



DAKWAH AS A PROFESSION: THE IMPACT OF POPULARITY AND ITS CHALLENGES FOR PREACHERS

Asrul Harahap^{*1} 

*Correspondence:
asrulharahap@uinbukittinggi.ac.id

Authors Affiliation:
UIN Syech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi

Article History:
Submission: March 24, 2025
Revised : May 18, 2025
Accepted : June 21, 2025
Published: June 30, 2025

Keywords : Professional Da'i,
Dakwah Methods, Dakwah Media

Kata Kunci: *Da'i professional,
Metode Dakwah, Media dakwah.*

ABSTRACT

In recent years, dakwah (Islamic preaching) in Indonesia has undergone significant developments, evolving from merely spreading religious values to becoming a profession with social, cultural, economic, and political implications. With the rise of social media and technology, dakwah has gained widespread attention, giving preachers (da'i) considerable influence, both within the Muslim community and society at large. However, this popularity presents new challenges for da'i in maintaining their integrity and professionalism, especially when faced with material temptations and political exploitation of their influence. This study aims to explore how da'i can maintain their integrity and professionalism in the face of such challenges, and what strategies they employ to stay focused on their religious mission amidst the growing complexities of the world. This research employs a qualitative approach using document analysis and case studies of three prominent da'i figures: Ustadz Adi Hidayat, Ustadz Abdul Somad, and Gus Miftah. The findings indicate that da'i who are able to maintain their integrity and professionalism tend to have a stronger and deeper influence on their followers. They establish a stronger trust-based relationship with their audiences, which enhances the effectiveness of their preaching. Despite material temptations and involvement in politics, these da'i remain committed to preserving the essence of dakwah, staying true to religious principles without deviating from their original mission.

ABSTRAK

Dakwah di Indonesia telah mengalami perkembangan yang signifikan dalam beberapa tahun terakhir, tidak hanya sebagai sarana penyebaran nilai-nilai agama, tetapi juga sebagai profesi yang memiliki dampak sosial, budaya, ekonomi, dan politik. Dengan berkembangnya media sosial dan teknologi, dakwah semakin mendapat perhatian luas, di mana para da'i memiliki pengaruh besar, baik di kalangan umat Islam maupun masyarakat secara umum. Namun, popularitas ini membawa tantangan baru bagi da'i dalam mempertahankan integritas dan profesionalisme mereka, terutama ketika dihadapkan pada godaan materi dan politisasi dakwah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami bagaimana da'i dapat mempertahankan integritas dan profesionalisme dalam menghadapi godaan tersebut, serta strategi apa yang digunakan oleh da'i dalam menjaga fokus dakwah mereka di tengah tuntutan dunia yang semakin kompleks. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah pendekatan kualitatif dengan analisis dokumen dan studi kasus terhadap tiga tokoh da'i terkenal, yaitu Ustadz Adi Hidayat, Ustadz Abdul Somad, dan Gus Miftah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa da'i yang dapat menjaga integritas dan profesionalisme cenderung memiliki pengaruh yang lebih besar terhadap jamaah. Mereka mampu menciptakan hubungan kepercayaan yang kuat dan mendalam dengan audiens, yang mempengaruhi efektivitas dakwah mereka. Meski ada godaan materi dan keterlibatan politik, para da'i ini tetap berkomitmen



untuk menjaga esensi dakwah dan tidak melenceng dari prinsip-prinsip agama.

INTRODUCTION

Dakwah activities are essentially efforts to guide or encourage people towards the path of righteousness. As stated by Sheikh Ali Makhfudh in his book *Hidayatul Mursyidin*, "dakwah is encouraging people to do good deeds and follow religious guidance, calling them to goodness, and preventing them from doing evil deeds so that they may attain happiness in this world and the hereafter."¹ Dakwah is not merely giving lectures or delivering dakwah messages, but also includes a series of actions that encourage goodness and religious guidance.

The success of dakwah does not only depend on its objectives. The process and level of professionalism of a da'i also play a key role in shaping the success of dakwah. In the context of da'i professionalism, more than just the courage to speak in public or understand religious texts is required. A professional da'i must have good communication skills, a deep understanding of religion and society, an understanding of the needs and expectations of the congregation, and the ability to convey religious messages clearly and persuasively.²

A professional da'i does not only focus on religious texts, but also strives to make religious messages understandable to various levels of society. A da'i must also create a bridge of understanding between religious values and the realities of people's daily lives. Thus, the messages conveyed are not only theoretical, but also practical, relevant, and can inspire positive changes in people's daily lives.³

Becoming a professional preacher who captivates audiences is a rare achievement that requires high perseverance and dedication. As a result, people flock to invite these preachers to give various lectures. Faced with high public demand for compelling religious messages, the challenge is finding preachers who meet these criteria.⁴

Preachers who are able to meet high standards of professionalism and have appeal to audiences not only become magnets for the community, but also sources of inspiration and role models in understanding and practicing religious teachings properly.⁵ Thus, the existence of qualified preachers is very important in meeting the spiritual needs of the community and maintaining the preservation and development of religious values in everyday life.

