K.H. Ayat Dimyati and the Consolidation of Muhammadiyah in West Java, 2010–2015

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Abstract

This article examines the relationship between the formation of K.H. Ayat Dimyati's thought and his work as Chair of the West Java Regional Board of Muhammadiyah (PWM) in 2010–2015. Previous studies have generally presented Ayat Dimyati as a figure *of qoul bil* hal dakwah or discussed Muhammadiyah's regional leadership from the perspectives of management, cadre de*velopment, and serv*ant leadership. Little attention has been paid to the relations*hip among t*he idea of Tauhid Ilmu, Muhammadiyah's collective and collegial structure, and institutional processes during one regional leadership term. The research uses the historical method through heuristics, external and internal criticism, interpretation, and historiography. Primary sources include Ayat Dimyati's works, Muhammadiyah archives and decrees, Tanwir documents, interviews with family members and West Java PWM officers, and audiovisual recordings. The results show that his thinking was shaped by Garut's diverse religious environment, Islamic education, literacy experience, and Muhammadiyah cadre formation. The relationship among tawhid, divine guidance, knowledge, and action became the ethical foundation of his educational and leadership ideas. At the organizational level, the available record supports institutional consolidation more than structural transformation: it documents regional personnel changes, decisions concerning educational and health institutions, and a Study Team for Universitas Muhammadiyah Bandung. His role in the university was not as its sole originator, but as an agent who advanced the previously recorded university agenda by establishing a Study Team in 2011. This article offers a reading that avoids figure-centered historiography: Ayat Dimyati's significance lies in his ability to connect ideas, organizational structures, and collective work that helped sustain an institutional agenda beyond his term.

Keywords: Ayat Dimyati; West Java Muhammadiyah; Tauhid Ilmu; organizational history; structure and agency

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Introduction

Islamic organizations are an important arena in the formation of modern Indonesia's social, intellectual, and religious life. Since the early twentieth century, they have not only articulated the community's interests, but also developed cadres, built educational and social-service institutions, and negotiated Islam's relationship with nationhood and modernity. In this trajectory, Muhammadiyah, founded in 1912, occupies a prominent place because it combines intellectual renewal, religious purification, organizational rationality, and social work through a network of charitable enterprises.[1] The movement has endured not only through continuity of ideas at the national level, but also through its ability to translate national orientations into different regional social contexts.

West Java is an important setting for that process of translation. The province's religious life is shaped by Sundanese pesantren traditions, the development of urban society, competition among educational and health institutions, and changing patterns of dakwah. The West Java PWM therefore does more than administer decisions from the center. Its leadership must coordinate with regional, branch, and local units, councils, institutions, and charitable enterprises while adapting programs to local needs. Regional leadership thus stands at the intersection of established organizational structures and actors' capacity to understand change.

It is in this context that K.H. Ayat Dimyati gains historical significance. He led the West Java PWM in 2010–2015 after a long career as an educator, academic, ulama, organizational activist, and dedicated reader of Islamic literature. His leadership faced the need to consolidate an extensive organizational network, strengthen management of charitable enterprises, regenerate cadres, and realize a long-discussed higher-education agenda. Yet if his work is presented merely as a list of offices and programs, historical explanation loses the relationship among the formation of ideas, choices of action, institutional conditions, and long-term consequences.

Another historiographical problem arises when the life of an organizational figure is written heroically. A figure-centered approach tends to attribute change to an individual's vision or charisma, relegating deliberation, collective decisions, organizational rules, teamwork, and continuity between leadership terms to a passive background. For Muhammadiyah, this tendency is problematic because its collective and collegial system explicitly limits the concentration of authority in a chairperson. Conversely, an explanation emphasizing structure alone risks erasing actors' roles in activating decisions, setting priorities, assigning people, and turning discourse into operational programs.

Three gaps emerge from this overview. First, Ayat Dimyati's intellectual biography has not been adequately linked to organizational decisions taken or advanced during his leadership. Second, regional Muhammadiyah history is often

[1] Azyumardi Azra, *Islam Nusantara dan Modernisme Indonesia* (Jakarta: Prenada Media, 2019), 87; Ahmad Najib Burhani, Mu*hammadiyah Jawa dan Islam Berkemajuan (*Jakarta: LIPI Press, 2019), 15, 40; Haedar Nashir, Muh*ammadiyah Gerakan Pembaruan (Yo*gyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2010), 72. The year 2010 is verified through Google Books bibliographic data and the publisher catalog: https://books.google.com/books?id=HSeizwEACAAJ.

divided between studies of a figure's ideas and studies of institutional management, although ideas gain historical meaning through interaction with organizational structures and practices. Third, the story of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bandung's establishment risks being simplified into one pioneer's achievement, despite organizational sources documenting a long process from a university plan recorded in the 1999 Tanwir proceedings and formation of a Study Team in 2011 to government authorization in 2016. Such separation makes a proportionate assessment of Ayat Dimyati's contribution difficult.

This article aims to explain (1) how K.H. Ayat Dimyati's life, education, literacy experience, and cadre formation shaped his principal ideas; (2) how those ideas related to his leadership of the West Java PWM in 2010–2015; and (3) how interaction between his agency and Muhammadiyah's structure produced institutional continuity and change. This focus is not intended to prove that every organizational policy originated in his personal ideas. Rather, the study places him within collective work, the association's rules, and historical conditions that both enabled and constrained his action.

The article's novelty lies in an integrated reading of three layers generally separated in previous studies: intellectual formation, organizational consolidation, and institutionalization of a higher-education agenda. On the basis of primary sources, it argues that Ayat Dimyati's contribution to the establishment of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bandung did not consist in originating the idea, which appeared in a report presented at the 1999 Tanwir. Its significance lies in advancing that agenda by forming the Study Team in 2011 and consolidating organizational support. Thus, the study's novelty is not a claim about a "single founder," but an explanation of how a regional leader worked as an agent within a collective structure and created a formal study mechanism for development after his term.

