



## Modification of Da'wah through the Art Performance of Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha

Nur Khoerun Nisa<sup>1</sup>, Anas Azhimi Qalban<sup>2</sup>, & Dedy Riyadin Saputro<sup>3</sup>

<sup>123</sup>UIN Saizu Purwokerto, Indonesia

\*[nnurkhoerun@gmail.com](mailto:nnurkhoerun@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to understand the messages, methods, and strategies carried out by puppeteers in changing the traditional da'wah format into an interesting and memorable art performance. Descriptive qualitative research was used to collect data, using observation, interviews, and content analysis of art performances performed by Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha. The research findings show the use of various strategies by Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha to deliver da'wah messages to the audience in his art performances, incorporating contemporary innovations such as the use of media & technology, music, sholawat, and interactive dialog with the audience. In addition, Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha also uses straightforward language and relates strict messages to everyday life. The modification of da'wah through Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha's art performances intends to reach and impact various levels of society. Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha's art performances attract audiences of all ages, including children, teenagers, and adults. The implication of this research is that the modification of da'wah through art performances can be an effective strategy in spreading religious messages to the wider community and can be used as a role model in preaching that is not monotonous. Da'wah grows through larger art performances and inspires puppeteers and other artists to spread religious messages effectively, positively and attractively.*

**Keywords:** *Art performance; Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha; modification of da'wah; Wayang Kulit.*

### INTRODUCTION

Art exhibitions typically take place in conventional venues, such as stages or places filled with a crowd of spectators. Art performances nowadays often include shows in various locations, such as recording studios, theaters, or even virtually through digital media (Picard, 2021). Art

performances have also evolved in various styles and expressions. Traditional forms of art with established rules and patterns dominated in the past. However, now there is a greater level of artistic freedom and experimentation, combining various forms and genres of art. Present-day art performances are heavily influenced by technological advancements (Ritonga, 2019). Special effects, dramatic lighting, and the use of multimedia in art performances are made possible by advanced audio and visual equipment. Additionally, live streaming and online access to art performances are facilitated by digital platforms and social media.

In ancient times, performing arts often required the audience to interact directly with the artists. For example, during a theater performance, spectators could express their feelings directly and provide feedback to the actors. However, audience participation in contemporary art performances may differ and involve interaction through social media or specific applications (Rizal, Saputra, & Hafrida, 2018). In the past, performing arts often followed established cultural values and traditions, such as mythology or classical stories. Present-day works of art tend to reflect the development and shifts in society by addressing contemporary, social, and political issues.

The emergence of digital technology has made art performances more easily accessible. Art shows can be enjoyed by the audience through live streaming, digital platforms, or online artworks (Salam & Amin, 2020). Currently, art performances typically provide more space for freedom of expression and exploration of various themes and art forms. Artists are encouraged to explore the boundaries of tradition and create compelling and powerful works.

In the contemporary era, there is a scholar who can serve as an example in developing a specific perspective, namely Edward de Bono. In 1967, he created unique and vertical examples of lateral thinking. Departing from the habit of vertical thinking, which is more selective and seeks alternatives in solving a problem, lateral thinking is a way to develop thinking skills. Creative thinking ability can be developed through lateral thinking patterns. Innovation is not limited to craftsmen, filmmakers, architects, artists, designers, painters, and others. One can think creatively by learning how to think creatively and differently. Talent is needed for creative thinking, and one can live and learn to practice it. Lateral thinking is a tool or medium that can help someone in creative thinking (Basit, 2021).

Contemporary art performances often combine various creative streams such as theater, dance, music, visual expression, and mixed media.

This is because the current era demands creative and innovative thinking (Basit, 2021). Artists from diverse backgrounds are less commonly collaborating to create more varied and creative experiences. In this era, art performances encourage audiences to actively participate by involving them in the artwork, story selection, or direct interaction. The essence is to create more meaningful encounters and broaden the relationship between creators and spectators (Yusuf, 2018).

Through da'wah, messages about the truths of Allah, eternity, profound qualities, Islamic regulations, and other moral qualities can be conveyed clearly and impartially. da'wah is an activity to invite others to achieve a certain goal. This requires specific strategies to be accepted effectively and efficiently. In the context of the development and dissemination of Islamic teachings, da'wah means a relatively fundamental aspect of activity (Fuad & Nurhidayat, 2017). Islam cannot be known, understood, and embraced without the process of da'wah the Prophet Muhammad's. The activity of da'wah, in its development, has been passed down by scholars from one generation to another until today.

In relation to the spread of Islam, there are several different methodologies that can be used to convey firm teachings and values. One of these methodologies is through art, especially performing arts, as it can captivate and connect with a wide audience that may not be reached through conventional strategies. This approach is known as social Da'wah, where firm messages are conveyed through cultural variations and local customs. The art performance of da'wah by Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha is an excellent example of cultural da'wah (Suyanto & Setiawan, 2022). *Wayang Kulit*, or traditional Javanese *Wayang*, is used as a medium in the concept of art performance of da'wah .

The art performance by Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha is one form of modified da'wah that combines traditional *Wayang Kulit* with contemporary elements. Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha is a puppeteer known for his innovative approach to da'wah through the art of *Wayang Kulit*. In the art performance of Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha, he combines traditional elements such as the storyline and characters in *Wayang Kulit* with modern elements like everyday language, humor, popular references, or current issues relevant to society (Nasif & Wilujeng, 2018).

