

CULTURAL DA'WAH BASED ON ISLAMIC SOCIAL PEDAGOGY IN STRENGTHENING RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN THE COMMUNITY OF LAMONGAN

M. Fashih Alif Ba¹, Sauqi Futaqi², Hurin In Nihayatus S.³

^{1,2,3}Universitas Darul Ulum Lamongan, East Java, Indonesia
alrephfaseb05@gmail.com¹, sauqifutaqi@unisda.id², burininnihayatus@unisda.ac.id³

ABSTRACT: *This study examines the practice of cultural preaching (dakwah kultural) conducted by a religious leader in Plandi Hamlet, Lamongan, as a form of Islamic social pedagogy for strengthening religious moderation. Employing a qualitative case study approach with a historical perspective, data were collected through in-depth interviews and observations involving ten informants, including family members, close associates, and community leaders. Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The findings indicate that before 1988, Plandi Hamlet experienced complex religious conditions characterized by syncretic rituals under a tamarind tree, participation of Muslims in interfaith celebrations without adequate theological understanding, and the prevalence of gambling and alcohol consumption during funeral ceremonies. In response, the religious leader implemented a pulpit-less preaching strategy emphasizing dialogue, gradual persuasion, and engagement with community leaders through neighborhood meetings and social visits. Exemplary behavior (uswah hasanah) became the central pedagogical approach, demonstrated through consistency between teachings and daily actions. This approach contributed to significant social and religious transformations, including the establishment of Friday prayers in 1997, the reduction of syncretic practices, the development of Quranic educational institutions and mosque construction through charitable participation, and the decline of immoral cultural performances. Religious moderation was strengthened through interreligious harmony, reinterpretation of local religious spaces, and the institutionalization of routine religious practices. The study concludes that culturally grounded Islamic social pedagogy effectively promotes community-based religious moderation. The findings also demonstrate the importance of participatory, contextual, and culturally sensitive approaches in religious education at grassroots levels.*

Keywords: *Cultural da'wah; Islamic social pedagogy; religious moderation; non-formal Islamic education;*



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INTRODUCTION

Diversity is a social reality inherent in the lives of Indonesian people, both in urban and rural areas. Interactions between religious people, encounters between religious teachings and local traditions, and the accompanying social dynamics demand a da'wah

approach that is not only normative and doctrinal, but also contextual and adaptive. In a pluralistic society, a rigid and confrontational approach to da'wah has the potential to cause social rejection, so the da'wah model that emphasizes dialogue, example, and the creation of social harmony is needed as a concept of living together.

In this context, the concept of religious moderation is a strategic approach in building a peaceful and open religious life. Religious moderation emphasizes balanced, fair, tolerant, and rejection of extremism and openness in religion.¹ From the perspective of Islamic religious education, this concept has an important role in realizing multicultural education that is able to foster tolerance and respect for differences in a plural society². Religious moderation is not included to weaken religious commitments, but rather directs religious practices to remain proportionate and focus on social benefits.

One of the relevant da'wah approaches in a pluralistic society is cultural da'wah, which is a form of da'wah that does not rely solely on formal lectures, but is realized through social practices, community relations, and exemplary behavior in daily life. This approach is in line with cultural da'wah which places religious leaders as central actors in the process of internalizing Islamic values through direct interaction with society. Cultural da'wah that accommodates local culture wisely can be an effective means of instilling moderate Islamic values without causing social conflicts.³

From the perspective of Islamic education, cultural da'wah can be understood as a form of non-formal Islamic education that is directly natural in people's lives. Islamic education is not always organized through formal institutions, but also through habituation, example, and sustainable social practices. The example of religious leaders in social life has a significant influence on the formation of religious attitudes and behaviors, because religious values are more easily accepted through concrete examples than mere verbal advice.⁴

In addition, cultural da'wah can also be positioned as a practice of Islamic Social Pedagogy, which is the process of religious education that takes place through social

¹ Badrul Arifin and Hairul Huda, "Religious Moderation as an Approach in Indonesian Islamic Education," *TARLIM : JOURNAL OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION* 7, no. 2 (September 2024): 143–54, <https://doi.org/10.32528/tarlim.v7i2.2464>.

² Abdul Wahid, "Moderation Religion in the Perspective of Islamic Religious Education: Implementation in Multicultural Education in Indonesia," *Scholars* 2, no. 1 (August 2024): 29–36, <https://doi.org/10.31959/js.v2i1.2367>.

³ Ahmad Muhammad Mustain Nasoha et al., *Religious Moderation as a Bridge between Islamic Da'wah and Civic Education*, n.d.

⁴ Arifin and Huda, "Religious Moderation as an Approach in Indonesian Islamic Education."

relations, direct involvement, and the example of religious leaders in people's lives. Interpersonal relationships and social interactions between educators and students play an important role in the formation of learning experiences and religious values in Islamic education.⁵ Educators not only provide teaching, but also as role models in social relations that reflect Islamic values, so that the educational process takes place in a participatory and contextual manner.⁶

Islamic social pedagogy places society as a learning space, with social interaction as the main medium for internalizing religious values. In this context, cultural da'wah positions religious leaders as social educators who do not only convey teachings verbally. But it also guides the community through social connections, example, and direct involvement in community life. Through this approach, the values of religious moderation such as tolerance, justice, and balance can be internalized persuasively and humanistically through the social experience of a plural society.

