

When religion meets culture: Inside Muhammadiyah's "cultural da'wah study" on TvMu

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Abstract: This research examines the intersection of religion and culture within Muhammadiyah, specifically through the "*Pengkajian Dakwah Kultural*" [cultural da'wah study] program broadcasted on YouTube's TvMu. The study aims to explore how Muhammadiyah uses digital media to promote cultural da'wah while maintaining its religious integrity. Using a qualitative approach with narrative analysis, the study analyzes the content of TvMu's programs from 2021 to 2024, including dialogues, sermons, and cultural performances. The findings suggest that Muhammadiyah has embraced a more inclusive and adaptive approach to cultural integration, seeing culture not as a threat but as an integral part of its da'wah. The study reveals that digital media, particularly YouTube, plays a vital role in facilitating this integration, making religious teachings more accessible and relevant to a younger, tech-savvy audience. The research underscores the importance of balancing cultural authenticity with religious principles in the context of modern-day da'wah.

Keywords: cultural da'wah; digital media; Muhammadiyah; religion and culture; TvMu; YouTube.

1. Introduction

The integration of digital media into religious outreach is a growing global phenomenon, reflecting broader trends in how religious communities interact with cultural diversity and technological change. Internationally, digital platforms such as social media, online courses, and streaming services (like YouTube) have democratized religious education and expression, enabling individuals from diverse backgrounds to access and participate in religious dialogues, teachings, and cultural performances without geographical barriers. This global digital shift enables religious organizations to promote interfaith dialogue and religious moderation, especially among the tech-savvy younger generation, thereby increasing religious tolerance and reducing radicalism and intolerance (Missier, 2025). The effort to balance cultural authenticity with religious principles is not unique to Muhammadiyah or Indonesia; churches and missions worldwide are grappling with maintaining theological integrity while adapting to new digital communication norms. A collaborative and contextual approach is considered crucial in developing an inclusive global religious community capable of thriving in the digital age, recognizing the potential benefits and risks posed by digital outreach, such as misinformation or the commodification of religion (Bogdan, 2024).

The issue of religion and culture is an important topic that gives rise to different assessments in society. There are those who argue that religion must be sterile towards culture; there are also those who argue that religion can dialogue with culture about various things that must be considered to maintain religious purity (Qomariyah & Hasan, 2025). Amin Abdullah explained that the dialectic of religion and culture that occurs in society has given rise to subjective pejorative. There are those who are passionate about preserving religion so that it does not mix with local culture. There are also other parties who are enthusiastic about building a dialectical pattern between religion and culture so that a harmonious relationship can occur. Indications of dialectical practice can be seen in the phenomenon of changes in religious understanding and behavior

patterns from pure Islamic traditions (Martin et al., 2001).

When religion uses all means to carry out dialectics with various cultures in society. Therefore, we need to change our traditions towards each other. This means that there is a negotiation process that may result in changes in the form of each tradition, but they are independent of each other. Thus, the relationship between religion, culture and science is an inseparable unity (Naamy, 2022). The dialectic between religion and culture in Muslim society generally gives rise to subjective pejorative. Some are enthusiastic about preserving religion from possible acculturation to local culture, while at the other pole, they are busy and focused on building a dialectical pattern between the two. Indications of the dialectical process between religion and culture in Islam can be seen in the phenomenon of changes in patterns of religious understanding and religious behavior from pure Islam to local Islam (Hasan & Susanto, 2021).

The dialectic of religion and culture can simply be interpreted as a dynamic process of mutual influence between religious teachings and local and global cultural values. Religion provides direction for values and norms, while culture becomes a medium for religious expression in social life. Azra further explained that the dialectic of religion and culture occurred in historical processes, especially in the spread of Islam in the archipelago. He saw how Islamic values entered and experienced acculturation with local culture, such as art, customs and social systems. It is in this process that the form of dialectics creates a distinctive form of religion (Azra & Hasan, 2002).

The existence of colorful religious expressions indicates how strongly local traditions influence the original character of formal religion and vice versa. This process of mutual influence in anthropological language is called "religious and cultural dialectics". This phenomenon in anthropology is also called the process of externalization, objectivation, and the process of internalization (Berger & Luckmann, 2023). In reality, compromised religious practices often invite serious debate and polemics among Muslim communities. For one group, things like this are considered heresy, *churafat* and superstition that is not based on Islamic teachings; this group is called the puritan group. For other groups, traditions adopted from local culture are valid because they are considered a medium for prayers to be conveyed to Allah (Azra & Hasan, 2002).