Through this modification of da'wah, Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha attempts to bridge the gap between traditional culture and popular culture, as well as between religious messages and the context of everyday life in modern

society (Whinarno & Cecep, 2019). The da'wah of Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha can be enjoyed and understood by the audience in an entertaining manner while still conveying moral and religious messages. Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha's artistic performances can address social, political, economic, or environmental issues that are currently relevant in society (Baidowi & Salehudin, 2021). Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha is able to connect religious messages with the real-life context of the audience, enabling the da'wah message to have a stronger and more relevant impact. This approach reflects an effort to effectively convey religious messages within the ever-changing culture and context of the times (Octaviani, 2022). It is important to remember that each artistic performance by Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha has distinctive characteristics and a unique approach, depending on the theme, message, or specific context carried in each show.

The author discovered several journals from previous studies that could be used as literature reviews for the author's research. The presentation of similar research objectives aims to emphasize that the author's research differs from existing studies.

The first reference is from Mega Cynthia, textual analysis method is employed in this research. Stylistic devices such as assonance, alliteration, personification, and hyperbole used in the lyrics of the song "Sebujur Bangkai" sung by Rhoma Irama are examples of preaching through the popular medium of music. This song carries a strong da'wah message and distinctive stylistic elements (Cynthia, 2020). The difference lies in the author's research, where in the Wayang Kulit performances of Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha, he uses lyrics of "sholawat" (praise for the Prophet Muhammad) to convey da'wah messages. The straightforward and poetic language used in "sholawat" imparts a distinctive religious impression.

Secondly, Reza Pahlevi, this journal discusses digital of da'wah strategies on the YouTube channel "Jeda Nulis," used by Habib Husein Ja'far Al-Hadar to disseminate da'wah messages through digital platforms such as YouTube, specifically under the account name "Jeda Nulis," and other social media. Typically, da'wah is conducted through video lectures, studies, or works that can be accessed by anyone through gadgets (Pahlevi, 2023). In contrast to this research, the strategy employed involves artistic performances, particularly Wayang Kulit. The puppeteer brings the story to life and conveys da'wah messages to the audience through shadow puppets, music, movements, and dialogues.

Thirdly, Siti Muntoyibah and Ahmad Nurcholis, it indicates that in

the delivery of Islamic messages, da'wah is not limited to the stage but can also be combined with religious music such as "*sholawat*" (praise for the Prophet Muhammad). Habib Syekh's da'wah is designed to facilitate the audience or social media users in accessing and sharing religious music. Da'wah orchestration involves the composition of lyrics containing da'wah messages, taking into account the musical composition and orchestration supported by musical instruments. This is used by Habib Syekh as a bridge to encourage the audience to pray. In contrast to this research, Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha utilizes *Wayang Kulit* as a medium to convey preaching messages. They use shadow puppets played by the puppeteer, accompanied by gamelan music, and interspersed with "*sholawat*" lyrics.

Fourthly, [M. Asfahani Sauky and Bukhori](#), the focus of the discussion here is on the introduction and understanding of Sundanese cultural values integrated with Islamic religious messages. Ki Dalang Wisnu Sunarya incorporates traditional Sundanese stories in his *Wayang Golek* performance. Through these stories, he conveys da'wah messages with an emphasis on the social, moral, and cultural values upheld by the Sundanese community. In contrast to the discussed research, Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha's work focuses more on the use of *Wayang Kulit* in everyday life to present Islamic stories and convey religious messages through dialogues and scenes in the performance, using the Javanese language.

Fifthly, [Wayan Sugita and Gede Tilem Pastika](#), in the Balinese *Wayang Kulit* performance of the Bhima Swarga play, the conveyed messages tend to be related to Hindu teachings and mythology. The story and dialogue in this performance highlight Hindu religious values, such as devotion to God, respect for ancestors, and a balanced spiritual life. Its preaching messages are more focused on understanding and internalizing Hindu teachings ([Sugita & Pastika, 2022](#)). The difference with this research lies in its focus on Islamic religious messages. The content of the *Wayang Kulit* performance revolves around Islamic stories and values that are relevant to community life. Its preaching messages are more centered on understanding, practicing, and internalizing Islamic teachings in daily life.

Based on the provided data, the researcher is interested in focusing on the role of Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha in his efforts to propagate Islam through the performance of *Wayang Kulit* ([Andriani, 2019](#)). In the present era, *Wayang Kulit* is rarely performed in public. Therefore, Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha has revitalized it using an intriguing strategy, which involves da'wah through *Wayang Kulit* combined with "*sholawat*" (praise for the Prophet

Muhammad). He selects stories with moral and social messages that can deeply motivate and educate the audience by connecting the narratives to real-life situations. By making *Wayang Kulit* more applicable, the performances become more engaging, reigniting the community's interest in this traditional art form (Nasif & Wilujeng, 2018).

There are several benefits when da'wah is developed; the da'wah message becomes more easily understood by a broader audience, including the younger generation that typically has a stronger connection to art and culture. "*Sholawat*" lyrics, stories, and dialogues can convey da'wah messages that evoke a sense of piety, enhance religious understanding, and strengthen the spiritual connection with God (Sugita & Pastika, 2021). By consolidating the messages of religious outreach in these art and cultural exhibitions, social qualities can be strengthened and brought to life in the public arena. Audiences can participate in discussions, reflections, and exchanges of ideas regarding the messages of religious outreach, religion, and values through performances that combine outreach with art.

