

THE PREACHING OF THE VILLAGE CLERICS IN CREATING RELIGIOSITY IN YOUTH

Moh. Rofik¹⁾ *

Imam Sadili²⁾

¹ Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Madura, Indonesia

² Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Madura, Indonesia

*Email: rofikgaul17@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examines the role of *kyai kampung* (village clerics) in fostering youth religiosity in Blumbungan Village, Pamekasan, Madura, where adolescents have previously engaged in negative behaviors such as illegal street racing, promiscuity, and hedonistic lifestyles influenced by Western culture. The study aims to explore how culturally grounded and participatory da'wah strategies shape youth religious awareness and behavior within the local social context. Using a qualitative interpretive approach with a case study design, data were collected through interviews, participant observation, and documentation from *kyai*, transformed adolescents, community leaders, and mosque administrators, selected via snowball sampling. Findings reveal that *kyai kampung* act not only as religious leaders but also as social companions, engaging youth in various religious activities such as *pengajian*, *tajhizul mayit*, and mosque programs, resulting in significant improvements in religious participation and moral conduct. The study concludes that culturally adapted, participatory da'wah effectively enhances youth religiosity and promotes social transformation in rural communities, providing a practical model for religious leaders and policymakers seeking contextually relevant approaches.

Keywords: *Culturally Grounded, Da'wah, Village Clerics, Youth Religious*

Abstrak

Studi ini meneliti peran *kyai kampung* (ulama desa) dalam membina religiusitas remaja di Desa Blumbungan, Pamekasan, Madura, di mana remaja sebelumnya terlibat dalam perilaku negatif seperti balap liar, pergaulan bebas, dan gaya hidup hedonistik yang dipengaruhi oleh budaya Barat. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana strategi dakwah yang berlandaskan budaya dan partisipatif membentuk kesadaran dan perilaku keagamaan remaja dalam konteks sosial lokal. Menggunakan pendekatan interpretatif kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, observasi partisipan, dan dokumentasi dari *kyai*, remaja yang telah ditransformasi, tokoh masyarakat, dan pengurus masjid, yang dipilih melalui pengambilan sampel bola salju. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa *kyai kampung* bertindak tidak hanya sebagai pemimpin agama tetapi juga sebagai pendamping sosial, melibatkan remaja dalam berbagai kegiatan keagamaan seperti *pengajian*, *tajhizul mayit*, dan program masjid, yang menghasilkan peningkatan signifikan dalam partisipasi keagamaan dan perilaku moral. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa dakwah partisipatif yang diadaptasi secara budaya secara efektif meningkatkan religiusitas kaum muda dan mendorong transformasi sosial di masyarakat pedesaan, menyediakan model praktis bagi para pemimpin agama dan pembuat kebijakan yang mencari pendekatan yang relevan secara kontekstual.

Kata Kunci: *Berbasis Budaya, Dakwah, Ulama Desa, Pemuda Religius*

INTRODUCTION

Within a predominantly Muslim society that upholds religious values, alarming social realities have emerged among adolescents, including in Blumbungan Village. Various forms of deviant behavior, such as illegal street racing, promiscuity, late-night gatherings, and excessive social media use, have become increasingly prevalent (Suaib, 2023; Ronanda et al., 2024; Khoriani & Shofiah, 2025). Consumerist behavior and unfiltered adoption of Western lifestyles are also frequently observed, indicating a degradation of religious and cultural values among youth, even in rural areas traditionally regarded as strongholds of Islamic identity.

This condition has drawn serious attention from community leaders, particularly village clerics (*kyai kampung*), who maintain important roles in the religious life of Madurese society. Village clerics function not merely as spiritual symbols but as social agents with broad influence in shaping community values, attitudes, and behaviors. Amid modernization and globalization challenges, these local clerics must adapt and contextualize their da'wah approaches to remain relevant and reach all social groups (Masturi, 2025). Their da'wah extends beyond formal sermons in mosques or Islamic boarding schools, implemented through emotional and social engagement, employing cultural approaches and participatory activities that directly involve youth (Anwari, 2022; Budiman et al., 2025).