Religion and culture are two different entities, but both have an important and sensitive role in society. Both are primordial aspects that are inherent in individuals and communities and mutually influence each other. In the internal relations of Muslims, there are three patterns of religious and cultural relations, namely religious relations and local traditions, religious relations and entities and religious relations and Islamic thought. When culture meets religion, there will be a reciprocal relationship between the two. Therefore, it is not surprising that both of them seek influence and authority in their interactions (Ilyas, 2023).

From the description above, it can be understood that the relationship between religion and culture is a dialectical relationship and influences each other. The integration of religion and culture is also an interesting phenomenon to observe. There are some who maintain religious purity without being touched by local culture and tradition. There are also those who understand that the two can be combined and complement each other. The author does not focus on dialogue between religions and cultures from a *fiqh* perspective. However, this research will focus on the religious studies approach. So, the emic perspective in this research will be prioritized to read the relationship between religion, art and culture obtained from cyber data in the form of broadcasts on YouTube TVMu. The religious studies approach is more open in looking at the relationship between religion and culture. So that exploration will be more open, not immediately giving a rigid decision whether art and culture are haram or permissible.

The interaction between religion and culture is a theme that continues to be relevant in contemporary Islamic studies. Zainal Abidin's research in (Djatkiko, 2019) shows how Nada FM Radio in Madura succeeded in combining Islamic preaching with local culture. Through a broadcast pattern that is accommodating to Madurese arts and traditions, this radio is not only a preaching channel for preachers, but also a promotional medium for artists, as well as a cultural space that strengthens the community's Islamic identity without abandoning its cultural roots. Similar findings were present in Abdul Rahman's dissertation (Aritonang, 2024) which observed the community in Magicit-Hirit, where religious practices such as recitation of the Qur'an, *wiridan*, *yasinan*, and social events such as weddings and circumcisions show integration between Islamic values and local wisdom. This relationship is not merely coexistence, but rather

a form of synergy that enriches religious practice at the grassroots level.

In a global context, (Kuppinger, 2017) highlights the creative contribution of the Muslim community in Stuttgart, Germany, which, through works of art such as mosque design, culinary and simple fashion, has helped shape the modern urban cultural landscape. These works are not only rooted in Islamic values but are also part of a wider urban aesthetic discourse, showing that Muslims are active and innovative cultural producers. Meanwhile, Aguilar in (Hidayatulloh & Saumantri, 2024) emphasized that religion and culture are not rigid entities, but continue to experience shifts through ritual and performative practices. He emphasized that in ritual spaces, the boundaries between religion and culture become fluid, open to interpretation and renegotiation.

In Indonesia, harmonization between art and religion is consistently developed by Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). As noted (Riyadi & Amrullah, 2022), NU utilizes the art of music as an effective medium for da'wah, especially through the Sufism approach. Religious music, which was previously considered taboo by some groups, has become a means of touching the hearts of people across all ages. This cultural da'wah tradition is a legacy of Walisongo, which, according to (Asmar, 2020), has proven that Islam can blend with local culture without losing its essence. Through this approach, NU positions Islam not as an antithesis to art and culture, but as a complement and protector of noble values in society's traditions.

Muhammadiyah is a modern Islamic movement in Indonesia which shows its existence through various charitable efforts in the fields of education, health and social welfare. Since the beginning, this movement has been known for *tajdid* and the purification of Islamic teachings through the *tarjih* method, including determining the start of Ramadan and other holidays, even though it differs from government decisions. However, this purification approach invited criticism, one of which was from Abdul Munir Mulkhan, who considered that Muhammadiyah was not accommodating enough for local cultural expressions that were still within the corridor of commendable morals (Suparto, 2009).

This criticism was discussed in the 43rd Muktamar in 1995, which encouraged Muhammadiyah to formulate a new approach in the Tarjih National Conference, such as decentralizing fatwas and opening space for plurality of religious thought in the local cultural context (Budiman et al., 2025). Kuntowijoyo emphasized that returning to the Qur'an and Sunnah does not mean being anti-cultural; Muhammadiyah should become a new cultural movement (Bahari & Sivana, 2022).

In a field study in Jember, Mulkhan identified three groups of Muhammadiyah members: anti-TB puritans (superstition, heresy, *churafat*), tolerant groups, and groups who continued to practice traditions (Shiddiq et al., 2024). However, Ahmad Najib Burhani denied this anti-cultural view, pointing out that KH Ahmad Dahlan actually valued Javanese culture as part of Islamic identity (Effendi et al., 2020). In response, Muhammadiyah is now developing the concept of cultural da'wah to bridge religion and culture, and strengthen dialogue between Islamic values and local realities (Machfiroh et al., 2024).

