involve all parties to work together and synergize, accompanied by open and comprehensive socialization and suitable policy measures.

MCCC was formed because Covid-19 is an extraordinary event that must be immediately carried out prevention and action seriously, massive, and well-coordinated. The formation of the MCCC is one day after the establishment of the Government Task Force for the Acceleration of Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19). This shows how fast the Muhammadiyah’s response was in matters involving the interests of many people. Muhammadiyah is already trained and accustomed to dealing with various types of disasters and abnormal situations and conditions. The MCCC is an extension of the Muhammadiyah Disaster Management Center (MDMC) owned by Muhammadiyah organization, which is experienced and contributes a lot in
managing disasters in Indonesia.

To what extent is Muhammadiyah’s consistency in practicing Islamic philanthropy? What has been done and is being done by Muhammadiyah in handling Covid-19? How is the impact of Muhammadiyah’s contribution to the affected communities and the broader community in general? These are the things that will be described and analyzed as lessons and enlightenment for all. This study needs to be done to indicate the consistency of Muhammadiyah in implementing Islamic philanthropy from its establishment to the present day. Covid-19 until this study was written still surrounds the world and has not abated, so the novelty of this research lies in the description and analysis of Muhammadiyah’s contributions to Islamic philanthropy, especially regarding the handling of Covid-19 and its impact on Muhammadiyah members and the public that have not been done by other researchers as long as known.

**DISCUSSION**

**Philanthropy within Muhammadiyah**

Philanthropy means the love of humankind. It is derived from two Greek words, *philos* (love), and *anthropos* (humankind). Amelia\(^{11}\) defines philanthropy as voluntary activities of private giving and service for the public good. While Robert D. Putnam, as quoted by Amelia\(^ {12}\) demonstrates that philanthropy (including altruism and volunteering) is a form of social capital that binds society together in the spirit of supporting the welfare of others. In almost the same sense, Muhtada\(^ {13}\) refers philanthropy to the act of donating something to help people or improve the quality of human lives regardless of any personal return. Saidu and Mulkat\(^ {14}\) also refer philanthropy to the art of giving that are aimed at enhancing productive capacities cum development of the recipient or beneficiary. All of the above definitions, although differing in the use of expressions, it can be concluded that basically, philanthropy is an activity that arises from one’s love to benefit others regardless of who they are or the return profits or other interests. Thus, the feeling of love to give is what drives a person or society or company to practice philanthropy. Feelings of love to give can arise from the desire to give back to society, family and personal values, religion, desire to change, personal experience, personal affiliation, prestige, and status.\(^ {15}\)

Philanthropy can be divided into two distinct classifications, given its characteristic: traditional philanthropy and philanthropy of social justice. Tradi-
tional philanthropy is founded upon kindness charity. It is commonly practiced through the provision of direct social services, such as providing food, clothing, and housing for the poor. The concept of traditional philanthropy is generally on the grounds of direct giving services to fulfil the immediate and basic needs of the recipients. At the same time, social justice philanthropy focuses on removing social injustice, which is assumed to be the root of poverty and injustice. It observes the bridge because it associates the gap between the rich and the poor by mobilizing philanthropy resources in society. The social justice philanthropy is organized for its purposes through the collective action of social movement organizations.

All religions teach philanthropy to their followers. Likewise, Islam teaches it to its followers and encourages Muslims to practice philanthropy. Even Islam considers philanthropy as one of its most essential teachings. According to Amelia, philanthropy is one of the five fundamental pillars of Islam. It’s because the five fundamental pillars of Islam, as set out in the Qur’an and the Prophet’s (hadith) traditions, are: declaration of belief in one God and Mohammed is His prophet, daily prayer, fasting during the month of Ramadan, the pilgrimage to Mecca, and sharing the wealth with the less fortunate.