The cultural da'wah approach is also closely related to strengthening the value of religious moderation in people's lives. Moderation values such as tolerance, justice, and balance can be effectively internalized through social interactions that are persuasive and humane. The implementation of religious moderation through educational approaches, both formal and non-formal, contributes significantly to building a harmonious and mutually respectful multicultural society.⁷

Plandi Hamlet, Sumberjo Village, Lamongan Regency, is an area with complex religious dynamics. In their socio-religious journey, the people of Plandi Hamlet experience encounters between local traditions, Islamic religious practices that develop gradually, and interactions with other religious groups. This condition requires the presence of religious leaders who not only play the role of conveying teachings, but also as social educators who are able to guide the community wisely and moderately. Concretely, before 1988, the people of Plandi Hamlet still adhered to four different religions (Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam), with religious practices mixed with syncretic local traditions, such as asking for prayers and giving offerings to a figure who was trusted as the guardian of the hamlet under the asem tree. The habit of drinking liquor and playing cards when a resident dies is also still commonplace, while non-formal Islamic education in the community has

⁵ Apdila Nursanti and Dentha Andriyanti Mawarni, *Social Interaction in Islamic Religious Education: A Sociological Overview*, 7 (2023).

⁶ Rahmi Ulya Hasibuan, Rustam Ependi, and Muhammad Akhir, *The Role of Social Interaction in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Learning in The Forma*, 5, no. 3 (2025): 369–74.

⁷ Wahid, "Religious Moderation in the Perspective of Islamic Religious Education."

not been carried out in a structured manner. These data are the empirical basis that Plandi Hamlet needs an adaptive and gradual da'wah approach, not just normative assumptions. Religious moderation in an Islamic perspective emphasizes an attitude of balance (wasathiyyah), tolerance, and respect for differences in religious social life so as to create a peaceful and harmonious life of society.⁸

In this context, the role of religious leaders through cultural da'wah is very strategic. Religious leaders not only transmit Islamic teachings, but also build social relations, setting a gradual and sustainable example. Da'wah that is oriented towards social transformation with a humanist approach is more effective in shaping changes in people's religious behavior than an instructive and formalistic approach.⁹

Various previous studies have discussed the concept of religious moderation and its implementation in the context of Islamic education and religious institutions. Literature review shows that research on religious moderation has increased significantly in recent years, especially after 2020, with a main focus on education, social harmony, and efforts to prevent radicalism in multicultural societies.¹⁰ A number of studies place religious moderation as part of the formal education process. For example, research on the implementation of religious moderation in Islamic Religious Education learning in schools shows that values such as tolerance, balance, and inclusive attitudes can be instilled through the learning process in the classroom.¹¹ Other research also highlights that Islamic educational institutions, including Islamic boarding schools and madrasas, have a strategic role in building a moderate attitude through curriculum, institutional culture, and educational leadership.¹²

Other research also highlights the application of religious moderation in various educational contexts to address various socio-religious problems, such as radicalism,

⁸ Yusuf Baihaqi, "Moderation of Prophetic Da'wah in the Perspective of the Quran," *Islamic Guidance Journal* 11, no. 1 (2018): 189–2019.

⁹ Muhammad Kafnun Kafi and Zahra Khusnul Lathifah, "Religious Moderation in a Contemporary Context," 2025 3 (June 2025).

¹⁰ Junaidi Junaidi and Sri Wahyuni Tanszil, "RELIGIOUS MODERATION RESEARCH (2016–2025): SYSTEMATIC REVIEW AND BIBLIOMETRIC MAPPING," *Harmony* 24, no. 2 (December 2025): 185–214, <https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v24i2.888>.

¹¹ Arifatul Ma'ani et al., "The Value of Religious Moderation in the Learning of Islamic Religious Education and Characteristics of Class XI Students at SMK Negeri 1 Lumajang Indonesia," *International Journal of Educational Research Excellence (IJERE)* 2, no. 2 (August 2023): 283–88, <https://doi.org/10.55299/ijere.v2i2.510>.

¹² Adi Wibowo et al., "Construction of Education Based on Religious Moderation: Role of Islamic Education Leadership in Promoting Tolerance and Social Harmony," *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Approach Research and Science* 2, no. 03 (July 2024): 1311–16, <https://doi.org/10.59653/ijmars.v2i03.995>.

religious exclusivism, and identity-based conflicts.¹³ In the context of Islamic education, religious moderation is often understood as a pedagogical strategy to build a balanced religious understanding and promote harmonious social life.¹⁴

However, most of the research still places religious moderation within the framework of formal educational institutions, such as schools, madrasas, Islamic boarding schools, and universities. Studies on religious moderation that develop through the practice of social da'wah in people's lives directly are still relatively limited. In fact, in many local communities in Indonesia, the process of internalizing Islamic values actually takes place through daily social interactions, the example of religious leaders, and socio-religious activities at the community level.

In addition, research on da'wah often focuses on da'wah through lectures, digital media, or formal religious activities, while da'wah practices based on social exemplary and daily interactions of the community have not been widely studied as a form of Islamic social pedagogy in building people's religious awareness.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by examining the practice of cultural da'wah carried out by religious leaders in Plandi Hamlet, Lamongan as a form of Islamic social pedagogy in strengthening religious moderation at the community level. In contrast to previous research that focused on formal educational institutions, this study places community as a social-religious learning space that takes place culturally, dialogically, and based on example.

