

## ***INTEGRATING SHARIA AND MARIFA: TRANSFORMING SHEIKH YUSUF AL-MAKASSARI'S DA'WAH METHODOLOGY TOWARD AN INCLUSIVE DIGITAL RELIGIOUS HABITUS***

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**ABSTRACT**

*The expansion of digital religious communication has intensified the polarization of contemporary Islamic discourse between rigid formal-legalism and superficial spiritualism, contributing to a crisis of religious authority, the circulation of hate narratives, and growing social fragmentation within Muslim communities. Although previous scholarship has extensively examined classical Islamic thought, limited attention has been given to how the seventeenth-century Sufi-jurisprudential synthesis of Sheikh Yusuf al-Makassari can be reconstructed as a relevant framework for contemporary digital religious engagement. This study employs a Gadamerian hermeneutic approach to analyze the authentic manuscripts of Sheikh Yusuf al-Makassari through thematic interpretation of primary texts and relevant secondary literature. The analysis reconstructs a multidimensional da'wah framework integrating the epistemic levels of sharia, tariqa, haqiqa, and ma'rifa as interrelated structures of social transformation. The findings demonstrate that the integration of exoteric and esoteric dimensions produces a solution-oriented religious ethic capable of responding to contemporary digital challenges. Sheikh Yusuf's da'wah model rearticulates da'wah bil-hikmah and mau'izah hasanah as communicative strategies that mitigate antagonistic narratives, strengthen ethical reflexivity, and cultivate an integrative religious habitus adaptable to networked communication environments. This study contributes both theoretically and practically by offering a historically grounded yet contextually adaptive model of digital da'wah, advancing discussion on the transformation of religious authority in the digital age, reinforcing egalitarian and dialogical modes of Islamic communication, and providing an alternative framework for addressing the fragmentation of the ummah in the post-truth era.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Islamic communication is currently entangled in a digital paradox that simultaneously expands the reach of proselytization (da'wah) while massively amplifying ideological polarization. Advancements in information technology have reconfigured the landscape of religious value dissemination, rendering it expansive yet prone to methodological fragmentation.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the Muslim digital public sphere often suffers from an erosion of substantive depth due to the dominance of social media platforms that prioritize algorithmic velocity over content quality.<sup>2</sup> This digitalization has triggered an obfuscation of boundaries between established traditional authority and popular influences that frequently lack a robust theological foundation.<sup>3</sup> The decline in the quality of religious discourse within cyberspace poses a serious challenge to the sustainability of moderate and inclusive Islamic intellectual traditions.<sup>4</sup> Without an integrative communication framework, digital da'wah risks becoming a mere superficial information commodity, losing its transformative power for the community (ummah). Therefore, a fundamental re-evaluation of how Islamic values are communicated amidst intensifying technological disruption is imperative.

Empirical urgency indicates that the phenomenon of "Instagram Islam" has reduced the complexity of theological doctrine to mere visual aesthetics and fragmented, superficial motivational narratives.<sup>5</sup> Such communication practices often disregard the aspects of legal reasoning and spiritual depth that constitute the primary foundations of comprehensive Islamic teachings. Peterson (2020)<sup>6</sup> confirms that the superficiality of digital da'wah content in Indonesia directly challenges the legitimacy of conventional ulama (scholars) who possess profound scholarly bases. This crisis of authority is exacerbated by digital platform mechanisms that allow any individual to become a religious reference point without adequate theological qualifications.<sup>7</sup> This condition gives rise to contested authenticity, where the most viral online

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<sup>1</sup> Heidi A Campbell and Giulia Evolvi, "Contextualizing Current Digital Religion Research," *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies* 2, no. 1 (2020): 5-17, <https://doi.org/10.1002/hbe2.149>.

<sup>2</sup> Dale F Eickelman and Jon W Anderson, *New Media in the Muslim World* (Indiana University Press, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> James B Hoesterey, *Rebranding Islam* (Stanford University Press, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780804796385>.

<sup>4</sup> Eva F Nisa, "Creative and Lucrative Da'Wa," *Asiascape: Digital Asia* 5, no. 1 (2018): 68-99, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22142312-12340085>.

<sup>5</sup> Moch Fakhruroji, "Digitalising Islamic Lectures," *Contemporary Islam* 13, no. 2 (2019): 201-15, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-018-0427-9>; Martin Slama, "A Subtle Economy of Time: Social Media and the Transformation of Indonesia's Islamic Preacher Economy," *Economic Anthropology* 4, no. 1 (2017): 94-106, <https://doi.org/10.1002/sea2.12075>.

<sup>6</sup> Kristen M Peterson, "Shifting Boundaries," *Sociology Compass* 14, no. 3 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12769>.

