COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN THE DA'WAH ACTIVITIES OF MAJELIS TAKLIM AL-ISTIQOMAH

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the da'wah strategies of Majelis Taklim Al-Istiqomah Klender in enhancing adolescents' understanding of basic religious knowledge through the *Tuhfatus Shibyan* media in the digital era. *Tuhfatus Shibyan* is a nazm-based (rhymed poetry) text containing materials on *Ilmu Tauhid* (Islamic theology), *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *Sirah Nabawiyah* (Prophetic biography), and *maqolah / mahfudzat* (aphorisms), designed to attract adolescents' interest through an interactive and easily memorizable approach. This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach, using data collection techniques including observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The findings indicate that *Tuhfatus Shibyan* is implemented through structured teaching and Santri Basic Discipline Training (Latihan Dasar Kedisiplinan Santri, LDKS), which integrates religious education with character development. The study confirms that creative non-formal da'wah approaches, such as *Tuhfatus Shibyan*, are relevant for enhancing adolescents' basic religious understanding, with potential for adaptation into digital formats to meet the challenges of the digital era. The implications of this study recommend that Majelis Taklim organizers integrate technology into da'wah strategies and expand collaborative networks with other communities.

Keyword: Communication, Da'wah, Majelis Taklim, Digital Era

INTRODUCTION

Da'wah refers to the activity of conveying and disseminating Islamic teachings, encompassing two main components: *Amar Ma'ruf* (inviting to good) and *Nahi Munkar* (preventing wrongdoing). The practice of da'wah involves delivering Islamic law and affirming *tauhid* (monotheism) in a gentle, courteous manner while avoiding reprehensible actions (Hidayat, 2022). In Indonesia, da'wah has developed rapidly, particularly in academic institutions post-independence, influenced by social sciences and communication and media studies, giving rise to modern approaches to religious dissemination (Millie et al., 2023). The development of information technology has further facilitated digital da'wah through websites and online classes (Weng, 2018). Additionally, cultural da'wah in Malaysia and Indonesia integrates local elements, such as Chinese traditions, within an Islamic framework (Weng, 2022). However, da'wah practitioners also face challenges, including resistance and misinformation (Salih et al., 2019). Despite these challenges, da'wah remains crucial in fostering peace through education, interfaith dialogue, and legal approaches (Haq & Isa, 2024).

Traditionally, da'wah communication occurred through direct interactions, such as sermons in mosques or community gatherings, which were typically one-way with limited audience engagement (Akca et al., 2023; Šeba, 2020). Modern da'wah, however, has introduced interactive elements, such as Q&A sessions and the use of visual aids to enhance audience understanding (Taheri, 2023). Techniques like *amthāl* (parables) and *tafsir* (interpretation) also play important roles in contextualizing messages and making them more accessible (Mukhid et al., 2023). Beyond verbal communication, nonverbal elements such as eye contact, facial expressions, and body language significantly reinforce the da'wah message (Noor et al., 2025). The success of Badiuzzaman Said Nursi, for instance, demonstrates how effective nonverbal communication through kinesthetic cues, voice intonation, and symbolic gestures can deepen the impact of da'wah.

The digital era has transformed da'wah communication, enabling Islamic messages to reach global audiences through social media, websites, and online applications (Zaenuri, 2025). Digitalization not only expands outreach but also facilitates two-way interaction between da'i (preacher) and *mad'u* (audience), allowing for faster responses and active participation (Kerim et al., 2025). Nonetheless, challenges such as the spread of extremist ideologies and insufficient content moderation remain critical for preserving the integrity of da'wah messages (Sikumbang et al., 2024). Modern preachers must leverage rhetorical and narrative techniques to establish emotional connections with audiences (Stille, 2016). Additionally, the use of metadiscourse interactional markers in da'wah discourse strengthens social bonds and makes messages more persuasive and comprehensible across diverse audiences (Mahmood & Kasim, 2019).