The weakening of adolescent religiosity has become a major challenge in national character development both nationally and globally (Rahmawati et al., 2020; Awaludin et al., 2023; Samsudin, 2025). Rapid information flow, easy access to foreign cultures, and weakened social control within families and communities have made young people increasingly vulnerable to deviant behaviors. As the world's largest Muslim-majority country, Indonesia faces growing concerns over rising juvenile delinquency, moral decadence, and declining daily religious practices (Wijayanti & Abdurrahman, 2025). Nevertheless, amid global cultural influences, local initiatives serve as oases of morality and spirituality. One such effort is culturally grounded da'wah carried out by village clerics a humanistic, participatory approach deeply rooted in local community values, representing an important alternative for rebuilding religious awareness in increasingly complex societies (Nasution, 2023; Dani, 2024, Huda, 2024).

Cultural da'wah refers to conveying Islamic messages while considering values, customs, and local traditions within a particular community. Rakhmat (1994) states that da'wah becomes effective when communicators adapt both message and medium to the audience's sociocultural context. Village clerics in Blumbungan utilize socio-religious activities as da'wah media that embrace rather than judge. The use of local language, cultural symbols, and familial approaches makes da'wah more grounded and widely accepted, including by youth previously alienated from religious activities (Akilah et al., 2025). Cultural da'wah not only conveys Islamic teachings but simultaneously facilitates social transformation (Razi, 2011). It encourages behavioral change, fosters collective awareness, and helps build more religious social structures (Fijri et al., 2023;

Muhsinah, 2024; Irawan, 2025). Village clerics serve as transformational figures who not only offer advice but also embody exemplary conduct (*uswah hasanah*) and provide companionship in daily community life, actively participating in various social dynamics, including weddings, funerals, family conflicts, and community economic activities.

Previous studies have largely examined kyai roles within pesantren structures, formal religious institutions, or power relations in da'wah, as analyzed by Rohani (2024) and Bahri (2023). However, this study introduces novelty by focusing on village clerics' roles in non-pesantren contexts, particularly in guiding rural youth through cultural and participatory da'wah approaches. Another novel element is the direct observation of youth religiosity transformation processes, from previous engagement in deviant behaviors to becoming active participants in village religious activities. This study aims to explore how village clerics' da'wah strategies shape youth religiosity and how these processes unfold within Blumbungan society's local social and cultural context.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs an interpretive qualitative approach with a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding (Fitrah & Luthfiyah, 2018) of the role of village clerics' da'wah in fostering youth religiosity in Blumbungan Village, Larangan Sub-district, Pamekasan Regency, Madura. The qualitative approach was chosen because it enables the researcher to capture meanings, values, and subjective experiences that exist within the community, particularly in the context of social interactions between the *kyai* and the youth. Meanwhile, the case study design was selected because the focus of this research lies in a specific location that needs to be examined contextually. The main informants in this study consist of village clerics who are directly involved in the da'wah process, youths who have experienced religious transformation, as well as community leaders and mosque administrators who are familiar with the religious dynamics of the village.

The selection of informants was conducted using the snowball sampling technique, in which the researcher followed referrals from one informant to another who was considered relevant and knowledgeable about the research context. Data collection techniques included interviews, participant observation, and documentation (Nasarudin et al., 2024). Interviews were conducted to explore the strategies, experiences, and perceptions of both the *kyai* and the youth regarding the implemented da'wah activities. Observations were carried out by participating in or directly observing religious activities such as routine *pengajian* (religious study gatherings), *tajhizul mayit* (Islamic funeral preparation) training, and youth mosque programs. Documentation involved collecting activity records, photographs, and archives related to da'wah initiatives and youth participation.

Data analysis was performed using thematic analysis techniques, where data from interviews and observations were transcribed, coded, and categorized

into emerging themes that reflect the cultural *da'wah* strategies and their impact on youth religiosity. To ensure data validity and credibility, triangulation was applied by cross-verifying information from multiple sources and methods. The researcher also conducted member checking by sharing preliminary findings with key informants to confirm the accuracy and interpretative validity of the data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Cultural and Participatory Da'wah: Transforming Youth Religiosity

The findings reveal that village clerics' *da'wah* in Blumbungan Village plays a significant role in shaping youth religiosity among those previously distant from Islamic values. The *da'wah* implemented is cultural, dialogical, and participatory rather than structural or formal as found in Islamic boarding schools, employing personal and grounded approaches integrated into community daily life. This strategy effectively reaches young people who previously engaged in self-destructive activities such as illegal street racing, late-night gatherings, and uncontrolled social media use.

One impactful *da'wah* activity is youth involvement in *tajhizul mayit* (Islamic funeral rites). The *kyai* actively engage young people in every stage from washing and shrouding the body, performing funeral prayers, to accompanying the burial. Initially reluctant and fearful, youths gradually became confident and enthusiastic through the *kyai's* persuasive approach and community support. This activity provides a profound spiritual experience and fosters death awareness through self-reflection, gradually nurturing religiosity in daily life.