<sup>7</sup> Bryan S Turner, "Religious Authority and the New Media," *Theory, Culture & Society* 24, no. 2 (2007): 117-34, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276407075001>.

narratives are often perceived as absolute truths by the public.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, a spurious dichotomy has emerged between rigid traditionalism and rootless modernism, which accelerates the dissemination of extremist narratives.<sup>9</sup> This phenomenon creates a void for the emergence of religious populism that exploits the thinning depth of religious understanding in digital spaces.

In Indonesia, the fragmentation of da'wah is further complicated by the emergence of various religious movements competing for authenticity through digital content strategies. Salafi movements frequently utilize social media to promote literal puritanism, which is highly effective in attracting young audiences through claims of singular truth.<sup>10</sup> Conversely, the trend of urban Sufism offers instant spirituality that occasionally neglects social responsibility and ethical engagement in national life.<sup>11</sup> This polarization fosters unhealthy alliances between religious conservatism and political populism, further reinforced by social media echo chambers. The tension between these various factions results in da'wah no longer functioning as a bridge for social dialogue, but rather as a tool for group identity segregation. Within this multi-dimensional crisis, the need for alternative narratives capable of unifying various dimensions of knowledge becomes crucial for national stability. The search for a solution to this communication crisis directs attention back to the classical intellectual heritage of the Archipelago (Nusantara), which possesses integrative-inclusive characteristics.

Azra (2004),<sup>12</sup> through his authoritative study on the networks of Archipelago ulama, emphasizes the existence of a strong integrative character within local intellectual traditions. This aligns with the findings of Gibson (2010),<sup>13</sup> which highlight how the resilience of such traditions can serve as an epistemological basis in facing identity disruption in the public sphere. Intellectual traditions in the Archipelago have proven capable of synthesizing the dimensions of law (sharia) and spirituality (tasawuf) within a single harmonious da'wah framework.<sup>14</sup> The primary strength of this tradition lies in its ability to develop an authentic yet adaptive model of vernacular Islam in response to global dynamics. Past scholars successfully bridged various scholarly dichotomies that are currently often placed in opposition within fragmented digital da'wah. The relevance of this tradition becomes increasingly evident when contemporary da'wah becomes trapped in narrow formalism or a spirituality that lacks social engagement. Thus, revisiting the thought of key figures such as Sheikh Yusuf al-Makassari is a strategic step toward reconstructing a relevant model of Islamic communication.

Sheikh Yusuf al-Makassari emerges as a central figure in the intellectual history of the archipelago, offering a profound model of knowledge integration. As a scholar within the intellectual lineage of the Haramain network, he possessed internationally recognized scholarly

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<sup>8</sup> Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam* (Princeton University Press, 2007).

<sup>9</sup> Francis Robinson, "Crisis of Authority: Crisis of Islam?", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 19, no. 3 (2009): 339-54, <https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1017/S1356186309009705>.

<sup>10</sup> Noorhaidi Hasan, *Laskar Jihad: Islam, Militancy, and the Quest for Identity in Post-New Order Indonesia* (SEAP Publications, 2006).

<sup>11</sup> Greg Fealy and Sally White, *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia* (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008).

<sup>12</sup> Azyumardi Azra, *Asal-Usul Reformisme Islam Di Asia Tenggara* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2004).

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Gibson, *Islamic Narrative and Authority in Southeast Asia* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

<sup>14</sup> Peter G Riddell, *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World: Transmission and Responses* (University of Hawaii Press, 2001).

authority.<sup>15</sup> Sheikh Yusuf's uniqueness lies in his mastery of fifteen different Sufi orders (tariqa) and his ability to synthesize them into a coherent da'wah framework.<sup>16</sup> He demonstrated that spiritual depth does not necessitate the separation of a Muslim from social responsibility and the struggle against injustice. His teachings have demonstrated cross-generational resilience, as reflected in their continuing influence in the Cape Town region of South Africa. This enduring legacy is visible, for example, in the preservation of religious learning circles, the transmission of devotional practices across families, and the sustained reference to his teachings within local Muslim communities. Such continuity indicates that his intellectual and spiritual contributions have remained relevant across changing social and historical contexts.<sup>17</sup> The integration model he developed offers a resolution to the crisis of duality haunting the current world of digital da'wah. Sheikh Yusuf proved that religious orthodoxy can coexist with an inclusive and progressive cosmopolitanism of thought.

Contemporary research increasingly confirms that Sheikh Yusuf's integrative framework is highly pertinent to addressing the challenges of da'wah fragmentation in the modern era. Alatas (2021)<sup>18</sup> found that reform models rooted in integrative traditions exhibit higher effectiveness in mitigating ideological conflicts within Muslim societies. Kersten (2016)<sup>19</sup> argues that the concept of cosmopolitan Islam practiced by Sheikh Yusuf provides valuable insights for managing pluralism amidst the tides of globalization. This approach allows da'wah to remain anchored in firm theological principles without losing sociological relevance in digital spaces. Nevertheless, the practical application of Sheikh Yusuf's principles within social media communication strategies remains sparsely explored in a systematic manner. Most studies remain focused on historical and biographical aspects without touching upon the technical-operational dimensions within the context of digital communication. Therefore, there is an urgent need to reformulate his thought into a communication framework that can be implemented today.

