

H.Yusuf Haris' Leadership Strategy in Building Muhammadiyah Sintang (1963-1987)

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji peran strategis H. Yusuf Haris dalam pengembangan Muhammadiyah di Sintang periode 1963-1987. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode sejarah dengan pendekatan biografi-sosiologi melalui tahapan heuristik, verifikasi, interpretasi, dan historiografi. Studi ini mengungkap bahwa H. Yusuf Haris berperan sebagai penggerak utama dalam membangun fondasi organisasi Muhammadiyah Sintang melalui konsolidasi kelembagaan, pendirian sekolah inklusif, pengembangan amal usaha, dan penerapan strategi dakwah yang adaptif dengan kondisi masyarakat multikultural. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keberhasilan Muhammadiyah di Sintang tidak semata bergantung pada dukungan struktural organisasi pusat, melainkan lebih pada kemampuan kepemimpinan lokal dalam membaca dinamika sosial-politik dan merumuskan strategi adaptif. Kontribusi penelitian ini terletak pada pengayaan historiografi lokal dan pemahaman tentang dinamika gerakan Islam modern di daerah pedalaman Kalimantan Barat.

Kata kunci: H. Yusuf Haris, muhammadiyah sintang, sejarah lokal kalimantan barat.

Abstract

This study examines the strategic role of H. Yusuf Haris in the development of Muhammadiyah in Sintang during the period 1963-1987. This study uses a historical method with a biographical-sociological approach through the stages of heuristics, verification, interpretation, and historiography. This study reveals that H. Yusuf Haris played a key role in building the foundation of the Muhammadiyah Sintang organization through institutional consolidation, establishing inclusive schools, and developing Muhammadiyah charitable enterprises, and the implementation of adaptive da'wah strategies in line with the conditions of a multicultural society. The findings show that Muhammadiyah's success in Sintang did not solely depend on the structural support of the central organization, but rather on the ability of local leaders to read socio-political dynamics and formulate adaptive strategies. The contribution of this study lies in enriching local historiography and understanding the dynamics of the modern Islamic movement in the interior of West Kalimantan.

Keywords: H. Yusuf Haris, muhammadiyah sintang, local history of west kalimantan.

INTRODUCTION

Studies on local history and the roles of regional figures in religious and social development in Indonesia are very crucial to enrich our understanding of the contribution of local communities to the national history (Arrasuly, 2024; Setiawan, W., & Kurniasih, 2025)

Muhammadiyah, as one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia,

has played a central role in education, da'wah, and social community since its establishment in 1912 (Alfazri, M., & Anshori, 2024; Khoirunni'mah Al Mufarriju, 2024; Qodir, Z., Jubba, H., Hidayati, M., Abdullah, I., & Long, 2020) . However, the dynamics of Muhammadiyah's growth in remote areas, such as Sintang, West Kalimantan, have rarely received adequate academic attention. One of the

central figures in the development of Muhammadiyah in Sintang was H. Yusuf Haris, who served as Chairman of the Muhammadiyah Regional Executive Board (PDM) in Sintang from 1963 to 1987. During his leadership, he established various Muhammadiyah charitable organizations (AUM) in the field of education, developed *da'wah*, and strengthened the role of religious social activities in the Sintang community.

Sintang is an ethnically and culturally diverse region in West Kalimantan, which presents its own challenges for the development of religious movements such as Muhammadiyah. In an interview with Mr. Suratman at Muhammadiyah High School in Sintang, he explained that the social and religious life of Muslims in Sintang coexists with the Christian community, particularly Catholics, who had already established various educational and social institutions earlier. Meanwhile, the religious practices of Muslims at that time were still strongly influenced by traditional religious customs and had not yet been fully touched by modern Islamic thought characterized by rationality.