To answer the arts and culture problems faced, Muhammadiyah initiated the concept of cultural da'wah, which aims to instil Islamic values in all dimensions of life by paying attention to cultural aspects. Cultural da'wah focuses on understanding humans as cultural beings, by paying attention to customs, norms, art and other cultural products (Abudi, 2023).

The cultural dialogue at Muhammadiyah, which was broadcast on YouTube TvMu and UMJ in the month of Ramadan 1445 H, aims to develop cultural da'wah. In the dialogue, Haidar Nasir explained that cultural da'wah needs to integrate cultural potential in da'wah, while still inviting people towards goodness (Haedar, 2023). Abdul Muti added that cultural da'wah must focus on language and understanding of society, not just spreading new norms that are not in accordance with local conditions (Chasanah, 2022). Cultural da'wah sees culture as part of human nature, which includes religion, philosophy, art, and various social symbols that direct humans to understanding and acting in accordance with Islam (Falah, 2023). Muhammadiyah emphasizes that culture must reflect faith and pious deeds, with art as an effective means of da'wah (Tarjih, 2018).

However, the application of cultural da'wah among the people still requires clarification, especially regarding the capabilities of art and culture in da'wah. Muhammadiyah seeks to facilitate art as a medium for da'wah through various initiatives, such as interaction with the arts community, collaboration with educational institutions, and awards for artists who are committed to da'wah (Abudi, 2023). Based on the

decision of the Majelis Tarjih Muhammadiyah, preachers are expected to utilize communication technology to carry out art-based da'wah, such as photography, cinematography and graphic design (Tarjih, 2018).

In its implementation, Muhammadiyah also encourages the establishment of Arts Faculties at Muhammadiyah Universities to study art in the context of cultural da'wah. *Suara Muhammadiyah* Magazine (2023) expressed the importance of art in refining humans and bridging religious teachings with society, as well as strengthening cultural da'wah as an effort to present more cultured humans (Haedar, 2023).

This research will focus on how Muhammadiyah represents cultural da'wah through programs on YouTube TvMu, with an emic approach to understanding the relationship between religion and culture in the context of da'wah. This research aims to describe the dialectic between religion and culture in Muhammadiyah and identify how cultural da'wah is applied in the form of art and culture broadcast on the YouTube channel.

2. Research Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with an interpretive paradigm to understand the meaning of culture and religion in TvMu broadcasts (TV Muhammadiyah) which are rebroadcast via TvMu's official YouTube channel (Rahman, 2025). The main focus of observation is programs related to Muhammadiyah's arts, culture and cultural da'wah in the 2021–2024 period. Researchers specifically studied broadcasts in the form of dialogues, lectures and art performances that depict the dialectical dynamics between religion and culture in the Muhammadiyah context. The main data was obtained from TvMu YouTube shows, such as the "Cultural Fiqh" program, "Malam Mangayubagyo", and the series "Review of Ramadan 1445 AH", which were analyzed using the narrative analysis method. This method allows researchers to uncover the structure, meaning and ideology behind the narrative of digital media displays as a form of cultural representation.

The interpretive framework is used in an emic perspective, namely understanding art and culture from the perspective of the perpetrator and the internal values that are lived. Research data sources are divided into primary and secondary (Afrizal, 2017). Primary data includes YouTube TvMu video shows, while secondary data consists of official Muhammadiyah documents, such as the results of the Tarjih National Conference, Islamic Arts and Culture Guidelines, *Suara Muhammadiyah* articles, and the 2003 Muhammadiyah Cultural Halaqah document. Data collection techniques are carried out through observation of the content of published shows as well as documentary studies of Muhammadiyah religious and cultural texts. All data was analyzed to find a big narrative about how Muhammadiyah interprets art and culture within the framework of cultural da'wah through digital visual media (Kusumastuti & Khoiron, 2019).