The current literature gap indicates an absence of systematic analysis regarding Sheikh Yusuf's da'wah framework using contemporary social theories, such as mediatization theory or sociological hermeneutics.<sup>20</sup> A second gap lies in the minimal exploration of how the concept of sharia-tariqa integration can be operationalized within da'wah content algorithms to counter extremist narratives.<sup>21</sup> Third, the potential of this framework in addressing the challenges of superficial spirituality in digital spaces has not been comprehensively analyzed within Islamic

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<sup>15</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren, Dan Tarekat* (Mizan, 1995).

<sup>16</sup> S Essop Dangor and Shafiq Morton, *Syaikh Yusuf Dari Makassar* (Digniti, 2019).

<sup>17</sup> Kerry Ward, "Networks of Empire: Forced Migration in the Dutch East India Company: A Roundtable Response," *International Journal of Maritime History* 21, no. 1 (June 2009): 341-50, <https://doi.org/10.1177/084387140902100114>.

<sup>18</sup> Ismail Fajrie Alatas, *What Is Religious Authority?* (Princeton University Press, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1b3qqfw>.

<sup>19</sup> Carool Kersten, *Islam in Indonesia* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

<sup>20</sup> R Michael Feener and Terenjit Sevea, *Islamic Connections: Muslim Societies in South and Southeast Asia* (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009).

<sup>21</sup> Paul K McClure, "Hashtag Islam: How Cyber-Islamic Environments Are Transforming Religious Authority," by GARY R. BUNT, *Sociology of Religion* 80, no. 4 (2019): 542-43, <https://doi.org/10.1093/socrel/srz028>.

communication discourse.<sup>22</sup> The crisis of modernity warned of by Nasr (2014)<sup>23</sup> demands a fundamental rethinking of how Islam is communicated in contemporary contexts.<sup>24</sup> In Indonesia, revitalizing the integrative traditions of the archipelago serves as an effective counter-narrative to non-contextual transnational ideologies.<sup>25</sup> This research aims to fill these lacunae by reconstructing Sheikh Yusuf's thought through a hermeneutic-sociological lens as a solution to da'wah fragmentation.<sup>26</sup> This approach allows for the analysis of classical texts to be precisely contextualized with the technical and social challenges of the digital age.<sup>27</sup>

The primary objective of this research is to reconstruct Sheikh Yusuf al-Makassari's integrative da'wah paradigm as a conceptual and methodological framework for addressing the challenges of contemporary digital religious communication.<sup>28</sup> More specifically, the study examines how the synthesis of *sharia*, *tariqa*, *haqiqa*, and *ma'rifa* can be recontextualized to respond to the fragmentation of religious authority, the circulation of superficial narratives, and the erosion of social cohesion in networked environments.<sup>29</sup> The central argument advanced in this study is that Sheikh Yusuf's intellectual legacy should not be understood merely as a historical inheritance, but as a living epistemological resource capable of generating an adaptive and dialogical model of digital Islamic communication. Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of a locally grounded Islamic communication framework rooted in the intellectual tradition of the Indonesian Archipelago while remaining relevant to global scholarly discourse.<sup>30</sup> Practically, it offers a methodological orientation for da'wah practitioners in designing digital content that is ethically grounded, theologically substantive, and socially responsive. Socially, the application of this integrative model has the potential to strengthen social cohesion and religious harmony within increasingly fragmented digital publics. In this way, the study positions the intellectual heritage of the Archipelago as a viable navigational framework for negotiating the complexities of communication in the contemporary era.

## METHODS

This study employs a qualitative-integrative design that synergizes philosophical hermeneutics for the exegesis of classical texts with comparative-contextual analysis to map the resonance of Sheikh Yusuf's thought within contemporary digital da'wah discourse. This approach was selected due to the ontological complexity of the research, which necessitates a methodological bridge between 17th-century historical texts and 21st-century technological realities. The interpretative paradigm serves as the primary foundation for extracting profound meanings from key manuscripts, such as *Al-Nafhah al-Saylaniyah* and *Taj al-Asrar*, which were chosen for their representative transformative doctrines most applicable to modern society. This methodological integration seeks to circumvent historical anachronism by utilizing Hans-Georg

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<sup>22</sup> Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, *Rethinking the Qur'an: Towards a Humanistic Hermeneutics* (University of Humanistics, 2004).

