

## Muhammadiyah Da'wah, Social Capital, and Muslim Community Resilience in Kendari

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### Abstract

*This study aims to analyze Muhammadiyah da'wah as a social practice in building social capital and transforming Muslim community resilience in Kendari City. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. The study involved 18 informants, consisting of Muhammadiyah administrators, da'wah activists, managers of Muhammadiyah charitable institutions, and community members involved in da'wah activities. The findings show that Muhammadiyah da'wah strengthens community resilience through three main mechanisms: building trust through routine religious and social interaction, reinforcing collective norms through educational and moral guidance, and expanding social solidarity through social services and community empowerment programs. These mechanisms demonstrate that Muhammadiyah da'wah functions not only as a medium for transmitting Islamic teachings, but also as a social infrastructure that produces social capital and enhances adaptive capacity in an urban Muslim community. The novelty of this study lies in its integration of da'wah studies, social capital, and community resilience within the specific context of urban Indonesia, particularly Kendari City. This study contributes to Islamic studies by showing that da'wah can operate as a transformative social practice that strengthens cohesion, collective action, and community-based resilience.*

**Keywords:** Muhammadiyah da'wah, Social practice, Social capital, Community resilience, Kendari City

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the study of da'wah has shifted from a normative-theological approach to a more contextual and sociological approach. Da'wah is no longer only understood as an activity of conveying religious teachings, but also as a social practice that operates in people's daily lives. In this perspective, religious practices have an important role in shaping social relations, strengthening collective values, and encouraging social transformation (Casanova, 1994; Putnam, 2000). This shift is becoming increasingly relevant in the context of modern society, characterized by the complexity of social change, increasing individualism, and challenges to social cohesion. Kendari City, as one of the growth centers in the Eastern Indonesia region, faces social dynamics characterized by urbanization, social heterogeneity, and rapid economic transformation. This process not only creates opportunities but also presents various forms of social vulnerability, such as weakening of community bonds and declining social solidarity. In these conditions, the practice of da'wah has strategic potential as a social instrument to strengthen community cohesion and resilience. However, studies that specifically examine da'wah as a social practice that contributes to the formation of



social capital and community resilience are still relatively limited, especially in the urban context in Indonesia.

Muhammadiyah, as one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia, is known to have a pragmatic and transformative da'wah approach. Muhammadiyah's da'wah is not only realized through religious lectures, but also through educational activities, health services, and social empowerment. This approach shows that da'wah functions as a social practice that contributes to building social networks, collective norms, and trust between community members. In this framework, Muhammadiyah da'wah can be understood as a mechanism of production and reproduction of social capital that strengthens community cohesion (Fukuyama, 2001; Putnam, 2000).

Theoretically, the concept of social capital provides an important foundation for understanding how da'wah practices contribute to the social dynamics of society. Social capital refers to networks, norms, and beliefs that allow coordination and cooperation to achieve common goals (Putnam, 2000). In addition, Bourdieu's perspective emphasizes that social capital is a resource that is embedded in social relations and can be mobilized to obtain collective benefits (Bourdieu, 1986). In the context of da'wah, religious activities such as recitation, social activities, and community service are important spaces for the formation and strengthening of social capital.

On the other hand, the concept of community resilience describes the ability of people to survive, adapt, and transform in the face of various social, economic, and cultural pressures. Community resilience depends not only on material resources, but also on the quality of social relations and the collective capacity of the (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015; Norris et al., 2008; Cutter et al., 2008). In this regard, social capital plays a key role in increasing the adaptive capacity of communities, especially through strengthening social networks and trust. Thus, the integration of da'wah practices, social capital, and community resilience provides a comprehensive analytical framework for understanding the role of religion in social life.

Although several studies have addressed the role of religion and religious organizations in society, most still place da'wah within a normative or institutional framework. Studies that elaborate da'wah as a social practice that has direct implications for the formation of social capital and community resilience are still limited. In addition, local contexts such as Kendari City have not received much attention in the academic literature, leaving a significant research gap.

