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Transformative Da'wah and Wasathiyah Islam: A Contextual Analysis of TGH. L. Muhammad Turmudzi Badaruddin's Communicative Strategy

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the transformative da'wah communication strategies practiced by TGH. L. Muhammad Turmudzi Badaruddin in conveying the values of *wasathiyah* or Islamic moderation. The research focuses on how his communicative approach integrates educational, social, and economic aspects as part of pesantren-based leadership. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observations, and document analysis involving pesantren administrators, religious leaders, and community members. The findings reveal that TGH. Turmudzi implements a triadic communication model—*bi al-lisan* (oral preaching), *bi al-hal* (exemplary practice), and *bi al-kitabah* (written expression)—which collectively internalize moderation through inclusive education, moral exemplarity, and socio-economic empowerment. The study offers a theoretical contribution by formulating a contextual model of Islamic communication that extends the understanding of *wasathiyah* from doctrinal discourse to lived practice within pesantren culture. Practically, this research highlights that communicative da'wah can serve as a tool for fostering social cohesion, interreligious dialogue, and peacebuilding. Nonetheless, the study acknowledges its limitation in scope, focusing on a single pesantren leader, thus recommending future comparative research across different contexts to further validate the model.

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1. Introduction

In the past two decades, the landscape of religious life in Indonesia has experienced significant tension due to the rise of intolerance, identity-based polarization, and the shrinking space for interfaith dialogue. The province of West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), particularly Lombok—often referred to as the “Island of a Thousand Mosques”—has not been immune to this challenge. Reports from the Setara Institute (2022) documented several incidents of religious intolerance in the region, including the prohibition of worship houses, discrimination against minority groups, and sermons that provoked public sentiment. This condition underscores the fact that religious diversity alone does not guarantee social harmony without the presence of inclusive and moderate religious narratives.

In response to these dynamics, the concept of wasathiyah Islam has gained increasing relevance. As a normative and practical framework, wasathiyah promotes balance (*tawazun*), justice (*i'tidal*), tolerance (*tasamuh*), and consultation (*shura*)—positioning itself as a counter-narrative to exclusivism and extremism. Prominent scholars such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi (2006), Azyumardi Azra (2019), and Ali Munhanif (2020) have emphasized the role of moderate Islam in addressing the spiritual and socio-political challenges facing the Muslim ummah in the globalized world. However, the implementation of wasathiyah values at the grassroots level largely depends on the credibility and social authority of local religious leaders.

In Lombok's context, the figure of the Tuan Guru (TGH) holds a vital role as both preacher and moral leader. Beyond delivering religious sermons, they act as cultural brokers and agents of social transformation. One of the most prominent figures representing wasathiyah Islam in the region is TGH. Lalu Muhammad Turmudzi Badaruddin—a spiritual guide of the Qadiriyyah-Naqsyabandiyah Sufi order, founder of the Qamarul Huda Islamic Boarding School (*Pesantren*), and member of the Supreme Council of Nahdlatul Ulama (PBNU). His da'wah activities are known for their emphasis on moderation, cultural sensitivity, and educational development.

Despite his significant public role, academic studies specifically examining his communication strategies in propagating wasathiyah Islam remain scarce. Existing literature tends to focus on his biographical background or his contributions to Islamic education, without exploring the strategic dimensions of his da'wah in addressing local socio-religious challenges.

This study addresses this gap by conducting a contextual analysis of the da'wah communication strategies employed by TGH. L. Muhammad Turmudzi Badaruddin. Rather than merely analyzing the content of his sermons, this research explores how he integrates religious moderation values into educational institutions, economic empowerment programs, and sociocultural practices within Lombok's diverse society.

By combining the framework of da'wah communication theory (Burhanuddin, 2006) and the principles of wasathiyah Islam (al-Qaradawi, 2006), this study

contributes not only to Islamic communication scholarship but also to broader efforts in promoting religious moderation through culturally embedded da'wah models. It further highlights the strategic role of pesantren-based religious leaders in advancing inclusive Islam within Indonesia's pluralistic context.