Based on these conditions, this study seeks to fill the study gap by examining the practice of cultural da'wah carried out by religious leaders in Plandi Hamlet, Sumberjo Village, Lamongan Regency. This research aims to examine the history and practice of cultural da'wah carried out by religious leaders as a form of Islamic social pedagogy in strengthening religious moderation in the midst of the dynamics of religious diversity. In particular, this study aims to: (1) reconstruct the history of cultural da'wah carried out by religious leaders in Plandi Hamlet; (2) analyzing the strategy of cultural da'wah as a practice of Islamic social pedagogy; and (3) examine the contribution of da'wah to strengthening religious moderation at the community level.

¹³ Musyahid Musyahid and Nur Kolis, "Religious Moderation Implementation in Islamic Education: A Systematic Review," *FITRAH: Journal of the Study of Islamic Sciences* 9, no. 2 (December 2023): 265–84, <https://doi.org/10.24952/fitrah.v9i2.9547>.

¹⁴ Zeid B. Smeer and Inayatur Rosyidah, "RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION LEARNING TO COUNTER RADICALISM: Study at SMAN 1 Sugihwaras Bojonegoro," *ULUL ALBAB Journal of Islamic Studies* 22, no. 1 (June 2021): 176–202, <https://doi.org/10.18860/ua.v22i1.11837>.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of case study research and historical perspective. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to deeply understand the practice of cultural da'wah carried out by a deceased religious figure, especially in the context of the socio-religious transformation of the people of Plandi Hamlet. The focus of the research is not on quantitative measurement, but on the meaning, experience, struggle process, and social impact of da'wah practices that take place historically and contextually. This approach allows researchers to reconstruct the dynamics of da'wah based on the perspective of the actors and historical witnesses who are directly involved, as in oral history research.

The research was carried out in Plandi Hamlet, Lamongan Kota District, Lamongan Regency, which is the main area of da'wah activities of the religious leaders studied, named Kyai Abdul Wahab S.Pd.I. The subject of the study is a religious figure who has passed away, focusing on the struggle of the da'wah of Kyai Abdul Wahab S.Pd.I with a focus on: (1) the cultural da'wah strategy applied, (2) the process of socio-religious transformation of the community, and (3) the socio-religious heritage left behind in the form of mosques, TPQ, and the habituation of moderate Islamic values in the community.

The determination of informants was carried out using the purposive sampling technique, with the following criteria: (1) having personal closeness or direct relationship with religious leaders, (2) being involved or witnessing directly the da'wah process, and (3) understanding the socio-religious dynamics of Plandi Hamlet before and after da'wah activities took place. A total of 10 research informants included the wives of religious leaders, family members, close friends, comrades-in-arms, people who drove him to Plandi Hamlet, teachers' friends, and local community leaders. The selection of informants is carried out in stages until the data obtained reaches a level of saturation (data saturation).

The data collection technique was carried out through in-depth interviews and field observations. Interviews were used to explore historical narratives, personal experiences, and informants' perceptions of cultural da'wah practices. Observations were carried out to identify the social and physical traces of religious leaders, such as mosques, TPQ, and the religious practices of communities that have undergone transformation.

Data analysis used the interactive model Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which includes three main stages:

1. Data reduction, namely the process of selection, simplification, and categorization of data based on the focus of research, namely, cultural da'wah, social pedagogy, and religious moderation.
2. The presentation of data in the form of descriptive-thematic narratives to facilitate the interpretation of patterns and relationships between findings.
3. Conclusion drawing and verification, which is carried out gradually and continuously throughout the research process to ensure consistency and validity of interpretation.

The validity of the data in this study was carried out through source triangulation and technique triangulation. Triangulation of sources was carried out by comparing information obtained from various informants, such as family members of religious leaders, close friends, and community leaders who witnessed da'wah activities in Plandi Hamlet. Meanwhile, technical triangulation was carried out by comparing the results of interviews with the findings of field observations related to the social footprint and religious practices of the community. In addition, the researcher also conducted member checks on key informants to ensure the accuracy of historical data and research interpretation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-Religious Conditions of Plandi Hamlet Before the Presence of Religious Leaders

Based on the results of interviews with informants, the socio-religious conditions of the people of Plandi Hamlet before 1988 were in a complex dynamic. The wife of a religious leader said: *"At that time, the community here was still mixed, some were Buddhists, Hindus, Christians, and Muslims. The Christian began to enter because there was a teacher from outside who taught at a school near here, he invited the residents door to door. Until there are some Muslims who move."* In addition, the annual Christmas celebration is held openly and involves the participation of the Muslim community, both in the form of attendance and consumption of dishes that according to some residents are considered not fully in accordance with the provisions of Islamic law. This condition shows that the community's religious understanding is still loose and unstructured in the form of non-formal Islamic education activities such as routine recitation or taklim assembly, and there is still a fluid interaction space between religious teachings and local social practices.

In addition to these external influences, the religious practices of the community are also still mixed with local traditions that are syncretic. Friends of Religious Leaders (locals), explained:

"In the past, if there was a wish or wanted to plant, residents would come to a large asem tree on the edge of the hamlet. They asked for prayers to the village guard, not to Allah. It's been passed down from generation to generation."