Methods

This research employs the historical method, which encompasses four main stages: heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. These stages reconstruct Ayat Dimyati's thinking and work from traceable evidence rather than adding a new method beyond the original research. In Kuntowijoyo's account, historical research moves from selecting a problem and collecting sources to verification, interpretation, and presentation of a historical narrative; Sulasman defines heuristics as finding and gathering relevant sources.[2]

Written primary sources comprise Ayat Dimyati's writings and a published interview with him, especially "Untuk Kaaffah Masih Berat," "Gagasan Manhaj Kehidupan Berbasiskan Relasi Ilmu dan Hidayah," Tauhid Ilm*u, and writi*ng on a Qur'anic manhaj. *Organizational* sources include Muhammadiyah Central Board Decree No. 35/KEP/I.0/D/2011 appointing the West Java PWM leadership for 2010–2015; several West Java PWM decrees from 2011 concerning regional leadership personnel, management of educational institutions, construction of Muhammadiyah

[2] Kuntowijoyo, *Pengantar Ilmu Sejarah*, new edition (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2013), 64; Sulasman, *Metodologi Penelitian Sejarah* (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2014), 90.

Bandung Hospital, and the Study Team for the Establishment of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bandung; and the report of the Muhammadiyah Tanwir in Bandung on December 3–5, 1999. Recordings of Ayat Dimyati's lectures and discussions were used to examine ideas not fully recorded in his written works. Secondary sources include books, articles, undergraduate theses, and master's theses on Muhammadiyah, regional leadership, historical methods, and the relationship between structure and agency.[3]

External criticism addressed the origins, form, legality, and authenticity of sources. Ayat Dimyati's articles were checked against author identity, publication title, issue number, page range, and publishing metadata. Source criticism involves verifying the decision number, date, letterhead, signatures, official seals, and the provenance of the records, even though the original facsimiles of the complete decision documents are not available for independent collation. An examination of the documentation confirms that the Central Executive's Decree (Surat Keputusan Pimpinan Pusat) No. 35/KEP/I.0/D/2011 was obtained from the archives of the West Java Regional Executive (PWM Jawa Barat) as well as from an official copy held by the Central Executive. Books were checked against publisher details and catalog records. Interviews were recorded with their time, place, and interview statements, while audiovisual materials were checked against channel identity and the consistency of their content with the topics discussed.[4]

Internal criticism assessed the credibility of content, the witnesses' positions, consistency of information, and possible bias. Family testimony helps explain Ayat Dimyati's upbringing, simplicity, and intellectual habits, but kinship can produce idealization. Testimony from PWM officers matters because they participated in organizational processes, although retrospective memory may be shaped by the passage of time and institutional loyalty. Oral evidence was therefore compared with his writings, decrees, Tanwir documents, policy traces, academic catalogs, and online institutional sources. When details cannot be reconciled, the article favors contemporary primary sources, records the basis for corrections, or limits claims to what can be established; unverified details are not filled in speculatively.

The interpretation stage applies Christopher Lloyd's concept regarding the relationship between structure and agency within a framework of methodological structuralism. Structure means not only an organization's formal arrangement, but also rules, deliberative mechanisms, collective and collegial values, the network of charitable enterprises, and ideological orientations shaping the scope of action. Agency refers to actors' capacity to understand needs, activate resources, interpret organizational mandates, and coordinate action. This framework does not impose theory on the evidence, but explains why Ayat Dimyati's leadership cannot be reduced either to personal will or to an automatic outcome of structure.[5]

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[3] Naufal Anggoro, "Pemikiran dan Kiprah K.H. Ayat Dimyati dalam Organisasi Muhammadiyah Jawa Barat (2010–2015).

[4] "External Criticism" section describes checks of articles in *Risalah* a*nd Jurnal Ilmu Dakw*ah, Central Board Decree No. 35/KEP/I.0/D/2011, the boo*k Tauhid Ilm*u, document photographs, recording metadata, and interview statements.

[5] Christopher Lloyd, The *Structures of History (Ox*ford: Blackwell Publishers, 1993), 15–30

Historiography arranges facts in an analytical narrative while preserving chronology, causality, context, and continuity and change. Results are distinguished from discussion: the results present his formation, principal ideas, consolidation policies, and institutional processes on the basis of sources; the discussion interprets the findings' meaning for organizational history and Ayat Dimyati's place in Muhammadiyah historiography. The distinction is needed so that interpretation does not replace evidence and the study's novelty can be tested through a clear relationship between data and argument.[6]

Results

Biographical and Intellectual Formation

K.H. Ayat Dimyati was born on December 10, 1954, in Garut, an area with strong pesantren traditions and religious life. He was the eldest of nine children. His position as firstborn in a large family was connected to a sense of responsibility and exemplary conduct often mentioned in family testimony. His family was not organizationally homogeneous: some relatives were associated with Nahdlatul Ulama-style pesantren traditions, while an uncle named Haji Mamak was active in Muhammadiyah, Darul Arqam Pesantren in Garut, and Muhammadiyah leadership in Garut Regency. Living among different forms of religious practice provides context for his openness to dialogue without losing his organizational identity.

His formal education combined religious teacher training and Islamic higher education. After completing elementary school in 1967, he continued through lower secondary school, a four-year Religious Teacher Education course, and advanced Religious Teacher Education, which he completed in 1973. He then studied at the Faculty of Sharia of IAIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, earning an intermediate degree in 1977 and a full undergraduate degree in 1980. He continued with specia*lized stud*y of the Qur'an and hadith at Al-Azhar University in Cairo in 1984–1985, followed by a master's program focused on Islamic law at IAIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, completed in 1999.[7]

This educational trajectory matters as more than a list of qualifications. Teacher training gave him a pedagogical foundation; sharia studies strengthened his methods of reading Islamic law; Al-Azhar broadened his encounter with Islamic scholarly traditions; and master's education connected textual mastery with a more systematic academic framework. This combination helps explain why his thinking later moved among questions of the Qur'an and hadith, philosophy of science, education, social fiqh, and nationhood.

