

***SHARĪFA* ON STAGE: FEMALE ISLAMIC AUTHORITY AND CINEMATIC PREACHING IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA**

A Thesis

**Submitted to the Master's Study Program of Islamic Studies at the
Faculty of Islamic Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of**

Master of Arts (M.A.)



by:

Mariati Aprilia Harahap

01212310004

UNIVERSITAS ISLAM INTERNASIONAL INDONESIA

DEPOK

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis explores the emergence of Ba‘Alawi female preachers within contemporary *da‘wa* practices in Indonesia. Focusing on Ayu Naylul Muna Almunawwar, a female descendant of the Prophet Muhammad, this study examines how she skillfully merges inherited religious authority with innovative *da‘wa* strategies grounded in cinematic aesthetics and popular culture. Drawing on the Hadrami tradition of Islamic scholarship, Muna engages her followers not only through conventional religious teachings but also via visually curated, emotionally compelling performances shared through digital media platforms. While previous research has documented male Ba‘Alawi preachers (*habā‘ib*) adapting to new media landscapes, the rise of *sharā‘if* employing modern outreach tools such as cinematic *da‘wa*, popular music with strategic marketing appeals remains underexplored. Employing a qualitative, interdisciplinary approach including in-depth and informal interviews, participatory observation, and digital ethnography focused on Instagram accounts like @thepoweroflove_event and @anmaofficial29, this study finds that Sharifa Muna Almunawwar uses advanced audiovisual media to enhance spirituality and hence elevate brand messaging and lifestyle goals, creating a unique religious character that appeals to urban Muslim middle and upper classes. Her approach signifies a strategic reconfiguration of female Islamic authority in Indonesia’s public sphere, reflecting both continuity with Ba‘Alawi tradition and adaptation to the expectations of a media-savvy audience. This research contributes to broader discussions on gender, religious authority, and the transformation of *da‘wa* in Indonesia’s increasingly visual and commodified Islamic environment.

Keywords: *da‘wa, female authority, Indonesia, preaching majelis, urban space*

IJMES TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM FOR ARABIC, PERSIAN, AND TURKISH

Consonants

A = Arabic, P = Persian, OT = Ottoman Turkish, MT = Modern Turkish

	A	P	OT	MT		A	P	OT	MT		A	P	OT	MT
ء	ʾ	ʾ	ʾ	—	ز	z	z	z	z	ك	k	k or g	k or ñ	k or n
ب	b	b	b	b or p	ژ	—	zh	j	j				ory	ory
پ	—	p	p	p	س	s	s	s	s				or ğ	or ğ
ت	t	t	t	t	ش	sh	sh	ş	ş	گ	—	g	g	g
ث	th	ṡ	ṡ	s	ص	ṡ	ṡ	ş	s	ل	l	l	l	l
ج	j	j	c	c	ض	ḍ	ẓ	ẓ	z	م	m	m	m	m
چ	—	ch	ç	ç	ط	ṭ	ṭ	ṭ	t	ن	n	n	n	n
ح	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ	h	ظ	ẓ	ẓ	ẓ	z	ه	h	h	h ¹	h ¹
خ	kh	kh	h	h	ع	ʿ	ʿ	ʿ	—	و	w	v or u	v	v
د	d	d	d	d	غ	gh	gh	g or ğ	g or ğ	ي	y	y	y	y
ذ	dh	ẓ	ẓ	z	ف	f	f	f	f	ة	a ²			
ر	r	r	r	r	ق	q	q	k	k	ال	al ³			

¹ When h is not final. ² In construct state: at. ³ For the article, al- and -l-.

Vowels

ARABIC AND PERSIAN				OTTOMAN AND MODERN TURKISH	
<i>Long</i> ¹ or	آ	ā		ā	words of Arabic and Persian origin only
	و	ū		ū	
	ي	ī		ī	
<i>Doubled</i>	آآ	iiyy (final form ī)		iy (final form ī)	
	ووو	uww (final form ū)		uvv	
	ويي	au or aw		ev	
<i>Diphthongs</i>	وي	ai or ay		ey	
<i>Short</i>	ا	a		a or e	
	و	u		u or ü / o or ö	
	ي	i		i or i	

For Ottoman Turkish, authors may either transliterate or use the modern Turkish orthography.

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GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS DIRECTORY

<i>Adab</i>	: good manner according to Islam values
<i>Akhlaq</i>	: good deeds in Islam
<i>al-mujādala billatī hiya aḥsan</i>	: arguing in the best manner
<i>al-maw'iza ḥasana</i>	: preaching with gently manner
<i>agapic love</i>	: type of love based on spiritual relationship
<i>'aql</i>	: brain
<i>Asma'ul Husna</i>	: the good Names of Allah
<i>Baraka</i>	: to get blessings
b. (Ar. <i>bin</i>)	: the son of
(b.)	: born
bt. (Ar. <i>bint</i>)	: the daughter of
<i>burqa</i>	: a garment that covers a woman's entire body, including the head and face, leaving only small holes for the eyes to see
<i>cadar</i>	: face-veil
(d.)	: died
<i>dā'ī</i>	: male preacher
<i>dā'īya</i>	: female preacher
<i>da'wa</i>	: preaching, Islamic missionary activity
<i>do'a Bersama</i>	: <i>praying session</i>
<i>du'a</i>	: <i>prayer, supplication</i>
<i>gambus</i>	: an old Islamic music in Indonesia
<i>gamelan</i>	: a popular traditional music instrument in Java
<i>habā'ib</i>	: the plural from of <i>habīb</i>
<i>habīb</i>	: singular form of male descendent of the Prophet Muhammad
<i>Habība</i>	: singular form of female descendent of the Prophet Muhammad, means the loved one
<i>Hadiya</i>	: gifts
<i>hadrah</i> (Ar. <i>ḥaḍra</i>)	: to present
<i>Haḍra Bāsawdān</i>	: a collection of dhikrs, <i>munajat</i> (prayer and hope), <i>qasidah</i> and <i>tawasul</i> (intercession) written by Syaikh Abdul bin Ahmad Basaudan

Hadramis	: people originally from Hadhramaut Yemen
<i>hakekat</i> (Ar. <i>ḥaqīqa</i>)	: the essential of Islam
<i>ḥikma</i>	: wisdom
<i>hubāba</i>	: the plural from of <i>ḥabība</i> , an honored call for senior <i>sharīfa</i>
<i>husnul khatima</i>	: the good ending of death
<i>Isra' and Mi'raj</i>	: The spiritual journey of the Prophet Muhammad from the Ka'ba (Masjidil Haram) in Makkah to the Aqsa Mosque (<i>Isra</i>), then ascending to the seventh heaven (<i>Mi'raj</i>) in one night.
IAIN	: <i>Institut Agama Islam Negeri: State Islamic Institute</i> , now became, <i>State Islamic University (UIN)</i>
<i>jama'ah</i>	: congregation, term specifically for the followers
<i>jiping</i> (<i>ngadabaji kuping</i>)	: studying religion relied on listening through ears only
<i>Kalimat Syahadat</i>	: acknowledge statement of being a Muslim
<i>Kejawen Muslim</i>	: cults of Javanese Muslim people
<i>Kiai</i>	: male preacher, the owner of pesantren, the owner of <i>majelis ta'lim</i>
<i>khalwa</i>	: seclusion
<i>khurūj</i>	: the task of preaching
<i>Kursus Banat As-Syafi'iyah</i>	: The Religious Course for Ash-Shafi'iyah Girls
<i>Kursus Ummahat As-Syafi'iyah</i>	: The Course for Ash-Shafi'iyah Mothers
<i>lafẓ</i>	: word
<i>mad'u</i> (Ar. <i>mad'ū</i>)	: people who are being preached to (object of <i>da'wa</i>)
<i>Madrasah Ibtidaiyah</i>	: the primary school level which focus more on religious subjects
<i>madrasah</i> (Ar. <i>madrasa</i>)	: school which taught religious subjects more rather than the common based school
<i>mahabah</i>	: love
<i>majelis ta'lim</i>	: <i>majelis</i> : (<i>plural</i>) <i>majelises</i> : religious gathering, previously known as <i>pengajian</i>
<i>manaqib</i>	: the story or life history of a person, especially important figures or saints of Allah
<i>maqam</i>	: the level stage
<i>mashura</i> (Ar. <i>mashūra</i>)	: famous (popular)

<i>mastura</i> (Ar. <i>mastūra</i>)	: hidden
<i>ma'rifat</i>	: to know in full about the Creator
<i>Ma'rifatullah</i> (Ar.)	: the highest stage of mysterious spiritual experience in Islam as part of Sufi heritage
MPR	: <i>Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat: People's Consultative Assembly</i>
MTCV	: <i>Majelis Ta'lim with Concert Vibes</i>
<i>Mudīra</i>	: <i>female leader of Pesantren (Mahad)</i>
<i>Mufti</i>	: who gives fatwa (rules and regulations)
<i>muṣala</i>	: a place for prayer (prayer room) smaller than a masjid
<i>munajat</i>	: delivering hope and expectation through prayers
<i>nahda</i>	: revival
<i>nasyid</i>	: Islamic vocal music art which lyrics contain religious messages
Need (NEED)	: the brand perfume of Ustadha Muna's product
<i>Padang Mahshar</i>	: a place where people will be gathered altogether in the afterlife time (Muslim's belief)
PAS	: Partai Islam Se-Malaysia: Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party
<i>Penghayatan</i>	: appreciation
Pesantren	: traditional Islamic religious school
PESATT	: <i>Pesantren Super Kilat: Super Lightning Pesantren</i>
PGA	: <i>Pendidikan Guru Agama: Religious Teacher Education School</i>
<i>Qasidah</i>	: a form of epic poetry in Arabic literature that is sung
<i>Qibla</i>	: <i>a holy place, a place of prayer</i>
<i>Qubbaḥ Al-Mustofa'</i>	: The Prophet Muhammad's Tomb in Medina city
<i>Ratib</i>	: A series of dhikr, prayers and praise to Allah SWT which are arranged regularly and read regularly
<i>Rasul shahada</i>	: acknowledge the statement as a Muslim that the Prophet Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah
<i>sada/ sayyid</i>	: the respectful male descendants of the Prophet
<i>saklek</i>	: bluntly speaking
<i>sanad</i>	: interconnected chain of knowledge up to the Prophet Muhammad
<i>sa-ta-ra</i>	: to cover

<i>shafā'a</i>	: the Prophet Muhammad's special assistance (intercession) to his <i>umma</i>
<i>sharā'if</i>	: plural form of female descendent of the Prophet Muhammad
<i>shari'at</i>	: Islamic law (rules and regulations)
<i>sharīfa</i>	: singular form of female descendent of the Prophet Muhammad
<i>ṣilaturrahim</i>	: a bond of brotherhood usually based on blood relations
<i>Silsila</i>	: the genealogy linked
SCTV	: <i>Surya Citra Televisi (Surya Citra Television)</i>
SD	: <i>Sekolah Dasar (Primary School)</i>
SMP	: <i>Sekolah Menengah Pertama (Junior High School)</i>
STAR	: the first-class ticket in the Cinematic event seminar, other categories; SPECTRA, MEGA, and GRAND
SUPER PLATINUM	: the first-class ticket in the Ramadhan TPL event, followed by other categories; PLATINUM, GOLD, SILVER and TRIBUNE
<i>Sunna</i>	: The Prophet Muhammad exemplary deeds
<i>Syaikh</i>	: an honorary call for man
<i>Talaqqi</i>	: (face-to-face) methods of learning
<i>Taqwa</i>	: spiritual piety
<i>Tarekat</i>	: Islamic <i>ṭarīqa</i> , the procedures
<i>Tausiyah</i>	: a kind of religious lecture given
<i>Tawajjuh</i>	: the goal of God's presence in Sufism
<i>Tawaqqufan</i>	: a break of Muslimah religious gathering
<i>Tawassul</i>	: intercession
<i>Tawḥīd shahada</i>	: acknowledge statement as Muslim that Allah is the Only to be worshipped
TPI	: <i>Televisi Pendidikan Indonesia (Indonesian Educational Television)</i>
TPL	: <i>The Power of Love Event</i> : Jargon among Ustadha Muna's followers to describe her Cinematic <i>Majelis Ta'lim</i>
<i>Ṭarīqa 'Alawiyya</i>	: spiritual movement or <i>ṭarīqa</i> taught and practiced by the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad SAW,

	especially those from Hadhramaut, Yemen
TVRI	: <i>Televisi Republik Indonesia (Republic of Indonesia Television)</i>
<i>ūlul albāb</i>	: people who have common sense
UM	: <i>Ustadha Muna Almunawwar</i>
<i>Wali</i>	: God's friends (Saint)
<i>Wali Songo</i>	: the Nine <i>Walis</i> who spread Islam in Indonesia Archipelago
<i>war-ticket</i>	: purchasing ticket for contemporary <i>majelis ta'lim</i> of popular preacher
<i>wayang</i>	: puppet show
<i>wirid</i>	: regular dhikr and daily prayer

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

On January 26, 2025, five hundred female Muslims flocked to the Pasteur Convention Hall in the Holiday Inn Hotel, Bandung. They were there when Sharifa Ayu Naylul Muna Almunawwar, a new generation of female Ba‘Alawi preachers who claimed to be the 40th generation from the Almunawwar family group, conducted the city's first cinematic seminar. She focused on Allah and Prophet Muhammad in her *da‘wa* on "The Power of Love" events, as she emphasized in her sermons, people will become the best servants of Allah and His prophet if they understand the fundamental principle of love. Her event, "The Power of Love,"¹ is an effort to search for love, which should only be anchored in Allah. Most participants wore black fashion, starting with the hijab, abaya dress, and accessories. Some of them also wear face veils in black colors. This phenomenon showed that Sharifa Muna Almunawwar's lifestyle as a Ba‘Alawi female preacher has inspired the way her followers dressed. When they entered the hall, those female attendees took off their face-veils. They acquired seats based on the categorical ticket price booked and enjoyed the event like seminar participants. The three large screens positioned in front of the stage, complemented by a professional sound system and impressive lighting, showcased more innovative *da‘wa* programs that appeal to the interests of the emerging Muslim middle and upper classes. A new method of public sermons was established with the introduction of *Majelis Ta'lim* with Concert Vibes (MTCV), which she described as Cinematic preaching. This incident brought to light the active role of *sharīfa* in innovative delivery, which transformed *da‘wa* into a more modern and urbanized presentation that gave Islam a new and modern outlook.

