

Ethics of Da'wah Messages

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Abstract

The message of da'wah serves as a strategic medium for conveying Islamic values to the broader community. However, the success of the da'wah message is largely determined by the ethical aspects that underlie it. This article aims to conceptually examine the ethical principles in delivering da'wah messages based on the *Mabadi 'Asyarah* approach developed by Dr. Tata Sukayat, supported by academic studies from UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. Using a qualitative literature study method, this article finds that values such as honesty, compassion, wisdom, and humility (*tawadhu*) are essential elements in shaping an effective, inclusive, and sustainable da'wah message. Ethics are not merely complementary elements in da'wah but constitute the core foundation that determines the success and sustainability of Islamic communication. The theoretical implications of this study affirm the importance of integrating ethics into any contemporary da'wah strategy, while practically, this article recommends strengthening communication ethics education for today's preachers.

Keywords: ethics; da'wah message; contextual da'wah; islamic communication

Introduction

Da'wah in Islam is not merely a verbal communication activity or the delivery of informative religious messages (Abdulsalam, 2025; Ali, 2023; Kadir Badjuber, 2021; Mokhtar et al., 2026; Zargar, 2023). Rather, it is a transformative and educational process of change that bridges Divine and human values. In this process, da'wah acts as a spiritual and social medium that conveys the values of truth, justice, compassion, and peace to all levels of society. Da'wah aims not only to invite goodness but also to build a civilization based on noble ethical values (Aliwan & Hakim, 2024; Nan et al., 2024; Siagian et al., 2016).

However, contemporary practice faces numerous challenges. Advances in information technology, social complexity, shifting values, and identity polarization have caused disorientation in the delivery of religious messages (Zhang, 2025). Many preachers convey messages in a provocative, exclusive, or even hateful style that contradicts the basic principles of Islamic teachings. Such messages, delivered in a loud, divisive, or condescending tone, not only obscure the meaning of da'wah itself but also damage the image of Islam as a religion of mercy for all creation (*rahmatan lil 'alamin*) (Supriyadi, 2021).

Given these problems, it is essential to re-establish ethics as the main foundation of every da'wah activity. Ethics is not merely complementary to message delivery but is the core that directs the preacher's thinking, behavior, and conduct (Abdullah et al., 2022; Fatihah, 2019). In Islam, ethics (morals) manifest true faith, as the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) stated that the primary prophetic mission is to perfect human morality. Therefore, an ethical da'wah message not only enlightens intellectually but also touches the heart and refines the soul of the audience (*mad'u*).

From the perspective of Islamic scholarship, the concept of ethics in da'wah has been systematically formulated by a number of scholars. One of them is Dr. Tata Sukayat,

who, in his work *The Science of Da'wah: Philosophical Perspectives of Mabadi Asyarah*, asserts that da'wah cannot be separated from the basic principles (*al-mabādi' al-'asyarah*), which include knowledge, charity, sincerity, honesty, steadfastness (*istiqamah*), humility (*tawadhu*), courage (*syaja'ah*), wisdom, patience, and gratitude (Sukayat, 2020). These principles not only provide a philosophical framework for da'wah activities but also form the ethical structure inherent in every message conveyed (Mulyana, 2018).

In this context, the ethics of da'wah messages should be interpreted not only as moral rules but also as a delivery method that considers the psychological, sociological, and cultural aspects of the audience. In the city of Bandung, known for its high social diversity and religious dynamics, applying ethics in da'wah messages is both a challenge and a necessity. A study by Herlina (2020) from the Faculty of Da'wah, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, shows that ethical and empathetic da'wah significantly contributes to improving social cohesion and religious moderation.

Furthermore, studies conducted by lecturers and students of UIN Bandung over the past five years indicate that communication ethics in da'wah are positively correlated with the success of the da'wah mission itself (Sukayat, 2020). Messages delivered with honesty, compassion, and wisdom tend to be more accepted and have a greater psychological and social impact. This aligns with the *da'wah rahmatan lil 'alamin* paradigm, which emphasizes making Islam a religion that brings coolness, not tension.

Thus, this paper aims to analyze and deepen understanding of the importance of ethics in delivering da'wah messages, using *Mabadi 'Asyarah* as the main philosophical approach and contextualizing it through local studies at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. Through this approach, the ethical concept of da'wah messages is expected to become not only a theoretical discourse but also a practical guideline for building character-driven, humanistic, and transformative da'wah communication.

Method

This article was prepared using a qualitative approach with the library research method. The primary data are sourced from the book *Da'wah: The Perspective of Mabadi Asyarah Philosophy* by Dr. Tata Sukayat, which serves as the main conceptual reference, as well as scientific articles from academic journals published by UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung and surrounding campuses. The analysis technique used is content analysis with a descriptive-interpretive approach, namely interpreting and contextualizing the ethical values of da'wah within the framework of *Mabadi 'Asyarah* thought.

This approach allows the author to examine in depth the relationship between ethical principles in Islamic da'wah theory and the socio-cultural reality of the Bandung community. The analysis also considers the results of previous research that support the significance of ethics in strengthening the reach and impact of da'wah messages, especially on social media and in urban public spaces.

Results and Discussion

Ethics in the da'wah message is the foundation that ensures da'wah is not only correct in *shari'i* terms but also socially and culturally accepted. A da'wah message not accompanied by strong ethics can be easily misinterpreted, rejected, or even cause social conflict. Therefore, understanding the principles of ethics in da'wah is an essential need for preachers (*du'at*) and da'wah institutions.