Village clerics regularly hold *pengajian* (religious study gatherings) specifically designed for youth using everyday language that feels familiar and relatable. Materials are not purely normative but connected to real youth issues such as social interactions, social media use, drug dangers, prayer importance, and life's meaning from an Islamic perspective. The communicative and humanistic delivery style makes sessions engaging and eagerly anticipated. Religious events such as *Maulid Nabi*, *Isra' Mi'raj*, *Nuzulul Qur'an*, and *haul* (memorial) of former *kyai* serve as *da'wah* platforms directly involving youth participation. The *kyai* entrust them with responsibilities as event organizers, stage coordinators, performers, or moderators in Islamic discussions. This involvement fosters belonging toward religious activities and cultivates moral responsibility to uphold values and traditions passed down by previous *ulama* generations.

The *kyai* also encourage youth mosque groups to be given active roles in organizing religious activities such as Saturday night study sessions, Islamic skill-based training in *khutbah* delivery and *tartil al-Qur'an*, and social activities like orphan donations and community service. In these activities, the *kyai* serve as mentors and companions rather than authoritative figures, positioning them not only as religious teachers but also as spiritual guides and exemplary role models. Youth religiosity transformation is evident through noticeable changes in attitudes and daily behaviors. Several youth informants admitted abandoning negative habits such as loitering late at night, excessive gaming, and consumerist

lifestyles. Instead, they became more diligent in attending *pengajian*, reading the Qur'an, and participating in mosque activities. Some even initiated organizing religious programs within their communities. This reflects internalization of religious values that grows naturally from personal awareness and direct experience under *kyai* guidance rather than being imposed.

The relationship between *kyai* and youth is familial and based on mutual respect rather than hierarchical. The *kyai* not merely preach from pulpits but also converse with youth, listen to their concerns, and engage in casual discussions or recreational activities related to youth issues. This creates deep emotional bonds, serving as an essential foundation for *da'wah* process success.

Table 1. Village Clerics' Da'wah Activities and Their Impact on Adolescent Religiosity in Blumbungan Village

No	Village Clerics Activities	Da'wah Forms of Youth Involvement	Impact on Adolescent Religiosity
1	Involvement in Tajhizul Mayit	Help bathe, shroud, and bury the body	Enhancing spiritual awareness, cultivating empathy, and fostering awareness of mortality
2	Regular sermons and <i>pengajian</i> specifically for adolescents	Becoming active participants by engaging in discussions and asking questions	Increasing religious understanding and fostering enthusiasm for learning Islam
3	Collective religious activities (Maulid, Isra' Mi'raj, Haul)	Serving as committee members, event organizers, or Qur'an reciters	Enhancing a sense of responsibility and pride in one's religion
4	Formation of mosque youth groups	Managing mosque activities, organizing study schedules, and conducting training sessions	Encouraging leadership, independence, and religious participation
5	Informal discussion and non-formal guidance	Interacting directly with <i>kyai</i> outside the official forum	Increase emotional closeness and respect for religious figures
6	Islamic skills training	Practice of call to prayer, sermon, reading the Qur'an with proper recitation	Sharpening religious abilities and boosting self-confidence

Table 1 summarizes the most profound activity is involvement in *Tajhizul Mayit*, where youth participate in funeral rites, enhancing spiritual awareness and mortality consciousness. Regular *pengajian* sessions encourage active discussion, increasing religious understanding and learning enthusiasm, while collective religious activities such as *Maulid*, *Isra' Mi'raj*, and *Haul* enable youth to serve as organizers or Qur'an reciters, enhancing responsibility and religious pride. Mosque youth group formation allows young people to manage activities and organize schedules, encouraging leadership and independence, whereas informal discussions between *kyai* and youth outside official forums increase emotional closeness and respect for religious figures. Islamic skills training in

prayer calling, *khutbah* delivery, and *tartil al-Qur'an* sharpens religious abilities and boosts self-confidence.