3. Research Results

3.1. Integration of religion and culture in Muhammadiyah da'wah

The relationship between religion and culture is a very complex topic and often gives rise to long debates in society. There are a handful of parties that argue that religion must stand alone, completely separated from local cultural influences (Pajarianto et al., 2022). On the other hand, there are also those who believe that religion should interact with culture in order to maintain the relevance of its teachings, as well as make them more contextual and acceptable in a continuously developing social life (Hakiki et al., 2025). In this case, Muhammadiyah, as one of the largest Islamic movements in Indonesia, cannot be separated from these dynamics. This movement, which was initially known for its spirit of purifying Islamic teachings, is now trying to find a balance between the purity of religious teachings and recognition of local culture, which is an integral part of people's lives.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Muhammadiyah was known for its firm and enthusiastic attitude in maintaining the purity of Islamic teachings (Izurrohman et al., 2023). In order to maintain pure teachings, Muhammadiyah developed a tarjih approach, namely a more rational and textual approach in understanding revelation and hadith. One aspect that became a big concern for Muhammadiyah at that time was the filtering of local culture, which was considered contrary to Islamic

principles. Local traditions, such as grave pilgrimages, traditional ritual culture, and various community habits that are considered part of heresy and superstition, are strongly opposed by Muhammadiyah. At that time, Muhammadiyah saw local culture as something that should be avoided, because it was thought to damage the purity of the Islamic teachings they adhered to (Islam et al., 2024).

This attitude is influenced by the understanding that the Islamic religion must be protected from cultural influences, which are thought to contaminate or destroy the pure teachings contained in the Al-Qur'an and hadith. This purification of Islamic teachings is driven by the intention to bring Muslims back to the true teachings of Islam, without any mixture of cultural influences that could turn people away from the straight path (Mahmud, 2023). Therefore, Muhammadiyah's preaching in the early days focused more on purifying Islamic teachings and tended to respond to local culture with scepticism (Meyer, 2024).

However, as time went by, very dynamic social changes in Indonesia, especially in the context of a multicultural and pluralistic society, began to make Muhammadiyah aware that an approach to religious purification without considering local culture would be difficult to accept by an increasingly diverse society. Muhammadiyah began to realize that to achieve more effective da'wah goals, they needed to develop a more inclusive approach, which was able to establish a harmonious relationship between Islamic teachings and existing local culture (Nuryami et al., 2024). This is also in line with changing times and the development of internal thinking in Muhammadiyah, which sees the need to adapt to the culture that is developing around Muslims in Indonesia.

At this point, Muhammadiyah began to develop the concept of *cultural preaching*, which is a da'wah approach that is more inclusive and more responsive to social and cultural changes in society (Huda et al., 2022). *Cultural da'wah* aims to build a more harmonious relationship between Islamic teachings and local culture (Wiendyarti et al., 2024). In this concept, local culture, which was previously seen as something to be avoided or opposed, begins to be understood as part of the reality of Muslim life that can be adapted and filtered according to Islamic principles.

Muhammadiyah's cultural da'wah does not demand the elimination of local culture, but rather efforts to filter and maintain cultural elements that are in line with Islamic values (Musthofa & Prihananto, 2023). For example, many local traditions actually have good values that can support Islamic teachings, such as art, music and other social culture. Therefore, Muhammadiyah's cultural da'wah seeks to integrate local culture within the framework of Islamic teachings, not eliminate it. In this way, Muhammadiyah seeks to introduce Islamic teachings to society without having to erase existing cultural identities (Ritonga et al., 2024).

One of the important figures in developing the concept of cultural da'wah was KH Ahmad Dahlan, founder of Muhammadiyah. KH Ahmad Dahlan not only emphasized the importance of purifying Islamic teachings, but also introduced the understanding that Islam and local culture can go hand in hand. In many ways, KH Ahmad Dahlan did not oppose the Javanese culture that existed around society, but tried to integrate Islamic values into that culture (Mohamed et al., 2024). This can be seen from his attitude of not rejecting local culture such as art, customs and traditions, but instead focusing on filtering out values that conflict with Islamic teachings and maintaining a culture that does not conflict (Riyadi & Amrullah, 2022).

In the time of KH Ahmad Dahlan, for example, traditions such as grebeg and several other Javanese cultural rituals, even though they had deep cultural roots, were not immediately opposed. On the other hand, KH Ahmad Dahlan tried to see whether there were elements of Javanese culture that could be harmonized with Islamic teachings (Burhani, 2020). For example, although Muhammadiyah opposes some elements of the grave pilgrimage which are considered to contain elements of shirk, they still maintain other elements of Javanese culture which do not conflict with the basic principles of Islamic teachings (Effendi et al., 2020).

3.2. Ideas for integrating religion and culture in TvMu broadcasts

In the midst of increasingly rapid developments and social changes, Muhammadiyah is starting to realize that cultural da'wah is not only relevant in the context of traditional local culture, but also must be adapted to the development of digital culture, which is increasingly dominant among the younger

generation (Songidan et al., 2021). Along with the rapid development of information and communication technology, Muhammadiyah must face new challenges in conveying its preaching messages to the public, especially the younger generation who are increasingly accustomed to digital media.