Under these conditions, modern Islamic movements such as Muhammadiyah became relevant and urgent. The spread of Muhammadiyah's in West Kalimantan, including Sintang, did not occur simultaneously from the center, but rather through individual *da'wah*

(proselytizing) by migrants and scholars from Java and Sumatra, as well as the gradual formation of organizations. Although Muhammadiyah had entered West Kalimantan since 1925, it was only officially recognized by the center in 1939 (Hamid, 2023). This shows that Muhammadiyah's expansion into remote areas such as Sintang took place slowly and required time and strategies that were adapted to local social conditions.

Despite his significant contributions to the Sintang community, the name and work of H. Yusuf Haris are not well known, especially at the national level. Many local figures like H. Yusuf Haris have had a major influence in developing communities in the region, whether through education, religion, or social services, but their roles have not been well documented due to various challenges, such as the scarcity of written sources, the advanced age of informants, resulting in weakened memories of the research subject, and so on.

Previous studies on Muhammadiyah in West Kalimantan generally only highlight the brief biographies of key figures and their roles in general (Lasa, 2014; Mukhlisin, 2023). For example, the article "History of 6 Muhammadiyah Figures in West Kalimantan" (Mukhlisin, 2023) reviews the strategic contributions of H. Yusuf Haris in the struggle for independence and the establishment of educational institutions, but does not

provide an in-depth analysis of leadership strategies and their impact on the development of local Muhammadiyah. Similarly, Zulkifli Abdullah's (2014) work discusses the characteristics of West Kalimantan's ulama, emphasizing charismatic authority, but its main focus is not on Muhammadiyah in Sintang. Other works such as "100 Inspiring Muhammadiyah Figures" (Lasa, 2014) and a biographical study of local figures (Gunawan, 2022) only contain brief profiles of H. Yusuf Haris without systematically analyzing his work and influence in developing Muhammadiyah in Sintang. Research on Sultan Hamid II (Agustian & Rina, 2023) and other local figures focuses more on political and symbolic contributions at the national and regional levels, rather than on the socio-religious and educational aspects of modernist Islamic organizations in Sintang.

This creates a gap in local historical writing, which actually plays an important role in national history. National history is not only shaped by prominent figures at the center of power but also by local leaders who face unique challenges in their regions. National history is a collection of local histories, and its historical value has a national impact (Jumardi, 2020). This research is important to revisit the social, religious, and community roles of H. Yusuf Haris during his tenure as Chairman of the

Muhammadiyah Regional Executive Board in Sintang from 1963 to 1987.

H. Yusuf Haris is an interesting figure to study because of his significant contribution to the development of Muhammadiyah in Sintang. During his leadership, he successfully established various Muhammadiyah charitable organizations that played an important role in strengthening the organization and empowering the local community. However, to date, academic studies on his role remain very limited. Therefore, this research aims to fill the historical void, particularly in the context of the history of Muhammadiyah Sintang. In addition, the availability and ease of access to sources on H. Yusuf Haris are supporting factors that enable this research to be conducted in a thorough and comprehensive manner.

METHODS

This research is a qualitative research with *field research*. Data were collected through interviews and observations. The method used in this research is the historical research method. The research process will go through four main steps, namely: source collection (heuristics), source criticism (verification), fact analysis (interpretation), and historical writing (historiography) (Abdurrahman, 2019; Herlina, 2020; Sulisty, 2023).

First, heuristics (source collection) in historical research is an effort to collect

the sources needed for the database in the research. Source collection is the first step that must be taken by researchers. In historical research, there are two types of data sources, namely primary and secondary sources. According to their material, sources are divided into two types, namely written and unwritten (Abdurrahman, 2019; Herlina, 2020; Sulisty, 2023). At this stage, the researcher collected primary sources related to the biography of H. Yusuf Haris. The sources were obtained from the archives of the Muhammadiyah Regional Executive Board in Sintang, the Sintang Regional Library and Archives, and the archives of the family of H. Yusuf Haris. Secondary sources included interviews with family members, students, and related parties, as well as books, articles, journals, and previous research. Data was obtained from the Yogyakarta City Library, West Kalimantan Provincial Library and Archives Service, the Sintang Regency Library and Archives, and various *online* sites to search for journal articles.