The effectiveness of da'wah communication through digital media has become a focus of contemporary research, particularly regarding the dissemination of Islamic values to younger generations. Studies on Ustadz Hanan Attaki on YouTube highlight his delivery style, persuasive communication strategies, and their impact on young Muslim audiences' religious interest and behavior, demonstrating how digital da'wah content can influence religious attitudes (Muharrifah & Sikumbang, 2025). The application of Social Penetration Theory in da'wah emphasizes openness between the da'i and *mad'u* to build effective relationships, empathy, and trust, thereby ensuring that da'wah messages are conveyed deeply and sustainably (Nurmala & Prasong, 2024). Communication strategies employed by Ustadz Muhammad Nuzul Dzikri on Instagram illustrate how message structuring, delivery style, and social media use can disseminate Islamic values in engaging and

interactive ways (Maharani & Asia, 2024). Furthermore, communication patterns in pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) emphasize modeling, dialogue, and spiritual guidance to instill discipline and religious values in students (Imamah, 2023).

Majelis taklim, as a nonformal Islamic educational institution, plays a significant role in practical and contextual da'wah communication, particularly for adolescents aged nine to seventeen in the digital era. Majelis Taklim Al-Istiqomah Klender utilizes the da'wah medium *Tuhfatus Shibyan*, a book presenting basic religious teachings such as *fiqh*, *tauhid*, ethics, *sirah nabawiyah*, and hadith, delivered in a manner that is engaging and easy to memorize for adolescents. However, da'wah targeting youth faces challenges, including competition with digital entertainment content, limited attention spans, and the need for creative and innovative methods. This study aims to describe the use of *Tuhfatus Shibyan*, identify communication challenges in da'wah, and measure the improvement in adolescents' understanding of basic religious knowledge. The findings are expected to serve as practical and theoretical references for other majelis taklim, aiding the development of creative da'wah strategies, strengthening religious understanding, encouraging active youth participation, and fostering moral awareness amid social and digital dynamics.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach to explore the phenomenon of da'wah communication at Majelis Taklim Al-Istiqomah Klender, particularly concerning the use of *Tuhfatus Shibyan* as a medium for youth religious education. This approach was selected because it enables an in-depth understanding of interactions, responses, and the social and cultural contexts influencing the religious learning process. By focusing on language, actions, and direct interactions, qualitative research captures the dynamics of da'wah communication more comprehensively. The study adopts a descriptive qualitative design, emphasizing the systematic and detailed depiction of phenomena, situations, and conditions in the field without relying on numerical or statistical data. The research data consist of primary sources, including field observations, in-depth interviews with leaders and students, and documentation of da'wah activities, as well as secondary sources such as literature, official documents, and other references supporting theoretical and contextual analysis.

Data were collected through multiple techniques: observations to directly examine the da'wah process and the use of *Tuhfatus Shibyan*; in-depth interviews to understand the experiences, perceptions, and responses of both leaders and adolescents; and documentation, including recordings of activities, *nadzom* materials, and supporting documents. The collected data were analyzed qualitatively through stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, enabling the identification of communication patterns, challenges, applied strategies, and the impact of using *nadzom* or rhythmic poetry in enhancing adolescents' understanding of basic religious knowledge. Thus, this study not only provides a comprehensive description of the effectiveness of the da'wah medium employed but also serves as a reference for developing creative da'wah communication strategies tailored to the characteristics and needs of adolescents in the digital era.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Forms of Da'wah at Majelis Taklim Al-Istiqomah

Da'wah through majelis taklim has become an important medium for religious education and social development, focusing on the implementation of Islamic muamalah principles in daily life through study sessions, discussions, and collective moral guidance (Rofiki et al., 2023). Gus Baha's

da'wah method emphasizes online lectures on YouTube delivered in a relaxed, interactive, and easily understandable manner, reflecting a modern majelis taklim that integrates knowledge, religious exhortation, and effective communication (Qordofa & As'ad, 2022). In the millennial era, majelis taklim da'wah has become increasingly creative through the use of digital media and interactive learning sessions, enabling Islamic teachings to be presented in ways that are engaging, relevant, and accessible to young generations (Bashori & Jalaluddin, 2021). Additionally, pesantren as the center of majelis taklim serves as a collective platform for religious study, character building, education, and social activities that holistically shape students' personalities (Mujahidin, 2021). Majelis taklim continues to evolve to meet the needs of the times.