As the event prevails, the participants will be entertained by Arabic songs performed by approximately seven *hadrah* players. Some of them also wear *cadar* (face-veil). They welcomed the participants with Arabian traditional music comprising chanting *dzikr*, *Salawat* (praises to the Prophet Muhammad), *Maulid* texts,² and Islamic songs.³

¹ Some of her loyalities called her event TPL, the short form of "The Power of Love."

² Panegyric texts describing the birth event of the Prophets that used to be recited in the *Maulid* celebrations.

³ Syamsul Rijal, "Performing Arab Saints and Marketing the Prophet: Habaib and Islamic Markets in Contemporary Indonesia," *Archipel* 99 (2020): 205, <https://doi.org/10.4000/archipel.1719>.

Hadrah means to appear, a kind of ritual for supplication spirit of the Prophet, and performing the daily litany like *ratib*.⁴ All these are self-discipline routines for connecting to Allah and seeking the Prophet's blessings and guidance. Some prayers were sung to stick to the follower's heart. When she entered the stage, she was already without a face-veil. She began her sermons by asking her congregation emotional questions. Her first question typically created an inexplicable emotional connection and pulse, followed by hysterical responses from them. This further demonstrated her presence as a female preacher who successfully awakens a pulse, understood only among her congregation, to seek religious knowledge from her.

Unique characteristics of "The Power of Love" events;

1. The "Maha Cinta" song from the soundtrack is available.
2. In upscale settings, the audience sits in chairs and listens to the sermon.
3. The cost of the ticket depends on the category of seat.
4. *Da'wa* materials are displayed on captivating slides with dramatic scenes and video clips.
5. The way Ustadha Muna presents poetry and prayers results in enduring religious encounters.
6. The optional appearance of a performer or special guest on stage.
7. Concluding the preaching session with a group singing of UMs' songs.

Figure 1.1. The Unique characteristics of Cinematic Seminar.

⁴ Fatimah Husein, "PRESERVING AND TRANSMITTING THE TEACHINGS OF THE THARIQAH 'ALAWIYYAH: DIASPORIC BA 'ALAWI FEMALE PREACHERS IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA," *Journal of Indian Ocean World Studies* 4 (2021): 172.



Figure 2.1. The ‘Cinematic Seminar’ scene in Bandung last January 2025.

Historically, the role of Ba‘ Alawi male preachers (*habā’ib*) cannot be separated from the historical background of Hadhramaut descendants who lived the *majelis ta’lim* in Indonesia throughout history with the support of local *kiais*. The term *majelis ta’lim* today was a transformative idea of *pengajian* specifically intended for men, an informal education based on *masjid* and *muşala* (prayer rooms),⁵ such as *Pengajian Kwitang*, *Pengajian Matraman*, and *Pengajian Luar Batang*.⁶ Among urbanist people in Jakarta, *Pengajian Kwitang*, was among the earliest *pengajian* as noted by Syamsul Rijal, however, female audiences were also available, segregated in separated place during the sermon.⁷ Ismail Fajrie Alatas pointed out that this *pengajian* led by Habib Ali Al-Habshi, known as ‘Habib Kwitang’ emphasized the piety of the Prophetic through the teachings of his *Ṭarīqa ‘Alawīyya*. After forming a network with local *kiais* such as Abdullah Syafi’ie, Abdurrazak Makmun, and Muhammad Na‘im, weekly Sunday meeting was successfully implemented, attracted thousands of Muslims and several local *kiais* to attend the *majelis*. In 1937, Habib Kwitang built a mosque near his house which was positioned as a Sunday meeting, to support the idea of Kwitang as an Islamic centre for Muslims throughout the

⁵ Ahmad Zubair, “K.H. Abdullah Syafi’ie: Ulama Produk Lokal Asli Betawi Dengan Kiprah Nasional Dan Internasional,” *Al-Turās* Vol. XXI, no. No. 2 (2015): 320.

⁶ A. Suryana Sudrajat, “Kiai Abdullah Syafi’ie, Ulama Betawi Legenda Majelis Taklim,” <https://Panjimasyarakat.Com/> (Jakarta), n.d.

⁷ Rijal, “Performing Arab Saints and Marketing the Prophet,” 192.

Java.⁸ Abdullah Syafi'ie (1910-1985) was one of the initiators in holding the *pengajian* or *majelis ta'lim* in Jakarta for females only, born on August 10, 1910, to the father, H. Syafi'ie bin Sairan, and the mother, Nona bin Sya'ari. He lived during the development of Islam, which began with the teachings of Al-Qur'an teachers, or ulamas who came from Yemeni or Hadhramaut and were of Arab descent. This religious tradition was inherited and passed down from time to time to the Batavian people.⁹ During his school years, he spent his formal education for two years only; the rest was spent obtaining religious knowledge from *mu'allim*¹⁰ and *habā'ib*.¹¹ *Habā'ib*, in plural form and *habīb*, in singular form, refers to the male descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. He learned religious studies from the ulamas of the Hadhrami diaspora from Ba'Alawi groups such as Habib Ali Bungur and Habib Ali Kwitang,¹² Habib Ali Al-Habsyi,¹³ Habib Alwi Bin Thohir Al-Haddad¹⁴ and Habib Salim bin Jindan.¹⁵ Therefore, I believe that for a long time, Muslims in Jakarta had contacted frequently with ulamas from the Hadhrami diaspora to gain Islamic knowledge, particularly the *habāib* from the Ba'Alawi lineage.

The history of the Hadhramaut people lies in their ancestors, who migrated widely to the coast of the Indian Ocean in the last five hundred years. Their father came from Yemen, so they are part of the Arab race. Later, they established their community as "Hadhramis."¹⁶ Although small, it is an important transregional flow community of people joining the Malay world. However, European colonists found them to be Creole Hadhramis, an Arab race originating from the Middle East, not Malays. In the 19th-20th century, due to the regular drought climate and political instability from the British colonization of Aden and its protectorate establishment in Hadhramaut, many Hadhrami

⁸ Ismail Fajrie Alatas, "Securing Their Place: The Bā'alawī Prophetic Piety & Islamic Resurgence in Indonesia" (Thesis, National University of Singapore, 2008), 28–29.

⁹ Zubair, "K.H. Abdullah Syafi'ie: Ulama Produk Lokal Asli Betawi Dengan Kiprah Nasional Dan Internasional," 319. Batavian, or Betawi, people are natives of Jakarta.

¹⁰ *Muallim* derived from the word 'a-li-ma meaning a teacher (Atabik Ali and A. Zuhdi Muhdlor, *Kamus Kontemporer Arab-Indonesia* (Multi Karya Grafika Pondok Pesantren Krapyak, 1999), 1769.

¹¹ Chatelia Nivianti, "Islam Dan Perempuan Betawi: Tutty Alawiyah Dan Majelis Taklim 1958-1991" (Undergraduate Thesis, University of Indonesia (UI), 2017), 21.

¹² <https://panjimasyarakat.com/2022/11/kiai-abdullah-syafiie-ulama-betawi-legenda-majelis-taklim/> retrieved on March 9, 2025.

¹³ Zubair, "K.H. Abdullah Syafi'ie: Ulama Produk Lokal Asli Betawi Dengan Kiprah Nasional Dan Internasional," 327.

¹⁴ Nivianti, "Islam Dan Perempuan Betawi: Tutty Alawiyah Dan Majelis Taklim 1958-1991," 21. He learned from him on Sufism, Qur'an memorization, and public speaking in Bogor, with Habib Salim bin Jindan, he learned hadith sciences.

¹⁵ Zubair, "K.H. Abdullah Syafi'ie: Ulama Produk Lokal Asli Betawi Dengan Kiprah Nasional Dan Internasional," 333.

¹⁶ Sumit K. Mandal, *Becoming Arab* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), 1–4.

communities have a long tradition of migrating to the nearby Indian Ocean regions such as Indonesia, India, and East Africa.¹⁷ Abushouk and Ibrahim pointed out that the 19th-century migration of the Hadhrami diaspora to Indonesia and the Malay world had grown rapidly. The frequent movement between Hadhramaut and Southeast Asia has raised the sense of ‘Arabness’ among them. The colonial policies of racial distinctions on residence and movement heightened racial distinctions separating them from the Indigenous population. Dutch classified populations into Europeans, Foreign Orientals (including Hadhrami), and natives (local people).¹⁸ This situation again strengthened their Arabic identity over their shared Muslim identity.

To maintain close contact with the homeland, the two central factors in succeeding the Hadhrami diaspora factors are, first, maintaining spiritual ties with the homeland through several generations and fostering family networks up to the wider Indian Ocean worlds.¹⁹ Therefore, Rijal said that most Arab communities were originally from Hadhramaut.²⁰ Historically, the Hadhrami diaspora mainly from Ba‘Alawi, gained prominence in Southeast Asia during the 18th century as leading Islamic preachers and successful industrialists.²¹ Therefore, religious, economic, and political aspects are some motives and dynamics resulting from Hadrami diaspora migration, particularly in Indonesia.

Although the political unrest overwhelmed the condition in Hadhramaut, however the presence of Habib ‘Umar as the Sufi leader and preacher is recognized as the resurgence of Sufism by the Prophet’s descent in Yemen Hadhramaut. Knysh (2001) cited that when Freitag anticipated a resurgence of Sufism in the newly unified Yemeni state, some areas faced challenges, including a troubled religio-political atmosphere and a lack of strong leadership. However, in the eastern region of Hadhramaut, particularly in Tarim, a revival of the Sufi movement began, led by a charismatic and energetic leader, Habib ‘Umar. He traveled continuously across the country with his new Toyota Landcruiser to preach

¹⁷ Ulrike Freitag, *Indian Ocean Migrants and State Formation in Hadhramaut: Reforming the Homeland* (Brill, 2003), 2.

¹⁸ Ahmed Ibrahim Abushouk and Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim, *The Hadhrami Diaspora in Southeast Asia: Identity Maintenance or Assimilation?* (Brill, 2009), 4.

¹⁹ Freitag, *Indian Ocean Migrants and State Formation in Hadhramaut: Reforming the Homeland*, 5.

²⁰ Syamsul Rijal, *Defending Traditional Islam in Indonesia: The Resurgence of Hadhrami Preachers* (Routledge, 2024), 19.

²¹ Eva F. Nisa, *Female Voices on Jakarta’s Da’wa Stage* (2012), 55–56.

furiously in public sermons and lectures at every stop.²² Habib ‘Umar bin Hafidh was born in Tarim on Monday, the same day as his ancestor the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), on May 27, 1963. His father, Syaikh Muhammad bin Salim was a *Mufti*²³ in the city at that time, who directly taught the *Hadith*, *Fiqh*, *Tauhid*, and *Usul Fiqh* sciences to the small Habib ‘Umar. He is genealogically linked to the Prophet from the Husein bin Ali lineage.²⁴ His father disappeared during the political raids by the socialist regime around 1972 and was widely believed to have been murdered by the regime's secret police.²⁵

On May 6, 1997 (1417 AH) Habib ‘Umar established Dar al-Mustafa, a male boarding school focusing on Sufi teachings and moral and spiritual discipline in Tarim. His educational philosophy emphasized the complete submission of students to their teacher's spiritual authority and the reverence for the descendants of the Prophet, represented by the Ba‘Alawi family *sada* (*sayyid*).²⁶ It was launched in 1993, while its curriculum is rooted in Sufi literature, it does not strictly adhere to the principles of the *Tarīqa ‘Alawiyya*.²⁷ The three focusing goals in this school are *‘ilm*, *suluk*, and *da‘wa*. First, *‘ilm*, learning sharia knowledge and all its related sciences directly from the ulamas/ those who have interconnected *sanad* up to the Prophet Muhammad through *talaqqi* (face-to-face) methods. Second, *suluk*, cleansing the soul/heart and purifying the *akhlaq*. And lastly, *da‘wa*, disseminating beneficial *‘ilm* and preaching to Allah’s path.²⁸ Nonetheless, the school has gained global recognition, attracting male students and visitors from diverse backgrounds, and contributing to the spread of Sufi teachings and values.

To fulfill the need for female boarding schools, Dar al-Zahra in Hadhramaut Yemen was established in 1998. This school is open to female students from diverse backgrounds and nationalities. Male and female teachers will teach the students, including Habib ‘Umar and his wife, Hubabah Ummu Salim. Habib ‘Umar will explain the lessons

²² Alexander Knysh, “The Tariqa on a Landcruiser: The Resurgence of Sufism in Yemen,” *Middle East Journal* 55, no. No.3 (2001): 406–8.

²³ Who gives *fatwa* (rules and regulations), pertaining to the problematic issues faced by Muslims for specific country or region.

²⁴ Almas Isa Muazzam, *Habib Umar Bin Hafidz: Menabur Cinta Dari Tarim (Sowing Love from Tarim)*, ed. Rama Ibnu Rusyd (Laksana, 2021), 15.

²⁵ Knysh, “The Tariqa on a Landcruiser: The Resurgence of Sufism in Yemen,” 406.

²⁶ Knysh, “The Tariqa on a Landcruiser: The Resurgence of Sufism in Yemen,” 408.

²⁷ Husein, “PRESERVING AND TRANSMITTING THE TEACHINGS OF THE THARIQAH ‘ALAWIYYAH: DIASPORIC BA ‘ALAWI FEMALE PREACHERS IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA,” 175.

²⁸ Al Habib Umar Bin Hafidh, *Khulashah Intisari Kumpulan Dzikir & Doa* (Penerbitbacalah@gmail.com, 2019), 11.

by projecting the TV screen from behind the curtain for them to see.²⁹ Sharifa Muna has been in Dar al-Zahra since 2009, up to 2012. A year after her entry, she has been selected to convey *da'wa* to the female Hadhramaut peasants among the Dar al-Zahra students every Thursday.³⁰

Previously, male religious ulamas dominated the delivery of Islamic messages to the community. Female religious scholars were rare; this situation was not unique to Indonesia but extended to various parts of the world, including Saudi Arabia, West Asia, and even North Africa,³¹ especially before and in the early years of the Soeharto era's regime (1966-1998). Saba Mahmood pointed out that the image of Arab and Muslim women who were passive and submissive, handcuffed by the male authority structures, needs to be corrected and empowered by the women's agency term, which is more fitting to the principle of Islamic piety and virtuous behaviors.³² Furthermore, Hilary Kalmbach, who recognized the male monopoly on public religious leadership, has experienced much of Islamic history, however, over the past thirty years, the number of Muslim women leaders actively challenging the norm has increased significantly, from the Middle East to Northeast and West Africa, South Africa, Central Asia, South and East Asia, Southeast Asia, Europe, and North America.³³ Moreover, Badrah Uyuni et al. pointed out that, although male ulama have dominated official religious institutions, however, female ulama have created their own space of female religious authority through the construction of piety, charisma, and moral discipline in the *majelis ta'lim* stage.³⁴ Hence, the duty to convey the message of Allah and His Prophet also burdens the female *dā'iya's* shoulder around the globe, not only the hands of male preachers.