His intellectual formation was also shaped by work in the IAIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung library from the late 1970s to the mid-1980s. Mohammad Fahmi Amrullah's testimony says that access to reading mattered more to Ayat Dimyati than financial considerations; he was even willing to work so long as he had broad access to the collections. His experience as staff member and later head of the library brought

[6] Kuntowijoyo, *Metodologi Sejarah* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2003), 154.
[7] Ayat Dimyati, "Biodata Penulis," 258.

him into contact with Islamic history, Muhammadiyah thinkers, philosophy, and the social sciences. This oral evidence is not isolated, but accords with the breadth of subjects in his writings and lectures.

His ties to Muhammadiyah developed through a process rather than solely through family inheritance. While studying in Bandung, he interacted with Muhammadiyah's autonomous organizations, including IPM and IMM. Discussions, meetings, and cadre training introduced him to organizational rationality, reform, deliberation, and social responsibility. These experiences were reinforced by informal encounters with Muhammadiyah figures in the family and by his reading. He came to understand Muhammadiyah not merely as a membership structure, but as a space for combining freedom of thought, organizational discipline, and social service.[8]

In family life, the testimony gathered by this study describes an approach to education through example and dialogue. Ayat Dimyati married Yati Suhaeti and had seven children, four sons and three daughters. Education, knowledge, moral character, and trust in God were valued above material measures. He did not impose an organizational choice on his children, but stressed responsibility for their choices. This testimony helps trace continuity between his appreciation of reason and freedom in thought and his educational practice at home. Since most family information comes from interviews with his children, however, it remains testimony to be read alongside other sources.

Tawhid, Divine Guidance, and Tauhid Ilmu

Ayat Dimyati's central ideas begin with a criticism of separating faith, knowledge, and human responsibility. He saw that religion could become formalistic when symbols and rituals did not produce honesty, justice, and social concern. In the interview "Untuk Kaaffah Masih Berat," comprehensive Islam *is no*t limited to formal compliance with rules, but demands consistency among belief, ways of thinking, and action. This criticism makes ethical questions the point of entry into his thought, rather than an addition after theology.[9]

Tawhid is therefore not understood as a verbal affirmation of God's oneness. It works as a principle rejecting the absolutization of power, office, wealth, figures, and even knowledge. When an authority is treated as a final truth immune to criticism, tawhid loses its liberating function. Religious organizations and leaders must consequently be open to correction. In this framework, amanah is not a privilege, but a responsibility bounded by moral values and human purposes.

The concept of divine guidance complements tawhid's critical function. Ayat Dimyati distinguishes guidance of reason, innate nature, and faith, giving honest and open reason an important role in seeking truth. The Prophet Abraham illustrates a process moving from empirical experience and reasoning toward transcendent

[8] Indie, "Filsafat Pendidikan Muhammadiyah," YouTube video, 2014; Indie, "Islam Berkemajuan," YouTube video, 2015; Bandungmu.com, "Muallim K.H. Ayat Dimyati: Guru Sekaligus Teman Diskusi," accessed November 10, 2024.

[9] M. Taufiq Rahman and Ayat Dimyati, "Untuk Kaaffah Masih Berat," interview with Ayat Dimyati, *Risala*h, no. 6, year 41 (September 2003): 25–27.

awareness. In this reading, mature faith does not arise by rejecting reason, but through dialogue between reason and revelation. Divine guidance then provides a moral orientation for the use of knowledge and power.[10]

The relationship between tawhid and guidance has a social dimension. Good works are not confined to individual ritual, but include actions affecting others' lives. Family testimony about his habit of treating students or colleagues to meals shows a simple practice of reducing social distance between lecturer and student. The interpretation of this practice is rooted in the spirit of the *Al-Ma'un* theology, which asserts that social concern need not wait for material abundance; rather, it can begin through personal effort, reflection, attentiveness, and concrete, everyday actions.

From this foundation came the c*oncept of T*auhid Ilmu. Ayat Dimyati criticized the assumption that knowledge is value-neutral. In his view, the choice of a problem, use of methods, interpretation, and application of knowledge always operate within a particular horizon of values. Knowledge detached from moral orientation can become an instrument of domination and inequality, while faith that rejects knowledge c*an descend* into fanaticism. Tauhid Ilmu seeks to restore knowledge as a means of reading God's signs while serving human well-being.[11]

This idea is not the symbolic Islamization of scientific terminology. Integration begins with the ontological *assum*ption *that* revealed and rational knowledge derive from the same source of truth, making a rigid divide between "religious" and "general" knowledge untenable. Epistemologically, reason, experience, and revelation illuminate one another. Axiologically, academic truth must be tested against ethical responsibility and its human consequences. Knowledge may therefore advance technically yet fail to count as progress if used for exploitation or oppression.

Within the fra*mework* of ta'lim, Ayat Dimyati dist*inguishe*s the *study o*f al-ki*tab from* al-hikmah. Study of al-kitab develops spiritual potential *throug*h revealed disciplines, such as Qur'an*ic studie*s and fiqh; study of al-hikmah develops physical capacities and mastery of science and technology. Both aim to form ulul alb*ab: people* whose intellectual, spiritual, family, and social responsibilities are in balance. This division shows that the integration of knowledge is linked to educational design and the kind of person to be formed, rather than remaining a slogan.[12]

Tauhid *Ilmu then* intersects with Progressive Islam. Ayat Dimyati did not measure progress only by buildings, numbers of institutions, or education statistics. His main measure was the people produced: their honesty, concern, responsibility, capacity to think, and commitment to the common good. Muhammadiyah's charitable enterprises are thus instruments of service, not symbols of organizational glory. His criticism of purely material progress also warns that institutional expansion without stronger

[10] Ayat Dimyati, "Gagasan Manhaj Kehidupan Berbasiskan Relasi Ilmu dan Hidayah," *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 5, no. 16 (2010): 145–150.