<sup>23</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Traditional Islam in the Modern World* (Kegan Paul International, 2014).

<sup>24</sup> Tariq Ramadan, *Radical Reform: Islamic Ethics and Liberation* (Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>25</sup> Robert W Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia* (Princeton University Press, 2000).

<sup>26</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316534984>.

<sup>27</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2013).

<sup>28</sup> Karel A Steenbrink, *Dutch Colonialism and Indonesian Islam* (Rodopi, 1993).

<sup>29</sup> Philip N Howard and Muzammil M Hussain, *Democracy's Fourth Wave?* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>30</sup> Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*.

Gadamer's principle of the fusion of horizons to align the historical context of the texts with the dynamics of contemporary readers. A primary focus on Gadamerian hermeneutics provides philosophical legitimacy for textual interpretations that do not merely record the past but also address spiritual exigencies in the digital era. Through this framework, Sheikh Yusuf's works are positioned not as static artifacts but as dynamic paradigms capable of addressing the challenges of religious communication disruption. Consequently, this methodology ensures that the transition from traditional philology to digital da'wah analysis is executed through a coherent, systematic, and profound intellectual process.

Data analysis procedures were conducted through systematic thematic codification, operationalized to extract meaning invariants from primary historical sources and secondary literature concerning digital da'wah phenomena. In this process, thematic analysis functions as a technical supporting instrument within a hermeneutic framework to identify patterns of transformative spirituality, which are subsequently examined in relation to the dynamics of cyberspace. The operationalization of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of capital is specifically employed to analyze how Sheikh Yusuf's religious authority is transformed from traditional cultural capital into influential symbolic capital within digital platforms. More specifically, Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* informs the analysis by explaining how embodied religious dispositions, ethical discipline, and devotional practices associated with Sheikh Yusuf continue to shape patterns of reception and recognition among contemporary Muslim audiences, even when transmitted through digital media. This analytical perspective enables the researcher to map how hierarchical structures in classical Sufism may be rearticulated within the more horizontal structures of the network society, as elaborated in Manuel Castells' framework. In particular, Castells' notion of *mass self-communication* provides an operational lens for examining how Sheikh Yusuf's authority is reproduced, circulated, and reinterpreted through decentralized digital interactions in which users simultaneously function as recipients, interpreters, and disseminators of religious meaning. The synergy between modern social theory and classical texts therefore seeks to reveal how the essence of spirituality is preserved despite radical shifts in communication media. The emphasis on this epistemological bridge is crucial for demonstrating continuity between classical Sufistic traditions and contemporary Islamic communication practices.

Interpretative validity is reinforced through expert judgment by performing theoretical triangulation and confirming findings with Yusufiyyah studies scholars to ensure high contextual accuracy. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing various manuscript variants from collections in Makassar, Jakarta, and Cape Town—which have been digitized—to ensure the integrity of philological data prior to further interpretation. This strategy effectively minimizes subjective bias by situating findings within a dialectic with established literature produced by prominent researchers such as Mustafa, Dangor, and Gibson. Thick description is consistently applied to ensure that the research findings possess a significant degree of transferability for the future development of digital Islamic studies. The researcher maintained a strict posture of reflexivity throughout the analytical process to recognize the potential influence of pre-understanding frameworks on the interpretation of sacred texts. Systematic documentation of every interpretative decision-making step was conducted to provide a transparent audit trail, ensuring that all analytical procedures are scientifically accountable. Ultimately, this entire sequence of procedures is designed to achieve epistemological consistency, preserving the authenticity of Sheikh Yusuf's spiritual message without disregarding the rigid methodological demands of contemporary social sciences.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Synthesis of Sharia Epistemology and Sufistic Eschatology: A Reconstruction of Sheikh Yusuf al-Makassari's Dawah Methodology within Colonial Dialectics

The reconstruction of Sheikh Yusuf al-Makassari's manuscript corpus confirms the existence of an integrative-systemic and holistic dawah architecture.<sup>31</sup> These findings assert that his intellectual construction transcends theoretical abstraction and manifests as a transformative methodology responsive to the socio-political dialectics of the archipelago during the colonial era. In-depth analysis of primary texts reveals that this four-dimensional framework constitutes a coherent structure, proportionately unifying the exoteric and esoteric dimensions of Islam. This approach is not merely an effort toward theological harmonization but serves as a strategy for navigating the identity of Muslim society amidst the pressures of aggressive global colonial hegemony. Through the integration of the dimensions of sharia, tariqa, haqiqa, and ma'rifa, Sheikh Yusuf successfully formulated a paradigm of struggle that transcended regional and ethnic boundaries. Consequently, his dawah must be viewed as an organized system of thought designed to perform comprehensive social and spiritual engineering. This methodological uniqueness positions him as a central figure within an international network of scholars possessing a sharp vision of liberation that surpassed his contemporary era.