With the difficulties and high demand from the community to find preachers with the appropriate criteria, this has become an opportunity for some preachers to earn a financial income and make preaching their profession.⁶ Making preaching a profession can also be listed in the occupation field on one's identity card. Dukcapil.kedirikab.go.id

¹ Sheikh Ali Mahfudh, *Hidayatul Mursyidin*, 7th edition (Cairo: Daar el-Mishr, 1975).

² Abdul Hamid Bashori, "The Communication Style of Da'i in Da'wah Activities," *El-Fatih: Journal of Da'wah and Islamic Education* 1, no. 1 (2022).

³ Bashori.

⁴ Asrul Harahap, "Map of Da'wah in Religious Activities (Interaction between Islam and Culture in West Sumatra)," *AL-QOLAM: Journal of Da'wah and Community Empowerment* 3, no. 2 (2019).

⁵ Mubasyaroh Mubasyaroh, "Persuasive Da'wah Strategies in Changing Community Behavior," *Ilmu Dakwah: Academic Journal for Homiletic Studies* 11, no. 2 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.15575/idalhs.v11i2.2398>.

⁶ Irzum Farihah and Ismanto Ismanto, "Dakwah Kiai Pesisiran: Dakwah Activities of Kiai in Lamongan Regency," *Ilmu Dakwah: Academic Journal for Homiletic Studies* 12, no. 1 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.15575/idalhs.v11i2.1907>.

lists 88 recognized occupations, with Ustadz/Mubaligh (preacher/preacher) ranked 45th. This indicates that being a preacher or da'i is now recognized as an official and respected occupation in the community's occupational structure. Thus, the profession of da'i is not only recognized socially and culturally, but also legally. This provides legitimacy for those who choose to make preaching their profession.⁷

Making da'wah a profession is not a step taken lightly. Someone who chooses this path must be prepared to face great challenges and responsibilities. They must develop the necessary qualifications and skills, as well as gain recognition from the community as someone who is competent in conveying religious messages.⁸ This requires seriousness and high dedication to continuously improve oneself and provide the best service to the congregation and the wider community. A deep understanding of religious knowledge, effective communication skills, and sensitivity to social conditions and community needs are the main foundations for carrying out da'wah as a profession. Thus, a da'i is not only a bearer of religious messages, but also a mentor, companion, and inspirer for the community in facing various life problems.⁹

Although making da'i a profession offers the potential for recognition and appreciation from the community, a da'i must also be able to maintain integrity and ethics in carrying out their duties.¹⁰ Exemplary behavior and daily life are important assets for a preacher in gaining trust and inspiring the community. Thus, making preaching a profession is not just about earning an income, but also a calling to make a positive contribution to the community and seek the pleasure of the Creator.¹¹

In the Indonesian context, the profession of da'i or religious preacher is increasingly gaining a respectable place and recognition from the wider community. This can be seen from the growing popularity of a number of preachers who have made da'wah their main profession. Several da'i in Indonesia have achieved success and fame through da'wah, such as Ustadz Abdul Somad, Ustadz Adi Hidayat, Gus Miftah, and others.¹²¹³ They are not only respected as bearers of religious teachings, but also recognized as community leaders who are able to provide positive influence and inspiration to millions of people.¹⁴

Their influential role is inseparable from their ability to convey religious messages in a way that is interesting, relevant, and easily understood by various groups. They do not only talk about religious texts, but also connect religious messages with current issues and everyday life. For example, Ustadz Abdul Somad is known for his firm yet humble style of delivery, while Ustadz Adi Hidayat often links his preaching with a scientific

⁷ Tanti Andayani Andayani, Wildan Yahya, and Nandang HMZ, "Strategies to Increase the Interest of Students at the Faculty of Da'wah, Bandung Islamic University, in the Da'i Profession," *Bandung Conference Series: Islamic Broadcast Communication* 2, no. 2 (2022): 96–100, <https://doi.org/10.29313/bcsibc.v2i2.3687>.

⁸ M Amin Sihabuddin, "Professional Ethics of Da'i According to the Qur'an," *Ghaidan: Journal of Islamic Counseling and Society* 1, no. 1 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.19109/ghaidan.v1i1.2031>.

⁹ Andayani, Yahya, and HMZ, "Strategies for Increasing the Interest of Students at the Faculty of Da'wah, Islamic University of Bandung, in the Da'i Profession."

¹⁰ Edi Amin, "Ethics of Da'wah: Contextualization of Professional Da'wah. Tajdid," *TAJID: Journal of Ushuluddin Science* 16, no. 1 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.30631/tjd.v16i1.52>.