According to Martin Slama, although Hadhrami Muslim women had previously experienced gender discrimination and segregation, this perception gradually changed

²⁹ Husein, "PRESERVING AND TRANSMITTING THE TEACHINGS OF THE THARIQAH 'ALAWIYYAH: DIASPORIC BA 'ALAWI FEMALE PREACHERS IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA," 176.

³⁰ Interview with Ustadha Muna Almunawwar on January 22, 2025.

³¹ Odah Jubaedah, "Kiprah Dakwah Dra. Hj. Lutfiah Sungkar (The Preaching Work of Dra. Hj. Lutfiah Sungkar)" (Undergraduate Thesis, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2008), 1–2.

³² Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, in *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton University Press, 2011), 4–6, <https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.2006.108.3.603>.

³³ Masooda Bano and Hilary Kalmbach, *Women, Leadership, and Mosques: Changes in Contemporary Islamic Authority* (Brill, 2012), 1.

³⁴ Badrah Uyuni et al., "Urban Islamic Sisterhood: An Anthropological Study of Women's Majelis Taklim as Agents of Social And Religious Change in Jakarta," *Juniper Publishers* 14, no. 3 (2025): 002, <https://doi.org/DOI: 10.19080/GJAA.2025.14.555887>.

dynamically after the Islamic Reformist organization, Al-Irsyad, established gender-segregated schools in 1914.³⁵ Consequently, Hadhrami girls began to be educated at school by their Hadhrami parents. Subsequently, the women's movement was no longer limited to the role of housewives or merely as companions to their husbands.³⁶ Now, Hadhrami women consciously join other Indonesian Muslim women and appear publicly to advocate for their agendas.³⁷ Since then, they started to look in public to pursue their interest and agenda.

To further explore gender relations in Slema's case, Sharifa's distinctiveness lies in her female nobility renegotiating her empowerment in a context where Hadhrami women are prohibited from performing on stage before large audiences.³⁸ This study focused on how Sharifa Muna Almunawwar, who inherited traditional authority from her noble ancestry and Hadhramaut network, achieved empowerment through her creative *majelis ta'lim*, "Cinematic *Da'wa*."³⁹ Nonetheless, Sharifa Muna reinterpreted her dynamic role as a preacher conveying *da'wa* and as a stage performer by delivering poetry and leading group singing sessions on stage exclusively for women. This condition naturally supports Martin Slema's assertion that Hadhrami women performed in various arenas and expressed a wide range of ideals.⁴⁰

1.2 Literature Review

Regarding the history on Hadhrami's, Sumit K. Mandal explained that the historical migration of Arab race, where their ancestors originally came from Yemen, later on, established by Hadrami communities in their new home based.⁴¹ Freitag highlighted the point on long tradition of these Hadrami communities migrated to Indonesia since the 19th

³⁵ Martin Slama, "Coming Down to the Shop': Trajectories of Hadhrami Women into Indonesian Public Realms," *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 13, no. 4 (2012): 318, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14442213.2012.699089>.

³⁶ Slama, "Coming Down to the Shop," 327.

³⁷ Slama, "Coming Down to the Shop," 327; Nisa, *Female Voices on Jakarta's Da'wa Stage*, 69.

³⁸ Rifa Tsamrotul Syaadah, "Navigating Nobility and Cosmopolitanism: Shara'if's Engagement on Jakarta Public Sphere" (Thesis, Universitas Islam International Indonesia, 2023), 7.

³⁹ Syaadah, "Navigating Nobility and Cosmopolitanism: Shara'if's Engagement on Jakarta Public Sphere" (Universitas Islam International Indonesia, 2023), 7.

⁴⁰ Slama, "Coming Down to the Shop," 321; Rifa Tsamrotul Syaadah, "Navigating Nobility and Cosmopolitanism: Shara'if's Engagement on Jakarta Public Sphere" (Thesis, Universitas Islam International Indonesia, 2023), 7.

⁴¹ Mandal, *Becoming Arab*, 1–4.

century.⁴² While Abushouk, focused on the evidence of colonial policies as racial distinction, which later on strengthened their Arabic identity.⁴³ Syamsul Rijal pointed out the reunification between North and South Yemen in 1990, followed by the reconnection between Indonesia and Hadhramaut in education, let Hadhramaut became the center of education for Arabic children.⁴⁴ Meanwhile, Alexander Knysh discussed the political unrest in Hadhramaut, faced a new resurgence of Sufism through Habib ‘Umar's role.⁴⁵ He started to establish male boarding school in 1993, focusing on Sufi teachings, promoted through their *Tarīqa ‘Alawīyya*.

Before the era of arrival of Dar al-Zahra graduated preachers, Indonesian public stage *da‘wa* was filled by several female popular preachers from non- Ba‘Alawi descendants, like Siti Rugayah, Tutty Alawiyah, Luthfia Sunkar and Mamah Dedeh. They were actively managing their female public religious spaces through offline *majelis ta’lim* gatherings in masjid, from one pulpit to another stage particularly in a big city like Jakarta. Some of them also reached the media in a public environment like radio stations, television screens, magazines and CD's rooms.

Zubair wrote that, previously, *pengajian* for females in Jakarta in 1930's relied more on listening through ears '*jiping*' (*ngaji kuping*) with the unsystematic subject in non-comfort zones. Besides, to counter the influence of modernization propagated by Dutch colonization, the purpose of *majelis ta'lim* establishment for females, was carried out by Abdullah Syafi'ie' at that time.⁴⁶ After the establishment of Masjid Al-Barkah in Jakarta by him, her wife, Siti Rugayah led the female *pengajian* and successfully transformed and utilized some cozy spaces in the mosque for women, with more organized subject. This breakthrough from Siti Rugayah in the *da‘wa* that led her to be invited by other masjids surrounding Jakarta as a female preacher.⁴⁷ In 1949, she received the honor invitation to

⁴² Freitag, *Indian Ocean Migrants and State Formation in Hadhramaut: Reforming the Homeland*, 2.

⁴³ Abushouk and Ibrahim, *The Hadhrami Diaspora in Southeast Asia: Identity Maintenance or Assimilation?* 4.

⁴⁴ Syamsul Rijal, "Revitalizing Hadhrami Authority: New Networks, Figures and Institutions among Ḥabā'ib in Indonesia," *Studia Islamika* 27, no. 2 (2020): 242–43, <https://doi.org/10.36712/sdi.v27i2.9382>.

⁴⁵ Knysh, "The Tariqa on a Landcruiser: The Resurgence of Sufism in Yemen," 406–8.

⁴⁶ Nivianti, "Islam Dan Perempuan Betawi: Tutty Alawiyah Dan Majelis Taklim 1958-1991," 1.

⁴⁷ Zubair, "K.H. Abdullah Syafi'ie: Ulama Produk Lokal Asli Betawi Dengan Kiprah Nasional Dan Internasional," 337.

recite the Qur'an at the Merdeka Palace before President Soekarno.⁴⁸ I argue that Siti Rugayah, the mother of Tutty Alawiyah, was one of the influential female preachers in Jakarta between 1940 and 1950. Tutty Alawiyah, who was nine years old when her mother passed away in 1951, saw it as a difficult moment in her life for she had learned a lot from her mother about how to be a good Qur'anic reciter, religious teacher, merchant, and poet composer.⁴⁹

Despite the limited *da'wa* strive among females, Tutty Alawiyah (1942-2016) replaced her mother to preach to the society. She was born in Jakarta on March 30, 1942, to the Ulama couple, Abdullah Syafi'ie and Siti Rugayah. She began her *da'wa* journey under the guidance of her father, a Batavian Ulama who was active in the *da'wa* movement in the early 20th century. Tutty is well-known as a bright student with many achievements. At the age of seven, she was competent in reciting Al-Qur'an, taught by her mother. At nine years old, she followed her mother's steps to be invited as the Qur'anic Reciter at the Merdeka Palace before President Soekarno.⁵⁰ At a relatively young age, 17 years old, she opened three Islamic courses for the female public in Pancoran, Jakarta. First, *Kursus Banat As-Syafi'iyah* (The Course for Ash-Shafi'iyah Girls). A course was in place for girls to learn about religion, *Maulid Nabi*, and reciting Al-Qur'an, with around 200 participants joining. Second, *Kursus Ummahat As-Syafi'iyah* (The Course for Ash-Shafi'iyah Mothers) to prepare mothers who were eager to learn deeply about religion, and lastly, *Kursus Tilawatil Qur'an* (The Qur'anic Recitation Course).⁵¹ As a female preacher, she was concerned about the position of Batavian women, who were slightly marginalized compared to others. Besides the historical fact, before the arrival of Islam, women were considered the lowest creatures who were degraded by the Eastern and Western nations. Therefore, she strived to improve the fate of women, especially Batavian people, to obtain a better education, marriage life, and work position following their proportional status as women.⁵² In 1981, she initiated *Badan Kontak Majelis Taklim/BMKT* (Contact Association of the Taklim Assembly) to unite *majelis ta'lims* around Indonesia in an organized and

⁴⁸ Rina Anjani, "Konsep Pendidikan Pesantren KH Abdullah Syafi'i Dalam Perspektif Tutty Alawiyah AS." (Undergraduate Thesis, UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, 2021), 43.

⁴⁹ Anna Aynushshaalihah, "Tutty Alawiyah Sebagai Ulama Perempuan Betawi (Tutty Alawiyah as a Betawi Female Ulama)" (Undergraduate Thesis, University of Indonesia (UI), 2013), 12–14.

⁵⁰ Aynushshaalihah, "Tutty Alawiyah Sebagai Ulama Perempuan Betawi (Tutty Alawiyah as a Betawi Female Ulama)" (University of Indonesia (UI), 2013), 12.

⁵¹ Aynushshaalihah, "Tutty Alawiyah Sebagai Ulama Perempuan Betawi (Tutty Alawiyah as a Betawi Female Ulama)" (University of Indonesia (UI), 2013), 15.

⁵² Nivianti, "Islam Dan Perempuan Betawi: Tutty Alawiyah Dan Majelis Taklim 1958-1991," 2.

structured way.⁵³ Unlike her mother, who focused merely on social, educational, and *da'wa* movements for female Muslims, particularly in Jakarta. Tutty Alawiyah even penetrated her role in the politics of the country. She has been appointed as the Minister for Women's Roles in the New Order and Reformation eras. Furthermore, she was also a member of the People's Consultative Assembly (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat/MPR) from the 1990s to the early 2000s. Jalan Hj. Tutty Alawiyah is now the street's name in South Jakarta, which was Jalan Warung Buncit, to honor her for her inspiring contribution to the religion as the female Ulama in DKI Jakarta, education, and the country's servant. This decision was determined through the Governor's Decree 565 of 2022 concerning the names of streets, buildings, and areas with the names of Batavian figures.⁵⁴

Luthfiah Sungkar was an ideal (*dā'iya*) whose preaching method was firm, she was able to embrace various levels of society, from upper, middle, and lower classes of different ages, to follow closer to the path commanded by Allah.⁵⁵ She was born in Solo on June 12, 1947, to Fatimah and Ali Sungkar. She married a (*dā'i*), Hasan Ali, and had five children during their marriage.⁵⁶ From primary school until high school, she spent her education in Al-Irsyad, Solo, in Central Java. Afterward, she furthered her bachelor's degree at Ash-Shafi'iyah University, Jakarta, and continued to al-Azhar University in Egypt and Brookvale College in Australia.⁵⁷ She was a popular figure in the *da'wa* sphere not only for Batavian females, but also for the national and transnational.⁵⁸ Through printing media, her books such as "*Sholat yang Dicontohkan Rasulullah Berikut Doa-Doanya*" (The Prayer Exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad and His Prayers), Al-Hidayah Magazine, and electronic media such as compact discs (CDs), for instance, "*Surga di Bawah Telapak Kaki Ibu*" (Heaven is Under Mother's Feet) and "*Aku Bersyukur Jadi Wanita*" (I am Grateful to be a Woman) were filled with her writing and recorded preaching as the source

⁵³ Anna Aynushshaalihah, "Tutty Alawiyah Sebagai Ulama Perempuan Betawi (Tutty Alawiyah as a Betawi Female Ulama)" (Undergraduate Thesis, University of Indonesia (UI), 2013), 25; Rijal, "Performing Arab Saints and Marketing the Prophet," 192.

⁵⁴ Rachel Tesalonika, "Profil Tutty Alawiyah, Penghormatan Ulama Perempuan Di Warung Buncit," CNN Indonesia, March 15, 2024, <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20240307183207-20-1071780/profil-tutty-alawiyah-penghormatan-ulama-perempuan-di-warung-buncit>. Download Apps CNN Indonesia sekarang <https://app.cnnindonesia.com/>.

⁵⁵ Odah Jubaedah, "Kiprah Dakwah Dra. Hj. Luthfiah Sungkar (The Preaching Work of Dra. Hj. Luthfiah Sungkar)" (Undergraduate Thesis, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2008), 55.

⁵⁶ Jubaedah, "Kiprah Dakwah Dra. Hj. Luthfiah Sungkar (The Preaching Work of Dra. Hj. Luthfiah Sungkar)" (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2008), 46.

⁵⁷ Jubaedah, "Kiprah Dakwah Dra. Hj. Luthfiah Sungkar (The Preaching Work of Dra. Hj. Luthfiah Sungkar)" (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2008), 48–49.