This tradition reflects the mixing of Islamic beliefs and local beliefs that have taken root in people's lives. In the social context of society, close friends of religious leaders, stated:

"If there are residents who die, they are drinking alcohol and playing cards. It's normal, nothing is prohibited."

These practices show that Islamic sharia values have not been fully internalized in the social structure of society and that religious understanding is still loose. As emphasized in the concept of da'wah bil hal emphasizes that the representation of Islamic values is not enough through formal rhetoric, but requires internalization through social relations and real examples.¹⁵ The initial condition of Plandi Hamlet shows the need for an adaptive and humanist da'wah approach, not confrontational. Therefore, a rigid da'wah approach has the potential to cause social resistance, while a dialogical and contextual approach is more likely to bring about sustainable change.¹⁶

In the perspective of Islamic social pedagogy, society is a living learning space, where social interaction is the main medium of internalizing values.¹⁷ The condition of Plandi Hamlet before the presence of religious leaders can be seen that the social space has not been fully filled by structured non-formal Islamic education practices. Religious traditions have not been held through routine recitation forums, jam'iyah, or systematic socio-religious activities. Thus, this initial situation became an important starting point to understand why cultural da'wah later became a relevant and effective strategy in building people's religious awareness gradually.

In addition, in the context of religious moderation, the initial condition of Plandi Hamlet shows that interfaith interaction took place socially without being accompanied by a disproportionate theological understanding. The presence of Muslims in Christmas

¹⁵ Khairina Siregar, *Concept Of Islamic Education Psychology In Ihya' 'Ulm Al-Din by Al-Ghazali*, n.d.

¹⁶ Arifin and Huda, "Religious Moderation as an Approach in Indonesian Islamic Education."

¹⁷ Gimam Bagus Pangeran, Ahmad Zumaro, and Muhammad Hafidz Khusnadin, "Islamic-Based Social Education: An Integrated Approach in Building Character and Community Unity," *Journal of Education Research* 6, no. 1 (January 2025): 61–69, <https://doi.org/10.37985/jer.v6i1.2177>.

celebrations, for example, is based more on social relations and respect for invitations, rather than on awareness of clear boundaries of faith. Religious moderation does not mean adherence to the principles of belief, but rather places tolerance in the framework of balance (*tawazun*) and justice (*i'tidal*).¹⁸ Thus, the socio-religious condition of Plandi Hamlet before 1988 can be understood as an initial phase that presents the urgent need for an Islamic social pedagogical process that is able to reorganize the religious practices of the community wisely and sustainably.

Cultural Da'wah Strategy: A Dialogical Approach and Gradual Social Transformation

Based on the results of interviews with the son of a religious leader, his wife, and the informant who drove him to Plandi Hamlet, it was found that the da'wah strategy applied was not confrontational or instructive directly to the community. Religious leaders prioritize a dialogical and deliberation approach as the first step before making socio-religious changes. According to the Religious Figure's Son, explaining the process that every time the Religious Leader finds a community practice that is considered not in accordance with Islamic law, he first discusses and shares with the head of the hamlet. After that, the head of the hamlet will discuss with local community leaders. After gaining an understanding and considering the existing social aspects, the idea was then conveyed to the community through the RT forum or Anjangsana jam'iyyah activities. This pattern shows that da'wah is carried out through a structured but still humane social process, so that change does not cause sharp resistance. This model is in line with the concept of Islamic social pedagogy which places social interaction as a medium for internalizing religious values.¹⁹

One concrete example of this strategy is the process of establishing Friday Prayers in Plandi Hamlet in 1997. The wife, friend, and son of the Religious Leader explained that at first Friday Prayers were only held in Dampit Hamlet, even though Sumberjo Village consisted of several hamlets. Religious leaders view that the existence of Friday Prayers in Plandi is important for the spiritual development of the community so that it is not left behind. However, the realization process did not take place instantly. The head of the hamlet even had to coordinate with modern parties who had a strong influence on the social structure at that time. Through repeated dialogue and a persuasive approach, Friday

¹⁸ Wahid, "Religious Moderation in the Perspective of Islamic Religious Education."

¹⁹ Pangeran, Zumaro, and Khusnadin, "Islamic-Based Social Education."

prayers can finally be established at the Plandi Mosque, even though the physical condition is still simple. This success then triggered other hamlets to follow similar steps. This event shows that social changes initiated through cultural da'wah are able to produce structural transformations in people's religious practices.²⁰

This dialogical strategy is also seen in the attitude of tawasuth and tasamuh practiced when responding to the annual Christmas celebration which previously involved the Muslim community. Based on the testimony of three religious leader friends, he did not immediately prohibit or condemn the participation, even attending invitations several times as a form of social respect. However, he gradually provided understanding through the postulates of the Qur'an, especially Q.S. Al-Kafirun verse 6, which affirmed the boundaries of faith between Muslims and adherents of other religions. The attitude of attending the invitation reflects tasamuh, while the affirmation of the evidence at the same time reflects i'tidal; The two go hand in hand without eliminating each other, so that social tolerance remains within the clear boundaries of faith.²¹ Thus, da'wah does not break social relations, but still maintains religious principles in proportion.