¹¹ Asrul Harahap, "Strategies of Islamic Boarding Schools in Fostering Da'i Cadres in Padang Lawas Regency, North Sumatra," *Alhadharah: Journal of Dakwah Science* 21, no. 2 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.18592/alhadharah.v21i2.6832>.

¹² Achmad Fauzi, "The Rhetorical Style of Ustadz Abdul Somad's Da'wah," *World Development* 1, no. 1 (2018).

¹³ Ahmad Midani, "Analysis of the Speech Acts in Ustadz Adi Hidayat's Sermons on the Audio Dakwah YouTube Channel," *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* 6, no. 1 (2022).

¹⁴ Muslimin Ritonga and Dewi Sartina, "Gus Miftah's Da'wah Communication in the Kembang Market Localization in Yogyakarta," *Al-MUNZIR* 13, no. 2 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.31332/am.v13i2.2051>.

approach that appeals to intellectuals and the younger generation. On the other hand, Gus Miftah, with his unique approach of " " (religion is for everyone), is able to reach various segments of society, including communities that are often overlooked in the context of traditional preaching.¹⁵

The professionalism of these preachers in delivering their sermons is one of the reasons why this profession can generate adequate financial income. Their presence is eagerly awaited by the community, whether at religious events in mosques, religious seminars, or on television and social media. This creates significant economic opportunities for professional da'i in Indonesia, especially with the development of digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and podcasts, which allow da'wah to reach a wider audience without geographical limitations. ¹⁶¹⁷

However, with the increasing status of preaching as a profession and the popularity that comes with it, new challenges have emerged for preachers, especially in maintaining their intentions and integrity.¹⁸ Many politicians and rulers take advantage of the popularity of preachers to boost their own image and popularity for political interests and personal gain. In this phenomenon, a da'i is often asked to provide support for certain figures or parties, especially when they have significant influence or a loyal following.¹⁹ This certainly poses the risk of shifting the purpose of da'wah from the delivery of a pure religious message to a more pragmatic and political one. This dilemma can trigger negative perceptions from the public who expect da'i to remain neutral and focus on the essence of da'wah.²⁰

In addition, another equally important challenge is how da'i must maintain sensitivity and relevance to complex social and political issues.²¹ In the context of an increasingly diverse and easily polarized society, a da'i is required to be wise in responding to these issues so as not to cause division. To that end, a deep understanding of religion, broad social insight, and effective communication skills are essential assets for professional preachers.²² Therefore, this study requires an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon of preaching as a profession, the impact of popularity, and the various challenges faced, including the risk of involvement in politics. These issues will be discussed in more detail in the following sections. This study aims to reveal how preachers maintain integrity and professionalism in facing the challenges of preaching. It also examines the strategies preachers use to maintain integrity amid material and political temptations.

¹⁵ Fauzi, "The Rhetorical Style of Ustadz Abdul Somad's Dakwah."

¹⁶ Sudirman Tebba, "Online Da'wah Through Social Media," *SALAM: Journal of Social and Cultural Syar'I* 10, no. 3 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.15408/sjsbs.v10i3.33725>.

¹⁷ Lukman Al-Hakim and Alfan Bachtiar, "Online Da'wah in the Perspective of Modern Society on YouTube Social Media," *KOMUNIKATA* 57 2, no. 2 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.55122/kom57.v2i2.265>.

¹⁸ Nur Ahmad, "Challenges of Da'wah in the Age of Technology and Information: Formulating Characteristics, Popularity, and Material in the Path of Da'wah," *ADDIN* 8, no. 2 (2014).

¹⁹ Amin, "Ethics of Da'wah: Contextualization of Professional Da'wah. Tajdid."

²⁰ P Putriany and N M Said, "The Influence of Dai Competence and Popularity on the Interest of Iain Bone Students in Participating in Da'wah Activities," *Jurnal Mercusuar* 1, no. 2 (2020).

²¹ S Hasibuan, "The Debate on the Application of Islamic Law as a Movement to Politicize Da'wah (Case Study of Qonun Syariah in Aceh)," *Hijaz: Journal of Islamic Sciences*, 2022.

²² Mahmud Yunus Daulay Nur Rahmah Amini, "PKPM Pembinaan Kader Mualigh/Mualighat Muhammadiyah 'Aisyiyah in the Advancement of Muhammadiyah Da'wah in the Muhammadiyah Village Branch" 1, no. 1 (2019).