Second, verification (source criticism), a step taken after collecting data, namely criticizing the authenticity and credibility of the sources obtained. Source criticism is broadly carried out in two stages, namely internal criticism and external criticism. Internal criticism is carried out as an effort to prove the authenticity of data or sources. External criticism is an effort to critique the

validity of a source (Abdurrahman, 2019; Herlina, 2020; Sulisty, 2023).

Third, interpretation (interpreting historical facts), the third step in conducting historical research is interpretation. Interpretation is defined as the step of interpreting the patterns depicted in historical events. Interpretation, or historical analysis, aims to conclude various facts derived from historical sources and relate them to the theories used by researchers. When conducting historical interpretation, researchers apply the methods of analysis (deconstruction) and synthesis (integration) (Abdurrahman, 2019; Herlina, 2020; Sulisty, 2023). At the interpretation stage, this research uses biographical and sociological approaches and applies social role theory.

Fourth, historiography (historical writing) is the final step in the historical research method. The most important thing in historical writing is the chronological presentation of an event (Abdurrahman, 2019; Herlina, 2020; Sulisty, 2023). Historiography is an effort to write, present, and report the results of research that has been conducted. Historiography in historical research is an indicator of whether the research was conducted according to procedure or not. The research will be presented in the form of an introduction, research results, and conclusion (Abdurrahman, 2019). This research will be organized in a coherent

and systematic manner. The discussion begins with a detailed description of the biography of H. Yusuf Haris as an important figure in Muhammadiyah Sintang, West Kalimantan. Next, the role of H. Yusuf Haris in establishing Muhammadiyah in Sintang will be discussed, and finally, the research will conclude with the role of H. Yusuf Haris in developing Muhammadiyah in Sintang from 1963 to 1987.

The year 1963 was chosen as the starting point because in that year, H. Yusuf Haris and his friends founded Muhammadiyah in Sintang Regency, West Kalimantan. This establishment marked the beginning of H. Yusuf Haris' activities in founding and developing the Muhammadiyah organization in Sintang. The year 1987 was chosen as the end point of the research because it marked the end of H. Yusuf Haris's term as Chairman of the Muhammadiyah Regional Executive Board in Sintang, signifying the end of H. Yusuf Haris's activities in Muhammadiyah. The scope of the study was Sintang, where H. Yusuf Haris contributed through the Muhammadiyah organization.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study successfully answered the main question about the role and influence of H. Yusuf Haris in establishing and developing Muhammadiyah in Sintang, West Kalimantan, during the period 1963-

1987. The main findings show that H. Yusuf Haris not only played a role as the founder and Chairman of the Muhammadiyah Regional Executive Board (PDM) in Sintang, but also as a key driver in the fields of education, Islamic preaching, and social community, which significantly shaped the character of the Sintang community and strengthened the existence of Muhammadiyah in the interior of West Kalimantan.

Biographical Sketch of H. Yusuf Haris

H. Yusuf Haris was born on 3 April 1922 in Nanga Dedai, Sintang, into a family of Minangkabau migrants who strongly practiced religious traditions. His religious education began at an early age under the guidance of his parents, H. Haris and Hj. Lariyah, until he successfully completed reading the Qur'an at a young age. In 1947, Yusuf Haris married Hj. Latifah Hani binti H. Bakri Dang sai, with whom he had eleven children. The family was known for being religious, disciplined, and active in fostering Islamic values in the Tanjung Puri neighborhood of Sintang. Their home served as a center for social and religious activities, accommodating relatives and students pursuing their education in Sintang.

Yusuf Haris' educational history reflects a combination of traditional and modern approaches. He began his education by studying the Qur'an at home, then continued his religious studies under

the guidance of Sayyid Ali Alhabsyi from 1937, focusing on fiqh, tafsir, hadith, and Arabic. His formal education at Madrasah Taman Pendidikan Sintang was interrupted by the Pacific War in 1941. He then continued his studies at Madrasah Thawalib Parabek Bukittinggi and Madrasah Thawalib Padang Panjang, completing his education in 1945. Yusuf Haris was also accepted at Kulliyatul Mu'allimin al-Islamiyyah (Islamic Normal School) in Padang, which was led by Prof. Mahmud Yunus, although his education was again interrupted due to the political situation after independence.