2. Literature

The concept of *wasathiyah* (moderation) has become a foundational pillar in Islamic thought, particularly in response to rising religious extremism and social fragmentation. Yusuf al-Qaradawi (2006) argues that *wasathiyah* is rooted in the Qur'anic term *ummatan wasathan* (QS al-Baqarah: 143), referring to a just, balanced, and tolerant community. *Wasathiyah* entails multiple principles including *tawazun* (balance), *i'tidal* (justice), *tasamuh* (tolerance), *musawah* (equality), and *islah* (reform). These principles serve both theological and strategic purposes, especially in multicultural societies such as Indonesia.

From a communication perspective, Islamic da'wah is not merely about transmitting religious doctrine but also about engaging audiences contextually. According to Burhanuddin (2006), da'wah communication consists of three primary components: the *da'i* (preacher), the *risalah* (message), and the *mad'u* (audience). The effectiveness of da'wah depends significantly on the credibility of the preacher, the contextual relevance of the message, and the appropriateness of the media channel. This framework allows for analyzing da'wah not only as a religious duty but also as a communicative act that negotiates meaning, identity, and power within a given sociocultural context.

Several studies have addressed the role of religious leaders and pesantren in promoting Islamic moderation. Suhirman Jayadi (2020), for example, explored the educational philosophy of TGH. L. Muhammad Turmudzi Badaruddin and emphasized his integrative approach to religious and secular knowledge, focusing on spiritual bonding between teacher and student. While Jayadi's work offers insight into Turmudzi's pedagogical thinking, it does not address the broader communication strategies of his da'wah practice.

Similarly, Badrun (UIN Mataram) analyzed the role of pesantren as moral institutions in instilling *wasathiyah* values. His study highlights the role of pesantren culture—such as *ikhlas* (sincerity), *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), and *simplicity*—in shaping the character of santri. However, Badrun's analysis is mainly institutional and pedagogical, without considering how *wasathiyah* values are disseminated through community-level engagement or da'wah communication models.

Another relevant work by Zainun Wafiqatun Niam discussed the institutional efforts of NU and Muhammadiyah in articulating moderate Islam. This literature primarily examined the discursive and organizational dimensions of *wasathiyah*, often overlooking how individual *ulama* translate these values into daily practice, particularly in rural or pesantren-based communities.

While the aforementioned studies offer valuable contributions to the discourse on Islamic moderation, they tend to focus either on institutional

frameworks or pedagogical approaches. There remains a lack of empirical research examining the communicative strategies of *ulama* in applying *wasathiyah* values at the grassroots level—especially in regions with socio-religious tensions such as Lombok.

This study seeks to bridge that gap by analyzing the da'wah communication strategies of TGH. L. Muhammad Turmudzi Badaruddin—a prominent *Tuan Guru* and pesantren leader—who embodies *wasathiyah* not only in discourse but also in action. Unlike previous studies that treat pesantren as passive institutions of religious transmission, this research positions pesantren as dynamic spaces of da'wah communication, where messages of moderation are contextualized, negotiated, and embodied.

By employing both *wasathiyah* theory (al-Qaradawi, 2006) and da'wah communication theory (Burhanuddin, 2006), this study provides a dual-lens analysis of how Islamic moderation is practiced communicatively and contextually. It contributes to the growing field of Islamic communication studies by demonstrating that local religious actors play a pivotal role in promoting inclusive, peaceful, and transformative religious narratives.

3. Methods

This study employs a qualitative case study approach to explore the da'wah communication strategies of TGH. L. Muhammad Turmudzi Badaruddin in promoting *wasathiyah* Islam in Lombok. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis conducted at Pondok Pesantren Qamarul Huda Bagu, Central Lombok. Informants included pesantren administrators, family members, students, community members, and two spokespersons representing TGH. Turmudzi due to his health limitations. Interviews explored perceptions of his da'wah content and methods, while observations focused on religious events and community interactions. Supporting documents such as his sermons, written works, and digital content were also examined. Thematic analysis followed Miles and Huberman's model, combining data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing, guided by the frameworks of *wasathiyah* Islam and Islamic communication theory. Data credibility was ensured through triangulation across sources and methods, as well as peer review and member checking, providing a grounded and trustworthy interpretation of how religious moderation is communicated and practiced at the grassroots level..