[11] Ayat Dimyati, "Gagasan Manhaj Kehidupan Berbasiskan Relasi Ilmu dan Hidayah," 145–150.

[12] Ayat Dimyati, "Manhaj Qur'ani: Studi Konsep Al-Qur'an tentang Tauhid Ilmu," in Ta*uhid Ilmu dan Implementasinya dalam Pendidikan,* ed. Hendar Riyadi (Bandung: Kerja sama Majelis Tarjih dan PPI PWM Jawa Barat dengan Nuansa Cendekia, 2009), 42–47.

values can create an anomaly in knowledge: high academic authority divorced from humanity.

In his educational philosophy, teachers and lecturers cannot merely transmit subject matter. They must set an example, open dialogue, and cultivate values. Ayat Dimyati used Al-Fatihah as a framework *for a* way of life: tawhid supplies values, worship and social relations constitute the process, and people of character are the outcome. Education producing ritual piety without social sensitivity fails in its prophetic mission. The integration of knowledge and guidance is therefore a process of forming people, not simply combining subjects.

Social Fiqh and Thought on Nationhood

Ayat Dimyati's thought moves from epistemological foundations to concrete social problems. He rejected a fiqh concerned only with whether worship is valid or invalid without considering the ethical purposes of Islamic law. One expression was his idea of hospital fiqh, arising from changes in medicine and the experiences of patients in vulnerable situations. A patient confined to bed, using medical equipment, or physically restricted requires legal *concess*ions (rukhsah) and a reading of fiqh attentive to ease and the protection of human dignity.

In this discussion, alternative means of purification or adjustments to prayer posture are not treated as diminishing worship. The chief considerations are the patient's ability, submission, and sincerity. Hospital fiqh also encompasses the ethics of medical staff, families, and visitors. Doctors and nurses do more than perform technical procedures; they bear responsibility for preserving patients' dignity. Individual worship and public responsibility thus belong within one framework: piety gains meaning when it produces empathy and protection for vulnerable people.

In matters of nationhood, Ayat Dimyati's views are evident in his discussion of women's leadership. He acknowledged scholarly disagreement about *imamah al-'uzm*a, but distinguished the classical caliphate's structure from a modern constitutional state. So long as a leader, man or woman, had moral commitment, capacity, and the ability to uphold the constitution, he saw no substantive prohibition on holding the highest state office. He also took social acceptance and stability into account. This position reflects a reading of fiqh that seeks to preserve the relationship among norms, context, and the common good.

In a discussion of "Poros Tengah Jilid 2," Ayat Dimyati argued that political fragmentation among Muslims resulted less from a lack of space than from failure to build unit*y of vision (ij*ma' al-ru'ya*h), will (ijma'* al-iradah), an*d action (ijm*a' al-'amal). He criticized loyalty centered on a figure because personal victory does not necessarily serve the community's welfare. This continues his organizational view: collective action requires agreement on values and working mechanisms, rather than mere mobilization behind an individual.

His work in the MUI, ICMI, and FKUB broadened the arenas in which he applied moderation. Moderation meant not blurring principles, but acting fairly, proportionately, and empathetically amid differences. Family testimony says that he could maintain a conviction even when in a minority, without expressing it through

confrontation. This stance linked consistency of principle with an ethic of dialogue, two elements also visible in his Muhammadiyah leadership.

Leadership and Consolidation of the West Java PWM

The 2010 West Java Muhammadiyah Regional Conference operated within an organizational structure that made collective and collegial leadership a principle. Participants did not elect the chair directly, but chose board members who then deliberated on personnel. According to Jamjam Erawan, the selection process produced 39 final candidates, from whom participants elected 13 PWM members. These 13 members chose the chair and divided responsibilities through internal deliberation, then submitted the lineup to the Central Board for approval. This mechanism conferred legitimacy on Ayat Dimyati while limiting any interpretation of the chair's office as personal power.

The formal appointment is recorded in Muhammadiyah Central Board Decree No. 35/KEP/I.0/D/2011 of February 2, 2011. This document establishes Ayat Dimyati's position and that of other leaders within a legal and organizational framework. His election did not represent the sudden appearance of a figure detached from history, but resulted from cadre formation, academic and organizational experience, the regional conference election, agreement among elected members, and central approval. This sequence shows the layers of legitimacy underlying his work as coordinator of the West Java PWM.[13]

The 2011 decrees document personnel changes and institutional planning during the early phase of his leadership. Decisions concerned regional Muhammadiyah leadership personnel, leadership of educational enterprises, reactivation of a cadre training institution, arrangements for hospital construction, and formation of a team for the higher-education agenda. These administrative documents indicate formal priorities concerning personnel and institutional arrangements; they do not by themselves establish the effects of those arrangements.[14]

At the regional level, the West Java PWM adjusted the personnel of the Bandung City PDM and appointed the Depok City PDM lineup. These policies sought to maintain coordination between regional levels and ensure that regional conference decisions could be translated into local needs. Changing or appointing personnel does not automatically prove program success, but shows attention to organizational continuity at the level directly dealing with branches, local units, and charitable enterprises.[15]

In education, consolidation involved appointing or dismissing school leaders and reactivating Pondok Pesantren Luhur Muhammadiyah. School heads were seen as

[13] Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, Surat Keputusan Nomor 35/KEP/I.0/D/2011 tentang Penetapan Ketua dan Anggota PWM Jawa Barat Periode 2010–2015, February 2, 2011.