METHODS

In this study, the method used is a descriptive qualitative approach.²³ In this study, data collection techniques were carried out through passive observation and documentation analysis. Passive observation techniques were carried out by monitoring the activities and content of dakwah disseminated by professional da'i on various social media platforms, such as YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook, and observing the impact of popularity on the challenges of dakwah. In addition, the documentation analysis technique was used to explore more deeply the background and context of preaching as a profession. The documentation reviewed included news articles, academic publications, books, and digital content relevant to the theme of professional preaching in Indonesia.²⁴ The collected data was then analyzed using thematic analysis, a method of analysis that helps identify patterns, themes, or major issues related to preaching as a profession. This process included coding the data into broad themes, such as the social impact of the popularity of preachers, political temptations, and the challenges of maintaining neutrality and professionalism.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In recent years, da'wah has undergone significant changes, particularly in Indonesia, where this activity is increasingly seen as a profession that not only focuses on spreading religious values but is also related to social, economic, cultural, and political aspects.²⁵ Da'i or preachers now not only appear on mosque pulpits but are also active on various media platforms, both television and social media, which allow da'wah messages to reach a wider and more diverse audience. With the development of technology and media, the profession of da'i has become increasingly popular, even generating a huge influence for a number of preachers who have many followers. This popularity has made them influential figures, not only in the religious sphere, but also in social and sometimes political issues. However, this phenomenon brings its own consequences and challenges for da'i in maintaining their integrity, professionalism, and focus on preaching.²⁶

With increasing popularity, professional da'i face various challenges, including material temptations, pressure from various parties, and public expectations that often conflict with the essence of pure preaching. Many da'i have significant financial opportunities through broadcast preaching activities or through digital platforms, such as YouTube, Instagram, and podcasts.²⁷ In addition, their popularity also makes preachers figures who can be exploited by various parties, including politicians or businesspeople, for certain interests. These challenges test the ability of preachers to uphold the principles and values of the religion they represent, as well as to maintain sincerity in every message they convey. Therefore, this study focuses on understanding the impact of popularity on the preaching profession and the various challenges faced by preachers in maintaining their integrity and professionalism amid temptations and pressures. This discussion also

²³ Rukin, *Qualitative Research Methodology*, Rake Sarasin, 2022.

²⁴ Sugiyono, *Qualitative Research Methodology*. In *Qualitative Research Methodology*, Rake Sarasin, 2020.

²⁵ C Suryana, "Politics as Da'wah: Political Communication of the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS)," *Communicatus: Journal of Communication Science*, 2021, <http://journal.uinsgd.ac.id/index.php/cjik/article/view/12646>.

²⁶ D M Maulina, "Dakwah as a Medium for the Integration of Religion and Science," *Jurnal Peurawi: Media Kajian Komunikasi Islam*, 2021, <https://jurnal.ar-raniry.ac.id/index.php/peurawi/article/view/8823>.

²⁷ N Aisyah and S Rofiah, "Modern Da'wah in the Era of Media Convergence: A Case Study of YouTube Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid," ... *Da'wah and Islamic Communication*, 2022, <https://www.ejournal.iaisyarifuddin.ac.id/index.php/dakwatuna/article/view/1632>.

reveals the strategies applied by professional preachers to maintain their focus on preaching amid the dynamics of an ever-evolving profession. (Harahap, 2022)

Da'is in Maintaining Integrity and Professionalism in Facing Da'wah Challenges

The results of the study show that integrity is one of the key factors that enable a preacher to have a profound influence on his congregation. Preachers who are able to maintain integrity, both in their words, actions, and daily lives, create a stronger relationship of trust with their audience. This integrity is evident in the consistency between what is conveyed in sermons and the practices in the preacher's personal life. When congregants see that preachers uphold religious principles with high commitment, their trust in the message of da'wah increases.²⁸

This study also shows that congregations are more interested in and feel more connected to preachers who not only talk about religious texts but also exemplify those values in their lives. Preachers who maintain their integrity are considered more authentic and inspirational by congregations because they see them as consistent and reliable figures.²⁹ This has an impact on the effectiveness of the preaching itself, where congregations tend to be more open to accepting the teachings and even using them as guidelines in their lives. Thus, preachers who are able to maintain their integrity have the ability to have a more positive and profound impact on congregations, which ultimately strengthens the mission of preaching in society.³⁰

This study identifies that integrity and professionalism in preaching, as demonstrated by preachers such as Ustadz Adi Hidayat, Ustadz Abdul Somad, and Gus Miftah, have a significant impact on strengthening their relationship with their congregation and increasing the effectiveness of their preaching. Although these preachers have different styles and approaches, they share a commitment to maintaining integrity and sincerity in delivering religious messages.³¹³² They are recognized by their congregations as authentic and consistent figures who not only convey religious teachings theoretically but also apply them in their daily lives.

Ustadz Adi Hidayat demonstrates integrity through his scientific and systematic approach, in which he always refers to religious texts using detailed and structured methods.³³³⁴ His integrity is evident in his seriousness in providing the congregation with a deep understanding without imposing a particular interpretation. This approach creates a high sense of trust, especially among intellectuals and the younger generation who appreciate an academic approach to understanding religion. His neutral attitude and

²⁸ Amin, "Ethics of Da'wah: Contextualization of Professional Da'wah. Tajdid."

