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Original Research

Progressive Da'wah and Contextual Hadith Hermeneutics: Religious and Social Transformations in Central Java, Indonesia

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Abstract: The tension between textual scripturalism and the insistence on secularisation in modernity often obscures the transformative capacity of prophetic texts in contemporary social dynamics. Socio-religious studies have been trapped in a dichotomy between isolated textual-normative ushul fiqh and reductionist da'wah studies without a solid empirical hermeneutic foundation. This article analyses how progressive da'wah internalizes hadith values and how this shifts religious understanding among people in Central Java. Using multi-site phenomenological and ethnographic designs across six socio-cultural loci involving 47 key informants, this study unravels the dialectic between normative authority, cultural agency, and digital mediation. The results show that religious transformation does not occur through linear doctrinal transmission, but through the Hadith-Based Social Transformation (TSBH) model, which combines Islamic boarding school networks, accommodation of Javanese local wisdom, and hybridization of cyber authorities. This study's recommendations affirm the importance of updating the epistemology of da'wah based on maqasid sharia as a substantive analytical framework for global Islamic moderation.

Keywords: Progressive Da'wah; Contextual Hadith Hermeneutics; Religious and Social Transformation; Moderate Islam; Living Hadith

1. Introduction

The fragmentation of religious understanding among urban and rural Muslim communities in Indonesia further demonstrates the dialectical tension between the rigid pull of scriptural literalism and the ever-evolving demands of modernity. Contemporary religious phenomena are often confronted with cognitive dissonance when particular norms inherited from medieval traditions are forced into the complexity of modern social problems without adequate cultural mediation. According to the Central Statistics Agency's census release, Indonesia is now home to more than 241 million Muslims out of 278 million people, with a highly dynamic and pluralistic religious concentration in Central Java, which includes more than 36.5 million people (Central Statistics Agency, 2024, p. 88). In the midst of this demographic density, the clash of ideas between conservative da'wah that urges normative textualism and syncretic patterns of religiosity creates disorientation in the socio-religious orientation at the grassroots. Therefore, the need for a religious articulation that can bridge the sacredness of prophetic texts with empirical social reality is an urgent social fact to be critically examined.

Previous academic studies on the position of the corpus of hadith in the public sphere are mostly still shackled in the paradigm of normative studies-ulumul hadith or limited to the study of da'wah instrumentation oriented to practical rhetorical methods. The classical hadith approach tends to limit itself to textual criticism of transmission (sanad) and editorial authenticity (matan), while conventional da'wah communication studies often treat prophetic texts only as legitimate postulates without examining the sociological mechanisms of their internalisation into social

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actions. Several researchers have analysed the role of local wisdom and Islamic boarding school networks in religious transmission in Java (Bruinessen, 1995, p. 45; Dhofier, 2000, p. 1091; Estuningtiyas, 2023, p. 98). However, the existing literature has not systematically mapped how contextual hadith hermeneutics is transformed into a sociocultural agency capital that actively reconstructs the theological consciousness, human relations, and economic activism of local communities. This gap reveals a serious theoretical deficit in linking hadith epistemes to empirical social transformation.

Responding to the epistemological and analytical weaknesses in the existing literature, this study aims to investigate in depth the dialectical relationship between the hadith text and the dynamics of progressive da'wah in transforming the religious landscape of society in Central Java. This study addresses the gap in previous research by examining how prophetic texts are no longer positioned solely as static legal dogmas, but are operated as emancipatory social ethics through institutional da'wah agencies and new media. Specifically, this paper answers three main research questions: how the hermeneutical-contextual mechanism of internalising hadith is operated by da'wah agents; how the adaptation of prophetic values is negotiated with local Javanese wisdom and digital infrastructure; and how these articulations form moderate socio-religious transformation patterns. With this focus, the article presents an evidence-based analysis of local-level religious change dynamics.