⁵⁸ Jubaedah, "Kiprah Dakwah Dra. Hj. Luthfiah Sungkar (The Preaching Work of Dra. Hj. Luthfiah Sungkar)" (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2008), 52.

of Islamic knowledge.⁵⁹ Furthermore, she was a tele-*dā'iya* who actively appeared on several television stations in Indonesia, such as Televisi Pendidikan Indonesia/TPI, Indosiar, and Surya Citra Televisi/SCTV, and cellular phones.⁶⁰ Her insightful preaching transformed the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith into a cherished and straightforward guide for everyday life.

After conveying her *da'wa* through her *Majelis Ta'lim* "Khairunnisa" she invited the *mad'ū* (followers) to have a meal together. This scene was not a habitual action in the Indonesian Muslim community until her present.⁶¹ Besides, the three principles of *da'wa* compiled in Sura Al-Nahl (16) verse 125, were used by Ustadha Luthfiah Sungkar in her preachings: by wisdom (*hikma*), beautiful preaching (*al-maw'iza hasana*), and arguing in the best manner (*al-mujādala billatī hiya aḥsan*).⁶² Moreover, this verse emphasizes the core principles of timeless religious teaching. First, the meaning of *da'wa bil hikma* highlights the importance of inviting people to Allah's Path through wise and pleasant *da'wa*, relating to them in their context, and using examples from their experiences, whether broad or narrow. Second, *da'wa bil maw'iza hasana*: to attract people's attention, preaching should be done with consideration, not dogmatic, self-centered, or offensive to others, but in a gentle manner. Lastly, a preacher should express her beliefs politely and with good examples, so the listener feels that we are not just arguing to win but genuinely sharing our faith out of love for humanity and God (*al-mujādala billatī hiya aḥsan*).⁶³ These three principles of preaching must be applied by preachers to convince the *mad'ū* as stated in the Qur'an. Although Luthfiah Sungkar was of Arab descent, she was not a *sharīfa*. The word *sharīfa* means noble and high, meaning the prophet lineages from female descendants.⁶⁴ While the *sharā'if*, is the terminology for its plural form. In fact, Ustadha Luthfiah was an influential female preacher from the Hadrami diaspora who invited female audiences to Allah's path significantly in the *da'wa* field in Indonesia.

⁵⁹ Jubaedah, "Kiprah Dakwah Dra. Hj. Lutfiah Sungkar (The Preaching Work of Dra. Hj. Lutfiah Sungkar)" (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2008), 51.

⁶⁰ Jubaedah, "Kiprah Dakwah Dra. Hj. Lutfiah Sungkar (The Preaching Work of Dra. Hj. Lutfiah Sungkar)" (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2008), 61.

⁶¹ Jubaedah, "Kiprah Dakwah Dra. Hj. Lutfiah Sungkar (The Preaching Work of Dra. Hj. Lutfiah Sungkar)" (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2008), 59.

⁶² Jubaedah, "Kiprah Dakwah Dra. Hj. Lutfiah Sungkar (The Preaching Work of Dra. Hj. Lutfiah Sungkar)" (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2008), 66–68.

⁶³ 'Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*, New Revised Edition (Amana Corporation, 1989), 669.

⁶⁴ Ali and Muhdlor, *Kamus Kontemporer Arab-Indonesia*, 1132.

Another influential figure from the female preacher is Dedeh Rosidah, popularly known as Mamah Dedeh (1951-present). She was born in Ciamis, one of the districts in West Java, on August 5, 1951. She was born and raised in a religious family under the care of her father, Sujai, a Batavian ulama (*kiai*). Following her father's footsteps as a preacher, Dedeh Rosidah began preaching in her elementary school (Sekolah Dasar/SD). After graduating from Junior High School (SMP), she continued her education at the Religious Teacher Education School (PGA). In 1968, she took higher education at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and stayed in the dormitory of the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) 'Syarief Hidayatullah,' now the State Islamic University, in Ciputat, Jakarta. In 1970, she married her senior, Syarifuddin, the son of Batavian Ulama, KH. Hasan Basri. After finishing her college education, she lived in Tanah Abang, Jakarta, for five years at her in-laws' house. Afterward, she moved to Depok. During that time, she was still actively preaching until, in 1994, Indonesian legend actor Benyamin Sueb, owner of Batavia Radio Station, Bens Radio, asked Mama Dedeh to fill the 'Ngaji' program session every Friday. Her distinctive and straightforward speaking style is similarly associated with the character of Bens Radio, asked Mama Dedeh to fill the 'Ngaji' program every Friday. Her distinctive and straightforward speaking style is similarly associated with the character of Bens Radio⁶⁵ received good feedback from radio listeners.⁶⁶ Ardiyansah cited Zaini that since 2007, the Indosiar television station requested her to fill the religious talk show in the "Mamah and Aa" program. Since that year she became a popular female preacher in Indonesia, Mama Dede, accompanied by Abdel, with a straightforward, light, and humorous style, reviews and answers questions about daily life from an Islamic perspective in the Indosiar TV program.⁶⁷

Despite to the fact that popular female preachers have existed to fulfill the religious knowledge needs of the Indonesian people, still, they are limited in number. Female Muslims are also in need of traditional Islamic school like Dar al-Mustafa, for male students in Hadhramaut. Fatimah Husein, explained quite comprehensively about the Dar al-Zahra establishment for female students in 1998 in Hadhramaut, Tarim. The important figures of *Ṭarīqa 'Alawiyya* knowledge transmitters from *sharā'if*, Ustadha Halimah

⁶⁵ The blunt style of Batavian people speaking (*ceplas-ceplos*).

⁶⁶ Muhammad Rosyid Ardiyansah, "Gaya Komunikasi Dakwah Mama Dedeh Pada Program Mamah Dan Aa' Di Indosiar (Mama Dedeh's Preaching Communication Style on the Mamah and Aa' Program on Indosiar)" (Undergraduate Thesis, Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo, 2019), 74–75.

⁶⁷ "Religious Program: Mamah & Aa Beraksi," <https://www.Indosiar.Com/Religious-Program>, 2025, <https://www.indosiar.com/religious-program/mamah-a-a-beraksi.html>.

Alaydrus, Ustadha Khodijah Assegaf and Ustadha Syifa are also highlighted by her.⁶⁸ However, the role of *sharā'if* women were limited and isolated from public space and was not as popular as the role of *habā'ib* until recently. Currently, those women who studied in Tarim will gain new authority. Both Habib 'Umar b. Hafiz and Hubaba Ummu Salim encourage their students to activate their role in *Ṭarīqa 'Alawiyya* preaching and disseminating to society.⁶⁹ To see the development *da'wa* by today's popular *sharā'if*, I joined participatory observations from several *majelis ta'lim* of Ustadha Halimah Alaydrus, Ustadha Amirah Novel Jindan and Ustadha Muna Al-Munawwar. Another emerged figure from *sharīfa*, Ustadha Firdaus in Banjarmasin' stage, has been studied by Wahidah.⁷⁰

Another works on *sharā'if* in building networks local and transnational, focusing on the role of *sharā'if* as actual actor on urban *da'wa* stage has been explained carefully by Eva F. Nisa, with the case of Ustadha Halimah too, and Ustadha Khadijah, the wife of Habib Munzir, Hadhramaut born resident.⁷¹ She wrote that Sharifah Halimah Alaydrus and Sharifah Khadijah Al-Junayd⁷² were sent to transfer Islamic messages by Habib 'Umar b. Hafiz to the Hadhramaut villagers.⁷³ On the other hand, not all students are obligated to convey the preaching in the Hadhramaut villages, only selected students are chosen. Therefore, in my view, I assumed that studying in Dar al-Zahra led them to become religious preachers and knowledge sources of Ba'Alawi *ṭarīqa* teachings to Arab and non-Arab communities. To provide guidance to the right path to Allah and the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

According to Yusra Dewi Siregar et al.'s research, Sharifa Salwa Alattas, who graduated from Dar al-Zahra Tarim in 2019 and continued the work of Majelis Nururrahmah in Medan after being inspired by her sister-in-law from Solo in 2017, was a leader in empowering the Muslim women's community in Medan. She also established the

⁶⁸ Husein, "PRESERVING AND TRANSMITTING THE TEACHINGS OF THE THARIQAH 'ALAWIYYAH: DIASPORIC BA 'ALAWI FEMALE PREACHERS IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA," 176–79.

⁶⁹ Husein, "PRESERVING AND TRANSMITTING THE TEACHINGS OF THE THARIQAH 'ALAWIYYAH: DIASPORIC BA 'ALAWI FEMALE PREACHERS IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA," 186.

⁷⁰ Syarifah Wahidah, "Komunikasi Dakwah Ustadzah Firdaus Bin Syekh Abu Bakar Dalam Majelis Ta'lim Muslimah al-Batul Banjarmasin (Communication of the Da'wa of Ustadzah Firdaus Bin Sheikh Abu Bakar in the Al-Batul Muslimah Study Group in Banjarmasin)" (Undergraduate Thesis, Fakultas Dakwah dan Ilmu Komunikasi, UIN Antasari Banjarmasin, 2019), 52–53.

⁷¹ Nisa, *Female Voices on Jakarta's Da'wa Stage*, 59.

⁷² The wife of Habib Munzir who was an early student of Habib Umar b. Hafiz before the establishment of Dar al- Zahro.

⁷³ Nisa, *Female Voices on Jakarta's Da'wa Stage*, 58.

hadrah Majelis Nururrahmah that same year, and she was successful in fusing local culture music instrument with *hadrah* music and incorporating lively traditional dances.⁷⁴ As a result, it demonstrated the blending of Indonesian culture and traditional Arabic music, which served as a powerful vehicle for Islamic *da'wa* and piqued the interest of numerous Medan communities.

Three aspects of commodification were discussed by Syamsul Rijal in relation to the *habā'ib*'s rise in popularity as leaders of post-Suharto *majelis ta'lim* groups in Indonesia: their Arab ethnicity and sanctity; the media's influence and the musicality of their preaching; and religious imagery that made use of prophetic symbols,⁷⁵ such as Habib Hasan bin Ja'far Assegaf's "Majelis Nurul Mustafa" (Nurul Mustafa Assembly) and Habib Munzhir's "Majelis Rasulullah" (Prophet's Council). New management teams and marketing plans, including billboards, banners, and goods like DVDs and jackets, were implemented at both assemblies. Additionally, they promoted their assemblies on their websites by utilizing new communication methods that were still in their infancy at the time, such as advertising and the internet. Both preachers were frequently escorted to attend events by vehicle and motorcycle convoys, with police assistance and fireworks displays to attract crowds before the assemblies began.⁷⁶ To date, no other scholar has conducted a study on the evolution of *sharā'if* in *da'wa* that emphasizes marketing aspects while preserving their nobility. Consequently, this research concentrated on Ayu Naylul Muna Almunawwar, who employed creative *da'wa* strategies rooted in cinematic aesthetics and relevant to popular culture, utilizing various marketing tools to effectively reach her audience.

Furthermore, Noorhaidi Hasan explained the development of pop culture coincided with the global Islamic revival phenomenon and has transformed Indonesia into a new 'Islamic' public sphere. It has produced more visible and legitimate actors in the public sphere presenting religion into more impressive manner. Thus, Muslim youth, intellectuals, and the Muslim middle class will actively take part in extensive commercialization by

⁷⁴ Yusra Dewi Siregar et al., "Syarifah Salwa Alattas Dan Majelis Nururrahmah: Menguatkan Muslimah Di Medan," *Islam & Contemporary Issues* 4, no. 1 (2024): 24–26, <https://doi.org/10.57251/ici.v4i1.1414>.

⁷⁵ Rijal, "Performing Arab Saints and Marketing the Prophet," 191.

⁷⁶ Rijal, "Performing Arab Saints and Marketing the Prophet," 197.

successfully collaborating in the marketing of religion as symbolic goods.⁷⁷ Today, it is essential to present religion in an attractive manner. With the addition of visualization, various interesting presentations will encourage Muslims to be religiously pious and responsible towards religious duty.

Pattana Kitiarsa talked about two important concepts on religion; the mass religion and the *virtuosi* religion in his Marketing God's theory, as my theoretical framework.⁷⁸ His works support my argument on the need of urban people in modified religious service in aligned to market desire. Ismail Fajri contends that the authority of Islamic religious leaders is based on their acknowledged link to the Prophetic tradition. He exemplified Habib Luthfi as someone who had connected to the Prophet and enabled him to convey Prophetic teachings to others without coercion. This recognition empowers those in authority to convey and adapt that past into relevant examples for contemporary time.⁷⁹

Regarding the use of marketing and pop culture for religious branding, to support my theoretical framework, Alma's concept on marketing and the mix method contributed highly in this study.⁸⁰ Meanwhile, Mara Einstein's finding on the use of music lyrics as part of popular culture, will increase the popularity of religious brand.⁸¹ Müller exemplified the case of Malaysia on PAS, the national party of Malaysia, by the time, accepted the pop music if played by good Muslim musicians, in their political campaign strategy.⁸² Muazzam's reading notified the standpoint of Habib 'Umar on the permissibility of music as a tool of *da'wa* with certain conditions.⁸³ All these confirmed the fact that the use of music as popisation strategy is inevitable duty.

To refer when this pop Islamic cultures begin, I started with the work of Yanwar Pribadi and Syamsul Rijal who perceived that, this pop culture has strengthened the

⁷⁷ Noorhaidi Hasan, "The Making of Public Islam: Piety, Agency, and Commodification on the Landscape of the Indonesian Public Sphere," *Springer Cont Islam* 3:229–250, no. 3 (2009): 231.

⁷⁸ Pattana Kitiarsa, *Religious Commodifications in Asia: Marketing Gods* (Routledge, 2008), 37.

⁷⁹ Ismail Fajrie Alatas, *What Is Religious Authority? Cultivating Islamic Communities in Indonesia*, ed. Fred Appel et al. (Princeton University Press, 2021), 4.

⁸⁰ Buchari Alma, *Manajemen Pemasaran Dan Pemasaran Jasa (Marketing Management and Marketing Services)*, 1st ed. (Dunia Usaha IKIP Bandung, 1988), 260.

⁸¹ Mara Einstein, *Brands of Faith: Marketing Religion in A Commercial Age* (Routledge, 2008), 57.

⁸² Dominik M. Müller, "POST-ISLAMISM OR POP-ISLAMISM? Ethnographic Observations of Muslim Youth Politics in Malaysia," in *Bd* (2013), 59:271–72.