Hermeneutic analysis of the manuscript *al-Nafhat al-Sailaniyya* demonstrates that Sheikh Yusuf's conceptualization of sharia transcends conventional understandings of positive legal formalism. He defines sharia as a straight and open path for every human being, which epistemologically positions legal norms as rational instruments of communicative dawah. The principle of *Al-Wuduh*, or communicative clarity, ensures that religious messages are accessible through reason, allowing truth to be recognized through robust arguments and certain evidence (*al-hujjah al-wadhihah*). This transformation of sharia into communicative action enables Islamic teachings to function as social glue and a tool for mass mobilization within the context of resistance against colonial power structures.<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile, the element of *al-istiqamah* guarantees methodological consistency in the process of societal transformation, supported by the aspect of *al-imkaniyyah* as a form of democratizing spiritual access. Thus, religious authority no longer rests solely on institutional claims but shifts toward the model of *al-qudwah al-fa'ilah*, or active exemplarity, which demonstrates tangible competence within the public sphere. The revolutionary significance of this dimension lies in the deconstruction of traditional hierarchies that often hindered the broader participation of the ummah in spiritual and social development.

Exploration of the work *al-Futuh al-Ilahiyyah* reveals that Sheikh Yusuf's tariqa methodology represents an epistemological revolution in the pedagogy of Islamic dawah in the Nusantara region. The deconstruction of the ten pillars of Sufism, ranging from the purification of monotheism to the ethics of social interaction (*husn al-ishra*), serves as a systemic framework for building resilient human character. This methodology shifts the orientation of religious education from mere cognitive information transmission to value internalization based on

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<sup>31</sup> Muhaemin Latif and Erwin Hafid, "Multicultural Attitudes in an Islamic Boarding School of South Sulawesi-Indonesia," *Cogent Education* 8, no. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2021.1968736>.

<sup>32</sup> Halimah Basri et al., "Inheritance Rights of Women in Makassar Society: A Study of Living Qur'an and Its Implications for Islamic Law," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 6, no. 2 (2022): 24-42, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v6i2.13882>.

transformative experience or al-tazkiyah.<sup>33</sup> The tariqa structure he developed possesses high compatibility with dynamic networked learning patterns, where the relationship between teacher and student transcends geographical and structural boundaries. Through this mechanism, Sheikh Yusuf created a solid community of learners with a high moral commitment to social change and political resistance. The integration between spiritual discipline and social engagement ensures that Sufism does not become a path of escapism, but rather a driving engine for concrete action within society. The success of this model is evident in how his followers maintained social cohesion and a fighting spirit despite enduring the extreme pressures of exile.

**Table 1. Integrative Framework of Da’wah Dimensions**

Da’wah Dimension	Epistemological Foundation	Transformative Modality	Strategic Objective
Sharia	<i>Al-Wiḍūḥ</i> and <i>Al-Istiḳāmah</i>	Normative communication and institutional authority	Social order and legal coherence
Sufism	<i>Al-Tazkiyah</i> and <i>Ḥusn al-Ishrā</i>	Ethical formation and networked learning	Moral integrity and communal cultivation
Haqiqa	<i>Qiblat al-Sirr</i>	Transformation of ontological consciousness	Political courage and existential resilience
Gnosis	<i>Al-Ma’rifah</i>	Spiritual leadership and social guidance	Authentic liberation and emancipatory awareness

Analysis of al-Nafhat al-Sailaniyya and Daf al-Bala indicates that Sheikh Yusuf’s conceptualization of haqiqa and gnosis constitutes the pinnacle of a systematically constructed transformative framework. Through the ontological structure of ma’rifah, which transcends subject-object duality, he formulated three levels of qibla as a framework of consciousness for every Muslim subject. Qibla al-Sirr, or the secret orientation, is not merely a pure metaphysical concept but the foundation of a consciousness that provides moral strength in facing systemic injustice in the physical world. Some also argue that historical consciousness entails safeguarding the authority and verifying the authenticity of Islamic teachings through legal sources. Eidetic consciousness involves the conceptualization of meaning by mediating authoritative sources through linguistic principles (mabāḥith al-alfāz). Meanwhile, practical engagement with reality requires reflecting upon human welfare, thereby enabling revelation to be translated into the domain of humanity.<sup>34</sup> This transformation of consciousness directly impacts how individuals perceive tyrannical power, wherein absolute sovereignty is recognized as belonging solely to God, thereby triggering extraordinary political courage. Gnosis, in this perspective, functions as an instrument of internal liberation that subsequently manifests in acts of resistance against colonial oppression in Banten and various places of exile. Sheikh Yusuf successfully demonstrated that spiritual depth is an inexhaustible source of energy for public leadership and consistent social activism. Consequently, ma’rifah becomes the basis for an ethics of social responsibility embodied in a leadership structure that is wise and steadfast in the principles of universal justice.