First, Reading and Writing the Qur'an (BTQ) is one of the primary forms of da'wah at Majelis Taklim Al-Istiqomah, aimed at equipping students with the ability to read the Qur'an correctly according to tajwid rules while also familiarizing them with Arabic script as a foundation for understanding the holy text. BTQ learning employs the Talqin and Qiro'ati methods. In the Talqin method, the ustadz reads first, and students follow while receiving direct corrections, which is effective for beginners who need intensive guidance. The Qiro'ati method emphasizes gradual learning, starting from short chapters to longer ones, combining memorization and reading practice alternately to improve fluency and understanding of recitation rules. These activities are held routinely every afternoon until after Isha prayers under the guidance of experienced ustadz. Besides reading skills, students also learn to write Arabic letters, understand verse meanings, and internalize the Qur'an's content. Through BTQ, the majelis emphasizes not only technical reading skills but also spiritual awareness, cultivating love for the Qur'an, and forming a solid foundation for religious understanding. This approach enables students to learn systematically, interactively, and contextually, making BTQ an effective da'wah medium for shaping a young generation that is religious, disciplined, and devoted to the holy text. With the right methods, BTQ serves as a strong initial foundation for instilling Islamic values from an early age.

Second, Congregational Prayer Practice is conducted daily at Maghrib and Isha as a means to strengthen Islamic brotherhood, discipline, and spiritual awareness among students. Congregational prayers are led by an ustadz or a student capable of leading, conducted consistently to accustom participants to following the Sunnah of the Prophet. This activity serves more than obligatory worship; it is also an educational medium for social values, togetherness, and solidarity among majelis members. Interviews indicate that students feel this practice strengthens social and spiritual bonds, enhances discipline, and encourages active participation in religious activities. Challenges arise from teenagers' busy schedules and differing motivation levels, but majelis administrators provide encouragement and reminders to keep congregational prayer a priority. Theologically, congregational prayer carries great merit, including multiplied rewards and the strengthening of the majelis' spiritual vitality. This practice also serves as direct learning about proper prayer etiquette and instills values of responsibility, leadership, and cooperation. With consistency and proper guidance, congregational prayer practice at Majelis Taklim Al-Istiqomah fosters a strong religious culture among adolescents while supporting da'wah strategies that balance spirituality and social interaction.

Third, Student Basic Leadership Training (LDKS) is an annual activity designed to develop character, independence, and leadership among students at Majelis Taklim Al-Istiqomah Klender. This activity is conducted over 3–4 days in locations such as the Thousand Islands, Puncak Bogor, and Sukabumi, with programs including group camping, group cooking, orphan sponsorship, sports, ice-breaking games, and tracking exercises. Each activity is designed to train teamwork, problem-solving,

and leadership skills while fostering a sense of responsibility. Evening activities include bonfires, talent shows, prize distribution, Maulid storytelling, and sharing sessions among students to strengthen emotional and spiritual bonds. LDKS also serves as recreational learning that combines education, leadership, and spiritual experiences, providing an engaging learning environment distinct from regular study sessions. With outdoor approaches and interactive activities, LDKS attracts students' interest, especially the younger generation, encouraging active participation in religious activities. This strategy aligns with da'wah principles that adapt methods to the needs of the mad'u, integrating scholarly learning, character development, and spiritual experiences. The success of LDKS demonstrates that Majelis Taklim Al-Istiqomah can develop creative, holistic, and relevant da'wah methods for youth while preparing disciplined, independent, and strong leadership qualities among students.

Da'wah Strategy of "Tuhfatus Shibyan" at Majelis Taklim Al-Istiqomah through SWOT Analysis

The da'wah methods during the COVID-19 pandemic combined online and offline approaches, utilizing digital media and strengthening effective communication to ensure that religious messages remained conveyed, relevant, and accepted by the community despite social and physical limitations (Baidowi & Salehudin, 2021). The Tuhfatus Shibyan da'wah strategy leverages social media as the primary medium to expand reach and engagement with a broader audience. Preachers such as Felix Siauw and Firdaus Wong combine online and offline activities to reinforce the delivery of their da'wah messages (Weng, 2018).

