Role of *Da'wah* in Responding to Political Dynamics in Indonesia

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Abstract

This study explores the role of *da'wah* in responding to the dynamic political landscape in Indonesia. As a form of religious communication deeply rooted in cultural values, *da'wah* has the potential to shape political behavior, raise awareness, and foster inclusive participation, particularly among marginalized groups such as women. The findings indicate that *da'wah* serves not only as a medium for conveying moral and ethical principles but also as an instrument for political education and engagement. By utilizing both traditional and digital media, *da'wah* adapts to contemporary challenges and facilitates dialogue across political divides. However, the study also identifies several challenges, including the risks of misinformation, misinterpretation, and the politicization of religious messages. These issues highlight the need for *da'wah* practitioners to develop effective communication strategies that are contextually relevant and grounded in both religious knowledge and socio-political understanding. Innovative approaches such as philanthropic *da'wah*, participatory platforms, and interdisciplinary engagement are emphasized as key to enhancing the impact of *da'wah* in political discourse. Using a qualitative literature review method this study provides a comprehensive analysis of how *da'wah* can contribute to building political awareness and democratic values in Indonesia. The study concludes that with the right strategies and ethical foundations, *da'wah* can become a powerful tool for civic transformation and social cohesion.

Keywords: *Da'wah*, Political Participation, Religious Communication, Political Awareness, Civic Engagement

Introduction

In the context of Indonesia's increasingly complex political dynamics, the role of *da'wah* has become highly significant in fostering public understanding and awareness of social and political issues. *Da'wah*, as a deeply rooted form of communication intertwined with cultural values, offers a unique approach to addressing political challenges within society.

Through a value-based religious framework, *da'wah* can influence both individual and group perceptions of the political phenomena unfolding in Indonesia.

Politics in Indonesia is often shaped by various factors, including dissatisfaction with governance, social conflicts, and competing group interests. In this regard, *da'wah* functions as a conciliatory tool that can align public perceptions by emphasizing moral and ethical messages relevant to political discourse (Maros & Rosli, 2017). For example, through sermons and religious lectures delivered by *ustadz*, the public is provided with deeper insight into the importance of selecting leaders with integrity and maintaining unity amid diversity.(Xia et al., 2020).

Moreover, *da'wah* can serve as a platform for dialogue among groups with differing political views. Research indicates that communication grounded in politeness and mutual respect can reduce conflict and enhance consensus across various segments of society. (Mahmud, 2019). In this sense, *da'wah* is not merely about delivering religious teachings, but also about adapting those teachings to respond to contemporary political and social challenges. (Meiratnasari et al., 2020).

Today, preachers can utilize a range of media both traditional and digital to disseminate *da'wah* messages that address political issues. With the advancement of technology, such approaches have become more efficient and capable of reaching wider audiences. (Ambarwati & Damayanti, 2024). Studies in this field reveal that consistent use of polite and strategic language in message delivery significantly enhances public trust and comprehension.(Barry et al., 2022).

Nevertheless, challenges remain in applying *da'wah* as a strategy to navigate political dynamics. Divergent interpretations of Islamic teachings and ineffective communication methods may lead to misinterpretations and potential conflicts between groups. (Djuyandi, 2017). Therefore, it is essential to conduct in-depth studies on effective communication strategies in *da'wah* within the political context of Indonesia, ensuring that its objectives are met while simultaneously supporting political and social stability.

Given this background, this study aims to analyze the role of *da'wah* in addressing Indonesia's political dynamics, with a particular focus on the communication approaches employed by preachers in conveying critical political messages. Employing a qualitative methodology and case study approach, this research seeks to provide a clearer picture of how *da'wah* contributes to shaping public opinion and responding to political issues within society.

Literature Review

Da'wah is not merely an activity for disseminating religious teachings; it also has a significant impact on the political and social dynamics within society. It serves as an effective communication tool for conveying moral and ethical values that can shape political behavior In this context, Munthe argues that *da'wah* utilizes various media, including mass media such as radio, to expand its reach in the era of globalization. This strategy enables *da'wah* to access a broader audience and influence public political awareness.(Munthe, 2019).