Yusuf Haris was known for his strictness in maintaining manners, honor, and discipline in worship within the family. His house was used as a prayer room for congregational prayers and recitation of the Qur'an, and he accustomed his children to become imams from an early age as a form of responsibility education. His parenting style integrated religious education with character building, making his family a model of a harmonious Muslim household. His tolerance towards local traditions, such as tahlilan, made him accepted by various groups and facilitated the development of a *da'wah* network in the pluralistic community of Sintang.

Yusuf Haris served as a courier carrying the text of the Indonesian Independence Proclamation to West Kalimantan in 1945-1946. He was assigned

this task by the Resident of the Republic of Indonesia in Padang, Muhammad Syafi'i, and Colonel Ismail Lengah. Traveling a risky route through Padang, Bukittinggi, Lubuk Linggau, Palembang, Bangka Island, Ketapang, Pontianak, to Sintang, he successfully smuggled the important independence documents. The Proclamation brochures he carried inspired the people's resistance movement, including the Red and White Movement in Nanga Pinoh, which successfully took control of the Dutch military headquarters on November 10, 1946 (Aspar, 1996). For his services, he was recognized as a Veteran of the Republic of Indonesia through Decree No. 003/KPTS/1962 (Gunawan, 2022).

Yusuf Haris' formal career in Muhammadiyah Sintang began in 1963, after previously being active in Masyumi. As Chairman of the Muhammadiyah Regional Executive Board until 1987, he pioneered the establishment of various Muhammadiyah charitable enterprises, including Muhammadiyah junior high and high schools in Sintang and educational institutions in Nanga Pinoh. The success of these schools in attracting students from various religious backgrounds proved the inclusiveness of the Muhammadiyah movement under his leadership. His legacy lives on through his house, which was donated to become the Aisyiyah Orphanage, and the educational institutions he founded, affirming the

integration of Islamic values, nationalism, and tolerance in his struggle. After retiring from his position at the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Yusuf Haris continued his personal *da'wah* activities. He used his private boat to reach remote areas such as Melawi, Nanga Dedai, Nanga Pinoh, and others. Thus, H. Yusuf Haris is known as a pioneer of *da'wah* and modern Islamic education in the interior of West Kalimantan.

Role in the Establishment and Development of Muhammadiyah Sintang

The Sintang community consists of three main ethnic groups Malay, Dayak, and Chinese with different settlement patterns. The Malay ethnic group generally lives at the mouth of the river (Purba, 2020), the Dayak in the interior, and the Chinese in trade centers such as Sungai Durian (Murtadlo, 2013). Economically, society was divided into three classes: the upper class as entrepreneurs and traders, the middle class as employees, and the lower middle class working in the agricultural sector (Bukit, 2000). In religious life, there was competitive dynamics between Islam and Christianity, particularly in the fields of proselytizing and education. Christians were the first to establish educational and social institutions, while Muslims sought to balance this through Islamic studies and education. The religious patterns of the community at that time were still

traditional and taqlid in nature, meaning that religious teachings were passed down from generation to generation without critical study.

The entry of Muhammadiyah into West Kalimantan was part of its national spread since the early 20th century. This movement began through individual preaching and was strengthened by the formation of an official organization. Muhammadiyah first appeared in West Kalimantan in 1925, then developed rapidly after the arrival of preachers such as Ustaz Khatib Syatibi from Yogyakarta in 1932. Through its preaching, the Muhammadiyah network began to form on the coast of West Kalimantan, such as in Pontianak, Singkawang, and Sambas. Administratively, Muhammadiyah's official presence was recognized in 1939 with the formation of six initial branches of the West Kalimantan Islamic Preachers Association (Hamid, 2023). From the coastal areas, Muhammadiyah's influence spread to the interior, including Sintang, through teachers and traders. In Sintang, the organization was established in 1963 on the initiative of local figure H. Yusuf Haris and his colleagues, long before its official recognition in 1979.