One of the main media used by Muhammadiyah in developing cultural da'wah is *TvMu*, the official YouTube channel owned by this organization. *TvMu* become a means to deliver da'wah that not only talks about Islamic religious teachings, but also tries to integrate local cultural values within the framework of Islamic teachings (Nadiyah & Maksum, 2024). With the concept of cultural preaching that is applied through broadcast programs, *TvMu* become a very important platform in forming a new understanding of how religion and culture can work side by side (Anjani, 2019). Through *TvMu*, Muhammadiyah not only conveys religious messages in accordance with Islamic principles, but also opens up space for wider discussions regarding how local culture can be introduced within the framework of Islamic teachings (Handoko et al., 2022).

Haidar Nasir, in a speech *iftitah* which was delivered to *Ramadan study*, emphasized that cultural da'wah not only functions to introduce Islamic teachings, but also to integrate local culture that already exists in society. Haidar explained that "*Cultural da'wah is not just about spreading religious teachings, but also facilitating people to accept religion in a form that is more contextual to the existing culture.*" (*TvMu*, 2024). This approach is a response to the fact that Indonesia's plural and multicultural society requires a more flexible way of conveying religious messages, especially to the younger generation who are highly influenced by digital culture and social media. Haidar Nasir also emphasized its importance "Introducing Islam in a more inclusive way, which allows Muhammadiyah's preaching to not only focus on purifying its teachings, but also recognizing the existing cultural diversity." (*TvMu*, 2024).

In this context, *TvMu* plays a big role as a channel that accommodates current developments, especially in conveying da'wah to the younger generation who are more accustomed to digital media. By using digital platforms such as YouTube, Muhammadiyah can reach a wider and more diverse audience, without having to be bound by geographic or social boundaries (Nadiyah & Maksum, 2024). One program that stands out in this regard is *Ramadan study*, where various speakers from religious figures, cultural figures and artists were invited to talk about how da'wah can be carried out contextually with existing local culture. This program also reflects that cultural da'wah is not only about talking about religious teachings, but also about how religion can be accepted in a form that is relevant to local culture (Anjani, 2019).

Besides that, *TvMu* also held discussion sessions discussing the role of art and culture in da'wah (Handoko et al., 2022). In Muhammadiyah's view, art is no longer seen as something that is contrary to religion, but as a means of introducing Islamic values (Pajarianto et al., 2022). This is reflected in various programs that display traditional arts, such as music, dance and theater, which are packaged in the form of preaching in accordance with Islamic principles. For example, in events *Ramadan study*, discussed how music can be an effective medium for da'wah, not only to entertain, but also to educate the public about moderate and tolerant Islamic values. This is in line with the views of Haidar Nasir who emphasized that "Art and culture are part of religious expression that can be used as a means of da'wah to introduce Islam to society more widely and more easily to be accepted." (*TvMu*, 2024).

However, even though *TvMu* has succeeded in introducing inclusive cultural da'wah, there are still challenges faced by Muhammadiyah in implementing this concept among more conservative members of society. Some Muhammadiyah circles still question whether local culture, which contains certain elements, can be accepted within the framework of Islamic teachings. As explained in Abdul Munir Mulkhan's study, there are still some people who view local culture as something that should be shunned, even considering it as heresy or a deviation from the pure teachings of Islam (Suparto, 2009). Nevertheless, Muhammadiyah continues to strive to open space for dialogue between religion and culture to create a broader understanding of cultural da'wah. As emphasized by Burhanudin Muhtadi, "Cultural preaching requires a more flexible approach, which can accept cultural diversity without sacrificing the principles of religious teachings." (Harahap et al., 2023).

It is important to note that cultural da'wah is not just about accepting local culture, but also about distilling cultural elements that are in accordance with Islamic principles. Muhammadiyah tries to

ensure that the culture accepted in cultural da'wah does not conflict with Islamic teachings, but can actually enrich the understanding of religion. In this context, *TvMu* become a means to introduce and educate the public about how religion and culture can go hand in hand without sacrificing religious values (Handoko et al., 2022). For example, in the program Ramadan study, Haidar Nasir revealed that "It is important for Muslims to see religion and culture as two entities that do not conflict with each other, but support each other in forming a religious identity that is richer and relevant to the social context of society." (TvMu, 2024).