⁸³ Muazzam, *Habib Umar Bin Hafidz: Menabur Cinta Dari Tarim (Sowing Love from Tarim)*, 91.

religious expression among the middle-class group after the fall of the Soeharto 'New Order' era in 1998,⁸⁴ similarly to Hoesterey's thought on the possibilities of new preacher emergence due to the ease access in education among the middle group and proliferation of media.⁸⁵ While, Rudnycky's work on Ari Ginanjar spiritual company training established the use of popular music as a medium for preaching in increasing a person's faith and productivity was also noted in my study.⁸⁶ Moreover, Syamsul Rijal's work on the progression of Islamic expressive songs throughout the modern era in Indonesia also discussed here.⁸⁷ And Zamhari and Mustofa's study on Habib Syeich's struggle in determining his involved the composition of *Salawat* with the harmonization of tamborine instrument also highlighted in this study.⁸⁸

The previous study by Rifa Tsamrotul Syaadah, wrote that today Hadhrami females of descent negotiate their women's empowerment by avoiding the traditional Yemeni values in the public sphere. Some of them appeared publicly and engaged in female gender leadership and political associations, hence social media influencers (entertainers).⁸⁹ All these were done to negotiate their women's empowerment to create a public stage for their spatial. These values have contradicted their previous norms in domestic roles as hidden from public eyes. While in the case of Sharifa Muna, she has successfully created her women's empowerment through her innovative *majelis ta'lim* by maintaining her traditional Islamic authority on stage performance within the track of *da'wa*.

The trend of *majelis ta'lim* in Indonesia today, is that female Muslimas prefer to participate in public sermons inviting the Prophet's descendent (*sharīfa*) as the religious preacher since the early 2000s. After the graduates of Dar al-Zahra returned to their

⁸⁴ Yanwar Pribadi, "Pop and 'True' Islam in Urban Pengajian: The Making of Religious Authority," in *The New Santri: Challenges to Traditional Religious Authority in Indonesia*, ed. Norshahril Saat and Ahmad Najib Burhani (ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute, 2020), 213; Syamsul Rijal, "Consuming and Disputing Aisha Song: The Quest for Pleasure and Islamic Romance in Contemporary Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 12, no. 1 (2022): 3–4, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v12i1.1-29>.

⁸⁵ James Bourk Hoesterey, *Rebranding Islam: Piety, Prosperity, and a Self-Help Guru*, ed. James Bourk Hoesterey (Stanford University Press, 2016), 9.

⁸⁶ Daromir Rudnycky J, "Spiritual Economies: Islam and Neoliberalism in Contemporary Indonesia," *Cultural Anthropology* 24, no. 1 (2009): 112, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1360.2009.00028.x>.

⁸⁷ Rijal, "Consuming and Disputing Aisha Song: The Quest for Pleasure and Islamic Romance in Contemporary Indonesia," 3.

⁸⁸ Arif Zamhari and Imam Mustofa, "The Popular Da'wah Movement in Urban Communities: The Role of Hadrami Scholars' Da'wah in Response to Religious Radicalism in Indonesia," *Akademika: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 25, no. 1 (2020): 197, <https://doi.org/10.32332/akademika.v25i1.2385>.

⁸⁹ Rifa Tsamrotul Syaadah, "Navigating Nobility and Cosmopolitanism: Shara'if's Engagement on Jakarta Public Sphere" (Thesis, Universitas Islam International Indonesia, 2023), 8.

homeland to initiate Islamic *da'wa*. They not only successfully take the attention of the public. Furthermore, reach the heart of Muslimas locally and abroad with their *tausiyah*. Fatimah Husein argues that the role of Hadrami, Ba'Alawi, and non-Ba'Alawi women as Islamic educators played a significant role in the private sphere. Although it was confined to the public sphere, as a result, it opened women's access to religious education.⁹⁰ Including their influence in religious education movements like Ustadha Amirah bt. Jindan,⁹¹ Ustadha Halimah Alaydrus,⁹² Ustadha Firdaus bt. Syekh Abu Bakar.⁹³ Ustadha Muna Almunawwar and her sister, Ustadha Alina Almunawwar established their religious schools adapted from Dar al-Zahra curriculums, named Ma'had "Nuruzzahra."⁹⁴ *Ratib* readings are a part of *Ṭarīqa 'Alawiyya* or Ba'Alawi female preachers. The reading of Sūra Yā sin with the combination of prayer texts for Sayyida Fatimah al-Zahra, the Prophet Muhammad's daughter, *Ratib* al-Haddad, and *Ratib* al-Attas now becomes popular and widespread in Jakarta as pointed out by Mona Abaza.⁹⁵ Unintentionally, they have succeeded in familiarizing the non-Hadrami communities with the teachings of *ṭarīqa*, particularly for the non-Arab communities.

Several studies on the development of *sharā'if* as preachers in Indonesia, including those on Khadijah Al-Junayd, Halimah Alaydrus, Khodijah Abdulqodir Hud Assegaf, Firdaus binti Syekh Abu Bakar, Sharifa Syifa, and Salwa Alattas have been conducted thoroughly by various researchers; however, Ayu Naylul Muna Almunawwar remains

⁹⁰ Husein, "PRESERVING AND TRANSMITTING THE TEACHINGS OF THE THARIQAH 'ALAWIYYAH: DIASPORIC BA 'ALAWI FEMALE PREACHERS IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA," 171.

⁹¹ The leader foundation of Mahad Dār al-Maliki, a full-day school designed for female students at the secondary level of education. This school focuses on formal and religious education. It is in the Cibinong district, Bogor City, led by her husband Habib Salim bin Abdul Qadir Al-Haddad.

⁹² Nisa, "Female Voices on Jakarta's Da'wa Stage," 61; Halimah Alaydrus, *ASSALAMUALAIKUM TARIM: Sebuah Perjalanan Menemukan Diri Sendiri*, ed. Nadiyah Alwi, 4th edition (Wafa Production, 2023), 151. Halimah is one of the mentors in Ahbabuzzahro. It is a tutoring course designed for the age of nine young Muslim women, most of them from Hadrami backgrounds. It was opened in 2004 from the donation of the batik factory 'Arjuna Weda,' Sharifah Sidah Muhammad Alaydrus. Ahbabuzzahro's name means, the lovers of the Prophet's daughter, Sayyidah Faṭimah al-Zahra. She studied on Tarim, Darus Zahro from 1998-2003.

⁹³ Wahidah, "Komunikasi Dakwah Ustadzah Firdaus Bin Syekh Abu Bakar Dalam Majelis Ta'lim Muslimah al-Batul Banjarmasin (Communication of the Da'wa of Ustadzah Firdaus Bin Sheikh Abu Bakar in the Al-Batul Muslimah Study Group in Banjarmasin)," 52–53. Ustadha Firdaus leads the first *majelis ta'lim* in South Kalimantan named, Majelis Ta'lim Muslimah al-Batul in Banjarmasin city.

⁹⁴ This religious education is named "Nuruzzahra" located in Semarang. With her elder sister, Ustadha Alina Almunawwar who serves as the leader (*Mudīra*) of Nuruzzahra, they adopted the revived Dar al-Zahro curriculums of Ḥadramaut Tarim and modified them based on the needs of her students mostly from lay families.

⁹⁵ Mona Abaza, "Markets of Faith: Jakartan Da'wa and Islamic Gentrification," *Archipel* 67 (2004): 195.

unexamined. This study is important because it reflects the new generation of *sharīfa* that uses pop culture music, cinematic aesthetics, and social media penetration, thus highlighting the marketing aspects that are inevitable in today's contemporary *da'wa* era.

1.3 Research Questions

To examine Ayu Nailul Muna Almunawwar as the female Islamic authority from female Ba'Alawi descent (power by virtue) and a graduate of Dar al-Zahra, and to measure on how her Cinematic approach to *da'wa* is relevant to contemporary *da'wa* in Indonesia, the following two research questions will help me analyze my findings. These questions will guide the exploration of her unique perspective and method in spreading Islamic teachings through her "The Power of Love" event. Furthermore, these questions will shed light on the impact of her work on society and the evolving role of women in religious leadership in Indonesia.

1. How does Ustadha Ayu Nailul Muna Almunawwar use Ba'Alawi heritage and digital media to reshape female Islamic authority in contemporary Indonesia?
2. In what ways does she tailor her *da'wa* to reflect the aspirations and lifestyle ideals of urban Muslim communities in contemporary Indonesia?

1.4 Research Significance

The development of Sufism in Indonesia with women as knowledge transmitters is limited. This study examines the phenomenon of religious authority within the traditional Hadhramaut framework in the contemporary public sphere. To observe Sharifa Muna Almunawwar's religious authority as a Dar al-Zahra graduate's female preacher, and how she implied her *da'wa* approach was relevant to modern contexts. Additionally, this study inspects her role in the educational sphere, particularly in transmitting classical Islamic teachings rooted in the Prophet's guidance, and her marketing strategy in promoting her innovative cinematic *da'wa*, and also to investigate her followers' perceptions of the innovative methods she incorporates into *da'wa* teachings.

1.5 Theoretical Frameworks

To explore Ayu Nailul Muna Almunawwar's role in *da'wa* within contemporary public spaces, Pattana Kitiarsa's Marketing God theory serves as a fitting theoretical framework for this study. This research strongly highlights a form of religious commodification. However, as argued by Sharifa Muna Almunawwar, it remains part of *da'wa* strategies. Some people require a more spectacular method of *da'wa* to guide them to the right path,

to be loved by Allah, and consequently by the Prophet Muhammad. Sustainability in this field demands careful management of expenses, necessitating effective strategies. To support my theoretical framework, I will incorporate the development of the marketing 4Ps, the marketing mix approach for religion, and the brands of faith strategy from other scholars to address gaps in the study of *da'wa's* development among the *sharā'if* in contemporary public spaces, specifically Sharifa Muna Almunawwar.

1.6 Main Argument

This thesis argues that Ayu Naylul Muna Almunawwar strategically fuses traditional Ba'Alawi Islamic authority with contemporary visual media and branding techniques to reimagine female *da'wa* and appeal to urban Muslim audiences in Indonesia, thereby transforming the landscape of Islamic authority and gender representation in the digital age.

Ustadha Muna Almunawwar represents a new form of female Islamic authority in Indonesia by creatively combining inherited Ba'Alawi religious legitimacy with innovative and media-savvy *da'wa* practices that use cinematic aesthetics, popular culture, and lifestyle imagery to appeal to urban middle-and upper-class Muslims.

1.7 Research Methodology

This study employs qualitative research within an epistemological paradigm. It is termed epistemological when the researcher establishes a relationship with the person being studied. Before continuing my research on Ustadha Muna Almunawwar, I had already engaged in and participated in several *majelis ta'lim* of her teacher, Ustadha Amirah bt. Jindan, in Cilodong, West Java, and obtained her consent to proceed with the study of Ustadha Muna Almunawwar's case. To meaningfully understand the participant's world, the focus is not only on her life and work but also on the complexities of perspectives such as historical contexts and cultural norms that shaped her individuality.⁹⁶ To achieve significant research outcomes, this study adopts an interdisciplinary approach based on literature review, in-depth and informal interviews, and participatory observations.

To accommodate this study, 14 interviewees were selected, including five in-depth interviews with Ustadha Muna Almunawwar, two *majelis ta'lim* leaders from Bogor and Malaysia, and two exclusive Zoom sessions with her. Additionally, I conducted nine informal interviews with her *jama'ah* and personal assistant to explore how her *da'wa*

⁹⁶ John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 2nd ed. (Sage Publications, 2007), 17.

approaches relate to Hadhramaut's authority as the Prophet's authorized connection and to the contemporary public sphere. To support data on her popularization strategy in *da'wa*, I examined related websites and her social media as part of my digital ethnography. Several books and relevant journal articles were also used as literature research to support the study.

1.8 The Structure of the Sub-Thesis

This sub-thesis comprises five chapters. Chapter One is an introduction which includes research background, literature review, research questions, research significance, theoretical frameworks, main argument, research methodology and sub-thesis structure.

Chapter Two highlights the emergence of *sharā'if* in contemporary *da'wa*, begins by introducing the idea of founding a school in Hadramaut in modern times as part of the Hadrami *nahda* (revival) in Southeast Asia. It underlines the issue of unification between North and South Yemen in 1990, continued with the reconnection relationship between Indonesia and Hadramaut through the establishment of traditional Islamic boarding school for males and females in Hadramaut. Moreover, this chapter investigates the emergence of *sharā'if* in spreading Islamic *da'wa* resulting from the Dar al-Zahra establishment by Habib 'Umar. It examines the works of Ustadha Muna Al-Munawwar *da'wa* as the female Ba'Alawi preacher graduated from Dar al-Zahra, who uses the contemporary approaches and emphasizes value of Sufisme through *Tarīqa 'Alawiyya* in her *da'wa* approaches.

Chapter Three scrutinizes the marketing religion through Pop Islamic *da'wa* with the aesthetic element, will increase the value. The application of 4Ps marketing strategy in segmented niche group, may influence the brand loyalties. Besides, the phenomenon of war tickets among popular *sharā'if*, some digital practices involved in the new contemporary *da'wa*, the social media for product promotion, also been discussed in this chapter. Pop Islamic music involvement in Ustadha Muna's *da'wa* contents to increase spiritual piety is investigated here.

Chapter Four examines the voices of female *jama'ah* related to her innovative *da'wa*, Cinematic Seminar, and other regular offline *majelis ta'lim* in the surrounding Jakarta areas. This chapter investigates the main reason for *jama'ah* participation is highly for seeking the spiritual attachment that is facilitated through modern media and pop culture in the form of cinematic and visualization.

Chapter Five provides the conclusions of the study.

To further discuss Sharifa Muna's *da'wa*, I will introduce you to the works of *da'wa*, female authority within the context of the historical Arab diaspora in Indonesia, and how it fits into the country's urban space in Chapter Two.