Cultural *Da'wah* and Social Approach

The *da'wah* carried out by the village clerics in Blumbungan Village is integrated into the community's socio-cultural life rather than delivered through formal or rigid methods. This cultural and social *da'wah* serves as the core of how the *kyais* engage with society while bridging the gap between religious values and everyday lived experiences (Muhtarom, 2019). The *kyais* utilize local customs and traditional moments such as regular *tahlilan* gatherings, harvest thanksgiving ceremonies (*selamatan panen*), commemorations of past religious figures (*haul*), and other Islamic celebrations as effective *da'wah* media. During these events, Islamic messages are subtly and contextually incorporated, allowing them to be well-received without disrupting deeply rooted cultural traditions. For instance, during *tahlilan* or village *selamatan* ceremonies, the *kyais* deliver brief *tausiyah* (religious talks) linking the meaning of death to spiritual preparation, such as performing prayer, engaging in supplication, and improving social relationships. Since these traditional activities are well accepted, young people participate willingly without feeling coerced to listen to religious messages.

Ustadz Umar (2025) emphasized that they do not force young people to come to the mosque through heavy sermons, but instead, during *tahlilan*, he inserts stories about the meaning of life and death, reminding them that everyone will ultimately return to God, noting that youths who initially came merely for traditional rituals began listening attentively and later approached him with questions afterward. He stressed that the success of cultural *da'wah* lies in enabling young people to discover the relevance of religious values within their own traditions rather than imposing *da'wah* from above without context. One distinctive feature of the village clerics' cultural *da'wah* is the use of simple, non-theological language and dialogical delivery. The *kyai* does not sit on a high pulpit addressing passive audiences but sits among youth in relaxed forums where discussions, Q&A sessions, and social sharing become integral parts of the *da'wah* process, creating an atmosphere where youth feel respected, not judged, and are more open to receiving religious messages.

Ustadz Syakur (2025) explained that if he preaches using yellow book (*kitab kuning*) terminology or abstract concepts, youth quickly become bored, so he starts by discussing everyday life like gadgets, social media, or dating, then connects these topics to Islamic perspectives, for example asking "You like hanging out late at night just to look cool on Instagram, but have you ever thought about how Allah watches us during those nights?" which prompts youth to reflect independently rather than being instructed directly. Fahmi (2025), a 17-year-old youth from Blumbungan Village, expressed that he previously wasn't interested in attending religious gatherings because sermons felt rigid and full of difficult terms, but when Ustadz Faiz talked casually at a small coffee stall about social media, peer groups, and even sins of the heart, it made him curious to join the next study session, noting that the village *kyai* didn't come as an authority

figure but as a conversation partner. Fahmi's statement underscores the shift in the *kyai's* role from authoritative figure to conversational companion, serving as an effective strategy to break down psychological barriers between youth and religious leaders.

Cultural da'wah in Blumbungan extends beyond formal preaching to social activities closely tied to community everyday life. The village *kyai* often integrate religious activities with social engagement such as community service, collective village work (*gotong royong*), religious gatherings combined with communal fish grilling, and environmental clean-up events, within which messages of Islamic ethics and morality are conveyed through simple, relatable narratives. Ustadz Faiz (2025) noted that they invite youth to clean the mosque, arrange its garden, and tidy village roads, and while working, he shares stories about patience, sincerity, respecting neighbors' rights, or remembering death, allowing youth to listen, engage in discussions, and eventually align religious values with their own social activities without realizing it. Thus, *da'wah* is understood not as a separate or isolated duty but as an integral part of public awareness concerning communal solidarity and social responsibility.

One main challenge in preaching to youth lies in their resistance to religion, often perceived as boring, irrelevant, or restrictive, which the cultural approach helps bridge emotionally and psychologically. Since da'wah is not delivered solely from a position of authority, young people feel safer to ask questions and share personal concerns. Fahmi (2025) explained that he was initially reluctant to join study sessions, but when Ustadz Umar asked why he skipped class or stayed up late and listened without getting angry, he started opening up about his problems, and afterward began attending religious gatherings voluntarily out of his own curiosity rather than fear of reprimand. This expression illustrates how emotional dialogue opens space for spiritual closeness, where resistance diminishes as adolescents feel respected and heard.

The village clerics understand that successful da'wah is not merely about instilling religious values but also honoring local cultural identity. They ensure da'wah does not suppress local traditions but transforms them into vessels for conveying religious meaning. For example, during *haul* ceremonies for ancestors or commemorations of the deceased, elements such as *rebana* music, local poetry, and traditional Madurese prayers are preserved while the *kyai* simply insert brief moral reflections between cultural performances. Ustadz Umar (2025) stated that he tells youth they do not need to abandon their culture but should make it a medium for da'wah, so during traditional ceremonies, youth continue using local traditions such as music, poetry, and the Madurese language while he inserts short messages like "Remember, every beat of the *rebana* is our prayer to Allah," allowing them to enjoy their culture while gradually feeling that religion resides within it. This strategy maintains a balance between religious modernity and local identity, preventing identity conflicts among adolescents.