<sup>33</sup> A. Sulaeman, “Islamic Religious Education Based On Sufism Construction Epistemology of Islamic Education,” *4th International Conference the Community Development in ASEAN*, 2017, 1-16, [https://amca2012.org/proceeding2020/media/Proceedings\\_ICCD2017\\_Cambodia.pdf](https://amca2012.org/proceeding2020/media/Proceedings_ICCD2017_Cambodia.pdf).

<sup>34</sup> Muhammad Anis, Mashduqi. “The Integration-Interconnection Paradigm in Islamic Law: Al-Syatibi’s Thought in Al-Muwafaqat”. *Al-Mazaahib: Jurnal Perbandingan Hukum* 12 no. 2 (2025): 205-221. <https://doi.org/10.14421/al-mazaahib.v12i2.3915>.

The integration of theory and practice in Sheikh Yusuf's dawah method is tangibly realized through the approaches of hikmah, mauidzah hasanah, and dawah bil lisan wal hal.<sup>35</sup> Hikmah in his practice is a dynamic interaction between eternal principles and timely application, allowing the Islamic message to remain relevant across various crisis contexts. The concept of al-takhalluq bi akhlaq Allah, which he taught, offers a revolutionary dawah ethic that transcends conventional morality by emphasizing the internalization of Divine attributes. The concrete implementation of this method is clearly observed in the military command structures and political diplomacy he conducted during the period of armed struggle against the VOC hegemony. He did not merely deliver abstract theological lectures but was directly involved in the arrangement of economic justice and the social organization of oppressed communities. This integration of word and deed is a message manifested concretely, providing robust legitimacy to his spiritual and political authority in the eyes of his followers. Historical experience shows that his dawah succeeded in creating a holistic model of resistance, where spirituality became the primary soul of every socio-political movement undertaken.

### **Sociological Restructuring of Da'wah: The Dialectic of Sharia and Haqiqa in the Perspective of Shaykh Yusuf al-Makassari**

The conceptual framework of Shaykh Yusuf al-Makassari presents a profound reorientation of the sociological structure of contemporary da'wah. These findings indicate that da'wah is no longer perceived merely as a theological activity, but rather as an instrument for fundamental social transformation. This shift challenges the established traditional hierarchies that have long dominated religious discourse in the Malay Archipelago and the broader Islamic world. Through this lens, da'wah is transformed into a space for the negotiation of identity and authority that is more inclusive and participatory. The emerging sociological implications include the deconstruction of power relations that have historically constrained individual spiritual creativity. This new structure enables a more dynamic articulation of spirituality in response to the complexities of temporal change. Consequently, this framework becomes crucial for understanding the evolution of Islamic movements oriented toward social justice.

Conventional da'wah configurations tend to reproduce authoritative hierarchical stratifications that position the preacher (da'i) as the sole holder of epistemic authority. In the traditional structure of knowledge transmission, the audience (mad'u) is often positioned as a passive, receptive subject devoid of dialectical space.<sup>36</sup> This pattern reflects a traditionalist hegemony that inhibits the growth of critical consciousness among the community. Shaykh Yusuf disrupts this pattern by introducing a network-inclusive four-dimensional model. This model allows for a more equitable distribution of spiritual authority without diminishing respect for scholarly expertise. The recognition of individual spiritual capacity in various aspects of life constitutes a significant democratization of authority. This aligns with social capital theory, which emphasizes the importance of trust and horizontal relations in strengthening community cohesion.

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<sup>35</sup> Imam Kanafi et al., "The Contribution of Ahlul-sunnah Waljamaah's Theology in Establishing Moderate Islam in Indonesia," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 77, no. 4 (2021): 1-10, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i4.6437>.

<sup>36</sup> Ibnu Fikri, "Da'wah Bi Al-Rihlah: A Methodological Concept of Da'wah Based on Travel and Tourism," *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 42, no. 2 (2022): 160-73, <https://doi.org/10.2158/jid.42.2.13591>.

Spiritual evolution within Shaykh Yusuf's framework is depicted through a spiral model rooted in a profound Sufi epistemology. This model demonstrates the dialectic between the exoteric (zahir) and the esoteric (batin) as an inexhaustible process that continuously ascends in quality. A practitioner may return to the dimension of Sharia, but with an ontological depth of understanding enriched by the experience of Haqiqa (ultimate truth). This non-linear approach is methodologically consistent with the Islamic intellectual tradition, which views knowledge (ilm) and action (amal) as an organic unity. This spirality functions as a defense mechanism against spiritual arrogance, which often arises in individuals who believe they have attained the pinnacle of gnosis (ma'rifa). In a sociological context, this understanding maintains functional connectivity between various strata of religious practitioners within a single social ecosystem. Consistency with Sharia is maintained as the ethical-legal foundation, while Haqiqa provides the vital spirit for the execution of that law.