Recent studies have increasingly examined the role of faith-based organizations in strengthening social cohesion, community participation, and local resilience. Research on Islamic organizations has highlighted their contributions to education, social welfare, and community development (Siddiqui, 2022; Sulaiman, Sugito, & Lubis, 2023), while studies on social capital have emphasized the importance of trust, networks, and collective norms in fostering community resilience (Ransome et al., 2021; Cox, Orsborn, & Syvertsen, 2022). Likewise, scholarship on community resilience has demonstrated the significance of social and institutional resources in enhancing adaptive capacity and collective action (McNamara et al., 2020; DeHanas & Shterin, 2021). However, these strands of literature largely remain disconnected. Existing studies tend to examine Muhammadiyah as an Islamic social movement, social capital as a sociological resource, or community resilience as a development outcome separately. Few studies have explicitly investigated how Muhammadiyah da'wah operates as a social practice that simultaneously generates social capital and contributes to the

transformation of community resilience, particularly within the context of urban Muslim communities in Eastern Indonesia.

This gap is especially important in Kendari City, a rapidly growing urban center characterized by demographic diversity, urban expansion, and increasing social complexity. As a regional hub in Eastern Indonesia, Kendari provides a distinctive setting for examining how Islamic organizations respond to the challenges of urban social change, weakening community ties, and emerging forms of social vulnerability. Despite the growing presence of Muhammadiyah institutions and activities in the city, limited scholarly attention has been given to understanding their broader social impacts beyond religious instruction and organizational development.

The novelty of this study lies in its integration of da'wah studies, social capital theory, and community resilience perspectives into a single analytical framework. Rather than treating da'wah merely as a religious or institutional activity, this study conceptualizes Muhammadiyah da'wah as a transformative social practice that produces trust, collective norms, and social networks which subsequently strengthen community resilience. By situating this analysis within the urban context of Kendari City, the study contributes a new empirical and theoretical perspective to contemporary discussions on Islamic social movements, faith-based community development, and the social role of religion in urban Indonesia.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze Muhammadiyah's da'wah as a social practice in building social capital and transforming the resilience of the Muslim community in Kendari City. This research focuses on how the practice of da'wah is implemented in daily life and how the practice contributes to strengthening social relations and the adaptive capacity of the community. Thus, this research is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of a more contextual and interdisciplinary da'wah study, as well as a practical contribution in strengthening community-based da'wah strategies.

More broadly, this study also enriches the perspective of the sociology of religion by showing that religious practices not only function as a medium for the dissemination of values but also as a mechanism for the formation of social structures that support community resilience. Therefore, understanding da'wah as a social practice is important in explaining how religion plays a role in facing social challenges in the modern era.

## **2. METHOD**

The research was conducted in Kendari City, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia, focusing on Muhammadiyah communities actively involved in educational, social, and community empowerment programs. Fieldwork was conducted from January to April 2026. The study involved 18 informants selected through purposive sampling, consisting of four Muhammadiyah administrators, three da'wah activists, two managers of Muhammadiyah charitable institutions, and nine community members who actively participated in Muhammadiyah religious and social activities. These participants were selected because of their direct involvement in planning, implementing, and experiencing Muhammadiyah da'wah programs. This sampling strategy enabled the researcher to obtain rich and relevant information regarding the relationship between da'wah practices, social capital formation, and community resilience (Patton, 2002).

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore participants'

experiences, perceptions, and interpretations regarding the role of Muhammadiyah da'wah in strengthening social relations and community resilience. Participant observation was undertaken during religious gatherings, educational programs, social service activities, and community empowerment initiatives organized by Muhammadiyah. In addition, organizational documents, activity reports, and related archives were examined to complement and triangulate the primary data (Denzin, 1978).