Da'wah programs broadcast on TVMu also cover various topics relevant to existing social and cultural dynamics, such as the Study of Cultural Da'wah. In this program, Muhammadiyah seeks to invite Muslims to see the relationship between Islamic teachings and local culture in a more inclusive and adaptive way (Oktriya et al., 2024). Cultural da'wah in this digital era also emphasizes the importance of conveying religious messages in a way that is easily understood by the younger generation, who are more familiar with technology and digital culture.

Besides that, TvMu also tries to involve the younger generation in the da'wah process, by presenting various discussions that discuss current topics related to religion and culture. By using digital media, Muhammadiyah hopes to reach a wider and more diverse audience, especially those who may not have been reached by conventional da'wah (Handoko et al., 2022).

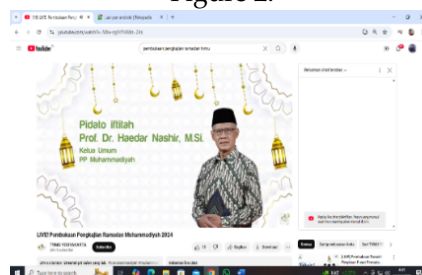
Figure 1.



(Source: Youtube TvUMJ, 2024)

The development of Muhammadiyah's cultural da'wah which tries to integrate the Islamic religion with local culture has brought many reforms in the way this movement conveys religious messages. Even though this idea is widely accepted, the challenges faced by Muhammadiyah remain large, especially in facing increasingly strong global cultural influences. In the era of globalization, local culture is often marginalized by more dominant global culture, especially popular culture which is spread through social media (Suharyanto, 2024). This raises the question of how Muhammadiyah can maintain integration between religion and local culture, without losing its relevance amidst such strong global cultural currents. However, in this challenge there is a great opportunity for Muhammadiyah to introduce Islamic teachings in a more universal and contextual manner with the times. One of Muhammadiyah's efforts to face this challenge is to utilize technology and digital media, as a means of bridging the gap between religion and culture, as well as introducing Islam as a religion that is not only relevant in the local context, but also in the global context (Irzan et al., 2024).

Figure 2.



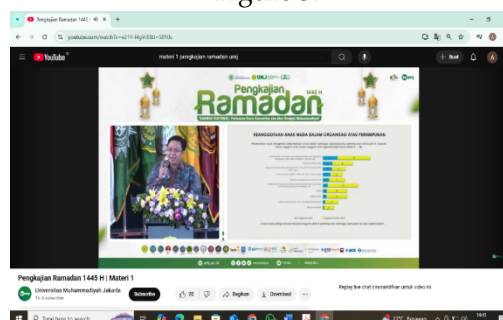
(Source: Youtube TvUMJ, 2024)

Haidar Nasir, one of the Muhammadiyah figures, said that cultural da'wah is purification and dynamization which is very necessary in carrying out da'wah in this modern era. He is of the opinion that culture is in the realm of dynamics whose laws are changeable, and along with developments over time, the arts and culture in Muhammadiyah have become very complete. Haidar emphasized the importance of cultural da'wah as a guideline used by Muhammadiyah to spread religion and culture. He sees that social media is a new culture that can be used to expand the spread of Muhammadiyah's da'wah, by adapting the form of da'wah to the needs of the younger generation who are increasingly familiar with digital media. "Cultural da'wah is a concept that can be used by Muhammadiyah to make da'wah more relevant and easily accepted by the younger generation living in the digital era," (Admin, 2024).

This emphasis is in line with the concept of Cultural Transmission, that culture and religious values are passed down through certain channels (Bisin & Verdier, 2023). In this case, social media functions as a new channel for cultural transmission that allows Muhammadiyah to refine religious messages to make them more relevant and easily accepted by the younger generation. By utilizing social media, Muhammadiyah not only transmits Islamic teachings, but also adapts these messages to current developments, making them more dynamic and easier to understand for young audiences who are used to digital platforms (Abas & Auliya, 2023).

Meanwhile, Burhanudin Muhtadi emphasized the importance of Muhammadiyah's adaptation to social media, especially in targeting the millennial generation and Generation Z who find it easier to access information via digital platforms. He revealed that around 70% of young people study religion in Muhammadiyah schools, but they more often look for religious information online (TvUMJ, 2024a). This shows that today's young generation is more open and accustomed to religious information conveyed via social media.

Figure 3.