This writing employs qualitative descriptive research to support the study. Observation, interviews, and documentation are some of the methods used in this research to collect data. As a primary source, an interview was conducted with Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha. Observation was carried out to gather information about a particular issue by directly observing the research subject. The subject to be observed is the modification strategies in the wayang kulit performance by Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha. Information about *Wayang Kulit* will be collected for documentation purposes (Aeni, 2020). A profound understanding of the context, experiences, and perceptions of the art performance will be obtained through qualitative methods. Information from the findings will be analyzed using the SMCR method, a strategy presented by David K. Berlo. The data sources for the research include Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha and journals that support this study.

The SMCR method (Source, Message, Channel, Receiver) is used in the analysis after the data is collected. Through the art performance, this model allows researchers to examine important aspects of religious communication. These components include the message source (Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha), the delivered religious message, the communication channel (*Wayang Kulit* performance), and the message receiver (the audience). This research can employ the SMCR model to investigate the use of wayang kulit as a channel for religious communication and how the religious message is

conveyed through modification strategies in the art performance.

Thus, the concept of religious outreach has proven to be a useful strategy for transferring Islamic teachings through the reinterpretation and modification of culture (Ahmad, Mukarom, & Ridwan, 2020). It can be observed how traditional art forms such as *Wayang* can be effectively used to reach a wider audience through the artistic preaching of Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha. It is crucial in engaging the community and fostering greater appreciation and deeper understanding of Islamic teachings.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha is a young preacher who is currently gaining national popularity. He was born in Cilacap on April 27, 2000. Since childhood, he has shown his talent in the field of religious outreach, his love for the arts, including playing musical instruments, and his seriousness in religious studies, ultimately leading him to become a popular figure in Indonesia with his distinctive preaching through wayang performances combined with *sholawat* (Islamic songs of praise) and religious music accompanying him. As a result, Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha became the champion of Indosiar Action 2019 (Fatha, 2021). As a young preacher with a unique style of outreach, Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha stands out. Among the youth, not many can apply Islamic art and Javanese cultural art in such ways. In this modern era, there are many Javanese people who are not willing to learn *Wayang Kulit* art due to a lack of parental support. Based on the gathered data, the researcher presents the research results and discusses the obtained information derived from the opinions of informants as well as from the researcher's perspective.

### **The Influence of Wayang Kulit in the Modification of Preaching**

*Wayang Kulit* is a unique form of performance art. Religious messages can be conveyed in an engaging and captivating manner through preaching with *Wayang Kulit*. Characters from *Wayang Kulit*, such as those found in the epics Mahabharata and Ramayana, can be utilized to educate the audience about morality and religion. *Wayang Kulit* has become an integral part of Indonesia's social heritage (Estuningtyas, 2021). The use of *Wayang Kulit* as a medium for da'wah in the context of modified outreach can contribute to the preservation and appreciation of this cultural heritage. It can also foster a love for local culture and the religion expressed through



*Wayang Kulit*, drawing the attention of the community to the beauty of traditional art (Eko, 2019).

*Wayang Kulit* performances use allegorical and symbolic language. Each character in *Wayang* holds specific symbols and meanings. Through the portrayal and development of these characters, da'wah messages can be implicitly conveyed to the audience. The images in *Wayang Kulit* can stimulate the intellect and reflection of the public regarding the messages being communicated. *Wayang Kulit* evokes strong emotions in people. The audience can become emotionally engaged in the performance experience when shadow puppets, gamelan music, and profound storytelling are combined in the show (Andriani, 2019). This emotional engagement can be utilized in modified outreach to influence and touch the hearts of the audience, making the da'wah messages more easily accepted and understood.

*Wayang Kulit* serves as the primary medium employed by Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha for modifying outreach. Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha's *Wayang Kulit* performances incorporate innovative elements, such as incorporating songs, dances, or dialogues that align with the preaching messages, alongside more conventional methods (Octaviani, 2022). Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha has the ability to develop stories in *Wayang Kulit* performances. He is capable of integrating conventional storytelling components with the da'wah messages he wants to convey, making the presented stories captivating and enthralling for the audience. Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha can deliver religious values in a profound manner, enhancing the community's understanding of Islamic teachings through his narratives (Nasif & Wilujeng, 2018).



Source: Author Observation, 2022

Image 1. Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha performs *Wayang Kulit* at Planjan State Junior High School.



Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha uses *Wayang Kulit* for da'wah, and one of his distinctive features is his use of a straightforward language (Javanese) that is easily understood by the community. To facilitate the audience's comprehension of the da'wah messages, he employs everyday language that is familiar to their ears. Additionally, Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha incorporates voice and music into his *Wayang Kulit* performances, creating an atmosphere that suits the story by playing gamelan music and other traditional musical instruments (Cynthia, 2020). His *Wayang Kulit* shows also gain a new dimension through the use of sound, including dialogue, singing, and the recitation of prayers, helping the audience to better remember the preaching messages. Results from an interview with Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha state that:

“*Wayang Kulit* is considered a necessity that must be preserved and passed on to the younger generation. Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha combines ancient traditions with messages relevant to the present by incorporating religious principles into *Wayang Kulit* stories. In doing so, he disseminates religious messages that can benefit society while also preserving the heritage of *Wayang Kulit*.”

Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha sees *Wayang Kulit* as an effective way to engage the community and convey religious messages. *Wayang Kulit* has a rich history and conventional qualities, and it can foster deep emotional and spiritual connections. Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha can leverage creativity and originality in modifying outreach to present *Wayang Kulit* performances that align with the current context and the needs of the community.

To capture the audience's attention, Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha employs plots that keep people guessing, intriguing conflicts, and events that evoke feelings in the audience. Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha introduces engaging narratives to balance the benefits of drawing a crowd to the art performance and delivering the intended message (Andriani, 2019). Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha selects shadow puppet characters that are associated with religious principles, such as kindness, honesty, or patience. Additionally, Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha reinforces the da'wah messages intended for the audience by choosing characters that are relevant.

According to the description above, the impact of *Wayang Kulit* in the adaptation of da'wah by Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha holds numerous historical, artistic, and symbolic values. Modern changes contribute to making the performances even more captivating (Musthofa, Asy'ari, & Rahman, 2021). The influence of *Wayang Kulit* in Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha's

modification of outreach significantly contributes to conveying religious messages to the community. The unique artistic approach, visual power, and the fusion of culture and religion in the performing arts create new opportunities for delivering da'wah messages in a more engaging and relevant manner. Therefore, a research study is conducted with the title "Da'wah Modification through the Art Performances of Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha: Exploring the Potential of *Wayang Kulit* as Convergent Media for Da'wah."

*Wayang Kulit* is a part of Indonesian culture and other local cultures that has existed for a long time. *Wayang Kulit* can embody religious values connected to local wisdom and traditions in the context of da'wah. This allows for a better connection of religious messages with the cultural context of the community. As previously explained, the use of *Wayang Kulit* as a means of teaching was first employed by Walisongo. Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha observes that people have an interest in this traditional art form. This is because it combines educational and entertainment components, allowing individuals not to feel underestimated while thinking about preserving strict information (Ahmad, et al., 2020). Each character in a *Wayang Kulit* performance represents various personalities and values. These images can be used to convey explicit and profound messages symbolically. *Wayang Kulit* combines engaging audio and visual elements. Traditional instruments and distinctive sounds are utilized in *Wayang Kulit* performances (Anggoro, 2018).

The stories in a *Wayang Kulit* performance can be adjusted to suit specific situations and target audiences. This allows the puppeteer to tailor messages based on the needs and understanding of the audience. For the millennial generation, *Wayang Kulit* shows should be presented with more contemporary concepts (Eko, 2019). Moreover, preaching using this means should also be adapted to the development of the times. Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha explained about *Wayang Kulit* that can entertain during his preaching activities, as follows:

"Humor comes in various forms, it can be through the stories told by the puppet, or through the collaboration between the puppeteer and the puppet. Because the puppeteer's voice is good, the puppeteer can produce various character voices from the puppet, can sing in Javanese, pop, or dangdut genres, so everything can be improved to create the puppeteer's voice."

From the interview results and direct observations, it can be

concluded that *Wayang Kulit* as a da'wah tool can be enjoyed in various forms of Islamic preaching packaged using various strategies, while also striving to attract public attention. Da'wah and *Wayang Kulit* are known to have dual functions, and as such, they should be utilized by the broader community as entertainment that can convey extraordinary virtues to the public, while also being used to deepen knowledge of faith through the delivery of da'wah messages (Anggoro, 2018). Especially when the puppeteer includes Punakawan characters in the performance - such as Cepot, Buta, Gareng, and Dawala - the atmosphere becomes lively, and the amusing antics of each puppet character make the audience laugh. Various media that can be used to leverage *Wayang Kulit* as a platform for artistic performances in this modern era are:

Firstly, The Use of Social Media. In this modern era, the use of social media is inseparable from the millennial generation to Gen Z. Platforms like Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and others seem integral to the lives of young people today. Utilizing social media for *Wayang Kulit* preaching can be the best solution. Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha often uploads his da'wah activities on his YouTube channel called "ulinnuha official" or on his personal Instagram account named "ulin\_345" so that the community can view his da'wah.

Secondly, Conventional Performane. Although considered old-fashioned, nevertheless, live performances like this may have significant meaning for many people, both in urban and rural areas. After winning the Sahur Academy Indosiar competition (AKSI), Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha often participates in religious events and *Wayang Kulit* performances in various places, frequently moving from one stage to another, always bringing his shadow puppets as da'wah instruments.

Thirdly, TV Channel. Another medium that can be used for *Wayang Kulit* performances as a means of preaching is TV. This media broadcast is still favored by many people. In fact, it seems that even businessmen spend time watching television every day (Ritonga, 2019). Audiences can watch Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha's performances in their own homes without having to go to the live show venue.

After undergoing a lengthy process in the talent search contest in 2019, Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha emerged as the champion and performed in front of the audience in the Grand Final round at Studio Indosiar with the theme "salam adalah doa" (greetings are prayers). The preaching he presented always involved *Wayang Kulit* accompanied by the recitation of

sholawat, allowing the audience to thoroughly enjoy the preaching delivered by Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha (Fatha, 2021). The preaching art performance by Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha has the potential to reach a larger and more diverse audience more effectively by leveraging media convergence (Sedyaningsih, 2018). Understanding the quality of media and employing appropriate techniques in its use will have a positive effect in achieving the preaching goals and impacting the community.