[14] Haedar Nashir, *Muhammadiyah Gerakan Pembaruan* (2010), 113–131; West Java PWM Archives, series of 2011 decrees concerning PDM units, educational enterprises, construction of Muhammadiyah Bandung Hospital, and the Universitas Muhammadiyah Bandung Study Team.

[15] Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, *AD dan ART Muhammadiyah* (2005), Articles 11 and 25, 39, 54–56; Pimpinan Wilayah Muhammadiyah Jawa Barat, Surat Keputusan Nomor 53/KEP/II.0/D/2011 tentang Perubahan PDM Kota Bandung Periode 2010–2015;

links between Muhammadiyah's educational vision and institutional practice. Reactivating the pesantren, meanwhile, addressed the need for cadre formation combining Islamic learning, intellectual development, and character. The decrees document changes to leadership in existing educational units alongside plans for institutional development.[16]

In health care, the West Java PWM reorganized the Muhammadiyah Bandung Hospital construction committee and established a supervisory board. Separating implementers from supervisors indicates an effort to build accountability from the construction stage. The hospital was treated not merely as a physical project, but as a service institution requiring divided functions, oversight, and management continuity. This is consistent with the idea of social service and documents institutional decisions, although the documents do not establish that every policy detail came directly from Ayat Dimyati's personal ideas.[17]

Jamjam Erawan's testimony stresses that staffing began by identifying program needs and then matching competence, experience, and expertise. In his account, personal closeness was not the basis for placement. The principle of "the right person in the right field" was presented as a guide for appointments in councils, institutions, and charitable enterprises. This oral evidence is consistent with the first year's decree pattern, although causal links between each decision and program success must remain limited to the available evidence.

Overall, the 2010–2015 leadership term shows continuity in Muhammadiyah's system rather than a fundamental change to the organization's identity or rules. The documented changes concerned PWM–PDM personnel, council and enterprise appointments, hospital construction oversight, and renewed attention to older agendas. Ayat Dimyati performed a coordinating role within deliberative mechanisms. These formal decisions support an interpretation of "institutional consolidation"; their operational effects require further evidence.

From the 1999 Tanwir Report to the Universitas Muhammadiyah Bandung Study Team

The need for a Muhammadiyah higher-education institution in West Java grew from the expansion of primary and secondary education and the need for advanced cadre training. By the late 1990s, the West Java PWM did not yet manage a Muhammadiyah university based in its territory. The issue involved not only access

[16] Pimpinan Wilayah Muhammadiyah Jawa Barat, Surat Keputusan Nomor 138/KEP/II.0/D/2011 tentang Pemberhentian Kepala SMA Plus Pesantren Amanah Muhammadiyah Kota Tasikmalaya; West Java PWM archive on the reactivation of Pondok Pesantren Luhur Muhammadiyah, 2011; Nashir, Muh*ammadiyah Gerakan Pembaruan (*2010), 119–126.

[17] Pimpinan Wilayah Muhammadiyah Jawa Barat, Surat Keputusan Nomor 051/KEP/II.0/D/2011 tentang Penyempurnaan Panitia Pembangunan Rumah Sakit Muhammadiyah Bandung and Surat Keputusan Nomor 55/KEP/II.0/D/2011 tentang Penetapan Dewan Pengawas Pembangunan Rumah Sakit Muhammadiyah Bandung; *Nashir, Muhammadiyah Gerakan* Based on an internal review, Decision No. 051 was selected because archival records list the Bandung City PDM (Muhammadiyah Regional Board) decree under entry number 53, while separately listing Decree No. 051 for the hospital construction committee; no public copies of either of these hospital-related decrees could be found online.

to education, but also continuity in developing intellectual cadres, knowledge, and the association's identity in the provincial capital.

The idea of establishing Universitas Muhammadiyah Bandung appeared in an organizational report at the Muhammadiyah Tanwir session in Bandung on December 3–5, 1999. The Higher Education Council's report listed plans to develop several higher-education institutions, including Universitas Muhammadiyah Bandung. This entry documents that the university was under consideration within the association more than a decade before Ayat Dimyati's leadership. It also corrects narratives presenting him as its sole originator.[18]

The university plan recorded in the Tanwir report was not realized immediately. Establishing a university required a ready organizing body, personnel, curricula, facilities, funding, governance, coordination with the Central Board, and compliance with state requirements. The intervening steps from 1999 to 2011 are not documented sufficiently to establish a continuous process of preparation. The cited report does not itself establish a timetable or identify the causes of the interval before the 2011 team was formed.

An important change came on October 31, 2011, when the West Java PWM recorded a decree appointing the Study Team for the Establishment of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bandung. Based on the document transcription, the opening section describes the team's mandate to follow up on the agenda of the 1999 Tanwir; however, the referenced report outlines proposed activities rather than decisions that have been independently verified. The decree established a formal study structure and assigned tasks and accountability. Ayat Dimyati's historical contribution lay in that transition: he did not create the original idea, but advanced an older agenda through a formal study process.[19]

The Study Team comprised leaders, academics, and Muhammadiyah figures experienced in higher education. Its tasks included a feasibility study, mapping internal potential, identifying external opportunities and challenges, analyzing public needs, preparing recommendations, and reporting to the West Java PWM. The mandate reflects caution: the team was not immediately tasked with founding the university, but with preparing academic and organizational grounds for the next decision.[20]

Jamjam Erawan's and Dikdik Dahlan Lukman's accounts show that the team's formation turned repeated discussion of a university into an agenda with direction and a division of work. Ayat Dimyati provided support and facilitation without

[18] Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, Risalah Sidang Tanwir Muhammadiyah Bandung 3–5 Desember 1999*(Yogy*akarta: PP Muhammadiyah, 1999), 59; West Java PWM Archives, proposal and progress documents for the establishment of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bandung.