Furthermore, Putrawan highlights that in the historical development of *da'wah* thought, the Prophets and Messengers employed diverse methodologies tailored to the sociopolitical challenges of their respective eras. This illustrates that *da'wah* is adaptive to evolving dynamics, including those in the modern era, where political and social challenges are continuously shifting. (Putrawan, 2021). Additionally, Tajiri emphasizes the importance of ethics in *da'wah*, asserting that preachers must possess a deep understanding of their roles and responsibilities, as well as the ability to communicate effectively. (Tajiri, 2010). High-quality *da'wah* communication is expected to foster public trust and promote better understanding of current political issues.

In the educational context, Sudiansyah explains how *da'wah* communication influences the morality and character of students in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). His research reveals a positive correlation between effective *da'wah* communication and character development, suggesting the potential of *da'wah* to shape a politically active and ethically grounded younger generation. (Sudiansyah, 2017). On a similar note, Istikhomah et al. underscore the importance of developing *da'wah* communication methods to cultivate character in line with Pancasila values an increasingly relevant approach in Indonesia's political landscape (Istikhomah et al., 2024). Pancaila's concept of the nation as an individual characteristic in global interactions has garnered significant scholarly attention. Individual characteristics are traits that are inherent to an individual, distinguishing them from others in a group (Siregar *et al.*, 2023).

With the advent of digital technology, such as social media, *da'wah* now faces both new challenges and opportunities. Muyassaroh et al. examine how preachers can leverage digital platforms to bridge religious messages and sociopolitical realities, reinforcing the relevance of *da'wah* in addressing contemporary issues. (Muyassaroh et al., 2024). Suharto argues that political communication through *da'wah* is not merely about knowledge transmission; it also aims to influence decision-makers, fostering a synergy between religion and political authority. (Suharto, 2017). In this regard, a profound understanding of *da'wah* and effective communication strategies can promote greater public engagement in political processes, enhancing political participation and awareness.

Finally, the challenges in *da'wah* communication cannot be overlooked. Iskandar points out that while *da'wah* holds the potential to educate and raise political awareness, risks of miscommunication and misunderstanding persist due to differing interpretations of Islamic teachings, which may exacerbate social tensions. Therefore, this study is essential to explore the extent to which *da'wah* can contribute to Indonesia's political dynamics and how effective communication strategies in *da'wah* can be applied to address contemporary challenges.

Research Method

This study employs a literature review method (library research) as the primary approach to analyze the role of *da'wah* in addressing political dynamics in Indonesia. The literature review method was chosen as it enables the researcher to thoroughly examine a wide range of relevant scholarly sources, including books, academic journals, research articles, and

official documents related to *da'wah*, political communication, and sociopolitical dynamics in Indonesia. Data were collected through a systematic review of academically credible literature, both printed and digital, sourced from platforms such as Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and university library databases. The data were then analyzed using a descriptive-qualitative approach**,** aiming to identify thematic patterns, key concepts, and interrelated variables across the selected sources. Through this method, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive and contextual understanding of the contribution of *da'wah* in responding to the evolving political landscape within Indonesian society.

Result and Discussion

1. The Importance of *Da'wah* in Promoting Political Participation

One of the fundamental contributions of *da'wah* in the political sphere is its ability to stimulate public awareness and encourage active political participation, particularly among groups that have historically been marginalized. Among these groups, women often face structural and cultural barriers that limit their involvement in political processes. *Da'wah*, when conducted through inclusive messaging and mass media platforms, offers a means to empower women with the knowledge, moral grounding, and encouragement necessary to participate in political life. As Yoteni et al. in (Jima'ain, 2023) explain, religious discourse conveyed through various media channels has a persuasive capacity that not only fosters spiritual development but also instills a sense of civic responsibility. This dual function of *da'wah*—as a moral compass and a socio-political motivator becomes instrumental in bridging the gender gap in political engagement.