Data analysis followed the thematic analysis procedures proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The process began with data familiarization through repeated reading of interview transcripts, field notes, and documentary materials. Subsequently, initial codes were generated and organized into broader categories related to Muhammadiyah da'wah, social capital, and community resilience. These categories were then reviewed, refined, and grouped into coherent themes through an iterative process of interpretation and verification. Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-stage framework, the analysis consisted of data familiarization, code generation, theme identification, theme review, theme definition and naming, and report production. Through this process, three major themes emerged: (1) Muhammadiyah da'wah as a mechanism for building trust and social networks, (2) the formation of collective norms through religious and social engagement, and (3) the strengthening of community resilience through social services and empowerment programs.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, this study employed source triangulation, method triangulation, member checking, and audit trails. Member checking was conducted by returning summaries of interview findings to selected participants for verification, while audit trails were maintained to document each stage of the research process and analytical decisions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Ethical principles were observed throughout the study, including informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001).

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **3.1. Muhammadiyah Da'wah as Social Capital Production**

The findings of the study show that the practice of Muhammadiyah da'wah in Kendari City functions as a significant mechanism of production and reproduction of social capital. Da'wah activities are not only limited to the delivery of religious teachings, but also create an intense space for social interaction through recitations, educational activities, health services, and community empowerment programs. These spaces become a medium for the formation of social networks, beliefs, and collective norms that strengthen community cohesion.

An informant who is a Muhammadiyah administrator stated:

"Da'wah in Muhammadiyah is not only a lecture, but how we are present in the community, helping them, building togetherness."

Another informant emphasized that Muhammadiyah activities create a sense of mutual trust and social connectedness among community members:

"Through Muhammadiyah activities, people know each other better. When there is a family facing difficulties, information spreads quickly and community members usually come together to provide assistance." (Community Member, Interview, 2026)

This finding indicates that Muhammadiyah da'wah facilitates the development of trust-based relationships that extend beyond religious gatherings. Such relationships constitute an important component of social capital because they enable cooperation, reciprocity, and collective problem-solving within the community (Putnam, 2000). Similar findings have been reported in recent studies showing that religious participation contributes significantly to social connectedness and collective resilience (Tay, Li, Myers, & Diener, 2021).

Field observations further confirmed this pattern. During several Muhammadiyah religious gatherings and community service activities, participants actively engaged in collective discussions, mutual assistance initiatives, and informal exchanges of information regarding education, health, and community welfare. These interactions created opportunities for strengthening interpersonal trust and expanding social networks beyond formal organizational structures. The observations suggest that Muhammadiyah da'wah functions not only as a religious activity but also as a social arena in which relationships, cooperation, and collective commitments are continuously reproduced.

This statement shows that da'wah is practiced as a relationship-oriented social activity, not just the transmission of values. In Putnam's perspective, this practice reflects the formation of social capital through the strengthening of networks and trust that enable cooperation (Putnam, 2000). The social capital that is formed is not only bonding (strengthening internal ties), but also bridging (connecting various social groups), especially through social activities that involve the wider community.

Another participant emphasized the importance of social trust generated through Muhammadiyah activities:

"People are willing to cooperate because they trust each other. When someone needs support, there is usually a network of people ready to help through Muhammadiyah activities."

This finding indicates that trust is not merely an individual attribute but a collective resource that facilitates cooperation and mutual support. Such conditions reflect what Putnam (2000) describes as the social infrastructure necessary for sustaining collective action and community engagement.

Furthermore, within Bourdieu's framework, the social capital generated through the practice of da'wah can be understood as a resource embedded in social relations and can be mobilized for the benefit of the collective (Bourdieu, 1986). Muhammadiyah as an institution provides a structure that allows the accumulation and distribution of social capital through its charitable business and organizational network. Thus, da'wah not only produces symbolic value but also has a structural dimension that strengthens the social position of the community.

### **3.2. Religious Public Sphere and Social Communication**

The results of the study also show that the practice of Muhammadiyah's da'wah functions as a religious public sphere that allows inclusive social communication. Da'wah activities are not only an internal space for the community, but also open a dialogue with the wider community. In this context, da'wah acts as a medium of communication that forms mutual understanding and strengthens social cohesion.

An informant from among the pilgrims said:

"We feel comfortable participating in Muhammadiyah activities because not only do we learn religion, but we can also discuss about daily life problems."

