



Received: 11-05-2022

Accepted: 23-11-2022

Published: 30-12-2022

Propagating the Concept of Rahmatan Lil 'Aalamin through Suffistic Da'wah in East Kalimantan

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Abstract

Dawah plays a vital role in developing and disseminating Islam as it opens opportunities for Islamic teachings to be accepted and adapted in new environments with people from different cultures. In this context, Sufi preaching is one of the successful manifestations in the propagation of Islam due to its flexible nature, which is its characteristic feature. Therefore, this research aims to examine and identify the role of preaching in developing Sufism in East Kalimantan, particularly in the current era of globalization. This study employs a descriptive qualitative research approach, with research locations spread across several areas in East Kalimantan, including Samarinda, Kutai Kartanegara, Balikpapan, Kutai Timur, Bontang, and Paser. The research results indicate that the current societal conditions closely related to technological advancements and information necessitate the presence of more relevant forms of preaching. In this context, da'is are obliged to use digital media to convey Sufi teachings. They are expected to be proficient in utilizing technology to continue delivering their preaching in line with the progress of the times.

Keywords: Da'wah, Tasawwuf, and East Kalimantan

Abstrak

Dakwah memainkan peran penting dalam perkembangan dan penyebaran Islam karena membuka peluang bagi ajaran Islam untuk diterima dan diadaptasi pada lingkungan-lingkungan yang baru dengan orang-orang yang berbeda budaya. Dakwah dasawuf, dalam hal ini, adalah salah satu wujud keberhasilan dalam penyebaran Islam berkat sifat lentur yang menjadi ciri khasnya. Penelitian ini, dengan demikian, bertujuan untuk mengkaji dan mengidentifikasi bagaimana peranan dakwah dalam pengembangan tasawuf di Kalimantan Timur, khususnya di era globalisasi seperti saat ini. Penelitian ini

merupakan penelitian kualitatif deskriptif, dengan lokasi penelitian yang tersebar pada beberapa tempat di Kalimantan Timur, di antaranya Samarinda, Kutai Kartanegara, Balikpapan, Kutai Timur, Bontang dan Paser. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kondisi masyarakat saat ini yang sangat terkait erat dengan kecanggihan teknologi dan informasi menuntut hadirnya bentuk dakwah yang lebih relevan di mana para da'i diwajibkan untuk mampu menggunakan media digital sebagai sarana dakwah dalam mengajarkan tasawuf. Para da'i dituntut untuk mahir memanfaatkan teknologi agar tetap dapat menyampaikan dakwahnya mengikuti kemajuan zaman.

Kata Kunci: *Dakwah, Tasawuf, dan Kalimantan Timur.*

A. Introduction

Every rational human being naturally desires to live a tranquil and blissful life. To attain such a state, the guidance of religion is indispensable in navigating life's journey. Through the presence of religion, life becomes more organized and purposeful. In this context, the Islamic faith demands its adherents to consistently strive for personal growth and positive transformation, notably through da'wah. Through da'wah, a Muslim is encouraged to invite oneself and others to obey the commandments of Allah and abstain from all that God prohibits.

The Islamic religion has flourished through the practice of da'wah. In historical records, da'wah has served as the primary driving force behind the global spread of Islam. However, it is essential to note that the role of da'wah throughout history has not been without challenges. This is evident in the early historical accounts of Islam, particularly during the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the Rightly Guided Caliphs. Furthermore, even contemporary scholars continue to face obstacles and hurdles in carrying out da'wah endeavors.

Da'wah can be defined as the act of inviting individuals to engage in acts of goodness and preventing them from committing wrongdoing. Engaging in da'wah is considered an obligation for every Muslim, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, or other social identities. The task or activity of da'wah is highly esteemed in the eyes of Allah. Every Muslim directly participating in da'wah

will be bestowed with the title "khairu ummah" (the best community) among humanity. This is recorded in the Quran:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ

Translation:

"You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoy what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah."
(Quran, Surah Al-Imran 3:110)

The mentioned verse highlights that the honor of the Muslim community lies in their efforts in da'wah. Regardless of their occupation, Muslims are obligated not to neglect the duty of da'wah. Every Muslim has the responsibility to convey da'wah according to their capabilities. The question arises: is da'wah solely the duty of scholars (ulama)? The answer to this question is no. This is because da'wah is a duty for every Muslim, based on their respective abilities. Scholars have provided examples of engaging in da'wah, one of which is through tasawwuf (Islamic mysticism).

Upon careful observation, it is evident that tasawwuf plays a significant role in Islam. Tasawwuf contributes to the development of human life through various spiritual practices. It has a widespread presence in various Islamic regions. Tasawwuf is a concept that encompasses the quest for inner tranquility, seeking closeness to the Divine, improving worship, and cultivating good character. Therefore, it is essential to convey the teachings of tasawwuf accurately through da'wah to prevent Muslims from going astray.