²⁹ Yusa' Farchan and Zulfa Rosharlianti, "The Trend of Hijrah: New Construction of Urban Millennial Muslim Identity in Indonesia," *The Sociology of Islam* 4, no. 2 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.15642/jsi.2021.4.2.182-205>.

³⁰ Hasbi Anshori Hasibuan, "The Urgency of Da'wah Management in Forming Professional Da'is," *Hikmah* III, no. 1 (2016).

³¹ Zamzami Almakki, "Visual Identity of Islamic Preachers on Social Media," 2023, https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-136-4_31.

³² Muhamad Riza Chamadi et al., "The Phenomenon Of Religious Activities In The Digital Era: Studies On Indonesia Students," *Al-Balagh : Jurnal Dakwah Dan Komunikasi* 8, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.22515/albalagh.v8i1.6215>.

³³ Rahma Alfiah, Syahrul Fauzi Bisri, and Nurul Fauzia, "Ustadz Adi Hidayat's Argumentative Da'wah on YouTube Social Media," *AdZikra: Journal of Islamic Communication & Broadcasting* 13, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.32678/adzikra.v13i1.6040>.

³⁴ Raihan Firdaus Naufal and Muhammad Rizal Khatami, "Indonesian Language as an Effective Communication Medium in Da'wah (Analysis of Ustadz Dr. Adi Hidayat, LC., M.A)," *Simpati* 1, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.59024/simpati.v1i2.165>.

focus on religious education make congregants see him as a reliable and consistent role model.

Ustadz Abdul Somad is known for his firm and straightforward style of preaching. In maintaining his integrity, Ustadz Abdul Somad is consistent with his attitudes and values, especially in avoiding direct involvement in practical political issues even though he has a large following.³⁵ This attitude has earned him respect as a figure who focuses on conveying religious messages, rather than personal or group interests. Through this approach, Ustadz Abdul Somad has succeeded in building strong relationships with congregations who appreciate the sincerity and honesty of his preaching, even though in practice he still sides with a certain group but does not use this to directly influence his congregation.³⁶

Gus Miftah is known for his inclusive preaching that is able to touch various levels of society, including communities that are often considered marginalized. However, his popularity also poses challenges related to integrity and neutrality. On several occasions, Gus Miftah has been involved in politics, either by supporting certain figures or attending political events with specific interests. This is often considered by some as the exploitation of preaching for political purposes, which obscures the role of preaching, which should be purely as a disseminator of religious messages. However, Gus Miftah himself states that his involvement in politics is part of inclusive preaching.³⁷

Gus Miftah believes that da'wah is not limited to lectures in mosques, but also needs to reach the social and political spheres, as long as it adheres to religious values. Gus Miftah strives to encourage politicians and the community to prioritize religious principles in all aspects of life. However, his involvement in politics risks creating a negative perception among his followers. Many hope that a da'i will remain neutral and not get involved in political interests, given the great influence they have. This creates a dilemma in maintaining the integrity of da'wah amid political and material temptations.³⁸

In carrying out da'wah as a profession, da'is face various challenges that can affect their integrity and professionalism. As figures who not only convey religious teachings but also become public figures, preachers are expected to have personalities that set an example for society. They need to demonstrate values of kindness, sincerity, and consistency between words and deeds. This is crucial because integrity is the main asset for a preacher to gain the trust of the community.

In terms of professionalism, this study shows that a professional preacher must have good communication skills, the ability to understand their audience, and broad knowledge of social and religious issues.³⁹ This professionalism is important to maintain the relevance of preaching, especially in the context of an increasingly diverse and dynamic society. In addition, da'i are also expected to be able to convey religious teachings in a way that is interesting, relevant, and easily understood by various groups, including the younger generation who may have different preferences in receiving information.

³⁵ Citra Dewi Harmia, "Reflections of Social Identity in the Da'wah Strategies of Ustadz Abdul Somad and Habib Jafar: A Study of Language Variation," *Madah: Journal of Language and Literature* 14, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.31503/madah.v14i2.649>.

³⁶ Z A Haq, *Da'wah Messages in YouTube Social Media Nussa Official-Nussa: Love Them (Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis)* (etheses.iainponorogo.ac.id, 2020), <http://etheses.iainponorogo.ac.id/9096/>.

³⁷ Amin, "Ethics of Da'wah: Contextualization of Professional Da'wah. Tajdid."

³⁸ Amin.

³⁹ Moh Syahri Sauma, "Ethics of Da'wah and Professionalism of Da'i (A Study of the Psychology of Communication in the Da'wah Messages of Ustadz Abdul Somad on the Ustadz Abdul Somad Official YouTube Channel)," *An Nida': Journal of Islamic Communication and Broadcasting* 9, no. 2 (2021).

Professional da'i in Indonesia face the challenge of remaining relevant without compromising religious principles. They must be able to adapt religious messages to contemporary issues without losing the fundamental values of religious teachings.⁴⁰ In this case, some preachers use different approaches to preaching, such as linking the material to everyday issues that are familiar to the audience, or connecting it to current social and political phenomena. This kind of approach allows them to reach a wider audience and foster interest in religious teachings in society.