This statement shows that da'wah creates a deliberative space that allows for a rational and open exchange of ideas. In Habermas's perspective, such a space can be understood as part of a public space that allows rational communication to achieve a common understanding (Habermas, 1984). Muhammadiyah's da'wah in this case is not only instructive, but also dialogical, thus strengthening its social legitimacy in society.

Furthermore, the practice of communication in Muhammadiyah da'wah shows an inclusive character that is not exclusive to certain groups. This is important in the context of heterogeneous urban societies, where diversity is both a challenge and an opportunity for the formation of social cohesion. Thus, da'wah serves as a bridge of communication that connects various social groups and strengthens social integration.

Despite these positive contributions, the study also identified several challenges. Some participants reported declining participation among younger generations, particularly due to the growing influence of digital media and changing patterns of social interaction. Others highlighted limitations in organizational resources that occasionally constrained the implementation of community empowerment programs. These findings indicate that while Muhammadiyah has successfully strengthened social cohesion, sustaining long-term engagement remains an important challenge in an increasingly urbanized and digitally connected society.

### **3.3. Da'wah and Community Resilience Transformation**

The findings of the study show that the practice of Muhammadiyah's da'wah has a significant contribution in increasing the resilience of the Muslim community in Kendari City. This resilience is reflected in the ability of communities to adapt to various social, economic, and cultural pressures. Da'wah programs based on education, social services, and economic empowerment are important factors in increasing the adaptive capacity of the community.

An informant involved in the empowerment program stated:

"Through Muhammadiyah activities, the community becomes more independent, helps each other, and is not easily influenced by negative things."

This statement shows that da'wah plays a role in building the internal capacity of the community, both in the form of social solidarity and the ability to face external challenges. In the community resilience literature, social capital is one of the key factors

that determine the adaptability and transformation of society (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015; Norris et al., 2008; Aldrich, 2012). Thus, the practice of da'wah that strengthens social capital directly contributes to increasing community resilience. Recent studies also demonstrate that civic engagement and social capital generated through local organizations contribute substantially to strengthening community resilience and collective capacity (Yustika, Prasetyo, & Widodo, 2024).

The integration between da'wah, social capital, and community resilience shows that religion has a strategic role in dealing with contemporary social dynamics. Muhammadiyah da'wah not only functions as a mechanism for reproducing religious values, but also as an instrument of social transformation that strengthens the collective capacity of society. This confirms that religious practices can be an important social resource in building a resilient and sustainable society.

### **3.4. Theoretical Discussion and Research Contribution**

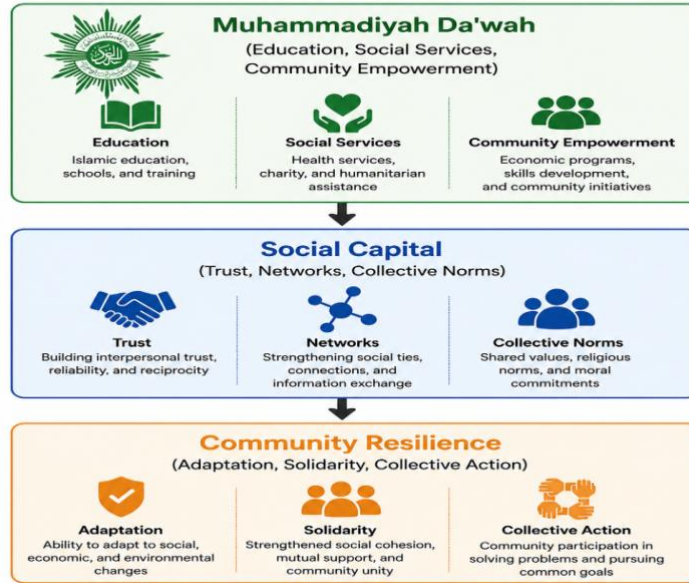
Theoretically, the findings of this study strengthen the argument that da'wah needs to be understood as a social practice that has structural and cultural dimensions. The integration of the perspectives of Putnam, Bourdieu, and Habermas provides a comprehensive analytical framework to explain how da'wah operates in building social relations, producing social capital, and creating spaces for public communication.