Transformation also occurs in the social practice of the community when there are residents who have died. The habit of drinking liquor and playing cards that were previously considered commonplace is slowly abandoned after religious leaders give a firm tausiah but still accompanied by an example of behavior. According to the Friends of Religious Leaders, he emphasized that what was conveyed was always in line with his daily actions. This consistency fosters a sense of reluctance and trust in the community, so that change occurs naturally without structural pressure. In the perspective of Islamic social pedagogy, this phenomenon shows that the internalization of values can take place through social experiences and interactions between individuals in daily life, rather than solely through formal learning activities.²²

The Dialogical Approach and Gradual Social Transformation carried out by religious leaders in Plandi Hamlet is in line with the concept of da'wah bil hal, namely da'wah through real deeds and examples in social life.²³ Cultural da'wah practiced in Plandi Hamlet also shows that social transformation is more effective when it is built through emotional closeness, deliberation, and community participation. Cultural da'wah practiced

²⁰ Kafi and Lathifah, "Religious Moderation in a Contemporary Context."

²¹ Wahid, "Religious Moderation in the Perspective of Islamic Religious Education."

²² D. A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (Pearson Education, Incorporated, 2015), <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=o6DfBQAAQBAJ>.

²³ Siregar, *Concept Of Islamic Education Psychology In Ihya' 'Ulum Al-Din by Al-Ghazali*.

in Plandi Hamlet uses an approach that reflects the principles of *tawasuth* (middle way), *tasamuh* (tolerance), and *i'tidal* (justice) in religious moderation, because changes are made gradually by considering the social conditions of the community.²⁴ Thus, the cultural da'wah strategy implemented does not only function as a delivery of teachings, but as a social education process that forms collective awareness and strengthens the social cohesion of the people of Plandi Hamlet in a sustainable manner.

Exemplary as the Core of Islamic Social Pedagogy in Cultural Da'wah

Based on the overall results of interviews with the wives of religious leaders, his children, and informants involved in the initial process of da'wah in Plandi Hamlet, it was found that the main strength of cultural da'wah lies in the aspect of exemplary (*uswah hasanah*) that is consistent in daily life. Religious leaders do not only convey Islamic teachings verbally through recitation or *jam'iyah* forums, but also display harmony between speech and action. His wife emphasized her husband's consistency in practicing what was conveyed. According to him, Kyai Abdul Wahab not only teaches the obligation to pray five times, but also practices it *istiqamah* by attending the mosque on time unless it is obstructed by *udzur*. This commitment was maintained until the end of his life, where he still had time to perform *Dhuhur* prayers in congregation with the residents before he died. In addition, the friend who escorted him stated that what he conveyed was always practiced in social life, so that the community could see directly the form of action of the values taught. The exemplary approach emphasizes on setting a good example from teachers or educators, because students tend to imitate what they see and hear from the people around them.²⁵ This consistency builds moral legitimacy in the eyes of society and gives birth to a sense of reluctance that is not based on formal authority, but on personal integrity.

This example was seen from the early phase of his arrival in Plandi Hamlet. According to the information of the daughters of religious leaders, the recitation of the Qur'an is carried out regularly in the mosque with participants of all ages, from children to elders, and is taught directly by the family without selflessness. When the construction of the mosque took place, the recitation activities were temporarily moved to his private home, showing that the process of religious education was not dependent on the availability of formal facilities. This pattern is in line with the principles of non-formal Islamic social pedagogy, which places the internalization of values as a continuous process

²⁴ Ibid.; Arifin and Huda, "Religious Moderation as an Approach in Indonesian Islamic Education."

²⁵ Arifin and Huda, "Religious Moderation as an Approach in Indonesian Islamic Education."

in various living spaces, rather than activities limited to specific buildings or structures.²⁶ This practice reflects that the process of internalizing religious values can take place in a flexible, adaptive manner.

Exemplary is also seen in his active involvement in the social life of the community. According to his close friend, in every hamlet deliberation, religious leaders always follow the procedures that have been agreed upon and comply with collective decisions, not imposing their personal authority. His son even said that two days before his death, he was still discussing with the youth about the development of the hamlet. This consistency emphasizes that the role of religious leaders is not limited to the delivery of normative teachings, but also as social educators who are present in community life, in line with the principles of Islamic social pedagogy that place interpersonal relationships as the main medium of value instilling.²⁷

In the context of the transformation of people's religious practices, example is a key factor in the success of change. According to his comrades-in-arms, when he gave directions related to habits that were not in accordance with the sharia, such as the practice of drinking liquor or the tradition of asking for prayers from other than Allah. His son added that non-Muslim residents fought from behind by making fun of him in front of other residents, and there were even residents who adhered to Islam also took down religious figures. But he responded patiently and calmly without replying to any words. On the contrary, the change occurred gradually because the community witnessed his integrity and seriousness in teaching the teachings conveyed. This shows that da'wah carried out through example has stronger effectiveness than an approach that only relies on formal lectures.²⁸ In the tradition of classical Islamic thought, the method of da'wah bil hal is understood as the delivery of Islamic teachings through real actions and morals in social life so that Islamic values can be accepted more persuasively by the community.²⁹ Therefore, da'wah bil things is more effective than a rhetorical approach alone, because religious values are more easily accepted through concrete examples than just verbal advice.