The operationalization of the concept of al-simā' in this context serves as a communicative bridge that transforms the paradigm of monological preaching.<sup>37</sup> Al-simā' does not merely signify auditory hearing but encompasses profound empathetic listening toward the social realities of the audience. Sociologically, this is closely related to the theory of communicative action proposed by Habermas, where mutual understanding is the primary goal of interaction. The preacher no longer stands as a solitary, dictating subject but as a facilitator in the collective search for truth. This paradigm demands intellectual openness from both parties to achieve spiritual consensus. Thus, da'wah evolves from the mere transmission of dogma into a dialectical process that enriches human insight.<sup>38</sup> This transformation is highly relevant in efforts to minimize ideological polarization frequently occurring in the modern public sphere.

Husn al-ishra, or noble social interaction, complements this communicative dimension by providing an ethical framework for social behavior. This principle ensures that spiritual transformation must manifest in public civility and the harmony of human relations. Shaykh Yusuf emphasizes that the attainment of Haqiqa is invalid if it is not accompanied by an improvement in the quality of social relations. From the perspective of the sociology of religion, this represents an attempt to integrate individual piety with collective responsibility. Husn al-ishra functions as a social glue that dismantles spiritual elitism, which often separates Sufis from societal reality. Interaction based on the nobility of character creates an atmosphere of da'wah that is composed and persuasive. Consequently, the religious community is no longer an exclusive entity but becomes an inclusive agent of social change.

Critiques of social media dominance in contemporary da'wah become highly relevant when juxtaposed with Shaykh Yusuf's model. Although digital platforms promise the democratization of information, algorithm-driven engagement often creates shallow, simulated dialogues. The current phenomenon of digital religion shows a tendency where interactions occur only on the surface without spiritual depth. Shaykh Yusuf's thought offers a solution by emphasizing the quality of presence and the depth of human encounter. Networked religion

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<sup>37</sup> Roni Tabroni, Naditha Rizkya Hantoro, and Amin Shabana, "Da'wah and Commodification of Religion in West Java Broadcasting Institutions," *Ilmu Dakwah: Academic Journal for Homiletic Studies* 19, no. 1 (June 2025): 117-40, <https://doi.org/10.15575/idajhs.v19i1.45005>.

<sup>38</sup> Misbahul Munir, "Fiqh Siyasah and the State: Mapping Paradigms of Religion-State Relations in Modern Islamic Thought," *PAREWA SARAQ: Journal of Islamic Law and Fatwa Review* 2, no. 2 (2023): 110-20, <https://doi.org/10.64016/parewasaraq.v2i2.51>.

must be capable of transcending mere data exchange toward an authentic exchange of spiritual energy. Algorithms often direct users into echo chambers that narrow horizons, whereas Shaykh Yusuf's model encourages broad exploration. Therefore, a redefinition is required regarding how technology can be utilized to support a genuine spiritual dialectic.

The construction of Shaykh Yusuf's thought radically offers a paradigmatic repositioning through the transformation of da'wah into a process of knowledge co-creation. In this context, religious knowledge is no longer viewed as a static entity transferred from one mind to another. Instead, it is the result of a collegial spiritual dialectic between the preacher and the audience who mutually enrich one another. Discourses and problems raised by the audience are no longer viewed as communicative anomalies to be suppressed. Such challenges are instead regarded as catalysts for deepening a collective ontological understanding of divinity and humanity. The resulting relationship is a partnership in a spiritual journey, rather than blind dependence on a charismatic leader. This model encourages the emergence of a learning society characterized by independent thinking and a commitment to traditional values.

Dialogue with global research over the last decade shows that the success of da'wah in the modern era depends heavily on the capacity for structural adaptation. Studies conducted by sociologists of religion, such as Campbell (2017), demonstrate that religious authority in the digital age is fluid and distributed. These findings align with Shaykh Yusuf's vision regarding the distribution of spiritual authority that is not centered on a single hierarchical figure. However, Shaykh Yusuf provides added value by maintaining an anchor in a solid Sharia tradition. This prevents a deconstruction of authority that leads to spiritual anarchy or the loss of an ethical compass. The syncretism between Sufi depth and formal legal compliance creates a robust model for facing waves of both secularism and radicalism. The strength of this model lies in its balance in managing the internal and external dimensions of religious life.