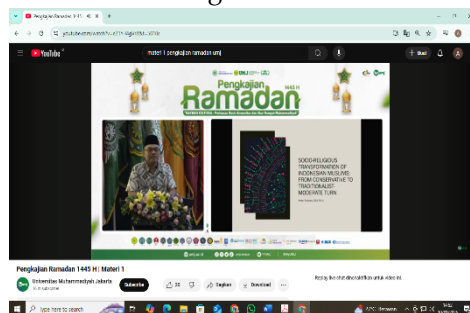


(Source: Youtube TvUMJ, 2024)

In the concept of Uses and Gratifications, the audience is not passive in receiving messages, but actively searches for and selects content that is relevant to their needs, in this case, preaching content that is easy to digest via social media (Gonzalez, 2024). Burhanudin also sees a great opportunity for Muhammadiyah to start a new culture of da'wah by utilizing social media, to ensure that Muhammadiyah's enlightened ideas can be accepted by the younger generation. "Muhammadiyah needs to enter the popular culture of preaching on social media, so that Muhammadiyah's enlightening ideas can be more accepted by the younger generation who are very used to the internet," (TvUMJ, 2024a).

However, even though cultural da'wah offers great opportunities, the challenge of implementing it among the Muhammadiyah community is not easy. Andar Nugroho, a media observer, highlighted that the struggle for religious narratives on social media is a new reality in the media world. He stated that Muhammadiyah was still less active in mediating its religious messages. In his view, Muhammadiyah needs to shift its da'wah methods from a more traditional offline setting to a social media setting that is more adaptive to changing times. Andar added that cultural da'wah could be a means of changing the mindset of Muslims by directing da'wah to the realm of social media, which is more dynamic and more accessible to the younger generation. "Cultural preaching can be directed at changing the preaching mindset from offline to online, which is more relevant and easily accessible to Muslims living in the digital era" (TvUMJ, 2024a).

Figure 4.

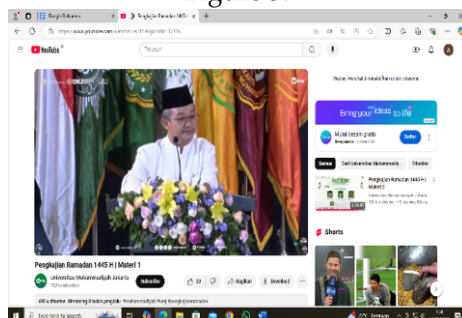


(Source: Youtube TvUMJ, 2024)

Marshall McLuhan, explained that changes in media technology (in this case, social media) will change the way we communicate and act in society. In other words, social media is not only a tool, but also an agent of change that encourages changes in the mindset and behavior of Muslims, especially the younger generation (McLuhan, 2014). Cultural da'wah, if directed well, can change the mindset of Muslims, leading them to be more open to new ways of religion and preaching that are more relevant to their digital lives.

Apart from that, Abdul Mu'ti revealed that currently, social media has entered the Digital Age era, where anyone who masters new media can control discourse and the flow of information. In this context, Muhammadiyah must take advantage of these changes more actively. "Muhammadiyah can change the form of its da'wah from offline to online or hybrid settings. Production of da'wah on social media does not need to be long, but in the form of short videos that directly touch on the substance of the message," (TvUMJ, 2024a). This is a great opportunity for Muhammadiyah to strengthen its preaching by following new media trends that are developing, in accordance with the culture in the community. Thus, Muhammadiyah's da'wah on social media can be presented in a more concise but compact form, allowing this da'wah to be more easily accepted by a wider audience.

Figure 5.



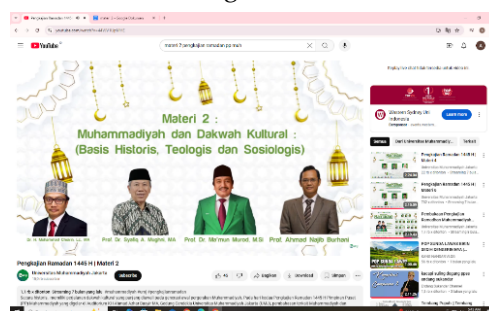
(Source: Youtube TvUMJ, 2024)

Social media is the main channel for disseminating information and shaping public discourse (McLuhan, 2014). By making maximum use of social media, Muhammadiyah can change the form of da'wah from offline to hybrid or completely online (Gonzalez, 2024). The use of short videos and denser content allows Muhammadiyah to introduce da'wah in a format that is more interesting and easily accepted by audiences who are used to fast and efficient digital content.