The establishment of Muhammadiyah in Sintang reflects a bottom-up pattern, where the movement arose from the awareness and needs of the local community. Figures such as H. Yusuf Haris played a major role in driving

da'wah, education, and religious social development without relying on instructions from the center. Despite its modest development, Muhammadiyah in Sintang has shown perseverance in nurturing the community and strengthening modern Islamic values. Limited resources did not hinder the continuity of this movement, which emphasized quality development and long-term social change. With consistency and the role of local figures, Muhammadiyah grew into an important socio-religious force in Sintang and helped shape the religious face of the people of West Kalimantan.

Muhammadiyah's presence in Sintang Regency, West Kalimantan, began in 1963 and cannot be separated from the central role of H. Yusuf Haris. Together with several local figures such as Sidi Khadir, M. Idris Oetori, H. Bakri Oetori, and H. Bakri Dangsai, he became the early pioneer of the formation of this modernist Islamic movement in the interior of Kalimantan. The presence of Muhammadiyah during this period brought a spirit of Islamic renewal that was rational and purifying in nature. In the socio-religious context of Sintang society, which at that time was still steeped in syncretic traditions, the presence of Muhammadiyah became an instrument of to correct religious practices that were considered deviant from the purity of Islamic teachings. Through education,

religious lectures, and tabligh (preaching), H. Yusuf Haris sought to instill progressive Islamic values in a pluralistic society, while also strengthening the identity of Muslims in this border region.

However, the development of Muhammadiyah in Sintang at the beginning of its emergence did not run smoothly. After its establishment in 1963, the organization's activities experienced a long period of inactivity, especially between 1965 and 1970. This inactivity was closely related to the national political situation after the dissolution of the Masyumi Party (Ishak, 2009), which had a widespread impact on various Islamic organizations, including Muhammadiyah. At that time, religious activities affiliated with Masyumi were often viewed with suspicion by the government, so many Islamic leaders chose to be cautious and limit their formal organizational activities (Muhammadiyah, 2023). In this situation, H. Yusuf Haris continued to strive to maintain the continuity of *da'wah* through non-structural religious activities, such as household recitations, teaching the Qur'an, and mentoring mosque youth. These efforts demonstrate his determination and intelligence in adapting his *da'wah* strategy to the sensitive political conditions without sacrificing the spirit of Islamic struggle.

The Development of Muhammadiyah Education: Inclusive, Modern, and Cadre Development

In response to the limitations of Muhammadiyah's formal activities, in 1970 H. Yusuf Haris and his colleagues established the Islamic Broadcasting Foundation (YBPI) in Sintang. This institution served as an alternative forum for Islamic preaching and education, with the aim of maintaining the spirit of community development in an environment that was safer from political pressure. Through YBPI, religious activities such as recitation of the Quran, preaching, and Islamic social activities could continue to be carried out systematically. YBPI became an important embryo for the rebirth of the Muhammadiyah movement in Sintang in the following decade. In its institutional structure, YBPI also served as a space for the regeneration of young Muslims in Sintang, many of whom would later play important roles in the management of Muhammadiyah and other autonomous organizations, such as Aisyiyah and Pemuda Muhammadiyah.

YBPI played a vital role in maintaining the existence and continuity of modernist preaching in Sintang. For more than a decade, this institution became the center of religious activities for the community, including the management of non-formal Islamic education and training for preachers.

Through an adaptive approach, YBPI was able to instill a rational and contextual understanding of religion without causing social resistance. It was only in 1982, after the national political situation was considered stable, that YBPI was dissolved and all its assets and activities were transferred to more formal Islamic institutions, such as the An-Nur Sintang Grand Mosque and the Muhammadiyah Sintang Foundation. This transformation was an important moment that marked the revitalization of Muhammadiyah as a socio-religious organization that plays a direct role in education and *da'wah*.