Generally, philanthropy is understood in Islam as, in the words of Robert McChesney, as quoted by Amelia, the believer ‘s moral obligation to do good work on God ‘s behalf. In Islam, this moral obligation has been institutionalized into many forms, which in Islamic teaching is either recommended or compulsory. Zakat is one of the three most practiced forms of philanthropy in the Islamic world, the other two being sedekah (donations), and waqf endowment (foundations, trusts). As religious acts subject to God’s judgment, zakat, sadaqa, and waqf could be employed to both improve quality of life and relieve suffering, depending on one’s interpretation of what constitutes a need that demands a religious response.

Benthall argues that the main concept of Islamic philanthropy is found in Quranic verse Q. 9: 60 which states that the following parties are entitled to enjoy religious almgsavings: (1) the very poor/al-fuqara, (2) the needy /al-masakin, (3) those employed to collect zakah/amylin, (4) those who bring their hearts together for Islam/mu’allafah qulubuhum, (5) for freeing captives/riqab, (6) in debt/gharimin, (7) fight for the cause of Allah/fi sabilillah, and (8) for the (stranded) traveler/ibn sabil. The objectives of Islamic philanthropic organizations, as reflected in their organizational mission, include fostering social justice and bettering the welfare of society. In practice, Is-
Islamic philanthropic organizations provide aid for those in need, including low-income families, orphans, disaster victims, and refugees in city slums and disaster-affected areas. Indonesia, like other Southeast Asian countries, has strong cultural traditions of giving and deeply rooted in religious practices and social values. In Indonesia, Islamic giving practices of “zakat” (almsgiving), “sadaqa” (donation), and “waqf” (religious endowment) are common, leading to philanthropic giving and voluntary work. Indeed, theological and belief systems are often credited with motivating individual giving and forming norms in certain societies. Therefore, it seems inappropriate to isolate religious beliefs from the dynamics of society and culture, politics, and economics. The practices of zakat, sadaqa, and waqf are a vital part of voluntary activism that, from the end of the nineteenth century, started to be institutionalized as voluntary and non-profit associations. The notion and practices of philanthropy are subject to change over time, especially in terms of management and control over the practices, which is often contested.

Candland, as quoted by Alawiyah, points out that Islamic faith in Indonesia has been a source of social formation in building religious non-profit organizations. The Muhammadiyah – the second-largest religious organization – is the best example of a non-profit organization that has applied Islamic belief as its basis. In addition, this organization has made use of Muslim philanthropy to expand its programs mainly on community development, education, and health services. Kato corroborated this statement by saying that in Indonesia, large Muslim organizations, which are usually considered moderate, have sponsored many social activities. For example, Muhammadiyah, the second-largest Muslim organization in the country, is always ready to provide financial assistance to victims of natural disasters through its sub-organization called the Muhammadiyah Zakat Institution (LAZISMU). There are three central facets of the philanthropic reforms of Muhammadiyah: Al-Ma’un theology, modernism, and puritanism. Theology of Al-Ma’un applies to the Qur’an chapter 107, titled al-Ma’un. The verses in the chapter generally promote kindness, particularly support for orphans and the needy. They show an appreciation of religious existentialism and make it clear that religious practices can have social consequences, such as prayers. They are wary of labeling those who are unkind to orphans and the poor as hypocrites. The concept of religious morality, particularly from this al-Ma’un chapter, has been given serious attention by Muhammadiyah’s founder, Kyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan (1868-1923).
Modernism and puritanism, in addition to al-Ma’un theology, contributed significant elements to the creation of a strong movement to organize charity and change the culture of direct giving. Modernism contributed to the organization of Muhammadiyah with some mechanism that creates long-term and legal effects, while modernists themselves brought a culture of rational thinking. The creation of modern schools, hospitals, orphanages, the registration of donors and waqf properties, and a culture of transparency and accountability were among the products of modernism. The puritan spirit has contributed to a rationalized approach to the philanthropic religious teachings. In other words, in charitable matters, Muhammadiyah’s war against superstition, non-authentic religious inventions, and religious delusions (tahayul, bid’ah dan khurafat, abbreviated as TBC) were also initiated. Among the products were ijtihad on organized payment and distribution of zakat and use of zakat for the organization. Al-Ma’un theology would not have had its strong effect without modernism and a puritan spirit. It is not far from the truth to state that from its establishment to the present day, these three main aspects, namely Al-Ma’un theology, modernism, and puritanism, made Muhammadiyah, the most consistent Islamic philanthropic organization. What is interesting is that Muhammadiyah keeps growing and expanding even though it gives a lot without expecting anything back. Also, Muhammadiyah has never been absent from addressing disasters and the community’s hardships, and it is growing and progressing.