Considering the conditions of the globalization era, where technology rapidly advances without proper filtering, particularly in disseminating information, teenagers become vulnerable to the absence of positive role models, leading them to emulate the behaviors of individuals they perceive as idols. The worsening economic situation also compels some individuals to resort to unethical means to provide for themselves and their families. Hence, there is a need for da'wah activities that can effectively permeate and be readily accepted by all segments of society.

Given these circumstances, it becomes crucial to adapt da'wah approaches to address the challenges faced by contemporary society effectively. Da'wah should be accessible, relatable, and easily understood by individuals from diverse backgrounds. It should be able to address the concerns and aspirations of the youth, providing them with guidance and a moral compass amidst the overwhelming influence of modern technology and the complexities of the current economic climate. By employing such inclusive da'wah strategies, it becomes possible to instill positive values, ethical conduct, and a sense of purpose among all members of society.

Based on the considerations above, this research aims to examine the role of tasawwuf da'wah in the era of globalization, specifically focusing on the region of East Kalimantan. The study seeks to explore the tangible forms and methods utilized in conveying the teachings of tasawwuf to the local community in East Kalimantan. By conducting this research, we intend to shed light on the practical implementation of tasawwuf da'wah and its effectiveness in addressing the challenges posed by globalization.

B. Method

This research can be classified as a qualitative descriptive study (Sugiyono, 1992:4). The descriptive approach encompasses data collection, organization, data analysis, and interpretation. Therefore, it enables classification, assessment, and the establishment of standards. This classification is essential for understanding the position of each element within a specific context, enabling data to be restructured and used for interpretation and allowing the researcher to draw relevant conclusions.

The data collection for this research was conducted by employing observation, interviews, and documentation techniques. Meanwhile, the data analysis technique adopted was the Miles and Huberman model, comprising several simultaneous stages of activity: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Miles and Huberman, 1985:23).

C. Result and Discussion

In the Quran, the term "da'wah" is mentioned frequently. The word "da'wah" is mentioned 198 times in the Quran. In these mentions, da'wah is generally interpreted as "invitation" or "calling." Allah commands Muslims to invite others to the path of Islam, as stated in Surah An-Nahl, verse 125. This invitation should be tailored to suit the individual being addressed. In this context, there are at least three methods that can be employed in inviting others, namely through wisdom (hikmah), through debate (mujadalah), and through setting a good example (keteladanan).

Da'wah is a spiritual endeavor that every Muslim must carry out. Established upon total acceptance of Islam's way of life to actualize it within society, the issue of Da'wah is paramount to the development of Islam as a religion for All. Muslims have to engage in da'wah, which involves conveying Islam's teachings, even though through a single verse. The essence of da'wah lies in manifesting faith through a systematic human endeavor by the believers. This propagation is conducted regularly in various social spheres and exerts influence on individuals' mindset, attitudes, and actions.

Da'wah significantly influences change within the Muslim community concerning their relationship with Allah and fellow humanity. This impact encompasses improvements in various aspects of life. Moreover, da'wah is not exclusively directed towards Muslims but also people of other faiths. This is evident in the history of the spread of Islam in the archipelago of now Indonesia, where many communities chose to embrace Islam due to the da'wah conducted by early Islamic missionaries during that era, famously known as Walisongo of the nine saints.

During the early expansion of Islam in Indonesia, the da'wah activities were carried out by Sufis, who considered various environmental aspects, including the political situation, psychological conditions, customs, traditions, and prevailing inclinations of the society at that time. The means of da'wah employed were diverse, encompassing tarekat (Sufi orders), politics, art, and

culture. Such forms of da'wah proved to be well-received by the Indonesian community. This kind of da'wah is known as "da'wah tasawuf," which refers to the propagation of Islam in a manner similar to or resembling the methods used by Sufis (Agus Sifa, 2017).

The concept of da'wah tasawuf is firmly rooted in the exemplary da'wah conducted by the Prophet Muhammad. He initiated and set a fine example of righteous and proper propagation. Some of the da'wah practices demonstrated by him include 1) conveying the truth to his family and close associates; 2) teaching monotheism (tawheed) to his community, emphasizing the belief in the oneness of Allah; 3) exhibiting noble character in his everyday life; 4) refraining from using coercion while inviting others to follow the teachings of Islam. This form of da'wah was then carried forward by the companions of the Prophet and continued by the Sufis, adapting to the changing times.

Based on the aspects mentioned above and the opinions of several prominent Muslim preachers in East Kalimantan, it can be concluded that Sufi preaching is perceived as a form of da'wah that aligns with the examples set by the Prophet Muhammad and the Sufis of the past. Sufi preaching is conducted courteously and through various methods, one of which involves setting a virtuous example and adhering to cultural practices appropriate to the prevailing societal conditions. Within Sufi preaching, the conveyed teachings encompass a multitude of virtues aimed at improving worship and the relationship with Allah, as well as fostering harmonious relations with Allah's creations.