However, this study also found that increased popularity and public expectations can pose their own challenges. In some cases, the popularity of da'i can trigger pressure from certain parties who expect them to support a particular agenda, either directly or indirectly. In addition, public expectations regarding the style and content of their preaching sometimes create pressure that can interfere with their independence as bearers of religious teachings.

Da'i Strategies in Maintaining Integrity Amid Material and Political Temptations

The popularity gained from the profession of preaching presents promising financial opportunities, both through lecture fees and income from collaborations with the media and sponsors. However, these material temptations also pose ethical challenges for preachers, who are expected to remain focused on preaching as a form of worship and not merely as a commercial means. This study found several strategies employed by da'i to maintain their integrity amid material temptations.⁴¹

First, da'i who are committed to integrity usually set clear boundaries regarding the material offers or collaborations they accept. They are selective in choosing offers to avoid activities or situations that could obscure their intentions in preaching. Some preachers reject invitations or collaborations that are deemed incompatible with their missionary mission, such as offers to promote commercial products that are irrelevant or even contrary to religious values. By setting these boundaries, they strive to maintain sincerity and focus on the pure purpose of missionary work.

Second, this study reveals that da'is who want to maintain their integrity often rely on the values of honesty and independence in their da'wah activities. They try not to get directly involved in certain political agendas that could damage their reputation or credibility in the public eye. Political pressure sometimes comes in the form of support from certain parties who want to exploit the influence of da'i for political gain.⁴² In this situation, da'i face a dilemma, where they must maintain neutrality so as not to be seen as siding with a particular group. Some da'i choose to keep their distance from practical politics in order to remain focused on the essence of da'wah.

Third, this study found that professional da'i often join communities or establish relationships with influential senior figures. Guidance and supervision from more experienced figures can help them maintain focus and integrity amid external temptations. Through these communities, da'i can discuss and provide mutual support in facing the challenges of da'wah, especially when confronted with financial or political temptations.

Fourth, in the face of public pressure and demands to remain relevant, some preachers choose to deepen their knowledge of religion and related social issues. With

⁴⁰ Chamadi et al., "The Phenomenon of Religious Activities in the Digital Era: Studies on Indonesian Students."

⁴¹ Farchan and Rosharlianti, "The Trend of Hijrah: New Construction of Urban Millennial Muslim Identity in Indonesia."

⁴² Amin, "Ethics of Da'wah: Contextualization of Professional Da'wah. *Tajdid*."

this deep understanding, they feel better prepared to respond to questions or criticism from the community in a professional manner. Preachers who have a strong academic background and adhere to religious principles tend to be better able to maintain the independence of their preaching without sacrificing integrity.⁴³

As a preacher with many followers, Ustadz Adi Hidayat is often invited to various events, including seminars and television programs. However, he maintains his distance from direct involvement in practical politics, striving to ensure that his preaching is not exploited for political interests. This demonstrates his commitment to keeping his preaching pure and uncontaminated by agendas other than spreading religious teachings. Ustadz Adi Hidayat is also known for his indifference to material things. On many occasions, he has emphasized that preaching is his calling in life, and although he receives honoraria, he ensures that his main motivation in preaching remains solely to serve religion and the people.⁴⁴

Ustadz Abdul Somad is a very popular preacher, and his influence is great among Muslims in Indonesia. Even though he receives many offers of material rewards, both from the private sector and the government, he still tries not to get caught up in material temptations that could damage the integrity of his preaching. One of Ustadz Abdul Somad's strategies in maintaining his integrity is to be open about the honorarium he receives. He often emphasizes that preaching is a calling, and although he does not refuse financial rewards, he remains committed to not pursuing material gain as the main goal of his preaching.⁴⁵

However, even though Ustadz Abdul Somad tries to stay on the path of integrity, he is sometimes involved in situations where his name is used for certain political interests. This often happens because of his great influence. Even so, Ustadz Abdul Somad tries to keep his preaching on track and emphasizes the importance of focusing on the pure message of religion without getting caught up in pragmatic interests.⁴⁶

Gus Miftah has a more inclusive and open approach in his preaching. He does not hesitate to involve himself in social and political discussions, and often supports several parties in the political world. Gus Miftah believes that preaching must be able to reach all levels of society, including in the political realm. He considers that preaching is not only limited to religious lectures, but must also involve social issues that are relevant to the lives of the people.

Despite his involvement in politics, Gus Miftah remains committed to religious principles in all his actions. He does not allow popularity and political influence to change the essence of his preaching. Gus Miftah often emphasizes that every step he takes in the political world must be based on religious values and must not sacrifice the integrity of da'wah. He strives to balance his role in da'wah and his involvement in politics by maintaining neutrality in terms of ideology, even though he sometimes has to choose a side that he feels is in line with the religious values he adheres to.