4. Results

Da'wah Communication Strategies: Integrating Bil-Lisan, Bil-Hal, and Bil-Kitabah

TGH. L. Muhammad Turmudzi Badaruddin utilizes a multi-modal communication strategy in propagating *wasathiyah* Islam. He employs *bil-lisan* (oral preaching) through public sermons, religious gatherings, and personal guidance sessions—often using the Sasak language to ensure accessibility. His messages emphasize interfaith tolerance, balanced thinking, and moral integrity.

In addition, *bil-hal* (exemplary practice) is evident in his daily interactions and institutional leadership, modeling humility, inclusivity, and community-oriented ethics. He also applies *bil-kitabah* (written da'wah) by composing religious texts such as *Zadul Ma'ad*, which are used as references for spiritual and ethical guidance. These combined approaches reflect a holistic and culturally embedded method of communication, allowing Islamic moderation to be internalized by various segments of society.

Institutionalizing Wasathiyah through Islamic Education and Social Leadership

At Pondok Pesantren Qamarul Huda Bagu, TGH. Turmudzi embeds *wasathiyah* principles into the pesantren's educational vision and curriculum. The pesantren offers multi-level Islamic education—ranging from diniyah to university level—while also emphasizing moral character, spiritual discipline, and social responsibility. Access to education is extended to all, regardless of socio-economic or religious background, demonstrating values of *musawah* (equality) and *tasamuh* (tolerance). He fosters a culture of respectful dialogue, avoids public rebuke, and encourages students to become agents of change through personal example. His leadership reflects the model of *charismatic religious authority* that transforms pesantren from a traditional religious institution into a center of ethical formation and interreligious engagement.

Promoting Social Harmony and Economic Empowerment through Contextual Da'wah

Beyond the pesantren, TGH. Turmudzi actively engages in public discourse and conflict resolution using *shura* (consultation) and inclusive negotiation. He mediates sociopolitical tensions, such as in the controversy over the Lombok airport name, by advocating mutual respect and public consensus. His efforts to preserve local traditions while filtering cultural elements through Islamic values also reflect his commitment to *islah* (reform). Economically, he strengthens pesantren-based entrepreneurship through the establishment of KOPONTREN (Pesantren Cooperative), facilitating community welfare and training students in practical skills. These efforts integrate Islamic moderation with social justice, affirming that *wasathiyah* is not limited to discourse but is enacted through sustainable and inclusive action.

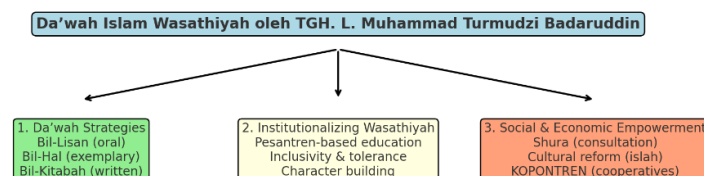


Figure 1. The Model of *Wasathiyah* Da'wah Strategy by TGH. L. Muhammad Turmudzi Badaruddin, encompassing: (1) a multi-modal da'wah approach (*bil-lisan, bil-hal, and bil-kitabah*); (2) the institutionalization of moderation values through inclusive pesantren-based education; and (3) socio-economic empowerment rooted in *shura* (consultation), cultural reform (*islah*), and pesantren cooperatives.

5. Discussion

This study has shown that TGH. L. Muhammad Turmudzi Badaruddin integrates the principles of *wasathiyah* into his da'wah strategies through a combination of oral preaching (*bil-lisan*), exemplary conduct (*bil-hal*), and written communication (*bil-kitabah*). His approach reflects a deep understanding of the sociocultural context of Lombok and demonstrates how da'wah can function as a transformative force when aligned with local wisdom and institutional leadership. Rather than employing confrontational or textualist methods, TGH. Turmudzi advances moderation through persuasion, character-building, and adaptive education, reaffirming the communicative nature of da'wah as both spiritual engagement and social navigation.