**Muhammadiyah and Covid-19 Handling**

As soon as Covid-19 began to spread in Indonesia, on March 14, 2020, Muhammadiyah immediately formed the Muhammadiyah Covid-19 Command Center (MCCC). The team consists of representatives from the Muhammadiyah Council, Institutions and business charities, namely the Public Health Development Board (MPKU), the Muhammadiyah Disaster Management Center (MDMC), ‘Aisyiyah, LAZISMU, the Higher Education and Research Development Council (DIKTI LITBANG), Basic and Secondary Education Assembly (DIKDASMEN), Tabligh Assembly, Muhammadiyah Student Association (IPM), Muhammadiyah Student Association (IMM), Nasyiatul ‘Aisyiyah (NA), Hizbul Wathan (HW), Muhammadiyah Student Association (TSPM), and Muhammadiyah Youth Association. The MCCC is chaired by Agus Samsuddin, and the MCCC was also formed at the regional level, and up to May 26, 2020, it has reached 30 regions.
Once formed, the MCCC immediately moved to carry out its task, namely, to coordinate the implementation of programs and action handling Covid-19 among the institutions and charitable businesses owned by Muhammadiyah in all regions of Indonesia. The following describes what has been done by Muhammadiyah in tackling this outbreak in all corners of Indonesia until May 26, 2020. The first is in the health sector. Consequently, Muhammadiyah does the following: (1) Provides 77 Muhammadiyah-‘Aisyiyah hospitals as hospitals that serve Covid-19 patients. The hospitals are spread in various regions of Indonesia, and the most are in Central Java and East Java. (2) Distribution of masks totaling 349,955 inhabitants. (3) Spraying of 49,198 points of disinfectant. (4) 92,050 hand sanitizers were distributed. (5) Distribution of 56,136 medical PPE packages. (6) Distribution of vitamins as many as 9,828 people. (7) Distribution of 2,503 inhabitants of an infrared thermometer. (8) Distribution of disinfectant to 2,895 people. (9) Portable sink aid for 2,123 people. (10) Making 75610 decontamination booths. The second is in the field of education. The contributions of Muhammadiyah include: (1) Making educational media with 7,105 points. (2) Phone credit subsidies for 187,667 students. (3) Online discussions engaging 33,634 people. (4) Student tuition assistance for 44,000 students. (5) Covid-19 Risk Factor (Safari) Awareness Program for 6,952 people. The third is in the social field. Some programs are as follows: (1) Socialization and education of 79,560 people. (2) Fast food for 59,098 people. (3) The assistance of 9,800 kg of eggs. (4) Cash assistance amounting to Rp 737,175,000, - (5) Distribution of 472,139 packages of food supplies. (6) 26,160 kg of rice assistance. (7) Free sahur (food before fasting) and takjil (food after fasting) in Ramadhan 1441H for 6,330 people.

The total disbursement of funds until May 26, 2020, at 16:00 was Rp 149,121,734,496. This is outside the cost of treatment at the Muhammadiyah-‘Aisyiyah hospital. And the total beneficiaries of all programs organized by Muhammadiyah are 2,467,787 people. Muhammadiyah has also provided psychological consultancy services for residents affected by Covid-19. And as of May 26, 2020, 84 people have utilized the service, namely 79 citizens and five foreigners.