CONCLUSION

⁴³ Ahmad, "Challenges of Da'wah in the Age of Technology and Information: Formulation of Characteristics, Popularity, and Material in the Path of Da'wah."

⁴⁴ Muhammad Adnan Firdaus, Malik Ahmad Nasir, and Asep Ahmad Siddiq, "SWOT Analysis of Ustadz Adi Hidayat's Da'wah Strategy in Instilling Islamic Values on the Adi Hidayat Official YouTube Channel," *Bandung Conference Series: Islamic Broadcast Communication* 4, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.29313/bcsibc.v4i1.12280>.

⁴⁵ Amin, "Ethics of Da'wah: Contextualization of Professional Da'wah. Tajdid."

⁴⁶ Amin.

The conclusion from these results and discussion is that da'wah is now not only seen as a religious duty, but also as a profession that has great challenges, especially in maintaining integrity and professionalism amid popularity, material temptations, and politics. Preachers who have successfully maintained their integrity, such as Ustadz Adi Hidayat, Ustadz Abdul Somad, and Gus Miftah, show that sincerity in conveying religious messages and consistency between words and deeds have a profound influence on their congregations. They are able to build stronger trust with their audiences because they not only convey religious teachings but also practice these values in their lives.

However, challenges remain, especially in managing their popularity and influence. Da'i are often faced with material temptations and the politicization of da'wah, which can obscure their original goals. Nevertheless, some da'i, such as Ustadz Adi Hidayat, maintain their distance from practical politics and prioritize scientific da'wah. Ustadz Abdul Somad, although his name is sometimes used for political purposes, tries to remain focused on delivering a pure religious message. Meanwhile, Gus Miftah, despite being involved in politics, remains committed to religious principles in all his actions. Overall, integrity and commitment to maintaining the objectives of da'wah remain the main factors in maintaining the influence and success of da'wah amid material and political temptations.

REFERENCES

Ahmad, Nur. "Challenges of Da'wah in the Age of Technology and Information: Formulation of Characteristics, Popularity, and Material in the Path of Da'wah." *ADDIN* 8, no. 2 (2014).

Aisyah, N, and S Rofiah. "Modern Da'wah in the Era of Media Convergence: A Case Study of YouTube Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid." ... *Da'wah and Islamic Communication*, 2022. <https://www.ejournal.iaisyarifuddin.ac.id/index.php/dakwatuna/article/view/1632>.

Al-Hakim, Lukman, and Alfan Bachtiar. "Online Da'wah in the Perspective of Modern Society on YouTube Social Media." *KOMUNIKATA57* 2, no. 2 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.55122/kom57.v2i2.265>.

Alfiah, Rahma, Syahrul Fauzi Bisri, and Nurul Fauzia. "AdZikra: Journal of Islamic Communication & Broadcasting" 13, no. 1 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.32678/advikra.v13i1.6040>.

Almakki, Zamzami. "Visual Identity of Islamic Preachers on Social Media," 2023. https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-136-4_31.

Amin, Edi. "Ethics of Da'wah: Contextualization of Professional Da'wah. Tajdid." *TAJDID: Journal of Ushuluddin Science* 16, no. 1 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.30631/tjd.v16i1.52>.

Andayani, Tanti Andayani, Wildan Yahya, and Nandang HMZ. "Strategies for Increasing the Interest of Students at the Faculty of Da'wah, Bandung Islamic University, in the Da'i Profession." *Bandung Conference Series: Islamic Broadcast Communication* 2, no. 2 (2022): 96 – 100. <https://doi.org/10.29313/bcsibc.v2i2.3687>.

Bashori, Abdul Hamid. "Communication Styles of Da'i in Da'wah Activities." *El-Fatih: Journal of Da'wah and Islamic Outreach* 1, no. 1 (2022).

Chamadi, Muhamad Riza, Kuntarto Kuntarto, Musmuallim Musmuallim, and Muhamad Baedowi. "The Phenomenon Of Religious Activities In The Digital Era: Studies On Indonesia Students." *Al-Balagh : Journal of Da'wah and Communication* 8, no. 1 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.22515/albalagh.v8i1.6215>.

Farchan, Yusa', and Zulfa Rosharlianti. "The Trend of Hijrah: New Construction of Urban Millennial Muslim Identity in Indonesia." *The Sociology of Islam* 4, no. 2 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.15642/jsi.2021.4.2.182-205>.

Farihah, Irzum, and Ismanto Ismanto. "Dakwah Kiai Pesisiran: Dakwah Activities of Kiai in Lamongan Regency." *Ilmu Dakwah: Academic Journal for Homiletic Studies* 12, no.

1 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.15575/idajhs.v11i2.1907>.

Fauzi, Achmad. "The Rhetorical Style of Ustadz Abdul Somad's Da'wah." *World Development* 1, no. 1 (2018).