This article argues that progressive hadith-based da'wah has transformed the religious orientation of the Muslim community in Central Java by operating through a tripartite dialectical mechanism: the hermeneutic reconstruction of prophetic texts, the vernacularization of values into the structure of the local Javanese ethos, and the amplification of hybrid authority networks. The success of this transformation is not determined by scripturalistic normative doctrinal imposition, but by the elasticity of contextual interpretation that transforms hadith from mere theological texts into emancipatory social capital. This thesis asserts that when the authority of prophetic texts meets a beneficial approach (maqashid asy-sharia) and is practised through the cultural capital of Islamic boarding schools and media technology, the community's religious understanding evolves from formalistic religiosity to a social-ethical consciousness that is tolerant, inclusive, and economically viable. Thus, the religious renewal was an organic synthesis of the text's orthodox continuity and its adaptability to local historicity.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Progressive Da'wah

Progressive da'wah is understood as transformative religious preaching that uses Islamic values as an instrument of human liberation, social justice, and holistic community empowerment. This construction breaks down the reductionism of conventional da'wah, which often limits religious appeal activities only to individual ritual formalities and ahistorical eschatological indoctrination. In contemporary religious sociology, this praxis is rooted in Islamic transformative ethics that demand religion's active involvement in solving structural problems such as poverty, alienation, and injustice (Muhtadi et al., 2025, p. 45; Ramadan, 2009, p. 78). Progressive da'wah distinguishes itself from literalist fundamentalist revivalism and reductionist modernism that marginalises the sacredness of revelation by combining orthodox loyalty to the text with deep contextual sensitivity. Thus, progressive da'wah operates as a religious agency that positions the public benefit (maslahah ammah) as the core manifestation of social piety.

In practice, progressive da'wah takes four main operational forms: hermeneutical-substantive, socio-cultural, emancipation-structural, and techno-mediatic. The hermeneutical-substantive variant focuses on dismantling narrow textualist understandings and exploring sharia maqashid that emphasise justice and mercy (Abou El Fadl, 2014, p. 112; Kusnawan & Machendrawaty, 2022, p. 34). The socio-cultural variant utilises cultural language, traditional symbols, and local capital as an accommodating medium of religious symbolic communication without sacrificing the principle of aqidah. The emancipation-structural variant manifests itself in the praxis of community organising through the formation of people-based cooperatives, productive Islamic philanthropic institutions, and

assistance to marginalised groups (Zaenurrosyid et al., 2024, p. 285). Meanwhile, the techno-mediated dimension strategically uses digital infrastructure to democratise access to religious literacy and counter the spread of exclusive narratives in cyberspace. These four categories work together to form a da'wah ecosystem that adapts to the dynamics of the times.

2.2. Contextual Hadith Hermeneutics

Contextual hadith hermeneutics is an epistemological model of prophetic text reading that integrates criticism of the historicity of asbab al-wurud with contemporary socio-cultural analysis to find the text's dynamic significance for the present context. This methodological significance is born from the realisation that the text of the Prophet's words was transmitted in a specific space and time of the 7th-century Arabian Peninsula, so that rigid literal meanings risk shutting down the elasticity of Islamic ethical-legal teachings (Brown, 2017, p. 145; Hallaq, 2009, p. 88). Adopting Fazlur Rahman's principle of double movement, this hermeneutics moves from the specific situation of the present day back to the time of revelation of the hadith to extract its ideal-moral value, then brings it back to the horizon of contemporary life (Malik, 2025, p. 55; Sungkowo, 2022, p. 12). Through this framework, hadith is treated not as a frozen historical fossil, but as a dynamic, transformative source of ethical inspiration that directs social change.

The operationalisation of contextual hadith hermeneutics is classified into three interpretive methodological levels: socio-historical, thematic-conceptual, and teleological-sociological. The socio-historical level traces the sociological background and cultural circumstances of the hadith's emergence to separate universal, permanent teaching elements from temporal, conditional cultural instruments (Heryani et al., 2023, p. 408). The thematic-conceptual level (maudhu'i) gathers all hadith rooted in similar themes to avoid reductionism and partial or counterproductive interpretations of seemingly contradictory texts (ikhtilaf al-hadith). The teleological-sociological level directly connects the meaning of prophetic texts with the public's needs in the empirical realm through a maqashid approach oriented toward protecting human dignity (Abou El Fadl, 2014, p. 130; Ulum, 2020, p. 8). This tiered categorisation ensures that the interpretation process remains faithful to the authenticity of the norms of revelation while being responsive to the social facts of modern society.