In addition to contributions in the fields above, Muhammadiyah also contributes to the religious field. Until May 26, 2020, at 4:00 p.m. Muhammadiyah has issued two circulars containing religious guidance. The first circular dated March 24, 2020, contained the Guidance for Worship in
Covid-19 Emergency Conditions following the Fatwa of the Tarjih and Tajdid Assembly of Muhammadiyah Central Leadership. The second circular dated May 14, 2020, contains the *Eid Al-Fitr Prayer in Emergency Conditions Pandemic Covid-19* in accordance with the Fatwa of the Tarjih and Tajdid Assembly of Muhammadiyah Central Leadership. This religious guidance is crucial for Muhammadiyah members so that they can carry out worship well in the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak. Many people were confused and hesitant to carry out the five daily prayers, Friday prayers, *tarawih*, and *witir prayers, i’tikaf* at the mosque, *Eid al-Fitr* prayers, and other worship services during the time of the plague, then the guide made by MTT PP Muhammadiyah was very useful and eagerly awaited by Muhammadiyah members spread across all corners of Indonesia, which number in the tens of millions of people.

In carrying out its duties, MCCC, until May 27, 2020, has collaborated with various institutions in the war against Covid-19. In addition to institutions and business charities within Muhammadiyah and ‘Aisyiyah, MCCC has also collaborated with partner institutions outside Muhammadiyah including communities, universities, private companies and international donor agencies, such as the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Unicef, Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), Indonesian Economic Scholar Association (ISEI), PT. Erlangga, PT. Tirta Investama (Danone), KKS Fisipol UGM, Alumni of Nursing Masters of UMY, TVMu, Kompass Gramedia, Buddy Ambyar, Kitabisa.com, Wardah, Alfamidi, PT Kelola Mina Laut, Alficart, Bank Mega Syariah, Hajj Financial Management Agency BPKH), Bank Bukopin Syariah, CIMB Niaga Syariah, Relindo, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Baznas, Gojek, and Narasi. As well as influencers, including Teuku Wisnu, Ihsan Tarore, Dewi Sandra, Dhini Aminarti, Vebby Palwinta, and Tiara “Indonesian Idol.”

In carrying out its programs in collaboration with the partners above, MCCC is independent and transparent. This is because the main proponents of MCCC activities in terms of funding are the Charity Institution of Zakat, Infaq and Shodaqoh Muhammadiyah (LAZISMU) and the form of partnerships with external partners is only in the form of funding which is general in design and operational support for MCCC which can be audited.

Likewise, many of the programs and actions were undertaken by Muhammadiyah in handling Covid-19 are in line with Government policy. But even so, Muhammadiyah remained independent and did not justify all
Government policies. For example, Muhammadiyah disagrees with the “Peaceful with Corona” and “New Normal” policies adopted by the Government.

On the issue of “Peaceful with Corona”, the Government adopted a policy to relax the Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) and declare peace with the Coronavirus on May 20, 2020. Muhammadiyah disagrees with this policy because various indicators of the development of the Covid-19 outbreak in the country continue to show an upward trend, both in terms of the number of cases and deaths. This should make all of us increase our efforts to fight it. Also, there is the fate of health workers and community members who are at stake with this policy. Health workers are now betting on the lives of those exposed to Covid-19. They must be protected so that they can work well.37

And in the “New Normal” issue, Muhammadiyah issued a press release questioning the policy. On the one hand, the Government still applies the PSBB but, on the other hand, conveys the application of relaxation. This confusion is often a source of tension between the authorities and the people. To carry out the rules, sometimes some elements of the authorities use violent methods. Likewise, with “New Normal.” There needs to be an explanation from the Government about the “New Normal” policy. Do not let people make interpretations of each. On the one hand, malls and shopping areas are opening, while mosques and places of worship still need to be closed. This has the potential to cause tension between government officials and the community and worshipers. Furthermore, Muhammadiyah asked the Government to examine the implementation of “New Normal” carefully and asked for an objective and transparent explanation, primarily related to (1) the basis of the “New Normal” policy from the main aspects of the current condition of Covid-19 transmission in Indonesia, (2) the intent and purpose of “New Normal”; (3) the consequences of the existing regulations, especially the PSBB and various public services, (4) guarantee of areas that have been declared safe or green zones imposed “New Normal” (5) careful preparations so that the community does not become victims, including to guard against the possibility of the spread of the Covid-19 epidemic.38