### **The Message and Meaning of Sholawat in the Art Performance**

The medium of da'wah are diverse, ranging from direct speeches to writings, and can even take the form of art. Various forms of art can be utilized as a means of preaching; nearly all types of art can incorporate elements of preaching, including one of them being the art of *Wayang Kulit* (Hariyanto, 2021). Art can also be defined as anything that has aesthetic elements and is created by humans.

In his *Wayang Kulit* performances, Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha utilizes music and sound to create the right mood and support the religious messages conveyed. For instance, the use of beautiful recitations of sholawat and traditional gamelan instruments aims to evoke emotions and connect the audience with religious messages.

Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha seeks to reconcile the tradition of *Sholawat* with a contemporary atmosphere in the changes made to his art performances. He incorporates contemporary melodies or arrangements, utilizes modern instruments, or introduces other forms of art such as dance or drama into his shows. The goal is to make sholawat more relevant and appealing to contemporary audiences (Musthofa, et al., 2021). Sholawat can also serve as a means to strengthen brotherhood and identity. Audiences can feel a sense of unity and solidarity in the process of building harmonious relationships by singing *sholawat* together. *Sholawat* also serves as a reminder of the importance of staying united regardless of nationality.

A form of tribute to Prophet Muhammad SAW is called *sholawat*. In the execution of his works, Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha uses *sholawat* to express admiration, respect, and love for Prophet Muhammad SAW. Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha hopes to bring the virtues and exemplary qualities of Prophet Muhammad SAW into the daily lives of the audience through *sholawat* (Khotimah & Amaluddin, 2022). The spirituality and devotion of the audience will be enhanced through *sholawat*. The audience is invited to contemplate and feel the presence of Allah SWT in their lives by listening

to and reciting sholawat.

*Sholawat* can serve as a tool to enlighten the congregation about the importance of maintaining a positive relationship with Allah and adhering firmly to religious ideals in daily life. Additionally, *sholawat* also has the potential to enhance nationalistic feelings and brotherhood. Congregants can feel a sense of unity and solidarity in the process of building harmonious relationships by singing sholawat together. *Sholawat* also serves as a reminder of the importance of staying united regardless of nationality.

*Sholawat* is an effective method to harness the power of art and culture in conveying religious messages. Modified art performances can foster originality and creativity in presenting *sholawat*, such as by incorporating visually appealing elements, music, and movements (Sugita & Pastika, 2021). The goal is to make the da'wah messages more engaging, relevant, and easily understood by the audience.

The Puppeteers like Ulin Nuha may have a positive perspective on the message and meaning of *sholawat* in modified performances based on a common understanding of puppetry and preaching. Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha sees *sholawat* as a way to express love and respect for Prophet Muhammad, enhance the spirituality and devotion of the congregation, and strengthen the brotherhood and unity of the Muslim community. *Sholawat* commonly recited on stage includes Javanese lyrics such as *sholawat werkudoro gambare wayang*, *sholawat Wali Songo*, and even contemporary hits like "*cintai aku karena Allah*," "*teman sejati*," and many more. He adapts to the changing times to ensure that the community can understand the preaching delivered by Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha. In a direct response during an interview, Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha expressed that:

“As a puppeteer, Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha is fortunate to witness direct responses from the community, and All praise to Allah, he has received positive feedback. Moreover, during those moments, seeing the community entertained during preaching and *wayang* (puppetry) performances brings a special joy to his heart. Especially when the audience is enthusiastic and appreciates the recitation of sholawat (Islamic songs of praise) that is presented, the congregation also joins in the chanting of the sholawat. Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha is very pleased to employ da'wah methods like this.”

The performance of *Wayang Kulit* is believed to be an ideal means of conveying new ideas and thoughts in accordance with the development of the times. Therefore, the da'wah method used by Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha is

highly effective in the present era. *Wayang Kulit* performances are multidimensional, with the puppeteer being the central figure in the shadow puppet show (Suyanto & Setiawan, 2022). Naturally, Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha can play various roles, including being an artist, social worker, educator, communicator, or entertainer.

Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha is now part of the younger generation of puppeteers who love *Wayang Kulit*. They can even be considered enthusiasts of traditional cultural art. However, their love for the art extends beyond its physical or puppetry form, reaching into the psychological essence commonly known as "*wewayanganing ngaurip*" (reflection of life with positive values).

### **The Strategies of Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha in Conveying Religious Messages to the Community**

Developing communication strategies is crucial to understanding the nature of the communicator and its implications. This is because the communication method we choose will influence the media we use (Estuningtyas, 2021). The stages of correspondence procedures can be carried out using the SMCR model, which was proposed by David K. Berlo in 1960. The abbreviation "Source, Message, Channel, and Receiver" represents the S-M-C-R model. Berlo stated that the party creating the message is the source, which can be an individual or a group. The channel conveys the message, the receiver is the person the correspondence is aimed at, and the message is the interpretation of thoughts into symbolic representations such as language or signs.

The puppeteer must be able to depict life, which is a dimension of a complex issue. Therefore, when the puppeteer has the ability to narrate, criticize situations, understand circumstances, and be accountable for their knowledge or words, the message is effectively conveyed (Widiantoro, 2020). Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha has a personality that is easy to understand and adapts well to various groups, indicating that the informant is skilled at adjusting to society. The informant also exhibits politeness towards the environment. Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha can adapt culturally and ethically to gain acceptance from the community.

Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha selects stories from *wayang* performances that are connected to Islamic teachings, such as the story of "Yudhistira Puspawresti," which narrates Yudhistira's struggle for justice and the preservation of his integrity to remain truthful. Yudhistira often faces



dilemmatic situations and must make difficult decisions. This story can be associated with Islamic teachings that emphasize the importance of honesty, justice, and moral courage in a religious environment (Dzikriyah & Fauji, 2022). Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha ensures that religious messages can be harmoniously integrated and easily understood by the general public by choosing these stories. In the dialogues between *wayang* characters, Ulin Nuha uses simple language that is easily understood by the community. This ensures that the religious messages conveyed can be understood by a wide audience, regardless of cultural and educational backgrounds.

According to Berlo (Mulyana, 2012: 162), The message is the interpretation of a thought into a representative code, such as language or signs. Messages are created as shown by components, content, construction, support, and code. These elements use language that is not difficult to understand; instead, they use Indonesian with a distinctive Javanese accent and regional idioms. The delivery of messages to the audience is packaged in an enjoyable and humorous manner to arouse the audience's interest. Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha composes messages with information that can be understood and easily comprehended (Prayoga, 2018). Overall, during preaching, Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha blends language, music, and *wayang*, each with its own characteristics that distinguish it from other classical *wayang* performances. However, the topics presented may lack variety, as similar topics are used in preaching at various locations.

The religious messages of Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha emphasize the importance of social justice, solidarity, and unity in society. Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha encourages the audience to assist each other, respect the rights of others, and create a more just life through *wayang* characters and their stories. Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha places significant emphasis on moral and ethical principles within religious teachings (Masfufah, 2019). Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha conveys messages about the importance of maintaining honesty, loyalty, justice, and kindness in everyday life through dialogues and interactions among *wayang* characters. Continuing with the interview results, Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha explains:

“*Wayang Kulit*, according to Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha, can be used to unite people in missionary efforts. When people from various walks of life gather to watch the *Wayang Kulit* performance, Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha brings together groups and enhances everyone's awareness of the preaching messages being conveyed.”

In conclusion, when da'wah through *Wayang Kulit* is practically



accepted by every citizen, its existence will not fade even as time progresses. Using arguments presented by Narawati (Ahmad et al., 2020) that the development of traditional performing arts is inseparable from social changes in the people demanding progress in traditional arts. Over time, traditional arts will continue to exist if they evolve into performing arts that can be enjoyed by many.

*Wayang Kulit* performances can be used as an invitation for someone to enter Islam without violence and can be adapted to the needs of the community (Baidowi & Salehudin, 2021). Therefore, da'wah can use *Wayang Kulit* as a means that is easily accepted by the community. Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha is trying to revive traditions and cultures based on Islamic values. Additionally, to make his preaching easily accepted, a puppeteer must have extensive information and understanding. When a puppeteer should have choices to refer to conflicts that occur in individuals, of course, they must have choices to understand them.

The next step in developing communication strategies is choosing the media that the community will use to receive information about da'wah. Determining the media as a means to convey messages of Islamic values so that da'wah can be delivered. Using virtual entertainment and computerized stages can help Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha in spreading the message of da'wah and expanding the audience's reach. The YouTube channel used by Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha to spread preaching messages is named "ulinnuha official," and his Instagram account is named "ulinnuha\_official." Through these channels, people from different places and times can access performances and da'wah messages through social media.

Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha also utilizes live broadcasts through social media to introduce his performances to a global audience. Viewers can watch the show live through livestreaming and submit questions and comments to Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha (Eko, 2019). In addition to uploading full show videos, his content includes creative recordings such as intriguing snippets, behind-the-scenes clips, or meetings with Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha. This captures followers' interest and encourages viewers to fully engage with the content. According to Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha's perspective:

“Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha turns social media into a stage to introduce the art of *wayang* to the younger generation, which is generally more familiar with internet media. Utilizing social media provides an opportunity to communicate directly with the target audience and build stronger relationships with them. Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha hopes

to make them understand and appreciate the art of *wayang* and the preaching messages he conveys by using creative and engaging content.”

Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha sees the utilization of social media as a valuable opportunity to expand the reach and impact of his preaching art performances. As part of his preaching journey, he is enthusiastic about developing relevant and beneficial content and communicating with the audience through social media. Awareness of ethics and courtesy is necessary for the use of social media in preaching art performances (Sediyaningsih, 2018). Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha is committed to maintaining the authenticity and integrity of *wayang* art as well as the quality of the preaching messages conveyed to remain accurate and beneficial to the audience.

The final stage in the communication strategy employed by Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha is determining his target audience. He designates the entire community as his audience because he aims to convey Islamic values to all segments (Marfu'ah, 2018). During a direct interview, Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha stated:

“Through the art of *Wayang Kulit*, da'wah can extend from one region to another through various events, both of a spiritual and ritual nature. Da'wah through *Wayang Kulit* is not only carried out in rural communities but also among students in schools. This proves that *Wayang Kulit*, used as a means of preaching, can attract people from all walks of life.”

Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha can perform at any event and among any community (Ahmad, et al., 2020). The art of *Wayang Kulit* is not widely known, especially among today's teenagers. However, *Wayang Kulit* can be integrated with da'wah, allowing it to continue to thrive and be rediscovered by the wider community.