Syafiq Mughni also added his views on the relationship between religion and culture in Muhammadiyah. He believes that this relationship is final with the birth of the concept of cultural da'wah, but it is necessary to look again at the extent of its implementation in the field. According to Syafiq, Muhammadiyah has a rational cultural pattern, which replaces irrational culture with a more rational culture. Cultural da'wah is in this dimension, where Muhammadiyah can utilize art and other cultural products to touch the public, direct them to rationality and avoid practices that are considered

contrary to Islamic teachings. "The Muhammadiyah approach can utilize art and other cultural products to touch society, so that they have a new culture without changing the culture that has already developed," (TvUMJ, 2024b).

Figure 6.



(Source: Youtube TvUMJ, 2024)

The integration of Islamic culture can be adapted to local culture without sacrificing the principles of religious teachings (Maulidin & Nawawi, 2024). In this context, Muhammadiyah's cultural da'wah aims to use local art and cultural products, such as traditional art and Javanese culture, to convey rational Islamic values. This also shows how Muhammadiyah can maintain a balance between utilizing local culture and maintaining pure Islamic teachings, so that da'wah becomes more easily accepted by local communities without sacrificing religious principles

Figure 7.



(Source: Youtube TvUMJ, 2024)

No less important, Najib Burhani stated that cultural da'wah is a form of cultural acculturation that is unique to the Muhammadiyah style. According to him, KH Ahmad Dahlan is a real example of how Islam can be integrated into Javanese culture, which makes Muhammadiyah's preaching more open to local culture. Burhani emphasized that the TBC (Superstition, Heresy, and *Churafat*) movement in Muhammadiyah is not an anti-cultural movement, but rather an attempt to demystify and demythologize local culture that is not in line with Islamic principles. "Muhammadiyah does not need to move away from local culture or popular culture, but must demystify elements that are contrary to Islamic law," (TvUMJ, 2024b).

On the other hand, Ahmad Dahlan, Chair of the West Java PWM, emphasized that art and culture must be positioned as part of the da'wah media itself. "Art and culture are means of da'wah that we must utilize, not only internally for Muhammadiyah, but to spread moderate Islamic ideas through social media" (TvUMJ, 2024b). This indicates that Muhammadiyah is increasingly open to using art and culture as a means of communicating Islamic values to the wider community.

Figure 8.



(Source: Youtube TvUMJ, 2024)

In facing these challenges and opportunities, Zakiyudin Badawi stated that the existing culture does not need to be abolished, but must be simplified in a form that is more in line with Islamic teachings. He emphasized that not all cultures are condemned as TB, and in terms of culture, what needs to be done is the acculturation of Islamic values in the culture that has developed. "The integration of Islamic values in culture is a real manifestation of cultural da'wah," he said (TvUMJ, 2024c). In this way, Muhammadiyah's cultural da'wah can not only strengthen the position of this organization at the local level but also introduce Islamic teachings universally at the global level.

On the international stage, religious culture serves as a bridge for cross-cultural communication and has significant implications for global exchange. Studies on Chinese international communication emphasize that religious culture is a crucial carrier of meaning, fostering understanding and respect between peoples, and mitigating cultural conflict in the era of globalization. This approach—by leveraging modern information technology and developing cross-cultural communication skills—emphasizes the importance of adaptability in presenting religious teachings in diverse cultural contexts while maintaining doctrinal authenticity (Mi, 2025). Globally, religious organizations are using digital outreach strategies, such as virtual communities, podcasts, and video sermons, to engage audiences across geographic, linguistic, and cultural boundaries. These methods enable religious communities to build connections and share messages in areas where traditional outreach may be limited or restricted. International trends encourage access to spiritual guidance for all, especially minorities or those in closed societies, by leveraging digital platforms for secure and relevant communication (Brownlie, 2018).

Research on Muhammadiyah's digital da'wah through TvMu aligns with broader international efforts to utilize digital media for authentic and culturally sensitive religious outreach. This global context highlights an ongoing negotiation: how best to maintain inclusive and adaptive religious practices in diverse and interconnected societies, while upholding religious integrity.

4. Conclusion

Thus, it can be said that there is a dialectical relationship between religion and culture in Muhammadiyah, with a focus on how the cultural da'wah approach is articulated through the "Cultural Da'wah Study" program on the TvMu YouTube channel shows how Muhammadiyah navigates the integration of Islam with local culture, offering a more inclusive approach that recognizes cultural diversity while maintaining Islamic teachings. This program provides an important platform to discuss these issues, which involve traditional religious views and modern cultural expressions. In addition, this research shows the role of digital media, especially YouTube, in promoting religious and cultural dialogue, so that it can reach a wider and more diverse audience, especially the younger generation. This research contributes to the broader discourse on how religious organizations can utilize digital platforms to interact with contemporary social issues and preserve cultural heritage.

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