All Muhammadiyah philanthropy programs and actions in handling Covid-19 certainly have a positive impact on the wider community. In terms of health, for example, by providing 77 hospitals to handle Covid-19, Muhammadiyah has had a significant role in helping the government in the field of public health. The number of hospitals owned by Muhammadiyah-‘Aisyiyah is 103 and 30 under construction 39. However, not all hospitals have
facilities, doctors, and medical personnel who can handle Covid-19 patients. Therefore, only 77 hospitals are prepared and prepared for this purpose. Despite that, 77 hospitals are not a small number. There is no other organization in Indonesia that provides many hospitals for this noble cause. Without contributions from Muhammadiyah, government hospitals would be overwhelmed by the increasing number of Covid-19 patients. Patients who have been treated by the Muhammadiyah hospital until May 26, 2020, at 16:00, were 3,126 ODP (monitored people), 1,623 PDP (patients under supervision), and 235 people were confirmed positive, so the total number of treated patients was 4,984.

In terms of education, with the assistance mentioned earlier, Muhammadiyah supported education and teaching activities during the pandemic outbreak. Muhammadiyah’s contribution in the field of education as above was made by as many as 39 universities owned by Muhammadiyah-‘Aisyiyah. The total funds they have spent until May 22, 2020, at 9:00 a.m. are as much as Rp. 90,566,492,596, -, and the total beneficiaries are 485,521 people. It should be noted that until November 2018, Muhammadiyah has 174 universities in the form of universities, colleges, academies, polytechnics, and institutes spread throughout Indonesia.

From a social perspective, the community has been helped by the programs carried out by Muhammadiyah. The public has received socialization and education on how to avoid contracting or transmitting pandemic outbreaks. They have also received social assistance in the form of fast food, eggs, basic food, rice, and even a small amount of cash. The role of Muhammadiyah that is no less important in the handling of pandemic outbreaks is in religious terms. This is because even though the community is surrounded by Covid-19, they still have religious obligations such as the five-day compulsory prayer, Friday prayer, and Ramadan fasting. More than that, they are also highly recommended to do such as Eid al-Fitr prayer, tarawih prayer, witir prayer, i’tikaf (staying for some moment) at the mosque, and so on. Muhammadiyah appeared through the Tarjih and Tajdid Assembly to guide the wider community, and in particular, to members of Muhammadiyah, in carrying out religious orders during the pandemic while still following health protocols established by the Government so as not to transmit Covid-19 or be infected by it. Of course, the community feels enlightened and helped by the existence of this worship guide.
CONCLUSION

Muhammadiyah, since its establishment, aims to practice philanthropy as advocated by Islam. Many charitable efforts carried out by Muhammadiyah as evidence of this. Even when the Covid-19 outbreak spread throughout the world, Muhammadiyah did not remain silent. With the command of the MCCC, Muhammadiyah has contributed to the health, education, and social fields. In doing so, Muhammadiyah has collaborated with fellow institutions within and outside of Muhammadiyah. Muhammadiyah works and contributes to the good of the people in a consistent, independent, and responsible manner. The larger society, therefore, significantly profits from what Muhammadiyah has presented. This study is believed to be timely and is one of the first studies conducted because it was conducted when Covid-19 was still haunting the world and has not subsided until now. This study has contributed studies in the field of Muhammadiyah and Islamic philanthropy by presenting evidence of the consistency of Muhammadiyah in implementing Islamic philanthropy through the handling of Covid-19 so as to provide a very beneficial impact for the entire community.

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ENDNOTE


12. Ibid.


19. Ibid.


29. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
36. Ibid.


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