Furthermore, this example contributes to strengthening religious moderation in Plandi Hamlet. His attitude of still respecting interfaith social relations, but firmly maintaining the faith, shows a balance between the principles of tasamuh (tolerance) and

²⁶ Zulkifli, Muhammad Fahrurrozi, and Ratna Permata Sari, *Non-Formal Islamic Education in Shaping the Religious Character of Urban Communities in Sekarbela and Pesinggahan, Mataram City*, 16, no. 2 (2025): 485–99.

²⁷ Pangeran, Zumaro, and Khushadin, "Islamic-Based Social Education."

²⁸ Siregar, *Concept Of Islamic Education Psychology In Ihya' Ulum Al-Din by Al-Ghazali*.

²⁹ Ibid.

i'tidal (fair firmness). In the framework of religious moderation, this approach reflects the implementation of tawazun values, which are maintaining social harmony without sacrificing faith commitment. This attitude is in line with the principle of religious moderation which emphasizes the values of balance (tawazun), justice (i'tidal), and tolerance (tasamuh) in the social life of a pluralistic society.³⁰

Based on these findings, it can be understood that exemplification is the core of Islamic social pedagogy practiced through cultural da'wah in Plandi Hamlet. Socio-religious transformation is not born from structural pressures or formal instructions, but rather from the process of internalizing values built through consistent and integrity social relationships. This model shows that cultural da'wah is not just a religious communication strategy, but a social education process that instills Islamic values in a deep and sustainable manner in people's lives.

Cultural Da'wah as Strengthening Religious Moderation at the Grassroots Level

Based on the results of interviews with informants, the practice of cultural da'wah carried out by religious leaders in Plandi Hamlet not only has an impact on changing religious rituals, but also makes a significant contribution to strengthening the values of moderation of religious people in the social life of the community. Religious moderation in this context is not understood as a compromise on the teachings of Islam, but as an effort to place the values of faith within the framework of balance, justice, and social tolerance.³¹

At the level of strengthening communal religious moderation, the same indicators of tasamuh and i'tidal were also seen to be repeated in his attitude towards Christmas celebrations which previously involved the broad participation of Muslims. According to his comrades-in-arms, he did not take confrontational steps towards the people involved, but provided a gradual understanding through the postulates of the Qur'an and a dialogical approach so that the community could distinguish the limits of social participation that were allowed and those that were not in accordance with the sharia. This consistency of attitude ultimately forms a pattern of permanent change at the community level, not just a situational response to a single event. In religious moderation, the principle of tasamuh shows an attitude of tolerance towards differences, while i'tidal emphasizes justice and firmness in maintaining the principle of faith.³² In other words, social relations are

³⁰ Arifin and Huda, "Religious Moderation as an Approach in Indonesian Islamic Education."

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

maintained, but the theological consciousness of the community is slowly strengthened. This strategy shows the implementation of religious moderation, namely fostering religious awareness through an educational and cultural approach, not a coercive approach. Strengthening religious moderation is more effective through cultural and dialogical approaches that persuasively touch people's awareness.³³

The strengthening of religious moderation is also seen in the transformation of local traditions that were previously mixed with non-Islamic belief practices. According to his friends, wife, and children, before the arrival of religious leaders, the residents of Plandi Hamlet had the habit of asking for prayers and giving offerings to a figure who was trusted as the guardian of the hamlet under the asem tree. Religious leaders do not remove the tradition frontally, but direct it slowly: prayers and supplications are diverted so that they are only addressed to Allah SWT, while offerings are replaced by food products distributed to the citizens. This gradual approach is an indicator of *tawasuth*, accommodating existing spaces and habits without confrontation, while directing the substance to be in accordance with the Islamic faith.³⁴ In Islamic social pedagogy, this process can be understood as the internalization of values through continuous social interaction. Islamic social pedagogy places social interaction as the main medium for learning religious values in people's lives.³⁵ So that people learn to understand the teachings of Islam through collective experience, not through ideological pressure.

In addition, the existence of *jam'iyah anjangsana* which is carried out regularly in each RT is a strategic social space in building the awareness of the moderate community. The activity not only contains *tahlil* readings, but also religious briefings that are delivered contextually according to the needs of the community. This forum functions as a non-formal Islamic education media that is participatory in the life of the community.³⁶ Non-formal Islamic education plays an important role in shaping the religious character of the community through recitation activities, *taklim* assemblies, and community-based learning.³⁷ Through the forum, values such as *ukhuwah*, social justice, and collective responsibility grow naturally in the lives of citizens.

³³ Agus Mubarak, *DA'WAH PARADIGM OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA*, 4, no. 2 (2023).

³⁴ Arifin and Huda, "Religious Moderation as an Approach in Indonesian Islamic Education."

³⁵ Pangeran, Zumaro, and Khusnadin, "Islamic-Based Social Education."

³⁶ Zulkifli, Fahrurrozi, and Sari, *Non-Formal Islamic Education in Shaping the Religious Character of Urban Communities in Sekarbela and Pesinggahan, Mataram City*.

³⁷ Renanda Ardi Rifkan Pratama et al., *Exploring Non-Formal Islamic Education: Research Trends, Contextual Practices, and Participant Impacts (2015–2025)*, n.d.