[19] Pimpinan Wilayah Muhammadiyah Jawa Barat, Surat Keputusan tentang Penetapan Tim Kajian Pendirian Universitas Muhammadiyah Bandung (number given as 63/KEP/II.0/D/2011 in the archive inventory and 63/KEP/I.0/D/2011) tentang Penetapan Tim Kajian Pendirian Universitas Muhammadiyah Bandung, October 31, 2011.

[20] Pimpinan Wilayah Muhammadiyah Jawa Barat, Surat Keputusan tentang Penetapan Tim Kajian Pendirian Universitas Muhammadiyah Bandung; Haedar Nashir, *Muhammadiyah Gerakan Pembaruan* (2010), 185–188.

taking over the team's technical tasks. This pattern accords with his leadership in other areas: the chair coordinated, while personnel considered competent performed specialized functions. These testimonies should be read as the organizational memory of the participants, which aligns with the mandate of the Study Team as identified in the research documents.

The process after 2011 involved inventorying resources, planning programs of study, preparing lecturers and facilities, designing governance, feasibility studies, and coordinating with the Central Board's Higher Education Council. At this stage, the organizational agenda interacted with higher-education regulation. Law No. 12 of 2012 and Government Regulation No. 4 of 2014 became part of the regulatory environment after the team's formation, so the requirements were met within a changing framework. This article does not use those two regulations anachronistically to explain the legal situation in 2011, but to show the context faced by the subsequent process.[21]

On June 14, 2016, the government issued Minister of Research, Technology and Higher Education Decree No. 205/KPT/I/2016 authorizing Universitas Muhammadiyah Bandung. The permit came after Ayat Dimyati's term, so its legal success cannot accurately be described as an administrative achievement completed under his leadership. Formation of the 2011 Study Team was an earlier organizational step in a process that later gained approval; the available evidence does not document a direct chain from the team's work to the permit. The 17 years from the 1999 Tanwir to the 2016 permit show that establishing the university was an accumulation of work across periods, not one person's product.[22]

Subsequent developments reinforce this cross-period character. Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Muhammadiyah Bandung was incorporated into Universitas Muhammadiyah Bandung through Minister of Education and Culture Decree No. 1195/M/2020, while Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Muhammadiyah Bandung became the university's Faculty of Islamic Studies through Minister of Religious Affairs Decree No. 328 of 2021. Both policies fall outside the period studied, but show subsequent stages in the institution's development.[23]

Simplicity as a Leadership Practice

Oral sources depict Ayat Dimyati as a leader who avoided using organizational facilities for personal purposes. Jamjam Erawan recounts that Ayat Dimyati declined a PWM car when traveling to teach because the journey was not PWM business; he chose public transport. On another occasion, he accepted a personal ride when offered it out of respect for the good intention. This account cannot serve as a sole measure of

[21] Republik Indonesia, Undang-Undang Nomor 12 Tahun 2012 tentang Pendidikan Tinggi; Republik Indonesia, Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 4 Tahun 2014 tentang Penyelenggaraan Pendidikan Tinggi dan Pengelolaan Perguruan Tinggi.

[22] Keputusan Menteri Riset, Teknologi, dan Pendidikan Tinggi Republik Indonesia Nomor 205/KPT/I/2016 tentang Izin Penyelenggaraan Universitas Muhammadiyah Bandung, June 14, 2016.

[23] Keputusan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia Nomor 1195/M/2020, December 30, 2020; Keputusan Menteri Agama Republik Indonesia Nomor 328 Tahun 2021, March 12, 2021.

organizational success, but shows how the boundary between a position of trust and personal interests was practiced in daily life.

Dikdik Dahlan Lukman and Jamjam Erawan also emphasize his openness in meetings. He allowed participants to voice views, listened before responding, and did not treat criticism as a personal attack. His courteous manner reduced distance between the chair, officers, young cadres, and students. A similar pattern appeared in family discussions before decisions. These accounts show the fit between deliberation as an organizational principle and dialogue as a personal habit.

In these findings, simplicity is not a rejection of progress or professionalism. It is a way to place office in proportion, limit the use of facilities according to entrusted duties, and maintain social relations without excessive symbols of power. The practice lends moral weight to his ideas of tawhid, amanah, and guidance. The article does not, however, make personal example the sole cause of consolidation. Such values function as capital of trust within a structure, while institutional outcomes still depend on collective decisions, organizational mechanisms, and the work of many actors.

Discussion

From Intellectual Biography to Organizational Practice

The findings show that Ayat Dimyati's biography cannot be narrated as a sequence of events neutral toward his thinking. Garut's varied religious environment, religious teacher training, sharia and Qur'an-hadith study, library experience, and Muhammadiyah cadre formation created layers that later converged in his concepts of tawhid, guidance, and knowledge. Family diversity helps explain openness to difference; sharia education supplied normative tools; Al-Azhar widened his horizons in Islamic tradition; library work reinforced his reading habits; and the organization provided an arena for testing ideas through collective work.

This relationship is not biographical determinism. Not everyone raised in a diverse family develops moderate thought, and not every librarian formulates epistemological concepts. Ayat Dimyati's agency is visible in how he turned experiences into categories of thought. Yet those ideas did not arise in an abstract space. Tauh*id Ilmu ca*n be read as a response to the divide in Islamic education, the growth of modern knowledge, and Muhammadiyah's need to join reform with theological foundations. Biography thus provides context for intellectual choices without becoming their sole cause.

The connection between ideas and actions is clearest in three principles. First, tawhid's rejection of absolutization accords with a leadership style that did not concentrate authority in the chair. Second, guidance as moral orientation accords with placing trust and competence above personal closeness. Third, knowledge as social responsibility accords with attention to education, health, and the university as means of service. This relationship does not make every decree a direct derivation from a theological concept, but shows a consistent orientation across his intellectual work, participants' testimony, and policy patterns.