CHAPTER II

DA'WA, FEMALE AUTHORITY, AND URBAN SPACE IN INDONESIA

2.1 Introduction

On January 22, 2025, hundreds of Muslim women gathered at Pondok Indah Mosque Hall to attend the *Majelis Ta'lim* of Ustadha Muna. This activity is routinely held at the mosque every Wednesday. It began with the reading of *Haḍra Bāsawdān*, collection of dhikrs, *munajat* (prayer and hope), *qasidah* and *tawasul* (intercession) written by Syaikh Abdul bin Ahmad Basaudan. The benefit of reading this is, asking Allah for all mercy, maintenance, safety and glory in this world and the hereafter,⁹⁷ which performed by six to seven *hadhrah* team players. With the melodious voices of the singers accompanied by drums (*gendang*), the *jama'ah* followed the readings expressively. Some of them opened the text to follow the song performed by the singer. Most of them came from Jakarta and its surrounding areas, such as Bogor, Tangerang, Depok and Bekasi, wearing headscarves and robes in various colors, while some of them also wore all-black clothing including face-veil. This highlighted the phenomenon of religious piety trends among the urbanists people, to attend the *majelis ta'lim* by popular female Ba'Alawi preachers.

In that session, Ustadha Muna, reminded the *jama'ah* about the importance of dhikr. She recited the Sūra al-Ahzāb verse 41, (O ye who believe! Celebrate the praises of Allah, and do so often), in Arabic with its Indonesian translation. Yet, she also mentioned about the concept of '*ūlul albāb*' to refer to people who have common sense. She meant that, they are people who remember of Allah while they stand, sit, and lay down. Moreover, in this situation, she differentiates between two groups of people, firstly, as some one who merely display their '*aql* or brain (*majang akal*), and secondly, some one who use their '*aql* appropriately (*pakai akal*). Above those matters, indeed, Allah wants His creations (people) in every second of their life, while they are standing, sitting or sleeping to remember Him. This point indicated that the emphasis of remembrance Allah a lot, as the true love should be, is the focus point of *da'wa* emphasis in every *majelis ta'lim* of her.

⁹⁷ Wahidah, "Komunikasi Dakwah Ustadzah Firdaus Bin Syekh Abu Bakar Dalam Majelis Ta'lim Muslimah al-Batul Banjarmasin (Communication of the Da'wa of Ustadzah Firdaus Bin Sheikh Abu Bakar in the Al-Batul Muslimah Study Group in Banjarmasin)," 74.



Figure 1.2. Simple decoration in non paid-*majelis ta'lim* held in Pondok Indah Mosque.

Source states that the Hadhrami diaspora had migrated to Indonesia since the 19th century century.⁹⁸ However, Saifullah viewed that Arabs and Persians had coexisted since the 7th to the 12th century in the Southeast Asian with the confined strategy, and individual actors through peaceful ways of *da'wa* by marrying the local women. Subsequently, Arabs brought the Islamic missionary *da'wa* in the 13th century with broader strategy, state formation initiation, during the second time of the migration wave. The first wave was called the arrival and spreading Islamic *da'wa* stage, and the second wave, considered the state or sultanate formation stage, resulted from the success of the first migration.⁹⁹ In the first wave, these Arab diasporas had successfully established their first Muslim communities in Southeast Asia, with limited preaching results. Conversely, the second wave involved a more planned agenda was aimed at a wider and more significant goal through the state formation.

Furthermore, Sunyoto added that the influence of Islam from Arabia has entered the archipelago through trade routes from a long time ago, up to the modern era. In the 8th century, Muslim traders from Arabia and Persia controlled trade in the Indian Ocean. They have exemplified a distinctive cultural model, pure Islam, which is deliberately associated

⁹⁸ Syaadah, "Navigating Nobility and Cosmopolitanism: Shara'if's Engagement on Jakarta Public Sphere" (Universitas Islam International Indonesia, 2023), 1.

⁹⁹ Saifullah, *Sejarah & Kebudayaan Islam Di Asia Tenggara*, ed. Eka Adinugraha (Pustaka Pelajar, 2010), 10–17.

with the business world. He also quoted L.W.C. van den Berg, in his book “*Le Hadhramout et les Colonies Arabes dans l’Archipel Indien*,” who said that in fact the Muslim Arab nation had long settled in the Indonesian archipelago. Although their numbers were limited, some of them had great political influence on the native population's affairs.¹⁰⁰ As I have mentioned before, the dynamics of Arab migration to Indonesia are not only due to the religious and economic factors, but also political motives to maintain their prevalence in the country. As a matter of fact, the Arab Hadrami Indonesians, particularly those of *sada* (*sayyid*) descent, had used their ‘Arabness’ to influence the political dynamics in Indonesia during the Soeharto era. The rumor said some *habā’ib* even had dealt in business with the generals. Thus, *habā’ib* had a close link to the Soeharto family to maintain power and influence over business matters. Sometimes, they were also appointed secretly as the hidden consultant government ‘paranormal.’¹⁰¹ This is a matter that is not aligned with pure Islam, which uses paranormal methods to determine actions.

Everything that smells of Arabic certainly has a place in the hearts of Muslims, especially if it is associated with the Prophet Muhammad. This fact is supported by Charles Issawi who stated that one of the characteristics of Arabs is that they are known as people who live around the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad, their language is the language of the Qur'an, Arabic, is given a special and authoritative position in the Islamic world, always gets moral and political support from non-Arab Muslims.¹⁰² Due to the shared belief and religion, Arabs and Islam are an inseparable entity that always got support from Muslims all over the world, especially Indonesia.

Sharā’if and *habā’ib* are Arabic familiar terms in the Islamic preaching world in Indonesia. Previously, *habā’ib* figures occupied an extraordinary position among Muslim traditionalists in Indonesia. Their adherence to traditionalist Islam is associated with a non-Arab majority in various regions. Two significant factors that make them enjoy a special high status are, first, having an Arab blood connection, where Islam was born, which allows them to understand and perceive Islam authentically. Second, the descent of the Prophet Muhammad must inherit the Prophet's blessings as the traditionalist Muslims believe.¹⁰³ He also stated that some lay traditionalists consider *habā’ib* not only an expert in the

¹⁰⁰ Agus Sunyoto, *Atlas Wali Songo: Buku Pertama Yang Mengungkap Wali Songo Sebagai Fakta Sejarah (The First Book to Reveal the Wali Songo as Historical Facts)*, ed. Abdul Rosyid Masykur and Faried Wijdan (Mizan Media Utama, 2016), 38–40.

¹⁰¹ Abaza, “Markets of Faith: Jakartan Da’wa and Islamic Gentrification,” 184–85.

¹⁰² Charles Issawi, *The Arab World’s Legacy* (The Darwin Press, 1981), 66.

¹⁰³ Rijal, *Defending Traditional Islam in Indonesia: The Resurgence of Hadhrami Preachers*, 2.

knowledge of Islam but even more as the friend of God, a Muslim saint ‘wali.’¹⁰⁴ This fact probably applies to fellow *sharā’if*. Thus, *sharā’if* names should be equal to treatment to *habā’ib* high status as perceived by Muslim traditionalists. Furthermore, Syamsul Rijal emphasized that the recognition of *habā’ib* in society must be at a mature age and well-versed in Islamic knowledge and practice, while demonstrating their sincerity as part of their fear of God (*taqwa*) and the practice of good Islamic morals (*akhlaq*).¹⁰⁵ For that reason, another equal term to *habā’ib* (male descendent), is the *hubābā* word (the plural form, which means the loved one). With its singular term, *habība*. Yet, the word *hubābā* considered among these female Hadhrami Arabs diaspora, it is only applicable as jargon to the female and senior saints among them. On the other hand, Bilal Philips disagreed with the concept of designating certain people as saints beyond the ordinary set by humans. He stated that humans are not allowed to label certain individuals as saints and pious people to a level that is beyond the scope of normal people.¹⁰⁶ According to him, the title of ‘saint’ is something beyond the scope of normal life, hence it is not permissible to describe someone as a saint/ *wali* of God, which the Salafi group disregarded this term and perceived it as a threat to Muslim traditionalist.¹⁰⁷ However, this chapter emphasizes on the female authority roles in *da’wa* field in Indonesia, particularly Jakarta in targeting the urbanist people in the modern era.

This chapter deals with the emergence of *sharā’if* through the reconnection between Hadhramaut and Indonesia after the unification of Yemen in 1990s. Habib ‘Umar played a significant role in preparing those *sharā’if* and other students who studied at Dar al-Zahra to become the future preacher once they returned back to their home residence. The first part of this chapter discusses on Hadhramaut factor as the basis of traditional Islamic education in emerging popular preachers among the *sharā’if* to convey *da’wa* to Muslim societies. The second part describes Sharifa Muna’s *da’wa* initiation into approaching contemporary public space. While the third part focuses on the Sufism values in her approach to *da’wa*, in Cinematic Seminars as well as in the regular offline *majelis ta’lim* of her.

¹⁰⁴ Rijal, *Defending Traditional Islam in Indonesia: The Resurgence of Hadhrami Preachers*, 2.

¹⁰⁵ Rijal, “Performing Arab Saints and Marketing the Prophet,” 200.

¹⁰⁶ Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, *The Fundamentals of Tawheed (Islamic Monotheism)* (International Islamic Publishing House, 2005), 174.

¹⁰⁷ Rijal, “Performing Arab Saints and Marketing the Prophet,” 194.

2.2 The Emergence of *Sharā'if* in Contemporary *Da'wa*

The idea of establishing a modern school for Arab children in Hadhramaut had begun in the 1880s; nevertheless, the implementation had not been successful yet.¹⁰⁸ When colonialism used the Dutch legal system, "*Indische Staatregeling*," as a split tactic to divide the Indian Ocean population into three categorizations: the European group, the Foreign East Group, and the indigenous group (*bumi putera*). The Hadrami people are included with the second group, mixed with the Chinese and non-Chinese groups.¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, in fulfilling the need of education for the children's population, the colonial government only provided the schools that fit the European groups, the Chinese group, and the native locals. Unfortunately, there was no school that was suitable for their (Arab) children. Furthermore, those Hadrami diaspora were afraid of any missionary agenda embedded in the school provided by the Dutch government.¹¹⁰ Therefore, the idea of founding a school in Hadramaut in modern times is considered a part of the Hadrami *nahda* (revival) in Southeast Asia.

After the establishment of relations between North and South Yemen in 1990, followed by the re-establishment between Indonesia and Hadhramaut connection, the issue of education for the descendants of the Hadrami found a bright spot. Through learning from religious education and Hadramaut *da'wa* sites in their direct place, the Hadhrami diaspora, from *sada* (sayyid) and non-*sada* groups, can learn and speak Arabic and implement their pious practices without interference from outside parties.¹¹¹ In this way, they could receive authority from Hadramaut as influential preachers in the future, when they returned to their original residence.

2.2.1 The Establishment of Dar al-Zahra as the First Female Boarding School in Hadramaut

Moreover, the first establishment groundwork for male boarding school for Indonesian Hadrami diaspora, played by Habib 'Umar as pioneer actor in Dar al-Mustafa formation in

¹⁰⁸ Freitag, *Indian Ocean Migrants and State Formation in Hadhramaut: Reforming the Homeland*, 234.

¹⁰⁹ Syaiful Anwar and Muhammad Yunus, "PERKAWINAN BEDA AGAMA ANTAR WARGA NEGARA INDONESIA DI INDONESIA SEBAGAI DIPLOMASI," ed. Ngimadudin et al. (Kampus A STAI Bumi Silampari, 2020), 117, <https://doi.org/10.37092/prosidingisid.v1i1.181> |.

¹¹⁰ Freitag, *Indian Ocean Migrants and State Formation in Hadhramaut: Reforming the Homeland*, 233.

¹¹¹ Rijal, "Revitalizing Hadhrami Authority: New Networks, Figures and Institutions among Ḥabā'ib in Indonesia," 242–43.

1993.¹¹² Subsequently, the establishment of Dar al-Zahra in 1998, in Hadhramaut, came from the concern of Habib ‘Umar to provide religious access in education for diverse female around the globe.¹¹³ I noticed that there is a sort of “downhill” action performed by *sharā’if* in the field of *da’wa*, after they received their education at Dar al-Zahra. In preparing this, teaching practices every Thursday to the fellow Hadhramaut villagers have been implemented by Dar al-Zahra.¹¹⁴ I am not sure whether this is to address the problem of the role of the *habā’ib* who crossed the line, or is there another motive behind it? Whatever it is, what is clear from my view is that the role of the *sharā’if* in the stage of *da’wa* today has become the full attention of women from the Ba‘Alawi and non- Ba‘Alawi groups. The label of *sharīfa* as the Prophet’s female descendants are still hold strongly by certain *sharā’if*, especially from the graduates of Dar al-Zahra. Particularly, in disseminating traditional teachings of the Hadramaut community to the society.

The emergence of female Ba‘Alawi preachers currently cannot be separated from the role of Habib ‘Umar and the Hadhramaut teachers. Through his cold hands, with the assistance of Hubaba Ummu Salim, he had successfully brought up the new generation of female preachers like Sharifa Khadijah Al-Junayd, who was his student before the establishment of Dar al-Zahra.¹¹⁵ According to the view of her alumni, Dar al-Zahra itself is not a university. Those who studied there will never receive any educational title as commonly found in any university around the globe. It is also not referred to as the usual *pesantren* found in Indonesia. The word *dār* is taken from Arabic, which means house. The term ‘al-Zahra’ refers to the name of the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), Sayyida Fatimah al-Zahra. Therefore, it is a house where any female can feel the mercy of the mother’s love, who loves her daughters more than their biological mother.¹¹⁶ In this house, female Muslims will be taught more about the Islamic teachings of Fatimah al-Zahra.

¹¹² Fatimah Husein, “Ba ‘Alawi Women and The Development of Hadrami Studies in Indonesia,” *Studia Islamika* 32, no. 1 (2025): 151, <https://doi.org/10.36712/sdi.v32i1.46004>; Husein, “PRESERVING AND TRANSMITTING THE TEACHINGS OF THE THARIQAH ‘ALAWIYYAH: DIASPORIC BA ‘ALAWI FEMALE PREACHERS IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA,” 175; Rijal, “Revitalizing Hadhrami Authority: New Networks, Figures and Institutions among Ḥabā’ib in Indonesia,” 245.

¹¹³ Husein, “PRESERVING AND TRANSMITTING THE TEACHINGS OF THE THARIQAH ‘ALAWIYYAH: DIASPORIC BA ‘ALAWI FEMALE PREACHERS IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA,” 176.

¹¹⁴ Interview with Ustadha Muna Almunawwar on January 22, 2025.

¹¹⁵ Nisa, *Female Voices on Jakarta’s Da’wa Stage*, 58.