Haq, Z A. *Dakwah Messages in YouTube Nussa Official-Nussa Social Media: Love Them (Roland Barthes Semiotics Analysis)*. etheses.iainponorogo.ac.id, 2020. <http://etheses.iainponorogo.ac.id/9096/>.

Harahap, Asrul. "The Map of Da'wah in Religious Activities (Interaction between Islam and Culture in West Sumatra)." *AL-QOLAM: Journal of Da'wah and Community Empowerment* 3, no. 2 (2019).

———. "Strategies of Islamic Boarding Schools in Fostering Da'i Cadres in Padang Lawas Regency, North Sumatra." *Alhadharah: Journal of Da'wah Science* 21, no. 2 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.18592/alhadharah.v21i2.6832>.

Harmia, Citra Dewi. "Reflections on Social Identity in the Da'wah Strategies of Ustadz Abdul Somad and Habib Jafar: A Study of Language Variation." *Madah: Journal of Language and Literature* 14, no. 2 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.31503/madah.v14i2.649>.

Hasibuan, Hasbi Anshori. "The Urgency of Da'wah Management in Forming Professional Da'is." *Hikmah* III, no. 1 (2016).

Hasibuan, S. "The Debate on the Application of Islamic Law as a Movement to Politicize Da'wah (Case Study of Qonun Syariah in Aceh)." *Hijaz: Journal of Islamic Sciences*, 2022.

Mahmud Yunus Daulay Nur Rahmah Amini. "PKMPembinaan Kader Mubaligh/Mubalighat Muhammadiyah 'Aisyiyah Dalam Kemajuan Dakwah Muhammadiyah Di Ranting Muhammadiyah Desa" 1, no. 1 (2019).

Maulina, D M. "Dakwah as a Medium for the Integration of Religion and Science." *Jurnal Peurawi: Media Kajian Komunikasi Islam*, 2021. <https://jurnal.ar-raniry.ac.id/index.php/peurawi/article/view/8823>.

Midani, Ahmad. "Analysis of Ustadz Adi Hidayat's Speech on the Audio Dakwah YouTube Channel." *Tambusai Education Journal* 6, no. 1 (2022).

Mubasyaroh, Mubasyaroh. "Persuasive Da'wah Strategies in Changing People's Behavior." *Ilmu Dakwah: Academic Journal for Homiletic Studies* 11, no. 2 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.15575/idajhs.v11i2.2398>.

Muhammad Adnan Firdaus, Malki Ahmad Nasir, and Asep Ahmad Siddiq. "SWOT Analysis of Ustadz Adi Hidayat's Da'wah Strategy in Instilling Islamic Values on the Adi Hidayat Official YouTube Channel." *Bandung Conference Series: Islamic Broadcast Communication* 4, no. 1 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.29313/bcsibc.v4i1.12280>.

Putriany, P, and N M Said. "The Influence of Competence and Popularity of Dai on the Interest of Iain Bone Students in Participating in Da'wah Activities." *Jurnal Mercusuar* 1, no. 2 (2020).

Raihan Firdaus Naufal, and Muhammad Rizal Khatami. "Indonesian Language as an Effective Communication Medium in Da'wah (Analysis of Ustadz Dr. Adi Hidayat, LC., M.A)." *Simpati* 1, no. 2 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.59024/simpati.v1i2.165>.

Ritonga, Muslimin, and Dewi Sartina. "Gus Miftah's Da'wah Communication in the Kembang Market Localization in Yogyakarta." *Al-MUNZIR* 13, no. 2 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.31332/am.v13i2.2051>.

Rukin. *Qualitative Research Methodology. Rake Sarasin*, 2022.

Sauma, Moh Syahri. "Ethics of Da'wah and Professionalism of Da'i (A Study of the Psychology of Communication in the Da'wah Messages of Ustadz Abdul Somad on the Ustadz Abdul Somad Official YouTube Channel)." *An Nida': Journal of Islamic Communication and Broadcasting* 9, no. 2 (2021).

Sihabuddin, M Amin. "Professional Ethics of Da'i According to the Qur'an." *Ghaidan: Journal of Islamic Counseling and Society* 1, no. 1 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.19109/ghaidan.v1i1.2031>.

Sugiyono. *Qualitative Research Methodology. In Qualitative Research Methodology. Rake Sarasin*, 2020.

Suryana, C. "Politics as Da'wah: Political Communication of the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS)." *Communicatus: Journal of Communication Science*, 2021. <http://journal.uinsgd.ac.id/index.php/cjik/article/view/12646>.

Sheikh Ali Mahfudh. *Hidayatul Mursyidin*. Vol. 7th ed. Cairo: Daar el – Mishr, 1975.

Tebba, Sudirman. "Online Da'wah Through Social Media." *SALAM: Journal of Social and Cultural Studies* 10, no. 3 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.15408/sjsbs.v10i3.33725>.