At this point, the study corrects the tendency of biographies to separate "thought" and "work" into two lists. Thought gains historical force when it acquires social media; action becomes analyzable when choices are related to values, institutions, and the conditions of the time. Ayat Dimyati not only wrote about the relationship between knowledge and guidance, but worked in an organization managing schools, hospitals, cadre formation, and higher education. Conversely, organizational policies cannot be understood as administration alone, since choices for consolidation rested on views about the relationship among values, people, and institutions.

Collective Structure and the Scope for Agency

Lloyd's framework helps explain that Muhammadiyah's structure both constrained and enabled action. The regional conference mechanism, election of 13 members, deliberations on personnel, Central Board approval, division of fields among councils and institutions, and obligation to follow the association's constitution and bylaws prevented a chair from acting as the organization's owner. The same structure, however, gave him legitimacy, networks, resources, and decision-making channels to coordinate change. Structure was not a passive stage; it was a condition of action.[24]

Ayat Dimyati used this scope for agency chiefly to optimize existing mechanisms. Reorganizing PDM units, replacing enterprise leaders, reactivating a pesantren, forming hospital supervisors, and establishing the university Study Team did not create a system outside Muhammadiyah. These actions activated existing rules and units. "Agent of chang*e" should ther*efore be used cautiously. The change was not a structural revolution, but a documented shift in formal coordination and preparation.

These findings correct two extreme explanations. The first treats a leader as the sole engine moving an organization through personal vision. This ignores the electoral process, the work of 13 PWM members, councils, teams, and central support. The second treats development as an automatic result of Muhammadiyah's rational structure. That model is also inadequate because the plan recorded in the 1999 Tanwir report did not immediately result in a university. Structures need actors who decide when to activate an agenda, whom to appoint, how to coordinate, and which steps to prioritize.

The 2010–2015 period can thus be understood as an encounter between organizational needs and a leader's capacity. The extensive network of charitable enterprises and leadership levels created pressure to consolidate. Ayat Dimyati's academic and organizational experience gave him the resources to read those needs. Regional conference legitimacy and Central Board approval supplied authority; testimony about deliberation and competence-based appointments explains how it was exercised. The result was strengthened collective capacity rather than centralization.

[24] Lloyd, *The Structures of History,* 15–30; Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, A*D dan ART Muhammadiyah* (2005), Article 15, 19, dan 24, 45–54.

Consolidation as Historical Change

In organizational history, change is often equated with new institutions, membership growth, or spectacular programs. Ayat Dimyati's case shows a less visible form of change: consolidation. Reorganizing personnel, dividing functions, reactivating units, establishing supervision, and preparing studies may appear administrative. Without such steps, however, major programs struggle to continue. Consolidation creates an organization's ability to act in subsequent stages.

The 2011 decrees show several areas of formal action. The PWM made regional and sectoral personnel decisions, documented educational appointments and cadre-training plans, arranged hospital construction oversight, and formed a team for the university agenda. Their relative order does not establish that one decision caused another or that implementation improved; it does show several formal steps associated with consolidation.

Consolidation also explains continuity and change together. Continuity appears in Muhammadiyah's identity as a dakwah and tajdid movement, its collective and collegial system, and its educational and social-service orientation. Change appears in how older mechanisms were activated to meet new needs. Ayat Dimyati's period need not be exaggerated into a "revolutionary chapter" to have historical meaning. Its meaning lies precisely in adapting organizational capacity without breaking institutional traditions.

This interpretation is consistent with research on regional Muhammadiyah leadership that emphasizes cadre training, management, or service, but adds a historical dimension. Whereas management studies tend to assess effectiveness at a particular moment, the historical approach traces the origin of an agenda, the sequence of decisions, the actors involved, and effects across periods. Consolidation is thus not merely a managerial category, but a historical process linking past decisions with possibilities for future action.

Universitas Muhammadiyah Bandung and a Correction to the Single-Founder Narrative

The findings on Universitas Muhammadiyah Bandung provide the strongest test of figure-centered historiography. The 1999 Tanwir document shows that the university idea was recorded before Ayat Dimyati became chair. The 2011 Study Team decree shows that during his term the idea acquired an implementation mechanism. The 2016 permit shows that legal authorization came only after his term. These three dates form a sequence that cannot be reduced to "founded by" one person.

Ayat Dimyati is better understood as connecting the conceptual and implementation phases. "Pioneer" can still be used to refer to his role in activating the agenda, forming the team, consolidating support, and starting the operational process. It becomes inaccurate, however, if taken to mean originator of the idea or sole founder. This distinction does not diminish his contribution, but places it more firmly within the evidence.

The 1999–2016 process also shows the importance of continuity in leadership. The Tanwir report recorded a university plan; the PWM under Ayat Dimyati formed a

study team; authorization was obtained under subsequent leadership; and later terms consolidated the institution by integrating colleges. Such institutional history consists of accumulated decisions. Leadership changes need not interrupt programs; in an organization with a strong institutional culture, they can carry agendas forward at different levels of readiness.

In Lloyd's terms, the university can be read as a struct*ural residue: an i*nstitutional consequence of action that continues to shape actors' choices after the original action and term have ended. Creating the Study Team was not the same as founding the university, but it established a formal structure for study. The available record does not trace which documents, findings, or practices were transferred to later teams. The 2016 permit and 2020–2021 integrations document later stages of the university's institutional history.[25]

A reading *of structural res*idue also guards against excessive causal claims. Not every development at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bandung after 2016 can be attributed to Ayat Dimyati. Each subsequent decision involved new actors, regulations, and conditions. What the sources allow us to say is that 2010–2015 included a formal study step in a process that continued after the term. His contribution was mediating within a collective process, not monopolistic.