The *Kyai* as a Transformational Figure

The transformational role of the *kyai* extends beyond merely conveying religious teachings, serving as an agent of change who exerts holistic influence on young people's lives. A *kyai's* ability to build personal and emotional connections across different social groups is a defining characteristic (Umam, 2020; Mukri & Tamam, 2021; Khofi & Furqon, 2024). This relationship manifests as an intimate, familial, and mutually respectful bond rather than a formal teacher-student dynamic, with the *kyai* present in everyday life listening to youth concerns, serving as a confidant, and offering guidance grounded in lived experience. Bahtiar (2025), a youth from Blumbungan Village, acknowledged that when wanting to discuss dating or school pressures, he sometimes visits Ustadz Umar's house where the *kyai* sits and listens without judging, sometimes asking why he feels that way and what he's experiencing, making him feel relieved and reconsider his actions to avoid bad decisions, which wouldn't happen if he were simply dictated to from above. This highlights the importance of emotional relationships where adolescents who feel listened to, respected, and trusted are more open to conveyed values, with the *kyai* assuming the role of spiritual companions rather than rigid authority.

Ustadz Umar (2025) explained that he intentionally sits with youth rather than on the pulpit, and when youth come by at night, he invites them for simple coffee while talking casually about life burdens, school, or family issues, sometimes sharing his own youthful experiences so they feel close rather than distant. This openness creates an atmosphere of trust where adolescents feel safe expressing anxieties without fear of being labeled deviant or sinful. A transformational figure not only speaks but also embodies living examples, with the village *kyai* in Blumbungan practicing Islamic values in daily life, allowing youth to witness consistency between words and actions that strengthens the *kyai's* credibility and legitimacy as a role model. Ustadz Syakur (2025) stated that he tries setting examples by performing prayers on time, visiting the sick, assisting with community economic difficulties, and participating in collective village work (*gotong royong*), noting that youth see he not only teaches but also takes action, and when they ask why he's cleaning village roads at 5 a.m., he replies "Doesn't Islam command cleanliness and social responsibility?" hoping they see that *da'wah* is alive, not just delivered from pulpits. His example in simple activities like being present in the community and interacting with all social strata demonstrates that religion is not an empty theory but integral to lived reality, serving as a transformation mechanism where adolescents internalize that personal change must be accompanied by concrete actions.

Bahtiar (2025) reflected that when he saw Ustadz Faiz helping orphans, distributing basic necessities, and accompanying his friend experiencing family problems, he began thinking that if religion is good, why is the *kyai* willing to go through such effort, wanting to do the same not for praise but to live a meaningful life. These testimonies reveal that adolescent motivation stems not solely from logical arguments but from inspiration derived from witnessing concrete actions, with such exemplary behavior sparking transformation desires in their hearts. Religious transformation does not occur through single lectures

or one-off interventions, as village *kyai* provide continuous guidance accompanying youth throughout spiritual journeys from initial doubt and identity crises to value integration with actions, including personal guidance, self-evaluation, and follow-up activities. Ustadz Faiz (2025) explained that after lectures or *pengajian*, he doesn't stop there but asks how it was when they put teachings into practice, and when some admit difficulty, he guides them individually, talking again the following week if youth struggle with old habits, noting the process is slow and he doesn't force them because what matters is they feel supported rather than abandoned after entering the mosque. This mentoring concept ensures changes achieved are not merely temporary or superficial but become integrated into adolescents' psychological and social structure, with the *kyai* functioning as long-term guide rather than one-time instructor.

Adolescents often face identity pressures including conflicts between local culture and globalization, peer pressure, and desires for social recognition. The village *kyai* understand these challenges and create discussion spaces on contemporary issues such as social media, free association, harassment, sexuality, and future anxieties, where the *kyai* acts as non-judgmental moderators, encouraging reflection rather than imposing directives. Fahmi (2025) shared that he was previously afraid to ask about dating for fear of rejection, but during one Saturday night study session, Ustadz Syakur said if confused, don't stay silent but ask and discuss because there's no prohibition on speaking, so he shared his friend's experience of risky relationships, and the *kyai* explained religious consequences and offered practical solutions on maintaining boundaries in social interactions and coping with peer pressure, which was very helpful. Such thematic discussions make adolescents perceive religion not as static dogma but as a value system relevant to personal challenges, with the *kyai* serving as facilitator of reflection rather than merely an enforcer of norms.