Sociologically, the implication of this model is the formation of mutual support networks that replace patron-client structures in religion. The da'wah community evolves into a community of inquiry where every member feels responsible for the spiritual growth of their peers. This paradigm of dialogical engagement triggers the birth of social initiatives based on collective spiritual consciousness. These networks are more resilient to external pressures because their binding strength lies in a shared ontological vision, rather than mere personal loyalty. Shaykh Yusuf successfully formulated a socio-religious system that blends mystical depth with practical effectiveness. The shift from dependence on a leader to independence within a network represents a significant leap in the evolution of the sociology of Islamic da'wah. Thus, da'wah becomes more relevant in addressing the challenges of an increasingly complex and fragmented modern society.

The implementation of this sociological model demands a restructuring of da'wah educational institutions in the future. The da'wah curriculum must not focus solely on the mastery of rhetoric and legal material, but also on the development of emotional and social intelligence.<sup>39</sup> The ability to listen actively and interact dialogically must become a core competence for prospective preachers. Character development based on *husn al-ishra* will

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<sup>39</sup> Rila Setyaningsih, "The Phenomenon of E-Dakwah in the New Normal Era : Digital Literacy of Virtual Da'i in Da'wah Activities," *International Journal of Islamic Thought and Humanities* 02, no. 01 (2023): 65-75, <https://doi.org/10.54298/ijith.v2i1.60>.

ensure that da'wah is delivered in a humane and dignified manner. This will reduce social resistance to religious messages that are often perceived as judgmental or rigid. Shaykh Yusuf has laid the foundation for a transformative and sustainable da'wah methodology. The emphasis on the process of collective learning will create a healthy and dynamic religious ecosystem for future generations.

Ultimately, the transformation of the da'wah structure through the perspective of Shaykh Yusuf al-Makassari provides a significant theoretical contribution to the global sociology of religion. He proves that the classical Islamic tradition possesses the flexibility and depth to respond to modern issues such as democratization and digitalization. The spiral model in spiritual development provides a plausible explanation for the dynamics of individual faith growth within a social context.<sup>40</sup> The synergy between Sharia and Haqiqa ensures that spiritual progress is always accompanied by tangible social responsibility. This thought is relevant not only to Muslim societies but also to the global discourse on the role of religion in the public sphere. Dialogical da'wah based on knowledge co-creation is the future of substantive religiosity.<sup>41</sup> Through this approach, religion remains a driving force for the progress of a just human civilization.

The conclusion of this discussion affirms that Shaykh Yusuf's sociological reorientation is the answer to the crisis of authority in contemporary da'wah. By dismantling rigid hierarchies and replacing them with inclusive networks, da'wah returns to its primordial nature as a mercy to the worlds (*rahmatan lil-alamin*). This model successfully unites the dimensions of legality, spirituality, and sociality in a single harmonious breath. Academics and practitioners of da'wah need to explore more deeply the operational potential of *al-simā'* and *husn al-ishra'* in various social contexts. Future challenges will become increasingly arduous with technological disruptions, yet the foundation laid by Shaykh Yusuf provides a clear direction. This transformation is not merely a change in method, but a shift in the thinking paradigm for understanding the relationship between God, humanity, and the universe. This is the essence of da'wah that brings real change to the social structure of society.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Sheikh Yusuf al-Makassari's four-dimensional da'wah framework—spiritual, ethical, social, and intellectual—offers a relevant response to the disruption of religious authority and identity fragmentation in contemporary digital environments. The findings demonstrate that the integration of these dimensions can move digital da'wah beyond formal and superficial communication toward a more substantive, dialogical, and socially cohesive model. In this sense, Sheikh Yusuf's thought should be understood not merely as a classical Sufi legacy, but as an adaptive intellectual resource for navigating ideological polarization and the accelerated circulation of information in cyberspace. The main theoretical contribution of this study is the formulation of the Integrative Islamic Communication Theory (IICT), which

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<sup>40</sup> Sulaeman, "Islamic Religious Education Based On Sufism Construction Epistemology of Islamic Education."

<sup>41</sup> Yusuf Sani Abubakar, Rajali Haji Aji, and Mpawenimana Abdallah Saidi, "The Principles of Natural Justice: A Comparative Analysis between Secular and Islamic Law in Administrative Decision-Making," *Mazahibuna: Jurnal Perbandingan Mazhab* 7, no. 2 (2025): 176–92, <https://doi.org/10.24252/mazahibuna.vi.56855>.

combines inner spiritual depth with outward communicative effectiveness and understands digital da'wah as an ethical and relational process linking transcendental values with social responsibility. Methodologically, the hermeneutic-sociological approach demonstrates that classical Islamic texts can be reinterpreted as practical resources for understanding contemporary digital religious dynamics. Although limited by its literature-based design, this study provides a foundation for future empirical research on the application, social impact, and cross-cultural relevance of this framework. Overall, the study argues that the intellectual heritage of the Indonesian Archipelago remains a relevant and flexible source for developing ethical, inclusive, and context-sensitive models of Islamic communication in the digital age.

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