2.3. Socio-Religious Transformation

Socio-religious transformation is a fundamental reconstruction of society's value systems, cognitive structures, ethical orientations, and patterns of collective action, triggered by the internalisation of new religious understandings. In classical and contemporary sociology of religion, religion does not simply maintain passive social integration; it drives historical transformation by shaping human social rationality and praxisis (Berger & Luckmann, 2016, p. 115; Weber, 2002, p. 68). This process explains how deeply internalised prophetic doctrine becomes the individual's normative compass, which in turn institutionalises it as a structured pattern of action within the community's public sphere (Parsons, 2013, p. 142; Turner, 2011, p. 95). In the Islamic context, this change involves a redefinition of the meaning of obedience, in which spiritual piety is integrated in a cohesive manner with the responsibility of social emancipation and collective solidarity. Thus, religious transformation constitutes an active dialectical arena between socio-cultural structures and the agency of human consciousness.

Empirically, socio-religious transformation in Islamic society can be mapped into three main domains: cognitive-theological restructuring, relational-inclusive praxis, and the institutionalisation of social capital. Cognitive-theological restructuring is evident in the shift from passive fatalism to a rational, solution-oriented theological ethos for addressing societal problems (Almanduri, 2023, p. 62; Dayrobi et al., 2024, p. 25). Relational-inclusive praxis shifts inter-group relations from an exclusive, suspicious attitude to an acceptance of pluralism based on universal brotherhood (ukhuwwah insaniyyah) and common citizenship (Hefner, 2011, p. 56; Mustofa et al., 2022, p. 160). Meanwhile, the institutionalisation of social capital is manifested in the creation of mutual cooperation networks, the ummah's economic independence through joint business units, and advocacy of social justice at the local level (Fuadi

et al., 2023, p. 10; Wauran & Anshory, 2025, p. 6946). This typology proves that religious transformation produces multidimensional shifts that strengthen civilised social orders.

3. Methods

3.1. Material Objects

The material object of this research is the dynamics of hadith-based da'wah praxis articulated by da'wah practitioners and experienced by the da'wah recipient community, with an analytical unit focused on the discourse of lecture texts, hermeneutical interpretation models, and socio-religious action patterns. The selection of loci focuses on Central Java because this region offers the archipelago's richest Islamic cultural landscape, where traditional Islamic boarding school traditions, Walisongo heritage, palace culture, and Islamic modernism are intensively acculturated. In order to obtain a methodologically credible typological representation, the study established six specific loci that reflect the sociological variation of Central Java: Semarang City (a cosmopolitan metropolitan representation), Demak Regency (a coastal Islamic centre with the historical legitimacy of the sultanate), Banyumas Regency (an area of egalitarian Banyusan agrarian tradition), Wonosobo Regency (a mountainous rural Islamic community), Surakarta City (the epicentre of palace Islamic traditions and urban ideological dialectics), and Pati Regency (the basis of the deep-rooted traditionalism of salaf Islamic boarding schools). These ecological and socio-cultural diversity criteria were deliberately chosen to ensure the coverage of comprehensive socio-religious variation.

3.2. Research Design

This research uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design enriched by multi-sited religious ethnography. The phenomenological design was chosen to explore the structure of consciousness, lived experiences, and the horizon of meaning of da'i and pilgrims as they internalise and practise prophetic texts amid daily life (Creswell, 2018, p. 76). The multi-site ethnography dimension is applied to track the movement of ideas, discourse transmission, and cultural adaptation of da'wah hadith that crosses various spatial boundaries, from traditional pesantren transmission spaces to virtual da'wah spaces (Al-Ansi et al., 2023, p. 1126; Marcus, 1995, p. 98). The research procedure is carried out iteratively through naturalistic participatory field observations to observe religious interactions in depth. This hybrid approach ensures that religious phenomena are not treated as static entities but as dynamic cultural practices.