¹¹⁶ Nur Hidayah, “Daruz Zahra (دار الزهراء) Tarim, Hadramaut, Yaman,” YouTube, @NurhidayahNdyh, November 6, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHiyMxMBLgk>.

Again, Eva Nisa, in her article, mentioned two generations of *sharā'if* on the Jakarta *da'wa* stage. While the older generations were the late Ustadha Lulu Alaydrus, the late Ustadha Seha Alatas, Ustadha Sukaenah binti Yahya, and Ustadha Lulu al-Habsyi, currently it has been carried by their new generation, appearing from the female preachers' roles of Ustadha Halimah Alaydrus and Ustadha Khadijah Al-Junayd on the Jakarta stage.¹¹⁷ Halimah Alaydrus came to Tarim in late 1998 and returned back to Indonesia in 2002. She again departed to Tarim to teach in 2023 and went back to Indonesia in the same year,¹¹⁸ while Khadijah al-Junayd spent her lifetime in Tarim as a pureblood family from both Arab parents (*wulayati*). She married Habib Munzhir in 1996 and moved to Indonesia in 1998. In the meantime, she actively preaches in her *Majelis Nisa* in 2002 in Jakarta.¹¹⁹

Another popular preacher from the Ba'Alawi group from whom I obtained information about the years, they spent in Hadramaut Tarim was Ustadha Amirah Jindan, Ustadha Firdaus binti Syekh Abu Bakar, and Ustadha Muna al-Munawar. Before studying Ustadha Muna's preaching approach, I had attended several *majelis ta'lim* conducted by Ustadha Amirah in the Depok and Cilodong areas, West Java. An influential female preacher who was among the earlier female students of Habib 'Umar. She is the daughter of Habib Novel Salim Jindan, a prominent preacher in Islamic preaching in Indonesia. In addition to that, her grandfather was Habib Salim bin Ahmad bin Jindan (1906-1969), a preacher in Batavia who was nicknamed the "Lion of the Podium,"¹²⁰ Sharifa Amirah started studying in Tarim with Habib 'Umar and several *habā'ib* in Hadramaut between 1997 and 1998,¹²¹ other source stated that she even took several years through informal studies with Habib 'Umar's wife, before the establishment of Dar al-Zahra,¹²² while Ustadha Firdaus binti Syekh Abu Bakar went to Tarim for study in 2007 only for five months,¹²³ and Ustadha Muna studied at Dar al-Zahra Tarim between 2009 and 2012.¹²⁴

¹¹⁷ Nisa, *Female Voices on Jakarta's Da'wa Stage*, 56–57.

¹¹⁸ Alaydrus, *ASSALAMUALAIKUM TARIM: Sebuah Perjalanan Menemukan Diri Sendiri*, 151; Nisa, *Female Voices on Jakarta's Da'wa Stage*, 59.

¹¹⁹ Nisa, *Female Voices on Jakarta's Da'wa Stage*, 65–66.

¹²⁰ "Jindan Novel Jindan," WIKIPEDIA Ensiklopedia Bebas, accessed December 30, 2024, https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jindan_Novel_Jindan.

¹²¹ Majelis AlHidayat Banda Aceh. [@majelisalhidayat]. (2024, July 19). "Biografi Ustadzah Amiroh Bin Jindan" [Video]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/reel/Cu4JCxaAS7o/?igsh=OHU1OWNzMGQ5a2o0>.

¹²² Husein, "Ba 'Alawi Women and The Development of Hadrami Studies in Indonesia," 153.

¹²³ Wahidah, "Komunikasi Dakwah Ustadzah Firdaus Bin Syekh Abu Bakar Dalam Majelis Ta'lim Muslimah al-Batul Banjarmasin (Communication of the Da'wa of Ustadzah Firdaus Bin Sheikh Abu Bakar in the Al-Batul Muslimah Study Group in Banjarmasin)," 50.

¹²⁴ "Interview with Ustadha Muna Almunawwar," January 22, 2025.

Additionally, Sharifa Muna was a student of Ustadha Amirah who is familiarly called “Umi” when she taught at the Al-Fachriyah Islamic Boarding School.

Al-Fachriyah School was inaugurated in 1993 by the *habā'ib*, including Habib Muhammad bin Ali bin Abdurrahman Al-Habsyi. Previously it was intended for orphans and the poor to study the sciences of *Aqidah*, *Fiqh*, *Nahwu* and *Tasawuf*. Then in 1998, it was changed to Pondok Pesantren Al-Fachriyah by Habib Jindan, where this pesantren adheres firmly to Islamic law in the *Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jama'ah* school, with the Shafi'i Madhab, Ash'ari *Aqidah* in monotheism, and the *Tariqa 'Alawiyya* school of Tasawuf. The four foundational core values taught by the teachers here, are based on four values; *'ilm* (knowledge), *'amal* (action), *khauf* (fear), and *wara'* (pious). And the daily recitations that prevail in this pesantren are; *Maulid* recitations, *Manaqib* recitations, *ratib*, studying the *Salaf* books, daily *wirid* after prayer which are written and arranged by Habib 'Umar.¹²⁵ I argue that, from here, it is obviously clear that Habib 'Umar's indeed, has reconnected *sharā'if* to their homeland Hadhramaut, by cultivating his influences in Pesantren Al-Fachriyah. As to prepare some students to continue studying in Tarim, to become an authorized preacher from Hadhramaut, in the future.

2.2.2 Gender Issue: Male Sphere Domination as a Supportive System

To further discussion on gender issues, regarding the male sphere domination in women Hadhrami, which Fatimah Husein termed it as male authority and decision making,¹²⁶ in the *sharīfa's* involvement in the field of *da'wa*, although strictly gender-based, still may interact dynamically in the contemporary era. Men are associated with public space, while women are associated with the opposite, showing the relationship between public and private space through a gender perspective, emphasizing that neither can exist or function completely independently of the other.¹²⁷ Therefore, women can be seen in the public space; however, they are not encouraged to be seen in the same way that men are. Following that, based on my perspective, this public space is respectfully regarded as a supportive framework that reinforces the *sharīfa's* role as a female preacher. Despite this, their public presence remains subject to strict gender-specific regulations, limiting interactions to

¹²⁵ Muhammad Dimas Faisal, “Pengalaman Tarekat Alawiyyah Di Pondok Pesantren Al-Fachriyah Ciledug Tangerang Selatan (Experience of the Alawiyyah Order at the Al-Fachriyah Islamic Boarding School in Ciledug, South Tangerang)” (Undergraduate Thesis, Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah, 2023), 13–14. One of the daily *wirid* written by Habib 'Umar, “*Khulāṣa al-Madad An-Nabawī*.”

¹²⁶ Husein, “Ba 'Alawi Women and The Development of Hadrami Studies in Indonesia,” 154. She called it, in other words, a male expertise for full agency.

¹²⁷ Fatima Sadiqi, “Gender in Arabic,” *Brill Encyclopedia of Linguistics*, January 2006, 10–11.

female-only, face-to-face engagements. In accordance with religious guidelines, only the permissible parts of the body—specifically the face and hands—are allowed to be visible to fellow women. Therefore, they will uncover their face during the interaction of *majelis ta'lim* or *Maulid* events.

When Fatimah Husein discussed the role of *sharā'if* as the *Ṭarīqa 'Alawiyya* knowledge transmitters, she wrote that the departure of Ustadha Halimah to Tarim was actually to accompany her brother, who wanted to study in Dar al-Mustafa.¹²⁸ While Ustadha Khodijah Abdulqodir Hud Assegaf received big support to study at Dar al-Zahra in 2006 from his uncle, Habib Husin b. Abdullah b. Muhammad Assegaf (d. 2019) of Gresik, East Java.¹²⁹ Moreover, Ustadha Syifa received the enlightenment from his teacher Ustadz Taufiq b. Abdul Qodir Assagaf (b. 1969) at the Suniyyah Salafiyyah Islamic Boarding School in Pasuruan, East Java.¹³⁰ Furthermore, Ustadha Firdaus binti Syekh Abu Bakar received fully support and accompanied by her husband, Habib Ali Hasan Alkaff from Banjarmasin while studying in Tarim.¹³¹ After finishing her high school education in Indonesia and marrying Habib Hayqal Alaydrus, Ustadha Salwa Alattas moved to Tarim to pursue further studies alongside her husband. Under the guidance of Habib 'Umar, she deepened her understanding of religion and developed her character and life purpose.¹³² For this case, I argue that the problem of male sphere domination among *sharā'if* in *da'wa* is not entirely bad; it could be a great support system too.

In the process of knowledge transmission, based on my observations, some *sharā'if* prefer a direct method of engagement, similar to public communication. Public communication is communication when a speaker speaks to an audience directly.¹³³ A style of public communication was customary in the Arabian community, *al-khuṭba*. This style,

¹²⁸ Halimah Alaydrus, *Bidadari Bumi: 9 Kisah Wanita Salehah*, 9th ed., ed. Aisha A (Wafa Production, 2017), 4; Husein, "PRESERVING AND TRANSMITTING THE TEACHINGS OF THE THARIQAH 'ALAWIYYAH: DIASPORIC BA 'ALAWI FEMALE PREACHERS IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA," 177.

¹²⁹ Husein, "PRESERVING AND TRANSMITTING THE TEACHINGS OF THE THARIQAH 'ALAWIYYAH: DIASPORIC BA 'ALAWI FEMALE PREACHERS IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA," 178.

¹³⁰ Husein, "PRESERVING AND TRANSMITTING THE TEACHINGS OF THE THARIQAH 'ALAWIYYAH: DIASPORIC BA 'ALAWI FEMALE PREACHERS IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA," 178.

¹³¹ Wahidah, "Komunikasi Dakwah Ustadzah Firdaus Bin Syekh Abu Bakar Dalam Majelis Ta'lim Muslimah al-Batul Banjarmasin (Communication of the Da'wa of Ustadzah Firdaus Bin Sheikh Abu Bakar in the Al-Batul Muslimah Study Group in Banjarmasin)," 50.

¹³² Siregar et al., "Syarifah Salwa Al-Attas Dan Majelis Nururrahmah: Meningkatkan Muslimah Di Medan," 2024, 26.

¹³³ Steven A. Beebe et al., *Interpersonal Communication Relating to Others*, New International (Pearson Education Limited, 2014), 4.

perhaps, was considered the most effective political communication form during the Prophet's era and the Four Guided Caliphs.¹³⁴ The method of *talaqqi* (face-to-face learning) is particularly favored, as practiced consistently by figures such as Ustadha Khadijah Al-Junayd, Ustadha Khodijah Abdulqodir Hud Assegaf, Ustadha Amirah Jindan, Ustadha Halimah, Ustadha Syifa, Ustadha Firdaus binti Syekh Abu Bakar and Ustadah Muna Almunawwar. During their *da'wa* sessions and *majlis ta'lim* gatherings, strict guidelines are enforced—no video or photo recordings, nor any form of audio recording or livestreaming, are permitted. Interestingly, among their *jama'ah*, there is a widely held belief that violating these rules can result in unexpected consequences. It is said that those who defy these regulations may mysteriously lose their data, experience device malfunctions, or even have their phones and other gadgets rendered unusable in unfortunate ways. Such occurrences are often cited as having happened repeatedly to those who dared to break the rules. Whether this is truly happening or not remains within the realm of Divine knowledge; Allah knows best. Yet, I frequently hear this same cautionary reminder each time I attend Ustadha Halimah's studies. On the other hand, through several remarks, only Ustadha Halimah Alaydrus, Ustadha Firdaus binti Syekh Abu Bakar, and Ustadha Aisyah Farid are allowed their voices to be listened to by the public, male and female listeners, while Ustadha Halimah and Ustadha Firdaus binti Syekh Abu Bakar reach wider audiences through live-streaming and radio propagation,¹³⁵ rather than Ustadha Aisyah.

¹³⁴ M. Mahmoud Galander, "Communication in the Early Islamic Era: A Social and Historical Analysis," *Intellectual Discourse* 10, no. 1 (2002): 64.

¹³⁵ Wahidah, "Komunikasi Dakwah Ustadzah Firdaus Bin Syekh Abu Bakar Dalam Majelis Ta'lim Muslimah al-Batul Banjarmasin (Communication of the Da'wa of Ustadzah Firdaus Bin Sheikh Abu Bakar in the Al-Batul Muslimah Study Group in Banjarmasin)," 81–83. I began attending Ustadha Halimah's public speeches in 2019 after being invited by my Hadhrami neighbour. I have attended a few *sharā'if majelis ta'lims* up to this point, such as Ustadha Amirah Jindan's, which began in October 2023, and Ustadha Muna's, which began in January 2025. In addition to joining the *Majelis Ta'lim*, I also made some observations about how these *sharā'if* preach in public.



Figure 2.2. Some *majelis ta'lim* ads displayed some regulations of *majelis* by *Sharā'if*.
(Sources: Instagram and others)



Figure 3.2. Some regulations prevailed in the 'Cinematic Seminar' of Ustadha Muna.

Moreover, based on my opinion in the matter of their presence, the existence of *sharā'if* in the *da'wa* public sphere can be classified into two categories: hidden (*mastūra*) and famous, in other word, popular (*mashūra*). In Arabic, the term '*mastura*' refers to a covered object. Eva F. Amrullah calls it an important term coined among Tablighi Jamā'at congregations, as women who have taken on the responsibility of carrying out the task of preaching (*khurūj*).¹³⁶ This indicates that the word *mastūra* refers to people whose *da'wa* engagement remains concealed or discreet, with little to no public advertising of their actions, and who are only known to female mates.¹³⁷ The dictionary definition of the word (*sa-ta-ra*) means to cover or to hide.¹³⁸ Their presence is not highlighted through professional management or media exposure, and they typically operate without any personal assistance, or, the common personal assistance could be their own disciples. On the other hand, the *mashūra sharīfa* represents the more publicly visible figures. *Mashura* means popular/ well-known by others.¹³⁹ They are often accompanied by a team of professional female assistants who manage their appearances and logistics during *da'wa* engagements. This team may include a personal driver, program coordinator, and other support roles—all filled by women. Notably, many of these assistants also observe a high level of modesty, with most wearing the face-veil (*cadar*) in their daily lives.