The transformation brought about by the *kyai* can be observed in psychological changes such as shifts in perspective, self-awareness, and internalized moral values, as well as social changes in relationships with the surrounding environment. Based on interviews and observations, several patterns emerged: first, higher self-awareness in choosing friends, activities, and life priorities such as preferring religious study sessions over aimless loitering; second, increased tolerance, empathy, and social responsibility including helping neighbors and reducing negative consumption; third, active participation in religious community life, becoming youth leaders in mosques, taking responsibility for religious events, and spreading da'wah values to peers. Bahtiar (2025) recalled that he previously joined a group that often hung out, smoked, snacked late at night, and raced, but after several months participating in the mosque youth group and receiving guidance from Ustadz Umar, he began leaving that lifestyle behind, and though friends were initially surprised, he said he wanted to find peaceful space in life rather than just through social media, now often inviting friends to join small religious study sessions. Ustadz Umar (2025) observed that some adolescents who used to skip school or spend Saturday nights at malls now sit in mosques participating in discussions, with

others even taking roles as youth committee members, serving as evidence that a guiding figure can serve as a catalyst for transformation.

Although the transformational role of village *kyai* appears effective, real challenges exist: some adolescents revert to old habits when intensive guidance is absent, others remain skeptical due to family conflicts or economic pressures, making it difficult to fully embrace change, and *kyai* sometimes face limitations in time and energy to provide individual intensive mentorship to all youth. Nevertheless, the *kyai* acknowledge these constraints and establish support networks such as senior youth and junior mentors to expand guidance reach, with some adolescents who have undergone transformation even becoming mentors for others, ensuring continuity of the transformative process.

Impact on the Transformation of Adolescent Religiosity

The intensive and purposeful da'wah of village clerics in Blumbungan Village has led to significant transformations in adolescent religiosity, evident not only in religious behaviors but also in attitudes, mindsets, and social engagement within the community. Previously, adolescents engaged in negative behaviors such as illegal street racing, free social interactions, and hedonistic lifestyles influenced by Western culture. Bahtiar (2025) described his past involvement in street racing and late-night hangouts, noting that regular attendance at *pengajian* and mosque activities guided by Ustadz Umar and peers helped him abandon these habits and prefer participating in religious study and social activities. According to Bahtiar (2025), this change emerged from internal awareness cultivated through participatory da'wah. Syakur (2025) observed increased mosque attendance, awareness of congregational prayers, and gradual abandonment of harmful behaviors as evidence of the effectiveness of contextual and participatory da'wah.

Participation in *tajhizul mayit*, where adolescents assist in washing, shrouding, performing funeral prayers, and accompanying burials, provides profound spiritual experiences and fosters mortality awareness. Ustadz Faiz (2025) explained that this involvement teaches social responsibility and humanitarian values in Islam while giving youth a sense of community ownership. Bahtiar (2025) emphasized that participating in *tahlilan* and funeral rites opened his eyes to the meaning of life and death, fostering responsible living.

Regular youth-focused *pengajian*, delivered in everyday language and addressing real-life issues such as social media use, peer interaction, and prayer importance, encourages active participation and deepens religious understanding. Engagement in events such as *Maulid Nabi*, *Isra' Mi'raj*, *Nuzulul Qur'an*, and *haul* develops responsibility and pride as adolescents take roles as organizers, performers, or moderators. Youth mosque groups facilitate leadership and independence through activity management, study scheduling, and Islamic skill-based training, including *khutbah* delivery and *tartil al-Qur'an*. Informal discussions with *kyai* outside official forums enhance emotional closeness and respect, positioning *kyai* as mentors and role models.

The transformation also includes internalization of religious values beyond ritual worship. Ustadz Umar (2025) highlighted the importance of practicing honesty, empathy, patience, and sincerity in daily life, while Fahmi (2025) expressed that prayer became a personal act of closeness to Allah and a guide for ethical behavior. Positive behavioral changes extend to social dynamics, as adolescents become role models, influencing peers and fostering harmonious relationships, with Syakur (2025) noting the spread of positive energy and strengthening of the mosque youth community.