3.3. Participant Profiles and Text Corpus

The empirical corpus includes data from 47 key informants recruited through purposive sampling combined with snowball sampling based on reputation and authoritative expertise. The composition of participants was distributed in a balanced and proportionate manner across six research locations to ensure data saturation: 12 senior kiai/Islamic boarding school scholars holding scientific sanad authority, 8 progressive young da'is across CSO affiliations, 7 religious structural leaders (Regional and Branch Administrators of NU and Muhammadiyah), 5 Islamic studies academics who actively research hadith and society, 6 prominent digital da'wah content creators, and 9 community leaders and administrators of the taklim council as da'wah recipients. In addition to human subjects, this study collected a textual corpus of 34 full-length thematic hadith lecture video recordings, 12 Friday sermon manuscripts, 8 hadith daras books taught in halaqah, and transcripts of viral religious social media content uploaded on YouTube and TikTok during 2022–2024.

Table 1: Informant Distribution Matrix by Locus and Participant Category

Research Loci	Kiai/Ulama Senior	Da'i Muda	Managers of CSOs	Islamic Academics	Da'i Digital/ Kreator	Local Congregations/ Leaders	Total
Semarang City	2	2	2	2	2	1	11
Demak Regency	2	1	1	0	1	2	7
Banyumas Regency	2	1	1	1	1	1	7
Wonosobo Regency	2	1	1	0	0	2	6
Surakarta City	2	2	1	1	1	1	8
Pati Regency	2	1	1	1	1	2	8
Total Amount	**12**	**8**	**7**	**5**	**6**	**9**	**47**

3.4. Data Collection Techniques

Field data collection was carried out over an 18-month period, from February 2022 to July 2024, to ensure longitudinal monitoring of the cycle of da'wah activities and community social dynamics. The data collection instrument used triangulation across three main techniques: semi-structured in-depth interviews, focused participatory observations, and digital-textual documentation studies. Semi-structured interviews lasting between 60 and 120 minutes were conducted using flexible interview guidelines that explored the methodology of hadith interpretation, the rationale for selecting sharia media, and perceptions of changes in social values. Participant observations were carried out by attending routine recitation forums, student halaqah, Friday sermons, and mosque-based economic empowerment workshops in the six study areas. Meanwhile, the document search included a critical review of the hadith teaching module, the fatwa minutes of local mass organisations, and a digital archive of netizens' interactions in the comment column of the online da'wah channel.

3.5. Data Analysis and Validity Techniques

The data analysis was carried out using an inductive thematic analysis method that was dialectically integrated with the textual hermeneutics of the hadith to dissect the prophetic text used by da'wah actors. The data analysis followed a systematic procedure: full transcription of all verbatim recordings, data reduction through open coding, grouping codes into analytical categories through focused coding, and extraction of key conceptual themes linking the text, actors' motives, and social impact (Creswell, 2012, p. 238). Qualitative validity and reliability were established through four layers of rigorous testing: triangulation of sources and methods, member checking by confirming draft interpretations with six selected key informants, transparent audit trails of research recordings, and thick description to ensure the transferability of findings into a broader theoretical context.

4. Results

4.1. Pathways and Dynamics of Hadith Internalisation: Pesantren Networks, Majlis Taklim, and Cyber-Religious Arenas

Field findings show that the internalisation of prophetic hadith values in six research loci in Central Java operates through three main transmission channels: salaf and charismatic kiai pesantren networks, community taklim assemblies, and digital social media ecosystems. Based on data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Central Java is home to at least 6,239 Islamic boarding schools with millions of active students, which makes it the epicentre of the transmission of the yellow book and the hadith corpus in the archipelago (Anita et al., 2023, p. 1958). However, at the micro-empirical level, research in six selected districts/cities identified and mapped

14 main reference pesantren and 18 networks of cross-regional taklim assemblies that consistently organise progressive thematic hadith recitation. In addition, qualitative monitoring of 12 online da'wah channels owned by young da'i and Islamic boarding schools in Semarang, Surakarta, and Pati showed a significant escalation in the intensity of contextual thematic hadith content production during 2022–2024.