The findings are consistent with previous studies that emphasize the role of faith-based organizations in generating social capital and strengthening collective action within communities. Similar to Hefner's (2000) analysis of Islamic civic organizations in Indonesia, this study demonstrates that religious institutions can function as important mediators of trust and social cooperation. However, unlike studies that primarily focus on organizational structures or religious authority, the present study highlights the everyday practices of da'wah as the principal mechanism through which social capital is produced and translated into community resilience. This distinction provides a more process-oriented understanding of how Islamic organizations contribute to social transformation in urban settings. This finding is also consistent with recent scholarship emphasizing the developmental role of faith-based organizations in strengthening community participation, social cohesion, and resilience (Ager, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, & Ager, 2021; Barmania & Reiss, 2021).

This research also contributes to the development of da'wah studies by showing that the effectiveness of da'wah is not only determined by normative aspects, but also by its ability to build social networks and increase community capacity. In this context, Muhammadiyah da'wah in Kendari City can be seen as a contextual, participatory, and transformative model of da'wah practice.

In addition, this study fills a gap in the literature that is still limited in examining the relationship between da'wah, social capital, and community resilience, especially in the urban context in Indonesia. Thus, this research not only makes an empirical contribution, but also enriches the theoretical discourse in the sociology of religion and the study of da'wah.

**Figure 1.**  
**Conceptual Model of Muhammadiyah Da'wah, Social Capital, and Community Resilience.**



**Source:** Author's elaboration based on Putnam (2000), Bourdieu (1986), and Aldrich & Meyer (2015).

Figure 1 illustrates how Muhammadiyah da'wah, implemented through educational activities, social services, and community empowerment programs, contributes to the formation of social capital in the form of trust, social networks, and collective norms. These dimensions of social capital subsequently strengthen community resilience by enhancing adaptation, solidarity, and collective action within Muslim communities in Kendari City.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The research emphasizes that Muhammadiyah da'wah in Kendari City cannot be reduced as a purely religious normative activity, but must be understood as a social practice that actively produces and reproduces social capital and transforms the resilience of the Muslim community. Da'wah practices based on education, social services, and community empowerment have proven to be able to build trust networks, strengthen collective norms, and encourage social solidarity which is the main foundation for the adaptive capacity of society in dealing with social, economic, and cultural pressures.

The main contribution (novelty) of this research lies in the conceptual integration between da'wah as a social practice with the framework of social capital and community resilience in the context of urban Indonesia. Different from da'wah studies that tend to be normative or institutional, this study shows that the effectiveness of da'wah lies in its ability to operate as a social mechanism that builds relationships, creates a dialogical public communication space, and strengthens the collective capacity of society. Thus, this study offers a new perspective that da'wah is not only an instrument of value spread, but also a strategic social infrastructure in building community resilience.

Theoretically, these findings enrich the study of the sociology of religion and da'wah by showing that religious practices have interrelated structural and communicative dimensions. The integration of the perspective of social capital and public space

emphasizes that effective da'wah is one that is able to connect the value dimension with concrete and sustainable social practices. This also broadens the understanding of the role of religious organizations in the context of urban social change.

Practically and policy-wise, this research provides important implications for the development of da'wah strategies that are more contextual, participatory, and empowerment-oriented. Religious organizations, especially Muhammadiyah, need to strengthen a community-based da'wah approach that not only focuses on the aspect of lectures, but also on strengthening social networks, public services, and community economic empowerment programs. In addition, local governments can make the practice of da'wah a strategic partner in social development, especially in strengthening social cohesion and community resilience in increasingly complex urban areas. Collaboration between the state and religious organizations is key in creating an inclusive and sustainable social development model.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study focuses exclusively on Muhammadiyah communities in Kendari City, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other socio-cultural contexts. Second, the research relies primarily on qualitative data, which provides depth but does not allow for broader statistical generalization. Future studies may employ comparative or mixed-method approaches to further examine the relationship between da'wah practices, social capital, and community resilience across different regions and Islamic organizations. Thus, the study of da'wah as a social practice can continue to develop as a relevant field of study in understanding the role of religion in the contemporary era.

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