The kyai culturally grounded approach strengthens adolescents' religious identity by integrating local traditions such as Madurese language, *rebana* music, and customs with Islamic values. Faiz (2025) emphasized that this encourages pride in local identity while avoiding harmful foreign cultural influences, and Fahmi (2025) noted that participation in Islamic cultural events helped reconcile religion and local traditions. Despite these successes, challenges remain due to economic pressures, social media, and peer influence, requiring continuous da'wah efforts and support from families and schools. Umar (2025) stressed the need for ongoing engagement to sustain changes, and Bahtiar (2025) highlighted peer support as key to maintaining positive behaviors. Practically, these findings serve as a reference for da'wah practitioners, community leaders, and policymakers in designing contextually relevant strategies. Academically, the study contributes to Islamic communication and da'wah scholarship, particularly in developing theories of culturally grounded da'wah based on local wisdom.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the da'wah conducted by village clerics in Blumbungan plays a strategic role in fostering adolescent religiosity through cultural, personal, and participatory approaches. The cultural da'wah accommodates local values such as *tahlilan*, *selamatan*, and *haul* ceremonies, making religious messages more acceptable through dialogical and relaxed approaches that engage emotions and direct interaction, creating a grounded, non-didactic da'wah environment where adolescents feel involved and respected. The village clerics serve as transformational figures who provide spiritual guidance and exemplify a way of life through emotional closeness, everyday life examples, and ongoing mentorship, building trust and strong motivation for personal transformation. The impact is evident in changes in attitudes and religious behaviors, with previously deviant youth actively participating in religious activities such as routine *pengajian*, *tajhizul mayit*, and social-religious events, increasing spiritual and moral awareness accompanied by strengthened religious identity rooted in local culture. Practically, this study provides insights for da'wah practitioners and policymakers to design contextual, culturally grounded approaches prioritizing emotional engagement over formal instruction, while academically enriching Islamic communication studies by demonstrating how local wisdom can be effectively integrated into contemporary da'wah strategies.

However, this study has limitations, including its single village context

which potentially restricts generalizability to other regions with different socio-cultural characteristics, and the challenge of maintaining adolescent religiosity transformation amid social pressures and media influences, requiring continuous family and community involvement for long-term sustainability. Future research should explore comparative analyses across diverse cultural contexts, examine long-term impacts of cultural da'wah on adolescent religiosity, investigate the role of digital media in supporting village *kyai's da'wah* strategies, and study family involvement mechanisms in sustaining youth religious transformation to provide valuable insights for developing more comprehensive and sustainable da'wah models in contemporary society.

REFERENCES

- Akilah, U., Safi'e, M., Rahmatullah, I., Fadlan, M. A., & Shobahiyah, Q. (2025). *Konektivitas Budaya Dengan Jiwa Keagamaan*. Malang: Kramantara JS.
- Anwari, A. M. (2022). The role of community service in improving educational character of students in a boarding school in Yogyakarta. *Research Horizon*, 2(1), 295–302.
- Bahri, S. (2023). Peran ulama dalam perkembangan institusi pendidikan islam Mathlaul Anwar dan MALNU. *Ulumuddin: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman*, 13(2), 261–282.
- Bahtiar. (2025, Juli 27). Salah satu remaja Desa Blumbungan Pamekasan. (Rofik, Interviewer).
- Budiman, A., Alhasbi, F., & Widoyo, A. F. (2025). Upaya persuasif majelis taklim dalam meningkatkan kesadaran berjamaah: studi pada Majelis Taklim Al-Ukhuwah Gentan. *Pawarta: Journal of Communication and Da'wah*, 3(2), 89–104.
- Fahmi. (2025, April 18). Salah satu remaja Desa Blumbungan Pamekasan. (Rofik, Interviewer).
- Faiz, U. (2025, April 19). Kyai Kampung Desa Blumbungan Pamekasan. (Rofik, Interviewer).
- Fitrah, M., & Luthfiyah. (2018). *Metodologi penelitian: penelitian kualitatif, tindakan kelas & studi kasus*. Suka Bumi: Jejak Publisher.
- Khofi, M. B., & Furqon, M. (2024). Strategi kepemimpinan kiai dalam mengembangkan Pondok Pesantren. *INCARE, International Journal of Educational Resources*, 5(3), 265–288.
- Mukri, R., & Tamam, A. M. (2021). Prototipe kepemimpinan kiai di pesantren modern. *Jurnal Dirosah Islamiyah*, 3(3), 320–331.
- Umam, W. (2020). A Kepemimpinan kiai dalam mengembangkan pondok pesantren. *Attractive: Innovative Education Journal*, 2(3), 61–69.
- Masturi, A. (2025). *Dakwah perkotaan dan kemajemukan agama*. Jakarta: Publica Indonesia Utama.
- Muhsinah. (2024). Analisis peran dakwah sebagai alat transformasi sosial: tantangan dan strategi komunikasi dalam konteks masyarakat modern. *Jurnal Komunikasi dan Media*, 1(1), 160–175.
- Irawan, D. (2025). Strategi komunikasi dakwah (studi analisis dakwah tradisonal dengan inovasi digital). *Syi'ar: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi, Penyuluhan dan Bimbingan Masyarakat Islam*, 8(1), 1–16.