Field data show three fundamental trends in hadith transmission among the Muslim community in Central Java: the shift from lafdziyyah reading to socio-cultural contextualization, the use of local art instruments, and the convergence between conventional authorities and digital audiovisual formats. At the pesantren and taklim council level, hadith reading no longer stops at explaining Arabic-Pegon lexical meaning; it actively links the text to rural poverty, environmental health, and the ethics of tolerance among citizens. Culturally, the da'is adapt tembang macapat, Javanese poems, and puppet performances based on suluk stories, interspersed with hadith teachings on universal brotherhood and compassion (Ja'far, 2024, p. 2348). Meanwhile, in the digital realm, young da'is in Islamic boarding schools package authentic hadith narrations into short video formats (reels, TikTok, shorts) with modern graphics and egalitarian spoken language that captivate Muslim audiences of productive age.

The transmission pattern found in the field confirms that the internalisation of hadith in Central Java is not just a process of teaching one-way doctrines, but an active cultural negotiation that positions hadith as a foundation of values (al-ashl) and local culture as an operational bridge (al-jisr). This was confirmed by the main resource person from the Da'wah Institute of the Regional Management of Nahdlatul Ulama Central Java, who underlined that the da'wah strategy of the guardians in the past relied on the ability to package the substance of revelation into the traditional container of the community without losing its essential message. As a concrete example, the hadith's understanding of cleanliness as part of faith (at-thahuru syathru al-iman) is contextualised through the tradition of communal service work of splice and village cleanliness in Banyumas and Wonosobo, where da'is lead the cleaning of waterways and the conservation of rural springs. Thus, the meaning of hadith can blend harmoniously into the Javanese social structure, while minimising the local community's psychological resistance to messages of religious reform.

4.2. Hermeneutical Nuances and Cultural Vernacularization: The Core Characteristics of Progressive Da'wah

The characteristics of hadith-based da'wah articulated by informants in Central Java display a methodological orientation centred on hermeneutical-maqashidi interpretation, emancipatory ethical sensitivity, and inclusivity of public space. Analysis of 34 recorded sermon sessions and hadith studies showed that 85% of the da'wah material highlighted the themes of social relations ethics (mu'amalah), distributive justice, rejection of domestic violence, and interreligious harmony, beyond the portion of discourse on pure eschatological rituals. Young preachers consistently trace the asbab al-wurud (historical context of emergence) of each cited hadith before applying the relevant law to modern social problems. This discursive pattern shows a significant shift from the traditional da'wah model, which typically emphasises formal legalistic dogma adherence, to the formation of civilised public moral-ethical awareness.

An in-depth study of the sermons and lectures reveals two typologies of hadith hermeneutic approaches used by preachers: accommodative-cultural hermeneutics and transformative-critical hermeneutics. Accommodative-cultural hermeneutics, dominant in Demak, Pati, and Banyumas, applies the rules of fiqh ushuliyah al-'adah muhakkamah (customs can be legal considerations) to validate communal rituals such as earth alms and slametan by citing hadiths that urge alms and establish friendship. In contrast, transformative-critical hermeneutics, which emerged in Semarang and Surakarta, uses social justice hadiths to criticise unequal power relations, contemporary usury practices, and gender discrimination in the public sphere (Ammar et al., 2025, p. 1548; Sari, 2025, p. 90). Field notes note a latent tension: some puritanical missionaries rejected this contextual reading and accused cultural accommodation of being heretical, but the mainstream discourse of Islamic boarding schools and large mass organisations still managed to maintain the hegemony of a progressive interpretation friendly to tradition.

The strength of progressive hadith interpretation in Central Java lies in its ability to unite theological transcendence with the praxis of universal humanitarian ethics without harming local sensitivities. Preachers in the research area do not treat the hadith text as a rigid law that unilaterally cancels customs, but instead use the prophetic text as a guide for the purification of values (tashfiyah) and the development of values (tarqiyah) over existing local wisdom. The hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah about the admonition to glorify one's neighbour (man kana yu'minu billahi wal yaumil akhir falyukrim jarahu), for example, is not only understood individually, but is institutionalised through the tradition of night patrols and RT-based emergency food barns in the countryside of Wonosobo and Surakarta. Through this semantic integration, prophetic texts undergo an ingrained process of vernacularization, enabling the text to function effectively as a driving force for social cohesion and a bulwark against primordial radicalism at the grassroots level.