The impact of this approach is seen in relatively harmonious social change and minimizing conflict. The practice of drinking alcohol and gambling when a resident died was gradually abandoned without any significant social turmoil. Society shows a sense of reluctance and respect not because of pressure, but because of the awareness that grows from a consistent process of social education. This is reinforced that strengthening diverse moderation is more effective through interpersonal relationships and exemplary rather than formalistic approaches that are purely instructive.³⁸

Thus, cultural da'wah in Plandi Hamlet can be understood as a form of da'wah bil hal with a model of strengthening religious moderation at the grassroots level based on Islamic social pedagogy. The da'wah process carried out by religious leaders not only shapes changes in religious rituals, but also builds a more balanced and harmonious structure of collective consciousness. Because religious moderation in this context is not just a normative concept, but a social practice that lives in people's daily interactions. This makes cultural da'wah a form of da'wah bil things that emphasizes examples and social practices in people's lives (Siregar, 2020).³⁹ The changes in Plandi Hamlet show that a sustainable socio-religious transformation is born from a humanist, dialogical, and community-based approach, so that moderate Islamic values can be deeply internalized in the life of the community.

Da'wah Heritage: Socio-Religious Transformation of Plandi Hamlet Community

The cultural da'wah carried out by Kyai Abdul Wahab not only succeeded in changing religious practices in his time, but also left a legacy of social transformation that continues to this day. Based on interviews with informants, the socio-religious condition of Plandi Hamlet shows significant progress after his leadership.

Inclusive Religious Composition

The son of a religious leader explained the current state of religious society:

"Now almost all residents have embraced Islam. Only one person who used to be a Hindu leader remains, and one Christian family still survives. But the harmony is maintained."

This condition shows that the da'wah carried out is not repressive towards minorities. Although the majority of citizens have embraced Islam, the space for non-

³⁸ Kafi and Lathifah, "Religious Moderation in a Contemporary Context."

³⁹ Siregar, *Concept Of Islamic Education Psychology In Ihya' 'Ulum Al-Din by Al-Ghazali*.

Muslims to coexist remains open. This reflects the implementation of religious moderation in the form of true *tasamuh* (tolerance)—not just a concept, but a real practice in daily life.⁴⁰

Transformation of the Meaning of Space and the Practice of Prayer Together

Interestingly, spiritual transformation does not necessarily mean the total removal of cultural heritage. Explain the ongoing practice of joint prayer:

"Every time there is an invitation such as a tingkepan (mitoni), circumcision celebration, or a prayer of salvation, which invites the closest neighbors, now it is in accordance with Islamic law. The event began with a prayer led by a religious figure. Now it is passed on by the generation after Abah."

More interestingly, the site of this joint prayer still retains what was once a center of syncretic practice:

"The place is still under the asem tree next to the lake, but the contents are different. Now the prayer is addressed only to Allah, not to the caretaker of the hamlet anymore."

This phenomenon shows a transformation of the meaning of space: the physical location is still maintained as a cultural heritage, but the spiritual orientation has changed completely according to Islamic teachings. From the perspective of religious anthropology, it is a form of acculturation in which new values fill old cultural spaces without having to destroy them.⁴¹ This is in line with the principle of *tawasuth* (middle way) in religious moderation.⁴²

Development of TPQ Based on Community Participation

The wife of a religious leader told the history of the development of TPQ pioneered by her husband:

"In the past, TPQ was still in an old house, the building was made of simple wood. Now a permanent building has been erected. The construction has never asked for government assistance. Abah used to direct residents to contribute according to their ability. He said, this should be a charity for the residents themselves."

His wife explained more about the philosophy behind the approach:

"The idea came from Abah. He wants residents to feel belonging, not just receiving assistance. Alhamdulillah, the residents are working together to build. Now the TPQ is good and continues to run."

⁴⁰ Arifin and Huda, "Religious Moderation as an Approach in Indonesian Islamic Education."

⁴¹ Nabila Fajriyanti Muhyin, "THE CONCEPTS OF CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION OF THE QUR'AN ABDULLAH SAEED," *Tanzil: Journal of Quranic Studies* 6, no. 1 (October 2023): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.20871/tjsq.v6i1.289>.

⁴² Arifin and Huda, "Religious Moderation as an Approach in Indonesian Islamic Education."

This approach shows that religious leaders not only focus on the spiritual aspect, but also apply the principles of community empowerment. The concept of charity is instilled as a collective motivation that strengthens a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for the sustainability of religious education. In the perspective of Islamic social pedagogy, this process creates collective learning in which the community not only receives, but also actively contributes to the development of educational facilities.⁴³

Construction of Mosques with the Same Principles

The wife of a religious figure also explained about the process of building a mosque that applies similar principles:

"Mosques are also built in the same way. Abah submitted through the mosque takmir, then the residents were invited to deliberate. Everything is done together, without begging outside. "The principle is to make it a charity for the people here."

This community participation-based development creates a strong emotional and spiritual bond to the place of worship, while instilling the value of collective responsibility in every citizen.

Cultural Transformation and Rejection of Disobedience

One of the significant changes is the reduction of puppet and sinden performances that used to be often held. The wife of a religious figure explained the background and rejection strategy carried out by her husband:

"In the past, there were often puppets and sinden. But now it's rare. Not because the residents don't like the puppets, but because the event is often used as a place for drinking and drinking by some residents. When someone started to bring liquor secretly, Abah immediately invited his friends home. He has never been angry in public, but with such actions, the citizens become embarrassed and understanding."