The success of his da'wah lies in its ability to institutionalize *wasathiyah* values through pesantren-based education. His pesantren, Qamarul Huda Bagu, is not merely an Islamic learning center but a platform for cultivating inclusive leadership and ethical citizenship. This confirms the assertion of Zamakhsari Dhofier (1985) that charismatic pesantren leaders function not only as religious instructors but also as cultural brokers. However, this study extends Dhofier's claim by showing how such leadership, when guided by *wasathiyah*, can bridge religious authority with modern civic engagement, offering a localized yet replicable model for peacebuilding.

Moreover, the findings suggest that TGH. Turmudzi's role transcends education. His socio-political involvement—such as mediating tensions around the renaming of Lombok's international airport—illustrates how *shura* and public consultation can be employed as instruments of conflict resolution. His refusal to exploit religious authority for political gain further reflects a form of ethical leadership that aligns with the *fiqh al-awlawiyyat* (jurisprudence of priorities), where public benefit (*maslahah*) and community harmony take precedence over symbolic power. This contributes to the broader literature on religious moderation by offering empirical insight into how da'wah can respond to real-world crises without compromising Islamic principles.

When compared to earlier studies, such as Suhirman Jayadi's (2020) analysis of Turmudzi's educational philosophy or Badrun's institutional study of pesantren character-building, this research offers a more integrative perspective. It positions da'wah not just as pedagogical activity but as a communicative ecosystem—where speech, behavior, institution, and policy interact. In this sense,

TGH. Turmudzi represents a new type of religious actor: one who functions simultaneously as a preacher, educator, reformer, and community mediator. His model echoes the framework of da'wah as contextual communication rather than doctrinal transmission.

Nevertheless, the implementation of wasathiyah da'wah still faces significant challenges. Cultural resistance, particularly from groups attached to syncretic practices or rigid interpretations, remains an ongoing negotiation. Likewise, the rise of digital extremism among youth poses a new frontier, where traditional interpersonal da'wah needs to evolve into multi-platform engagement. The example of TGH. Turmudzi, who has begun to embrace digital platforms such as YouTube and social media, indicates that pesantren-based actors can adapt without losing authenticity. This shift is critical if Islamic moderation is to resonate with younger, media-savvy generations.

Finally, the implications of this study are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, it underscores the relevance of combining da'wah communication theory with wasathiyah principles to analyze religious authority and influence in multicultural societies. Practically, it demonstrates that local religious leaders—when supported by institutional capacity and moral legitimacy—can play vital roles in promoting peace, education, and economic development. In this regard, TGH. Turmudzi's model of wasathiyah da'wah should not only be appreciated as a personal achievement but also as a replicable framework for pesantren and da'i across Indonesia and beyond.

6. Conclusion

This research shows that TGH. L. Muhammad Turmudzi Badaruddin carries out a form of da'wah that is grounded, contextual, and inclusive. Through a combination of speaking, doing, and writing (*bil lisan, bil hal, and bil kitabah*), he communicates the spirit of *wasathiyah* Islam not only as a religious idea, but as something that is lived, practiced, and embodied. His pesantren becomes more than just a place of learning; it becomes a community hub for building character, strengthening tolerance, and promoting mutual respect across religious and cultural lines.

More than anything, his example reminds us that religious moderation is not built by slogans or policies alone. It grows from trust, presence, and continuous engagement with real people and their daily concerns. Whether in education, interfaith dialogue, economic empowerment, or cultural reform, TGH. Turmudzi positions himself not as a distant authority but as a guide who listens, understands, and walks with the community.

In a time when religious narratives often become divisive, his approach offers something different. It is a form of da'wah that is persuasive without being forceful, rooted without being rigid. For pesantren leaders, policymakers, and scholars, this model provides a valuable reference point, one that blends tradition

with relevance and principle with pragmatism. Further studies could explore how such a model affects young generations of santri or how it compares with similar efforts in other parts of Indonesia. In the end, the strength of *wasathiyah* lies not only in its ideals but in the way those ideals are quietly practiced, sustained, and shared.

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