4.3. Multidimensional Social Transformations: Shifting Cognitive Creed, Economic Emancipation, and Hybrid Authority

The internalisation of hadith through progressive da'wah substantively transforms the dimensions of aqidah and the morals of the congregation from blind taklid obedience to critical theological awareness with a social dimension. Interviews with nine community leaders and administrators of the taklim council at six loci confirm that studying hadith through the lens of sharia maqashid frees pilgrims from mystical-superstitious fears without depriving them of respect for their ancestors (Almanduri, 2023, p. 60). The hadith's understanding of the dangers of riya and spiritual arrogance shifts the community's religious orientation from artificial piety that likes to show off symbols of formality to functional piety that emphasises humility (tawadhu), moral integrity, and social empathy. Aqidah is no longer positioned as a series of abstract and exclusive theological formulas, but as the ethical foundation of monotheism that manifests itself in the defence of weak groups (mustadh'afin).

In the socio-economic realm, progressive hadith da'wah crystallises structural change through the institutionalisation of the people's economy and Islamic philanthropic governance that is oriented towards productive benefits. Empirical observations in the field found concrete manifestations in the establishment of Islamic boarding school-based Baitul Maal wa Tamwil (BMT) in Pati and Demak, the micro-business halal certification program initiated by young da'i in Semarang, and the management of productive waqf land for organic agriculture in Banyumas and Wonosobo. These initiatives are explicitly rooted in the doctrine of the hadith narrated by Bukhari regarding the virtue of earning a living independently (ma akala ahadun tha'aman qaththu khairan min an ya'kula min 'amali yadihi) and the hadith prohibiting the hoarding of commodities (ihtikar) (Wijaya & Sofa, 2025, p. 1855). This transformation shows a paradigm shift in the ummah's philanthropy from short-term, consumptive charitable compensation to real economic empowerment that sustainably improves the living standards of vulnerable people.

In the intellectual dimension, there has been a democratisation of hadith literacy, which is balanced by the establishment of a hybrid religious authority ecosystem in cyberspace. Unlike the thesis of absolute authority fragmentation advanced by a number of Western scholars on the digital Islamic world, findings from Central Java show that social media platforms strengthen the scientific legitimacy of pesantren-based kiai and da'i. The most trusted digital da'wah content and those with stable interaction rates in Semarang and Surakarta are managed by young students and da'is who have a clear and socially accredited scientific genealogy (sanad) of pesantren (Rohmawati et al., 2025, p. 185; Whyte, 2022, p. 72). Urban Muslim communities show increased critical literacy; they actively question the degree of authenticity (takhrij) and the contextual relevance of a narration before sharing it in cyberspace, marking the birth of a digitally intelligent and scientifically sound Muslim public.

5. Discussion

The empirical findings of this study expressly answer the research problem by confirming that progressive da'wah based on hadith has succeeded in engineering a moderate and emancipatory socio-religious transformation in Central Java through three strategic mediation channels: the pesantren-kiai transmission network, the structured