Behavioral rejection is not just a verbal prohibition. This shows the effectiveness of da'wah bil p.⁴⁴ Example in the form of real actions is more imprinted in the hearts of the community than just a lecture. The attitude of religious leaders who leave the performance location when disobedience begins to occur becomes a subtle but effective social protest. In the concept of religious moderation, this approach reflects the principles of i'tidal

⁴³ Pangeran, Zumaro, and Khusnadin, "Islamic-Based Social Education"; Senator Adi Praselia, "Reconsidering Islamic Education Pedagogical Approach within Islamic Studies," *Journal of Islamic Education Research* 12, no. 1 (June 2024): 1, <https://doi.org/10.36667/jppi.v12i1.1568>.

⁴⁴ Siregar, *Concept Of Islamic Education Psychology In Ihya' 'Ulum Al-Din by Al-Ghazali*.

(justice) and tawazun (balance) that are not frontal, but remain firm in holding the principles.⁴⁵

Institutionalization of Routine Religious Practices

The Boy of Religious Leaders explained the current religious conditions that are increasingly structured and institutionalized:

"Now the five-time call to prayer is always resounding, congregational prayers are routinely established in mosques. Friday prayers are neatly scheduled. The activities of the anjangsana or routine RT are also clear in the event: tablilan and discussing the shortcomings or needs of each RT."

The regularity of religious practices shows that the transformation initiated by religious leaders is not temporary, but sustainable and institutionalized in the social structure of society.⁴⁶ The anjangsana forum, which may initially only contain tahlil readings, is now also a discussion space to solve social problems in the community. It reflects the integration between religious values and social concern in the lives of citizens, the essence of religious moderation that is not only ritualistic, but also grounded in social reality.⁴⁷

Reflection: The Sustainability of Cultural Da'wah

The legacy of KH. A in Plandi Hamlet shows that socio-religious transformation built through a humanist, dialogical, and exemplary-based approach has a strong durability beyond the life of the character. Mosques, TPQs, routine religious practices, social forums, even harmonious relations with minorities—all are proof that cultural da'wah not only transforms individuals, but also builds a solid social system. Effective religious moderation is strengthened through interpersonal relationships and examples, not instructive formalistic approaches.⁴⁸ Plandi Hamlet is a concrete example of how moderate Islamic values can be deeply and sustainably internalized in people's lives when da'wah is carried out with wisdom, example, and appreciation for existing social reality.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion of the cultural da'wah practices carried out by Kyai Abdul Wahab in Plandi Hamlet, Lamongan, several important conclusions can be drawn. First, prior to the presence of religious leaders (before 1988), the socio-religious

⁴⁵ Arifin and Huda, "Religious Moderation as an Approach in Indonesian Islamic Education."

⁴⁶ Zulkifli, Fahrurrozi, and Sari, *Non-Formal Islamic Education in Shaping the Religious Character of Urban Communities in Sekarbela and Pesinggahan, Mataram City*.

⁴⁷ Wahid, "Religious Moderation in the Perspective of Islamic Religious Education."

⁴⁸ Kafi and Lathifah, "Religious Moderation in a Contemporary Context."

conditions of Plandi Hamlet were characterized by religious plurality and syncretic practices. The community adhered to Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam, while local traditions such as praying to village guardians under asem trees remained prevalent. Social practices, including gambling and alcohol consumption during funeral ceremonies, were also common. These conditions highlighted the need for a gradual, adaptive, and humanistic approach to da'wah. Over time, significant transformation occurred, with the majority of residents embracing Islam while maintaining harmonious relations with the remaining Hindu and Christian minorities.

Second, Kyai Abdul Wahab implemented a dialogical and deliberative strategy of cultural da'wah. Social and religious changes were preceded by consultation with village leaders and community members through deliberative forums and religious gatherings. This approach successfully facilitated important transformations, including the establishment of Friday prayers, changes in funeral practices, and the strengthening of Islamic identity while preserving social harmony. These practices reflected the principles of religious moderation, particularly tawasuth (moderation), tasamuh (tolerance), and i'tidal (justice).

Third, exemplary behavior (uswah hasanah) constituted the core of Islamic social pedagogy in Plandi. Kyai Abdul Wahab demonstrated consistency between religious teachings and daily conduct through active social engagement, discipline in worship, and patience in facing resistance. This moral example generated trust and encouraged voluntary social transformation, confirming the effectiveness of da'wah bil hal. Fourth, cultural da'wah significantly strengthened religious moderation through educational and cultural approaches rather than coercion. Religious values became institutionalized through communal worship, religious education, and social activities.

Finally, the legacy of Kyai Abdul Wahab demonstrates that cultural da'wah based on dialogue, exemplary conduct, and community participation can create sustainable socio-religious transformation. Theoretically, this study enriches the discourse on da'wah bil hal and Islamic social pedagogy, while practically offering an effective model for promoting religious moderation in pluralistic societies. This research is limited to historical reconstruction based on the memories of informants who have potential memory limitations. In addition, the focus of the research is only on one religious figure in one location, so it cannot be generalized widely. Further research with a long-term ethnographic approach is needed to understand the dynamics of the sustainability of

da'wah after the death of religious figures, as well as comparative studies in other locations with different social contexts.

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