Moreover, *da'wah* serves as a culturally resonant communication tool that can contextualize political participation within religious frameworks familiar to the audience. In Muslim-majority societies like Indonesia, integrating Islamic values with civic duties allows political messages to be better received by the public. Preachers and religious leaders who employ *da'wah* techniques to promote the importance of voting, choosing ethical leaders, and engaging in democratic dialogue contribute to a political culture rooted in shared moral values. This approach not only strengthens the legitimacy of political institutions in the eyes of believers but also mitigates skepticism toward politics, which is often viewed as corrupt or divisive. By connecting political involvement with religious obligation, *da'wah* reframes civic engagement as a form of worship and responsibility before God, which may lead to more sincere and sustained participation from the public.

In addition, *da'wah* holds the potential to reshape political narratives by introducing ethical standards and moral accountability into political discourse (Solekhan, 2023). It encourages the public to question not only who holds power but also how that power is exercised. Through sermons, community discussions, and digital content, *da'wah* practitioners can emphasize principles such as justice (*al-'adl*), trustworthiness (*amanah*), and consultation (*shura*) as essential components of governance (Herrer, 2018). These teachings challenge followers to become not just passive observers but active stakeholders in the democratic process. As *da'wah* becomes more integrated with civic education and advocacy, it reinforces

the idea that political participation is not merely a right but also a collective moral imperative that upholds the integrity and future of society.

2. The Influence of *Da'wah* on Political Awareness

Beyond promoting participation, *da'wah* also plays a crucial role in shaping political awareness and consciousness. Many individuals, particularly in rural and religious communities, may lack access to formal civic education or feel alienated from the political process. *Da'wah* serves as an accessible and trusted medium through which political issues can be explained and contextualized within everyday life. By addressing topics such as justice, leadership, corruption, and public policy from a religious standpoint, *da'wah* creates an entry point for citizens to engage with politics from a value-driven perspective (Fenga & Wepener, 2018). This is particularly relevant in Indonesia, where religious authority often carries more weight than political figures, making religious communication a powerful platform for public education.

In the age of digital transformation, the influence of *da'wah* on political awareness has expanded dramatically. Social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have become central channels for contemporary preachers to deliver their messages. According to Husna in (Aziz et al., 2022), digital *da'wah* creates opportunities for real-time, interactive, and personalized communication, which enhances its impact on viewers' understanding of political issues. Online sermons and short video clips can go viral, reaching audiences far beyond the limits of physical gatherings. This digital presence not only modernizes the image of *da'wah* but also enables it to respond more dynamically to current events, policy debates, and social justice movements.

Furthermore, the language used in *da'wah* rooted in compassion, ethics, and community solidarity has a unique ability to inspire critical thinking and self-reflection. Rather than dictating political choices, *da'wah* invites listeners to assess the moral and ethical dimensions of their political environment. This reflective process cultivates informed citizens who are more likely to participate in elections, demand transparency, and reject divisive or manipulative political rhetoric. In this sense, *da'wah* becomes not only a source of religious guidance but also a vehicle for political enlightenment, empowering individuals to see their civic duties as part of their broader spiritual and social obligations.

3. Challenges in Political *Da'wah*

Despite its potential, the implementation of political *da'wah* faces significant challenges, especially in a diverse and rapidly changing society. One major obstacle is the risk of misinterpretation and the spread of misinformation. When religious messages are overly politicized or delivered without sufficient context, they can lead to confusion, polarization, or even radicalization. As noted by Nikmah in (Marlina & Ulya, 2024), the digital age has intensified this problem by amplifying voices that may not be adequately trained in theology or political communication. Misleading religious-political narratives can easily circulate on social media, manipulating public opinion and threatening social cohesion.