Tuhfatus Shibyan is a religious educational book specifically designed for children and serves as one of the main pillars of the da'wah strategy at Majelis Taklim Al-Istiqomah Klender. According to Ustadz Khoiruddin, the author, Tuhfatus Shibyan means "Pearl for Children," reflecting the book's purpose as a valuable learning medium to cultivate religious awareness in students from an early age. The book contains fundamental Islamic knowledge, including Ilmu Tauhid (theology), Ilmu Fiqh (jurisprudence), Sirah Nabawiyah (Prophetic biography), as well as maqolah or mahfudzat, which are collections of sayings from scholars, companions, and hadiths. These materials are arranged to ensure that children develop a strong understanding of religion while providing an engaging and enjoyable learning experience.

The background of the book's development arose from Ustadz Khoiruddin's observation in 2010 that religious education in many TPA (Islamic learning centers for children) tended to be monotonous, focusing on writing and evaluation without sufficient space for in-depth explanations that would attract children's interest. To address this, Tuhfatus Shibyan employs the nadzom method, presenting material in the form of rhymed poetry so that children can memorize and understand the content without needing to write. This method makes learning more efficient, cheerful, and enjoyable. The book's compilation began in 2009 with the gradual collection of materials, but printing was delayed until 2011 due to the passing of Ustadz Khoiruddin's mother, Hj. Masani binti H. Abdul Muttalib, in 2010. The book was eventually published as a waqf for religious knowledge, with the reward dedicated to the late mother, reflecting both spiritual and social values. Through this creative and educational approach, Tuhfatus Shibyan becomes an effective da'wah medium for children while supporting Majelis Taklim's strategy to cultivate a young generation that understands religion comprehensively and enjoyably.

Tuhfatus Shibyan represents a significant innovation in Majelis Taklim Al-Istiqomah Klender's da'wah strategy, specifically aimed at enriching children's religious education. According to Ustadz

Khoiruddin, the book was designed to make religious learning more engaging and comfortable through a distinct approach from conventional methods. Using nadzom or rhymed poetry, the book delivers fundamental religious knowledge such as Ilmu Tauhid, Ilmu Fiqh, Sirah Nabawiyah, and maqolah/mahfuzat drawn from scholars, companions, and hadiths. The nadzom-based approach enables students, particularly children, to enjoy reading and memorizing the material while being motivated to thola'ah, the practice of studying and revisiting the book independently. This method makes the learning process more interactive, facilitates children's understanding of religious concepts, and cultivates a consistent and enjoyable learning habit.

The primary motivation for creating Tuhfatus Shibyan stemmed from the limitations of religious teaching methods around 2010–2011. Religious education in many TPAs tended to be monotonous, emphasizing writing and assessment while offering limited space for in-depth explanations, which was less appealing to children. Ustadz Khoiruddin recognized the need for a more lively and interactive medium, leading to the development of Tuhfatus Shibyan using the nadzom method. By allowing children to learn through rhymed poetry, this approach creates a cheerful and enjoyable learning environment. It not only enhances teaching effectiveness but also strengthens the appeal of da'wah, enabling children to better understand and retain religious lessons.

In addition to focusing on children, Tuhfatus Shibyan was designed with flexibility to be used by a broader audience, including teenagers and adults. Although initially targeted at TPA (Islamic learning centers for children) levels, the content and nadzom method allow the book to be adapted according to the needs of different users. Its publication in 2011 as a waqf for religious knowledge, with the reward dedicated to the late Hj. Masani binti H. Abdul Muttalib, reflects a profound spiritual value while also emphasizing the book's social and religious objectives. Thus, Tuhfatus Shibyan functions not only as an educational and da'wah medium but also as a form of devotion and respect for Islamic values and family, exemplifying Majelis Taklim Al-Istiqomah's innovative, inclusive, and sustainable da'wah strategy.

The communication challenges of da'wah through Tuhfatus Shibyan are particularly apparent in the digital era, as noted by Ustadz Khoiruddin. He explained that the current generation of youth is more attracted to digital devices, such as smartphones, which deliver information quickly and interactively. As a result, interest in reading books or religious texts, including Tuhfatus Shibyan, tends to decline. This shift in behavioral patterns indicates that traditional teaching methods, which emphasize direct reading and memorization, face significant competition from more attractive digital media. Furthermore, entertainment content and games compete for students' attention, making it increasingly complex to maintain their engagement in religious learning and necessitating a more adaptive communication strategy.