*Wayang Kulit* performances are also popular among older individuals who are familiar with and appreciate traditional art. They may be interested in watching *Wayang Kulit* performances because they may feel nostalgic. Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha's *Wayang Kulit* performances attract both male and female audiences. *Wayang Kulit* does not discriminate based on gender, so both men and women can enjoy the show, with sometimes around 300 to 600 attendees or even more. However, the majority of the attendees are mothers and children. The visual appeal of the puppets captures their interest, and the stories and messages conveyed during the performance are

the two main reasons why *Wayang Kulit* shows often attract child and adolescent audiences. Young children may attend individually or in groups from schools or communities.

Based on the above explanation, the author states that *Wayang Kulit* is not just a method of diverting attention for the local area but contains preaching, communication, and educational values. Each story also conveys a moral message. It is important for us, especially the younger generation, to be aware that there is an influx of foreign cultures into Indonesia without filtering whether they are beneficial or detrimental to our own culture.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research results related to the modification of da'wah through art performances taught by Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha, it can be concluded that in the development of Islamic activities, practitioners of da'wah such as Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha can use local media such as *Wayang Kulit* as an effective medium, modified by combining it with sholawat and religious music.

Considering the crucial role of art performances in da'wah, future projections may include more puppeteers and the use of different media, such as theater, music, dance, and visual expression, to deliver firm messages. This can expand the reach of da'wah and reach a broader audience. This study suggests that puppeteers and artists undergo training, seminars, or workshops to enhance their skills in modifying da'wah through artistic performances. The audience benefits from this by gaining a deeper understanding of how performing arts can effectively convey religious messages.

The impact of this research has significant consequences for enhancing expression-based preaching. A more comprehensive framework for creating inventive and relevant da'wah strategies can be built by understanding new ways of conveying religious messages through performing arts. Religious teachings can be better understood and accepted as a result. A deeper understanding of the impact and effectiveness of modifying preaching through artistic performances suggests that additional respondents should be included in future research, and broader surveys should be conducted to understand the benefits and drawbacks of each artistic preaching method. A comparative study is also needed.

Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha's art performances can serve as a role model for non-monotonous da'wah. Da'wah grows through larger art performances and inspires other puppeteers and artists to spread religious

messages effectively, positively, and attractively. Further research on the modification of da'wah through Ki Dalang Ulin Nuha's art performances can contribute to a greater commitment to art-based da'wah and enhance the public's understanding of religious values.

## REFERENCES

- Aeni, N. (2020). *Manajemen Pondok Pesantren Dalam Meningkatkan Keterampilan Berdakwah Santri Darul Amanah Sukorejo Kendal 2020*. Retrieved from <http://e-repository.perpus.iainsalatiga.ac.id/id/eprint/9208>
- Ahmad, E. D., Mukarom, Z., & Ridwan, A. (2020). Wayang Golekm Sebagai Media Dakwah (Studo Deskriptif pada Kegiatan Dakwah Ramadhan Juniarsyah), *Tabligh: Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Penyiaran Islam*, 3(2), 190–207. <https://doi.org/10.15575/tabligh.v3i2.633>
- Andriani, R. Y. (2019). *Pesan Dakwah Tentang Kerukunan Hidup Antar Agama Melalui Pertunjukan Wayang Kulit Di Desa Lumbirejo Kecamatan ....* Retrieved from <http://repository.radenintan.ac.id/7509/1/SKRIPSI.pdf>
- Anggoro, B. (2018). “Wayang dan Seni Pertunjukan” Kajian Sejarah Perkembangan Seni Wayang di Tanah Jawa sebagai Seni Pertunjukan dan Dakwah, *JUSPI (Jurnal Sejarah Peradaban Islam)*, 2(2), 122. <https://doi.org/10.30829/j.v2i2.1679>
- Baidowi, A., & Salehudin, M. (2021). Strategi Dakwah di Era New Normal, *Muttaqien; Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Islamic Studies*, 2(01), 58–74. <https://doi.org/10.52593/mtq.02.1.04>
- Basit, A. (2021). *Dakwah Milenial*. Banyumas: Penerbit Wawasan Ilmu.
- Cynthia, M. (2020). Pesan Dakwah Dan Gaya Bahasa Pada Lirik Lagu “Sebijur Bangkai” Rhoma Irama, *INTELEKSLA - Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Dakwah*, 2(1), 107–126. <https://doi.org/10.55372/inteleksiajpid.v2i1.62>
- Dzikriyah, I., & Fauji, S. (2022). The Role of Kiai Syakirun in Preaching through the Using of Wayang Kulit in Tipar, Rawalo, Banyumas Regency (1998-2016), *Journal of Islamic History and Manuscript*, 1(1), 17–34. <https://doi.org/10.24090/jihm.v1i1.5988>
- Eko, K. A. (2019). Aplikasi Pengenalan Wayang Dengan Side Scroller Game Berbasis Android, *Krea-Tif*, 7(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.32832/kreatif.v7i1.2045>
- Estuningtyas, R. D. (2021). Strategi Komunikasi dan Dakwah Pada