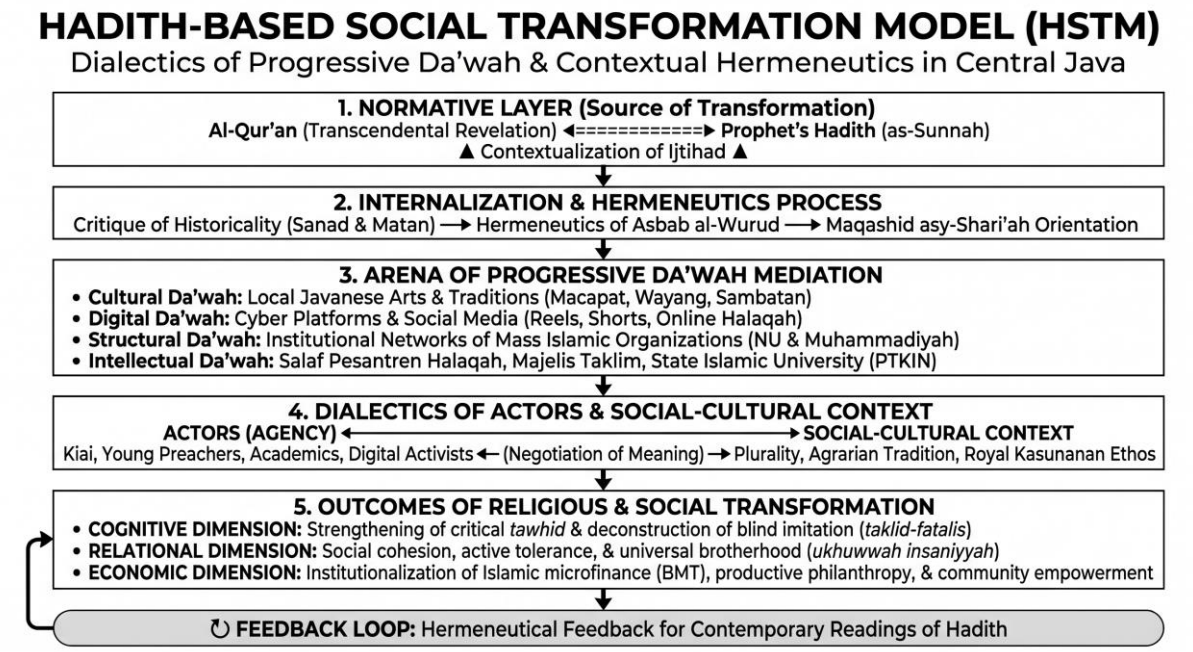
taklim assembly, and a contextually articulated digital platform. This process gives birth to a pattern of hadith understanding that is not imprisoned in rigid textualism or reduced to profane secularism, but is firmly grounded in the substance of sharia maqashid relevant to contemporary humanitarian problems. The characteristics of da'wah that are inclusive, accommodating to Javanese culture, and oriented towards economic independence have shifted the ummah's orientation from formalistic ritual piety to a civilised, transformative social piety. Thus, the religiosity that formed in this region reflects a harmonious blend of the depth of orthodoxy in prophetic texts and the wisdom of local socio-cultural ecology.

Epistemologically and philosophically, the success of this da'wah model shows that hadith texts have a plurality of hermeneutical meanings that can catalyse social change when read through the lens of emancipatory teleology. The interpretation of hadith that developed in Central Java collapses the essentialist myth that often views the teachings of Islamic orthodoxy as a static entity resistant to historical changes (Berkey, 2014, p. 184; Brown, 2017, p. 150). This phenomenon confirms that prophetic doctrinal truth is not a closed proposition that rejects the dynamics of the times, but an open life ethic that continually negotiates its interpretive horizon. Through the dynamic recitation of asbab al-wurud, the da'is liberate the meaning of hadith from the shackles of medieval temporality, transforming it into a force of ethical criticism that can guide the modernisation of society without losing its transcendental footing.

From the perspective of the sociology of religion, this socio-religious transformation can be explained through the dialectical relationship between preachers' cultural agency and the social-symbolic capital accumulated by the pesantren network. Referring to the theory of structuring, the da'wah actions of the kiai and young da'i are not in a vacuum; rather, they reciprocally reproduce and modify the cognitive structure and social norms of Javanese society (Dayrobi et al., 2024, p. 25; Giddens, 1984, p. 14). The cultural legitimacy of pesantren as the guardian of the Yellow Book orthodoxy provides a very strong symbolic capital, so that the progressive and accommodating reinterpretation of hadith to local wisdom is not suspected by the general public as a deviation from religion, but is seen as an authentic continuation of the teachings of the guardians (Bruinessen, 1995, p. 50; Dhofier, 2000, p. 1092). The synergy between deep-rooted traditional authority and contextual articulation strategies determines the success of value transformation at the lower level.

This research proposes a theoretical model of Hadith-Based Social Transformation (TSBH) that revises the linear religious transmission model dominant in conventional da'wah sociology. The TSBH model postulates that religious transformation takes place through a circular and interactive triadic structure: a normative layer (hadith texts and ijtihad ulama), a mediation layer (institutional networks of Islamic boarding schools, da'i, mass organisations, and cyber media), and a contextual layer (the structure of Javanese local culture and the ecology of modernity).