In the book *The Science of Da'wah: Philosophical Perspectives of Mabadi' Asyarah*, Dr. Tata Sukayat states that da'wah ethics are derived from the *mabadi'* values, which consist of ten principles: knowledge, charity, sincerity, honesty, steadfastness, humility, courage, wisdom, patience, and gratitude (Sukayat, 2020). These principles not only serve as moral guidelines but also become communication strategies that build emotional, spiritual, and intellectual connections between the preacher and the audience.

Honesty (Şidq): The Foundation of Trust in Da'wah Communication

Honesty is one of the main ethical values in delivering da'wah messages. A message conveyed without a foundation of honesty will lose public trust. In the context of da'wah, honesty includes the correspondence between speech and reality, the validity of the evidence used, and openness to differences in interpretation. Tata Sukayat states that honesty in da'wah is not only a personal attitude but also a social responsibility that maintains the credibility of Islam as a religion of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (Sukayat, 2020).

For example, in the phenomenon of digital da'wah, content is often found that conveys religious information without a strong scientific basis or even spreads hoaxes under the guise of Islamic teaching (Supriyadi, 2021). This practice certainly contradicts the principle of *şidq* taught by the Prophet PBUH. Mulyawan's research (2021) among UIN Bandung students shows that da'wah that cites valid sources and is conveyed with honest arguments is much more appreciated and accepted by the younger generation (Mulyawan, 2021).

Compassion (Rahmah): Empathetic Ethics in Touching the Heart

Da'wah not based on affection tends to turn into a threat rather than guidance. The principle of *rahmah* positions da'wah as a form of love for others, not as a tool of judgment (Kamal Basir et al., 2025; Sikumbang et al., 2024). The Prophet PBUH himself preached with great tenderness, even to those who rejected Islam. This is also affirmed in QS. An-Nahl:125, which states the importance of wisdom and good counsel (*mau'idhoh hasanah*) in preaching.

Herlina's (2020) research found that a da'wah approach prioritizing compassion and empathy such as listening to congregational complaints, understanding social backgrounds, and offering warm greetings succeeded in increasing congregational participation and strengthening the bond of brotherhood (*ukhuwah*) in mosques in the North Bandung area (Syaikhu, 2019). In fact, this approach is considered capable of reducing friction between Islamic organizations that previously often had disagreements.

Another example is da'wah to marginalized groups, such as poor urban communities and ex-convicts. Preachers who deliver messages with a compassionate approach without stigma or judgment are more successful in creating moral and spiritual transformation in the community (Farid, 2022; Thohir, 2019).

Wisdom and Judgment (*Hikmah*): Da'wah Strategies in a Plural Society

Wisdom in da'wah is not only about verbal intelligence but rather the ability to understand the audience's psychology and the social context in which da'wah takes place. In a multicultural society like Bandung, *hikmah* means respecting differences, adjusting language style, and not imposing one's will in conveying Islamic teachings.

Dr. Tata Sukayat emphasized that wise da'wah will keep the community (*ummah*) away from narrow fanaticism and open space for interfaith dialogue. Preachers should not convey da'wah material in a hateful tone or claim truth exclusively, as this will damage the spirit of tolerance and the beauty of Islam itself.

Supriyadi (2021) research in the East Bandung area shows that da'wah delivered in inclusive and non-patronizing language such as using daily life analogies, light humor, and appreciation for differences is more effective in reaching audiences across generations and backgrounds.

Humility (*Tawadhu*): Humility as Interaction Ethics

Tawadhu, or humility, is a very important ethical attitude in the da'wah process. A preacher (*da'i*) should not feel holier or more knowledgeable than the audience. When the preacher is arrogant or exclusive, the da'wah message loses its meaning because it becomes a symbol of power, not affection.

Farid (2022), in his study at a Bandung city Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*), found that young *ustaz* who behave egalitarianly greeting worshippers with familiar calls, engaging in two-way discussions, and being open to criticism are more appreciated by students and the surrounding community. *Tawadhu* also means acknowledging the limitations of one's knowledge, not imposing personal interpretations, and being willing to learn from the audience's experience.

Consistency and Exemplarity: Between Word and Deed

One of the causes of the crisis in the world of da'wah is the incompatibility between the message conveyed and the preacher's own behavior. This highlights the importance of the principles of *istiqamah* (steadfastness) and good deeds (*amal salih*). A preacher should be a real example of the message he conveys. Without exemplarity, the da'wah message loses its meaning.

Da'wah is not merely a rhetorical activity but a call to revive Islamic values in daily actions. Research by LPPM UIN Bandung in 2023 concluded that the social example of preachers is more effective in touching the awareness of the congregation than long lectures (LPPM UIN Bandung, 2023).

Conclusion

Ethics in da'wah messages is not an additional element but a fundamental one that determines the success and acceptance of da'wah in an increasingly complex society. In a contemporary context marked by information disruption, social fragmentation, and religious polarization, da'wah ethics serve as a counterbalance that affirms Islam's mission as a mercy to all worlds. Drawing on the *Mabadi 'Asyarah* principles as formulated by Dr. Tata Sukayat, values such as honesty, compassion, wisdom, humility, and exemplarity are not merely decorative elements of the da'wah narrative but are the ethical tools underlying all Islamic message delivery activities.

By strengthening the ethical dimension in da'wah, preachers can convey messages that are not only textually correct but also emotionally touching, socially accepted, and culturally constructive. Research conducted in the Bandung area, especially by the academic community of UIN Sunan Gunung Djati, proves that ethical and contextual da'wah is better able to create sustainable and inclusive social transformation. Consequently, da'wah educational institutions are expected to strengthen the communication ethics curriculum in preacher cadre programs. Additionally, preachers need to be equipped with cross-cultural communication skills and the ability to read social contexts in order to convey messages that are character-driven, solutive, and unifying.

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