- Kalangan Milenial di Era Modernisasi, *Muttaqien; Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Islamic Studies*, 2(01), 75–86.  
<https://doi.org/10.52593/mtq.02.1.05>
- Fatha, N. (2021). *Retorika Dakwah Ustadz Ulin Nuba Dalam Program Aksi Indosiar 2019 Skripsi*.
- Fuad, A., & Nurhidayat, A. (2017). Strategi Dakwah Wayang Santri Ki Entus Susmono, *Jurnal Dakwah Dan Komunikasi*, 8(2), 29–42.
- Hariyanto. (2021). *Ki Entus Susmono* : 9(2), 157–178.
- Khotimah, K., & Amaluddin, A. (2022). Contextualization of Da'wah based on the Civil Society Concept in Kroya, *Ilmu Dakwah: Academic Journal for Homiletic Studies*, 16(2), 307–326.  
<https://doi.org/10.15575/idajhs.v16i2.19450>
- Marfu'ah, U. (2018). Strategi Komunikasi Dakwah Berbasis Multikultural, *Islamic Communication Journal*, 2(2), 147.  
<https://doi.org/10.21580/icj.2017.2.2.2166>
- Masfufah, Y. A. ?. (2019). Dakwah Digital Habib Husein Ja'far Al Hadar, *Jurnal Dakwah: Media Komunikasi Dan Dakwah*, 20(2), 252–260. Retrieved from <https://www.detik.com/dakwah-digital-habib-husein%0Ahttps://ejournal.uin-suka.ac.id/dakwah/jurnaldakwah/article/view/JD202195>
- Musthofa, Y., Asy'ari, M., & Rahman, H. (2021). Pembelajaran Pesantren Virtual: Fasilitas Belajar Kitab Kuning bagi Santri Kalong, *TADRIS: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 16(1), 58–70.  
<https://doi.org/10.19105/tjpi.v16i1.4543>
- Nasif, H., & Wilujeng, M. P. (2018). Wayang as Da'wah Medium of Islam according to Sunan Kalijaga. *Kalimah*, 16(2).  
<https://doi.org/10.21111/klm.v16i2.2871>
- Octaviani, A. (2022). From Cafe to the Mosque: the Construction of Dakwah Digital Communication of Shift Community, *Dimas: Jurnal Pemikiran Agama Untuk Pemberdayaan*, 21(2), 275–296.  
<https://doi.org/10.21580/dms.2021.212.9429>
- Pahlevi, R. (2023). Strategi Dakwah Digital Habib Husein Ja ' far Al - Hadar, *Tabligh*, 1(2), 141–152.
- Picard, R. G. (2021). *Media Business Ethics, Corporate Social Responsibility, and Governance*. Retrieved from [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-32103-5\\_4](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-32103-5_4)
- Prayoga, D. S. (2018). Peran Dalang Dalam Seni Pertunjukkan Wayang Kulit, *SENADA (Seminar Nasional Manajemen, Desain Dan Aplikasi*

- Bisnis Teknologi*, 1, 210–217. Retrieved from <https://eprosiding.idbbali.ac.id/index.php/senada/article/view/50>
- Ritonga, M. (2019). Komunikasi Dakwah Zaman Milenial, *Jurnal Komunikasi Islam Dan Kebumasan*, 3(1), 60–77.
- Rizal, M., Saputra, D. N., & Hafrida, I. (2018). Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif, *Angewandte Chemie International Edition*, 6(11), 951–952.
- Salam, A., & Amin, M. K. T. (2020). Dakwah Melalui Youtube (Analisis Pesan Dakwah Ustadz Hanan Attaki), *Jurnal Washiyah*, 1(3), 653–665. Retrieved from <http://journal.uin-alauddin.ac.id/index.php/washiyah/article/view/16233>
- Sedyaningsih, S. (2018). Konvergensi Media Di Era Digital (Eksploitasi Media Komunikasi Dalam Proses Belajar Mengajar Di Era Digital), *Jurnal Pendidikan Terbuka Dan Jarak Jauh*, 19(1), 52–57. <https://doi.org/10.33830/ptjj.v19i1.317.2018>
- Sugita, I. W., & Pastika, T. I. G. (2021). Inovasi Seni Pertunjukan Drama Gong Pada Era Digital, *Mudra Jurnal Seni Budaya*, 36(3), 342–349. <https://doi.org/10.31091/mudra.v36i3.1492>
- Sugita, I. W., & Pastika, T. I. G. (2022). Fungsi Seni Pertunjukan Wayang Kulit Bali Lakon Bhima Swarga dalam Upacara Yadnya, *Jurnal Penelitian Agama Hindu*, 9843, 139–151. <https://doi.org/10.37329/jpah.v0i0.1624>
- Suyanto., & Setiawan, A. (2022). Shadow Puppets In The Hands Of The Young Puppeteers: Loss Of Philosophy Value, *Mudra Jurnal Seni Budaya*, 37(4), 358–367. <https://doi.org/10.31091/mudra.v37i4.2049>
- Whinarno, C., & Arifin, B. (2019). Pesan Dakwah dalam Pementasan Wayang Kulit Lakon “Ma’rifat Dewa Ruci” Oleh Dalang Ki Enthus Susmono, *Jurnal Kopsis*, 2(1), 1–12.
- Widiantoro, A. (2020). *Institut agama islam negeri ponorogo april 2020*. (April), 1–106.
- Yusuf, M. (2018). Seni Sebagai Media Dakwah Muhammad Yusuf Institut Agama Islam Ma’arif (IAIM) Nu Metro, *Ilmu Dakwah*, 2(1), 237–258.