Chart 1: Hadith-Based Social Transformation Model (TSBH) Scheme



The TSBH model shows a feedback loop: the internalisation of hadith values in society actively shapes how da'is interpret and present prophetic texts in the future. This paradigm replaces the passive perception of da'wah as a one-way transmission of dogma, making it a comprehensive analytical framework for understanding the dynamic interaction between religion, modernity, and local culture.

Compared with religious dynamics in the Middle East and South Asia, this research's findings in Central Java show unique comparative significance and run counter to the trend of global religious fragmentation. In a number of other Muslim countries, the penetration of digitalisation and modernisation often triggers sharp disruptions, erosion of the authority of traditional scholars, and the spread of radical puritanism that displaces established scholars (Anderson, 2003, p. 89; Bunt, 2018, p. 45; Saputra, 2022, p. 8). In contrast, in Central Java, kiai and da'is with pesantren backgrounds intelligently occupy modernisation and new media to expand the reach of wasathiyah da'wah and reintegrate traditional religious authorities in a hybrid format (Harnadi et al., 2021, p. 275; Rohmawati et al., 2025, p. 188). This comparison confirms that historical institutional capital such as pesantren has proven effective in fortifying the religious landscape against extreme polarisation and disruption of global identity.

Based on the empirical evidence and conceptual formulations produced, this research underscores the urgency of institutional da'wah policy reform in Indonesia through three national strategic interventions. First, the Ministry of Religion and Islamic higher education associations need to revise the da'i education curriculum by incorporating contextual hadith hermeneutics and religious sociological analysis as core competencies for missionary cadres. Second, Islamic boarding schools and mosques must strengthen their economic independence by using productive Islamic philanthropic instruments (zakat, infaq, and waqf) to support empowerment da'wah and alleviate rural and urban poverty. Third, moderate religious organisations such as NU and Muhammadiyah need to consolidate the talents of digital da'i pesantren to produce an inclusive and culturally friendly hadith religious narrative, to counter transnational intolerance in the archipelago's cyberspace.

6. Conclusion

The most important findings of this study reveal that socio-religious transformation in Central Java is not triggered by the enforcement of legal-formalistic sharia or aggressive purification of teachings, but by the elasticity of hadith hermeneutics, which treats the prophetic text as contextual social ethics that blends organically with local

Javanese wisdom. This research challenges the prevailing assumption that pesantren orthodoxy is rigid and anti-modernity; instead, traditionalist kiai and young da'is are among the most adaptive actors, embracing digital technology and using it to strengthen social cohesion and religious moderation. The formation of hybrid religious authorities shows that the sacredness of classical hadith sanad and the flexibility of cyber media platforms can reinforce each other, creating a strong cultural fortress at the grassroots level.

Substantively, this article makes a new theoretical contribution (original novelty) to Islamic sociology and da'wah by introducing the Hadith-Based Social Transformation (TSBH) model. This model breaks down the outdated conceptual dichotomy separating normative studies of hadith texts and empirical sociological studies by showing that hadith can function as emancipatory cultural capital that encourages the renewal of civilisation. This contribution offers a new analytical framework for international Islamic studies scholars to read the dynamics of Southeast Asian Islam not as a peripheral religious phenomenon, but as a vital locus for articulating Wasathiyah Islam that bridges the universality of revelation with the historical specificity of the nation's culture.

This study has limitations in its spatial coverage, focused on six loci in Central Java, and in its qualitative approach, which relies on in-depth interviews and ethnographic observations over 18 months; as a result, the degree of empirical generalisation is limited to the socio-cultural context of the Javanese Muslim community. The resulting conceptual model of TSBH opens up further testing space for future research, especially those covering non-Javanese cultural areas outside the island of Java or in the transnational realm of Southeast Asia. In addition, the future research agenda urgently needs to develop a hybrid methodology that combines large-scale digital ethnography, computational topic modelling, and quantitative social network analysis to comparatively measure the rate of diffusion and socio-religious impact of hadith in public space.

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