Another critical issue is the plurality of interpretations within Islamic teachings themselves. While diversity in interpretation is a hallmark of Islamic thought, it can also create friction when applied to political discourse (Keating & Melis, 2017). Competing religious views on governance, leadership, and justice may clash and lead to ideological conflicts among followers. Without a clear and balanced framework, *da'wah* messages may inadvertently contribute to fragmentation within the Muslim community. This situation becomes particularly sensitive in electoral periods, where certain preachers may be co-opted by political actors to endorse candidates, compromising the neutrality and credibility of religious institutions. (Patahuddin et al., 2024)

In addition, *da'wah* practitioners may lack formal training in political theory, media literacy, or conflict-sensitive communication, which are essential for navigating today's complex socio-political realities. Unlike secular educators or journalists, religious preachers are often not equipped with the analytical tools to critically assess policy, power dynamics, or democratic processes. As a result, their messages, while well-intentioned, may oversimplify political issues or fail to address the structural roots of injustice. This underlines the need for capacity-building programs that help *da'wah* actors become more informed and strategic in their communication, ensuring that their efforts contribute positively to democratic development and social harmony.

4. Innovation in *Da'wah* Strategies for Political Engagement

To respond effectively to the evolving political and social landscape, *da'wah* must adopt innovative strategies that go beyond traditional preaching. The integration of *da'wah* with social services, education, and advocacy has proven to be a powerful approach. A compelling example is the initiative undertaken by Muhammadiyah during the COVID-19 pandemic, as analyzed by Rahmat in (Alimardani & Elswah, 2020), Instead of merely urging compliance with public health measures, Muhammadiyah incorporated religious values into its communication about healthcare policies, vaccination campaigns, and solidarity with vulnerable groups. This form of philanthropic *da'wah* demonstrated how religious discourse can be mobilized to support public welfare while reinforcing trust in institutions and collective responsibility.

Another area of innovation is the use of participatory media to involve audiences in content creation and dialogue (Fadhil, 2024). Rather than positioning the preacher as the sole authority, many contemporary *da'wah* platforms invite community members to share their experiences, ask questions, and collaborate in problem-solving. Podcasts, webinars, online forums, and interactive apps have enabled a more horizontal form of *da'wah* that reflects democratic values and encourages critical discussion. These tools are especially effective for engaging younger audiences who are more accustomed to participatory digital culture and who seek relevance in religious messaging. (Yahya & Sahidin, 2022)

Finally, the success of innovative *da'wah* depends on its ability to maintain ethical integrity and adaptability. Preachers must balance religious authenticity with responsiveness to real-world problems, including political corruption, inequality, and climate change. This requires a willingness to engage with interdisciplinary knowledge from political science to

sociology and communication studies while staying grounded in Islamic principles. By cultivating this balance, *da'wah* can transform into a platform for civic transformation, empowering citizens to build a society rooted in justice, compassion, and mutual respect. Innovation, therefore, is not merely about tools or formats it is about reimagining the mission of *da'wah* to meet the demands of a democratic and pluralistic Indonesia.

Conclusion

In light of the increasingly complex political landscape in Indonesia, *da'wah* emerges as a vital mechanism for fostering political awareness, encouraging civic participation, and promoting ethical governance grounded in religious values. As demonstrated throughout this study, *da'wah* is not merely a tool for spiritual enlightenment but also serves as a culturally embedded form of political communication capable of reaching diverse segments of society. Its ability to mobilize communities particularly marginalized groups such as women through inclusive and moral narratives underscores its potential in strengthening democratic engagement.

Furthermore, the integration of *da'wah* into digital media platforms has expanded its reach and impact, making it a relevant and adaptive tool in modern political discourse. However, the rise of misinformation, interpretive plurality, and the politicization of religious messages presents significant challenges that require careful attention. To navigate these issues, *da'wah* practitioners must be equipped with both theological insight and socio-political literacy, ensuring that their messages are constructive, inclusive, and contextually grounded.

Ultimately, the strategic innovation of *da'wah* through philanthropic action, participatory communication, and interdisciplinary engagement holds promise for cultivating a more informed, ethical, and active citizenry. When aligned with the principles of justice, transparency, and unity, *da'wah* can contribute meaningfully to the development of a politically conscious society and to the broader goal of maintaining social harmony and democratic stability in Indonesia.

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