The formal revival of Muhammadiyah Sintang as an organization was marked by the first Regional Conference (Musda) held on June 1-3, 1979. This forum was attended by various branch and chapter representatives and became an arena for organizational structure consolidation after a long period of vacuum. During the Musda, H. Yusuf Haris was unanimously elected as Chairman of the Muhammadiyah Regional Executive Board (PDM) of Sintang Regency. His leadership marked a new chapter in the Muhammadiyah movement for Islamic renewal in the region. One of the strategic decisions resulting from this Regional Conference was the establishment of a formal educational institution, namely SMA Muhammadiyah Sintang, which later became a symbol of Muhammadiyah's revival in the region. This decision showed

that the movement's focus was not only on verbal *da'wah*, but also on the development of a modern, structured Islamic education system that was open to the wider community.

The establishment of SMA Muhammadiyah Sintang in 1979, which complemented the existence of SMP Muhammadiyah (established in 1977), became an important milestone in the history of Islamic education in the region. This school not only served as an educational facility for Muslims, but also as a center for spreading Muhammadiyah values among students. Interestingly, this educational institution was also open to non-Muslim students, demonstrating Muhammadiyah's inclusive and humanistic approach to preaching. Through an education system that emphasizes discipline, morality, and scholarship, Muhammadiyah Sintang, under the leadership of Yusuf Haris, succeeded in forming a strong social base. Muhammadiyah schools became centers for the formation of Muslim cadres and intellectuals who played a role in various fields of Sintang society in the following decades.

Contextual *Da'wah* in a Multicultural Society

In addition to education, missionary activities are an important pillar that H. Yusuf Haris continues to strengthen. He emphasizes that Muhammadiyah's

missionary work must be based on knowledge, grounded in the Qur'an and Sunnah, and delivered with a rational and wise approach. To that end, he has developed itinerant missionary activities to various remote areas of West Kalimantan, including areas that are difficult to reach. In a pluralistic and sometimes competitive social context, particularly with the growth of Christian missionary activities, Muhammadiyah's *da'wah* approach is dialogical and persuasive. While Christians use a socio-material approach such as providing educational and health assistance, Muhammadiyah presents a model of *da'wah* based on values, exemplary behavior, and strengthening the community's morals. It is this polite yet firm approach that has made Muhammadiyah widely accepted by various segments of society in Sintang (Loes, 2024).

Under the leadership of H. Yusuf Haris, Muhammadiyah succeeded in establishing the foundations of progressive Islam in Sintang Regency. This movement not only succeeded in forming a rational and pure religious consciousness but also gave birth to educational and social institutions that continue to this day. Yusuf Haris' role in the establishment and development of Muhammadiyah in Sintang shows that Islamic preaching in the border region of West Kalimantan cannot be separated from the contributions of local figures who

think visionarily, work sincerely, and are oriented towards the progress of the people. Thus, the journey of Muhammadiyah in Sintang reflects the dynamics of modern Islam, which is able to adapt to the local social, political, and cultural context without losing its Islamic identity.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that H. Yusuf Haris played a strategic role in building the foundations of Muhammadiyah in Sintang during the period 1963-1987 through an adaptive and visionary leadership approach. His success in establishing inclusive educational institutions, developing contextual *da'wah* strategies, and maintaining the organization's sustainability amid national political challenges proves his capacity as a local figure capable of transforming modern Islamic values in the context of Sintang's multicultural society. The findings of this research reinforce the thesis that the development of Muhammadiyah in the regions does not solely depend on organizational structural factors, but rather on the ability of local leaders to read local social dynamics.

The contribution of this research lies in enriching local historiography through an intellectual biography approach that integrates the analysis of individual roles with socio-religious transformation. This research has limitations in terms of the

availability of complete organizational archives, especially internal documents of Muhammadiyah Sintang in its early period. For further research, it is recommended to explore more deeply the intellectual network of H. Yusuf Haris with Islamic centers of learning in West Sumatra, as well as comparative studies with the development of Muhammadiyah in other rural areas.

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