- Fijri, S., Sesilia, P., Rista, L., Pratama, S., Ananta, R. P., & Ikhsan, M. (2023, December). Peran media sosial dalam dakwah dan komunikasi di era society 5.0. In *Proceeding Conference on Da'wah and Communication Studies*, 2(2), 57-61.
- Muhtarom, A. (2019). *Gerakan keagamaan islam transnasional: diskursus dan kontestasi wacana islam politik di Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Ilmu.
- Nasarudin, N., Rahayu, M., Asyari, D. P., Sofyan, A., Fadli, M., Hari, K. K., ... & Sarie, F. (2024). *Metode Penelitian Kombinasi (Mixed Method)*. Padang: CV. Gita Lentera.
- Nasution, K. U. (2023). Dakwah adaptif: menyasiasi tantangan komunikasi islam di lingkungan pendidikan multikultural. *Edu Global: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 4(2), 65-85.
- Dani, F. R. (2024). Dakwah multikultural: Pendekatan komunikasi antarbudaya dalam menyebarkan Islam. In *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Ilmu Ilmu Sosial (SNIIS)*, 3(2), 1310-1323.
- Huda, M. K. (2024). Strategi dakwah lintas budaya dalam menghormati keberagaman dan membangun komunikasi efektif. *Meyarsa: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi dan Dakwah*, 5(2), 158-168.
- Rakhmat, J. (1994). *Membuka tirai kegaiban: renungan-renungan sufistik*. Bandung: Mizan.
- Razi, F. (2011). NU dan Kontinuitas Dakwah Kultural. *Jurnal Komunikasi Islam*, 1(2), 161-171.
- Rohani. (2024). Transformasi relasi kyai dan santri dalam tradisi pesantren. *Manarul Qur'an: Jurnal Ilmiah Studi Islam*, 24(2), 24-42.
- Ronanda, D. Z., Sari, D. N., & Tanjung, E. D. (2024). Studi literatur analisis terhadap perilaku menyimpang di kalangan remaja. *Jurnal Nirta: Studi Inovasi*, 3(2), 11-19.
- Suaib, A. (2023). Pendidikan akhlak remaja di era Society 5.0 dalam perspektif Islam. *Pandu: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak dan Pendidikan Umum*, 1(4), 10-17.
- Khoriani, E., & Shofiah, V. (2025). Kenakalan dan penyalahgunaan narkoba pada remaja beserta upaya pencegahannya. *SINERGI: Jurnal Riset Ilmiah*, 2(5), 2391-2410.
- Samsudin. (2025). Membangun karakter religius masyarakat pedesaan di era revolusi 5.0. *Jurnal Kependidikan*, 13(1), 19-44.
- Awaludin, A. (2023). *Internalisasi nilai-nilai pendidikan islam berbasis kearifan lokal dalam pembentukan karakter religius remaja di Desa Kalisapu Kecamatan Slawi Kabupaten Tegal*. Pekalongan: UIN. KH Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan (Doctoral dissertation).
- Rahmawati, F., Afifulloh, M., & Sulistiono, M. (2020). Budaya religius: implikasinya dalam meningkatkan karakter keagamaan siswa di Min kota Malang. *Elementeris: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar Islam*, 2(2), 22-35.
- Syakur, U. (2025, Juli 16). Kyai Kampung Desa Blumbungan Pamekasan. (Rofik, Interviewer).
- Umar, U. (2025, April 17). Kyai Kampung di Desa Blumbungan Pamekasan. (Rofik, Interviewer).
- Wijayanti, S., & Abdurrahman, Z. (2025). Analisis faktor dekadensi moral generasi Z dan solusinya dalam konseling islam. *Al-Ittizaan: Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling Islam*, 8(1), 56-70.