Sufi preaching emphasizes the heart's and consciousness's significance in expressing the truth. The Sufis prioritize knowledge, emotions, experiences, deeds, and worship in their propagation of the faith. They do not immediately emphasize rigid laws but instead focus on touching the hearts of individuals, allowing the community to comprehend the deeper meanings of Islam, faith,

and spiritual excellence. Consequently, society embraces Sufi preaching more readily, appealing to ordinary people and the intellectual elite.

The changing times have engendered a contemporary society profoundly interconnected with technological and informational advancements. The era of globalization is apprehended as a period in which digital media assumes paramount importance and finds application in all facets of human life. The progress of technology and information bestows various substantial benefits upon humankind. The ease, convenience, and swiftness of accessing information engender a communicative and interactive experience that is both effortless and enjoyable for individuals (Juniawati, 2014).

In light of the current society, particularly the Muslim community, being deeply connected to the advancements in technology and information, preachers face the demand to convey their message or preaching materials in engaging forms through digital media such as articles, videos, role-playing games, or other captivating formats. This allows the preaching materials to be enjoyed and accessed by Muslims worldwide.

The transformation of preaching using digital media as a means of propagation necessitates that Muslim preachers possess adequate technological understanding and skills to effectively convey their message while keeping pace with the changing times. Through digital media, Islamic teachings can be disseminated swiftly, conveniently, and uniformly to Muslims worldwide. Furthermore, digital media enables the reach of preaching to diverse segments of society.

Traditionally, preaching has been more closely associated with adults, and young people tend to be less involved in preaching activities. However, the presence of young influencers actively engaging with online media and spreading inspiration and motivation through platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and other online channels has a significant impact on the younger generation. This transformation has brought preaching closer to teenagers. In fact, many young individuals are beginning to undergo a positive change,

meaning they are improving their appearances by observing modesty (aurat) and enhancing their worship to draw closer to Allah. This indicates that Sufi preaching in the era of globalization through digital media has a profoundly positive effect and can reach all segments of the Muslim community, not only the older generation but also the youth or teenagers (Muthmainnah, 2014).

The form of preaching through young Muslim role models who serve as inspirations for the youth and are disseminated through online media is tangible proof of the effective propagation of Islam, worship, and goodness through exemplary behavior and virtuous role models. This approach aligns with the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who conveyed Islam by setting an example through his noble character and conduct.

Based on interviews with several religious figures in East Kalimantan, it is evident that the transformation of preaching from conventional means to digital media has become necessary, particularly considering the current circumstances where society is inseparable from technological and informational advancements. Through digital preaching, Islamic teachings can spread widely and evenly. Sufi preaching becomes an activity of delivering goodness through worship that relates to the relationship between humans and their creator and the relationship with other human beings, all facilitated by media that aligns with the guidance and examples provided by the Prophet Muhammad and the Sufis.

The digital dissemination of Sufi preaching holds immense significance and should be developed further. This form of preaching aligns with the examples set by the Sufis and preachers of the past in propagating Islamic teachings. Preaching conveyed gently, creatively, and attractively is always eagerly anticipated by spiritually thirsty Muslims. Through digital media, sufi preaching can reach a broader audience, inspire them, and assist them in fulfilling the spiritual needs of Muslims in the modern era.

The current societal reliance on information technology necessitates the presence of Sufi preaching as a response to their yearning for spiritual fulfillment and tranquility. In reality, radical preaching in digital media has emerged, leading to divisions within the Muslim community. Hence, Sufi preaching in this era of globalization plays a crucial role as a guiding principle in establishing the rules and norms of preaching that promote peace and serenity among Muslims amidst the rapid developments in technology and information.

The presence of Sufi preaching in the era of globalization is believed to bring peace and tranquility to Muslims worldwide in practicing Islam. Islam will be seen as a religion of tolerance for all humanity. There will no longer be radical factions causing divisions among Muslims. Islam will spread worldwide as a religion that embodies mercy and compassion for the entire universe, as described in the concept of "rahmatan lil 'alamin" - a mercy to the world.

D. Conclusion

Sufi da'wah is a form of propagation that aligns with the examples set by the Prophet Muhammad and the Sufis of the past. This type of da'wah is conducted through various methods, such as setting a virtuous example and adhering to cultural practices appropriate to the prevailing societal conditions. Within Sufi preaching, the conveyed teachings are extensive, encompassing various aspects of goodness to improve worship and foster a harmonious relationship with Allah and all of Allah's creations.

Indeed, present-day Muslim preachers are required to master technology to effectively convey their preaching in line with the developments of the times. Through digital media, Islamic teachings can be disseminated quickly, conveniently, and evenly to Muslims worldwide. However, in the era of globalization, Sufi preaching via digital media also faces significant challenges. The ease of access to information may lead to an influx of radical

preaching that influences Muslims, resulting in differing perspectives and disputes among them. Islam, at times, might be portrayed harshly, which can disrupt social relations in society, especially between Muslims and followers of other religions.

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