On the other hand, these challenges present opportunities for innovation in Majelis Taklim Al-Istiqomah's da'wah strategy. Tuhfatus Shibyan has the potential to be developed into digital formats, such as learning applications, interactive videos, or other online media, allowing it to align with the interests and learning styles of the younger generation. By leveraging technology without diminishing the traditional values contained in the book, the majelis taklim can expand the reach of da'wah while maintaining the effectiveness of religious education. This situation highlights the importance of organizations adjusting their resources and da'wah methods according to external opportunities and threats, in line with adaptive da'wah communication concepts proposed by Coulter.

As a nadzom-based teaching medium (rhymed poetry) at Majelis Taklim Al-Istiqomah Klender, Tuhfatus Shibyan has received various responses from students that reflect its effectiveness as a

da'wah tool. According to Ustadz Syahrul, student responses vary depending on their seriousness in learning: "For those who are truly serious, of course… in any place, some are serious, some less so; that's teaching, and that's the learning process." For highly motivated students, this method proves engaging and impactful, even inspiring some to become da'wah practitioners. For instance, a teacher named Ustadzah Ira from Majelis Taklim Al-Istiqomah brought Tuhfatus Shibyan to her hometown in Cianjur, where it was well-received by the local community, both children and adults. This demonstrates that the nadzom approach used in Tuhfatus Shibyan has broad appeal and can be adopted outside the Majelis Taklim Al-Istiqomah environment.

Moreover, the unique nadzom method makes the book easier to memorize and enjoy, particularly for children. Ustadz Khoiruddin noted that Tuhfatus Shibyan bears similarities to qasidah such as Burdah, which facilitates memorization. One 17-year-old student, Salman, stated, "Yes… when I'm alone, I sometimes suddenly sing the nadzom from Tuhfatus Shibyan; it's just fun." The nadzom approach allows students to engage emotionally with religious material, making learning more enjoyable and engaging. Positive responses from serious students, coupled with the book's dissemination to other regions, highlight the effectiveness of Majelis Taklim Al-Istiqomah's da'wah strategy using Tuhfatus Shibyan. However, the variation in responses also underscores the need for additional strategies to attract less enthusiastic students, emphasizing the importance of tailoring da'wah methods to audience characteristics to achieve organizational goals optimally.

CONCLUSION

The da'wah communication strategy implemented by Majelis Taklim Al-Istiqomah Klender through the use of the nadzom-based medium Tuhfatus Shibyan has proven effective in enhancing adolescents' understanding of basic Islamic teachings. The majelis successfully combines traditional learning methods with creative and innovative approaches, attracting the interest of young people amid the rapid growth of digital technology, which tends to fragment attention spans. Routine activities such as Qur'an reading and writing (BTQ) lessons, congregational prayers, and the Student Leadership Basic Training (LDKS) play an essential role in fostering discipline, independence, and religious character among participants, while also providing a meaningful and enjoyable learning experience.

Despite challenges such as competition with entertainment-oriented digital content and limited facilities, the majelis has been able to carry out non-formal da'wah in a contextual, practical, and relevant manner. The use of nadzom not only facilitates memorization and comprehension of religious material but also cultivates a love for Islam, resulting in positive impacts on behavior, learning motivation, and active participation in religious activities among adolescents. Therefore, this da'wah strategy demonstrates that creative and innovative approaches tailored to the characteristics of the audience can significantly enhance the effectiveness of religious education.

Recommendations include the development of creative da'wah methods integrated with digital technology to expand outreach, improvements in facilities and training for majelis administrators, and consistent implementation of routine activities. Furthermore, future research is encouraged to broaden the scope of study or measure the specific impact of the da'wah strategy. Meanwhile, government institutions and religious organizations can support the majelis through training, funding, and provision of technological communication tools, ensuring that community-based da'wah remains innovative and adaptive to contemporary developments.

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