Thought as Institutional Ethics

Tauhid *Ilmu gains* historical relevance when read alongside the higher-education agenda. In Ayat Dimyati's thought, a university is not merely an additional building and set of programs, but a space for integrating knowledge, guidance, professionalism, and cadre formation. Epistemological vision and institutional choice align here. The study does not, however, have sufficient evidence to state that Universitas Muhammadiyah Bandung's initial curriculum was directly designed around the entire con*cept of Ta*uhid Ilmu. Such claims require supporting evidence—in the form of curriculum documents, meeting minutes, or academic policies—that has not been adequately presented in the research data.

This evidentiary limit clarifies the article's contribution. The relationship between thought and institution is established at the level of orientation, the language of values, and direction of action, not by assuming every institutional product directly applied one person's ideas. Ayat Dimyati held that knowledge should serve the common good; Muhammadiyah developed educational enterprises for service and cadre training; his leadership activated the university agenda. This is a strong historical relationship, but distinct from a claim about specific curricular influence.

Hospital fiqh offers a similar example. Discussion of easier worship for patients and the ethics of medical personnel accords with organizational concern for strengthening Muhammadiyah Bandung Hospital. The decrees on the construction committee and supervisory board, however, establish governance more directly than implementation of hospital fiqh. The article therefore treats the idea as an institutional

[25] Lloyd, *The Structures of Hist*ory, 64–67.

ethic that provides a horizon of meaning, while the technical form of each policy must be established from its own documents.

Simplicity also serves as an institutional ethic when personal practice builds trust, reduces distance, and strengthens the legitimacy of deliberation. A leader who limits use of facilities, listens to criticism, and speaks with young cadres can coordinate more readily without domination. Moral standing, however, does not replace systems. The strength of Ayat Dimyati's case lies in the encounter between personal example and structure: personal trust was used to move collective mechanisms, not bypass them.

Place in Historiography and Source Limitations

Compared with research on qoul bil hal *dakwah, thi*s article broadens the focus from personal social practice to relationships among ideas, organization, and institutional change. Compared with studies of Yogyakarta PWM management or other regional leadership, it adds an archival chronology and the question of continuity across terms. This positioning allows Ayat Dimyati to be read at once as a Muslim intellectual, Muhammadiyah cadre, collective chair, and institutional agent, without merging those roles into a myth of a solitary figure.

The main historiographical contribution is a shift in the unit of analysis. The figure remains important, but is not the only center of explanation. The unit expands to relationships among the figure, deliberative forums, decrees, teams, charitable enterprises, regulations, and participants' memories. This shift better fits Muhammadiyah's institutional character. It also permits more precise attribution: a report at the 1999 Tanwir recorded the agenda; the 2011 PWM formed the Study Team; the government granted a permit in 2016; and decisions in 2020–2021 integrated institutions.

The study has source limitations. First, much oral testimony comes from family and internal officers with emotional or organizational ties to Ayat Dimyati. Second, interviews were conducted years after 2010–2015 and thus face selective memory. Third, There are inconsistencies in several pieces of information, including bibliographic details, interview dates, informants' job titles, and the reference numbers of official decrees (SK). Specifically, the numbering of the decrees for the university study teams differs between the archival inventory and the narrative description, necessitating a re-verification against the original documents. Fourth, the referenced decrees tend to document formal decisions rather than the dynamics of debate, failures, implementation on the ground, or various forms of resistance; the full original archival set was not independently collated for this article. The consolidation narrative should therefore be read as a reconstruction from available evidence, not a complete account of every internal dynamic.

These limitations are addressed through cross-criticism, tracing online catalogs and archives, documenting verification, and limiting claims. Testimonies regarding leadership style are compared against patterns found in official decrees; the chronology of the higher education institution is juxtaposed with *Tanwir* (deliberative assembly) reports—as documented in research data, transcripts of the Study Team's decrees, government rulings, and the official profile of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bandung—while the subject's ideas are examined through written works and lectures

that feature identified sources and specific URLs. This approach does not eliminate bias, but makes each argument's basis clearer and prevents speculative filling of gaps.

Conclusion

K.H. Ayat Dimyati's thought was formed through Garut's diverse religious environment, Islamic education, Qur'an and hadith studies, library work, and Muhammadiyah cadre training. From this formation developed a conceptual relationship among tawhid, divine guidance, knowledge, and action. Tawhid criticizes absolutization; guidance gives reason moral direction; Tauhid Ilmu rejects the divide be*tween reli*gion and science; and education, social fiqh, and nationhood provide arenas for putting these ideas into practice.

In the West Java PWM in 2010–2015, Ayat Dimyati worked within its collective and collegial structure, not above it. His work was marked by institutional consolidation: reorganization of regional leadership and charitable enterprises, appointments described by an informant as competence-based, formal hospital construction oversight, decisions concerning educational and cadre-training institutions, and establishment of the Study Team for Universitas Muhammadiyah Bandung. The documented decisions concern existing structures; the evidence is insufficient to measure an increase in their operational capacity.

The most important finding concerns Universitas Muhammadiyah Bandung. A university plan was recorded in a report presented at the 1999 Tanwir, so Ayat Dimyati should not be presented as the sole originator. His contribution was forming a Study Team in 2011 within a collective process that ultimately led to authorization in 2016; the surviving evidence does not establish a direct causal chain from the team's work to the permit. The study's novelty lies in reading Ayat Dimyati as an institutional agent connecting ideas and structures, rather than a lone organizational hero.

Historiographically, this study shows that a regional leader's significance can lie in initiating formal steps whose possible effects extend beyond a leadership term. Ayat Dimyati's legacy includes Tauhid Ilmu, an ethic of e*ntrusted r*esponsibility and simplicity, and a study structure associated with a higher-education agenda that continued across terms. This contribution enriches the history of Muhammadiyah in West Java by placing actors, organization, policy continuity, and institutional consequences within one proportionate explanation.

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