Some difficulties faced by the followers in participating in Ustadha Muna's cinematic preaching. There were regulations that prevailed at "The Power of Love's" last event in Bandung, as noted in the information given after registration for the event. First, since the registration opened at 07.00 am, and the event will be started at 08.30 am-02.00 pm, many of the followers directly came from other towns, while the latecomers must follow the organizer's direction, using a different entrance to avoid distracting other participants during the event's show. Second, no photo, video, or audio recordings were allowed to be taken of the scene directly or indirectly through the devices. Third, handphones should be set in silent/off mode during the event. Fourth, kids under 10 years were not allowed to join. Fifth, bringing food to the ballroom was prohibited unless provided by the event organizer. Sixth, leaving the waste in the ballroom was not allowed. Seventh, trade transactions were prohibited in all areas of the ballroom except for the bazaar's registered participants. Lastly, following all directions from the committees was

¹³⁶ Eva F. Amrullah, "Seeking Sanctuary in 'the Age of Disorder': Women in Contemporary Tablighi Jamā'at," *Contemporary Islam* 5, no. 2 (2011): 142, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-010-0147-2>.

¹³⁷ This popular term derived from Arabic was actually coined by people who were in the *sharīfa* circles themselves.

¹³⁸ Ali and Muhdlor, *Kamus Kontemporer Arab-Indonesia*, 1047.

¹³⁹ Ali and Muhdlor, *Kamus Kontemporer Arab-Indonesia*, 1733.

highly commended during the session. All these are part of the complexities in attending the Cinematic *majelis ta'lim* by Sharifa Muna Almunawwar, as shown in figure no. 5. Despite the difficulties of attending the cinematic *majelis* directly, however, this does not deter women from participating in her *majelis* and returning to her various assemblies.

2.3 Profile of Ustadha Muna Almunawwar

BIODATA OF SHARIFA MUNA ALMUNAWWAR	
Name	: Ayu Naylul Muna Almunawwar
Born in	: Salatiga
Date of Birth	: June 29, 1991
Father	: Ali Almunawwar
Mother	: Yuyun Nailufar Almunawwar
Family's name	: Almunawwar from the 40th generation
Education	: 1. Pondok Pesantren Bābul-Khairāt, Lawang 2. Hidayatullah School, Semarang 3. Pesantren Al-Fachriyah, South Tangerang 4. Dar al-Zahra, Tarim Hadhramaut Tarim, 2019-2012
Da'wa Achievement	• Established family school named Mahad "Nuruzzahro" in Semarang • Introduced Cinematic Preaching (The Power of Love Event) in 2019 until now
Her Pop Islamic Songs	: <i>Candu Dalam Rindu</i> (Addiction in Longing), <i>Maha Cinta</i> (The Most Love), <i>Beri Aku Cinta</i> (Give Me Love), and <i>Tuhan Dengarkan Do'aku</i> (God, Hear My Prayer).

Figure 4.2. Profile of Ustadha Muna Almunawwar.

Ayu Naylul Muna Almunawwar was born in Salatiga on June 29, 1991. Her parents' marriage adhered to endogamous marriage to maintain the 'sacred' lineage among the 'Alawiyyin's community members.¹⁴⁰ A tradition for preserving lineage by marrying within

¹⁴⁰ Syarifah Ema Rahmaniah and Egi Tanadi Taufik, "Our Husband and Children Are Not Acknowledged: Endogamy, Gendered Power and Child Issues," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 18, no. no.2 (2024): 376–77; Husein, "PRESERVING AND TRANSMITTING THE TEACHINGS OF THE THARIQAH 'ALAWIYYAH: DIASPORIC BA 'ALAWI FEMALE PREACHERS IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA," 177.

their groups or within their circles. She posited as the 40th generation of Prophet descendants from Arab families named Almunawwar.¹⁴¹ Before studying at Hadhramaut, Dar al-Zahra, she studied at Pondok Pesantren Bābul-Khairāt, Lawang, under the leadership of Habib Muhsin Alattas. She furthered her studies at the family's school, Hidayatullah in Semarang, up to high school levels, for about four months. After that, she continued to the Pesantren of Ustadha Amirah, Al-Fachriyah.¹⁴²

Born to the mother who was an announcer for TVRI,¹⁴³ one of the earlier television channels in Indonesia. Thus, this situation made the small Sharifah Muna very close to the stage performance world. Similar to other popular preacher who began his early elementary school era with talent development as performer, songwriter, and actor, like Aa Gym.¹⁴⁴ She has participated in many poetry and singing competitions since primary school. In grade five, she had experience in becoming a TVRI presenter after her mother retired. Therefore, from an early age, she was familiar with stage performances. Later, this experience initiated her preaching approach to cinematic seminars, an innovative preaching method with pop culture nuances.

Every day, she preaches around the Jabodetabek¹⁴⁵ areas like Jakarta, Tangerang, and Bogor. The regular sessions are normally held in Magelang and Semarang. Due to her tight schedule in other cities, currently she holds her *majelis ta'lim* in her city, Semarang, once a month. Others schedule through invitation, like in Singapore. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, she used to teach in Singapore every month. After the COVID attack, her schedule shifted to three months due to the difficult access to the country. Recently, she started to preach again regularly in Singapore, as she confirmed. Later, this experience initiated her preaching approach to cinematic seminars, an innovative preaching method with pop culture nuances.

¹⁴¹ Interview with Ustadha Muna Almunawwar on January 26, 2025.

¹⁴² Before establishing Dār Al-Maliky in the Cibirong district, Ustadha Amirah taught at Ma'had Al-Fachriyah. Al-Fachriyah means "pride" and is derived from the great title of her Grandfather Sulthonul Awliya Fachril Wujud Asy Sheikh Abu Bakar bin Salim. This pesantren started from the enthusiasm of her parents, Al Walid Al Habib Novel bin Salim bin Jindan and her mother, and her grandfather from her mother, Al Habib Muhammad bin Ali bin Abdurahman Al Habsyi Kwitang, and her grandfather from her father, Al Imam Al Habib Salim bin Ahmad bin Jindan, in preaching in Allah's path. Currently, this pesantren is led by his brother, Habib Jindan bin Novel bin Salim bin Jindan, as the leader of Al-Fachriyah. (1436H Al Fachriyah, "Pondok Pesantren Al Fachriyah," Al Fachriyah, accessed February 14, 2025, <https://www.alfachriyah.org/menu/pondok-pesantren/>).

¹⁴³ Televisi Republik Indonesia

¹⁴⁴ Hoesterey, *Rebranding Islam: Piety, Prosperity, and a Self-Help Guru*, 46.

¹⁴⁵ Jakarta Bogor Depok Tangerang and Bekasi areas.

Like it or not, we have to open our eyes that the image of *Majlis Ta'lim* which is boring, scary, full of hellfire torture and so on must be eliminated. Therefore, I want to change the perception. In fact, *majlis ta'lims* are so many, however, those who came to it were only the knowledge seekers and ulama admirers. In this ending time (*akhir zaman*) phase, my concern is, the most difficult part of *da'wa* is inviting the avoidant people to attend the *majlis ta'lim* due to their reluctance on previous image of it.¹⁴⁶

Sharifa Muna Almunawwar is among the new generation of female Ba'Alawi preachers who used contemporary approaches in attracting her audiences, or *jama'ah*. Through the music lyrics and her cinematic approaches to the new generation of *ta'lim*, she tried to catch all the hearts of those who have been far away from *majelis ta'lim* existence. She studied at Dar al-Zahra with the consent of both parents, Ali Almunawwar and Yuyun Nailufar Almunawwar. Prior to that era, her sister Ustadha Alina Almunawwar had preceded her to Tarim for studying religion. Once Ustadha Alina returned back to Indonesia, she was already with a full face-veil. Responding to that situation, her friends teased her and said that one day Muna would be like her sister, wearing the face-veil (*cadar*). She responded to it negatively and said, "No, it would not be!" as she replied.¹⁴⁷ When she entered Dar al-Zahra in 2019, everything changed significantly.

According to her personal view, Dar al-Zahra is a house of light; it is comparable to the home of Sayyida Fatimah al Zahra, the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad and his wife Sayyida Khadija bt. Khuwailid, where its occupants were taught to love her and the Prophet Muhammad more deeply, and to exhibit excellent manners (*adab*) as if they were visiting her. Therefore, after attending Dar al-Zahra, all acts of prayer and good deeds gain meaning and heartfelt attachment. "Before, everything seemed dark and unseen to my eyes," said Ustadha Muna Almunawwar.¹⁴⁸ Since then, Dar al-Zahra has held a special place in her heart, and whenever she is reminded of the place, she often finds herself crying.

Therefore, I would like to draw attention to the differences between the current and earlier iterations of *majlis ta'lim* (MT) before discussing further the modern version initiated by Ustadha Muna Almunawwar. There are at least seven differences that I can identify. First, in the past, women were marginalized or unrecognized for participating in religious education, similarly to *majelis ta'lim* in comfort spaces.¹⁴⁹ However, today

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Ustadha Muna Almunawwar, on January 22, 2025, and July 6, 2025.

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Ustadha Muna Almunawwar, on January 22, 2025.

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Ustadha Muna Almunawwar, on July 6, 2025.

¹⁴⁹ Zubair, "K.H. Abdullah Syafi'ie: Ulama Produk Lokal Asli Betawi Dengan Kiprah Nasional Dan Internasional," 337; Nivianti, "Islam Dan Perempuan Betawi: Tutty Alawiyah Dan

women are more active as the main partakers in the development of MT in Jakarta and other parts of Indonesia.¹⁵⁰ Second, the subjects taught in the past were relatively arranged in unsystematic materials.¹⁵¹ Third, previously the preachers in MT were filled predominantly by male preachers, called ulama.¹⁵² It was rare to find female preachers who taught fellow female students regularly in class. Fourth, the phenomenon of female preachers on behalf of *shara'if* is vividly unavailable, compared to today's phenomenon of 'downhill' performed by them. Nowadays, their role in teaching Muslim societies, particularly women, is easy to be detected by naked eyes. Fifth, MT in the past was the classical type of learning usually found in masjids¹⁵³ *muşala*¹⁵⁴ and house residence. The *jama'ah* will sit on the carpet or floor.¹⁵⁵ Today MT is not only conducted in former places, however, it has also been transcended to seminar rooms and five-star hotel ballrooms.¹⁵⁶ Attendees can even sit comfortably on a chair with a table provided, like seminar participants. Sixth, earlier *hadrah* only performed Arabian music songs, *ratib*, and its litany series during the breaks. Conversely, today's pop music genre was possible to attach in the main sessions of MT gatherings.¹⁵⁷ Lastly, previously, there was no ticket category or price to join the MT through 'ticket war' purchases. Approximately, only regular payments were monthly or annual fees charged to members for MT operational expenses.

In responding to music and arts as an approach to *da'wa*, Habib 'Umar greatly appreciates various forms of art that can remind humans of their Creator and the Prophet. One day he met someone who was playing a musical instrument; he did not forbid and reprimand him. He even showed him how to play the music and sing songs that praised the virtues of the Prophet.¹⁵⁸ As the Head of Dar al-Zahra, Habib 'Umar was not rigid in any

Majelis Taklim 1958-1991," 2; Aynushshaalihah, "Tutty Alawiyah Sebagai Ulama Perempuan Betawi (Tutty Alawiyah as a Betawi Female Ulama)" (University of Indonesia (UI), 2013), 2.

¹⁵⁰ Nisa, *Female Voices on Jakarta's Da'wa Stage*, 56.

¹⁵¹ Zubair, "K.H. Abdullah Syafi'ie: Ulama Produk Lokal Asli Betawi Dengan Kiprah Nasional Dan Internasional," 337.

¹⁵² Jubaedah, "Kiprah Dakwah Dra. Hj. Lutfiah Sungkar (The Preaching Work of Dra. Hj. Lutfiah Sungkar)" (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2008), 1; Husein, "PRESERVING AND TRANSMITTING THE TEACHINGS OF THE THARIQAH 'ALAWIYYAH: DIASPORIC BA 'ALAWI FEMALE PREACHERS IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA," 171.

¹⁵³ Abaza, "Markets of Faith: Jakartan Da'wa and Islamic Gentrification," 175–77.

¹⁵⁴ Zubair, "K.H. Abdullah Syafi'ie: Ulama Produk Lokal Asli Betawi Dengan Kiprah Nasional Dan Internasional," 320. *Muşala* is a place for prayer (prayer room) smaller than a masjid.

¹⁵⁵ Abaza, "Markets of Faith: Jakartan Da'wa and Islamic Gentrification," 179.

¹⁵⁶ Interview with Ustadha Muna Almunawwar on January 22, 2025.

¹⁵⁷ For points 6 and 7, the conclusion is derived from my observations joining the Cinematic Seminars of Ustadha Muna in Bandung on January 26 and in Jakarta on March 2, 2025.

¹⁵⁸ Muazzam, *Habib Umar Bin Hafidz: Menabur Cinta Dari Tarim (Sowing Love from Tarim)*, 91.

musical approach in *da'wa* as if it would bring people closer to God and His Messenger. Therefore, he must support the role of Ustadha Muna in using the music lyrics in her new cinematic *majelis ta'lim* in the contemporary public spaces.

2.3.1 The Contemporary *Da'wa* Approach of Ustadha Muna

When talking about the paid *majelis ta'lim*, the marketing concepts which relevant to religion values cannot be denied in this case. Therefore, demand for religious service came from the need of people in the contemporary society, which is unavoidable. Pattana Kitiarsa's theory as my theoretical framework usage, viewed it as Marketing God's theory, which, at first, the intention is to not end up with religious unrest through opposing and challenging the religious belief nor its legal institution of the religion. However, it is more likely related to the market desire.¹⁵⁹ Basically, everyone is in need of God's attention to live a better life. For that reason, the demand for religious lessons should be transformed in an innovative, unbored, and fascinating visualization posited another demand for certain people. As Ustadha Muna Almunawwar said, the reluctant people who are still busy with their high-level world are the middle class and upper class.

Max Weber in the *Sociology of Religion* (1966) had distinguished two concepts in religion, the masses and the *virtuosi*. In search of spiritual enlightenment, the masses—men and women, all ordinary people—will seek the figure of a saint to connect them with the Creator in order to pursue a comfortable life, while the *virtuosi* replace the guidance of what is and is not to be done. Thus, these ethical requirements must be met in order to attain the religious path.¹⁶⁰ Meanwhile, Ismail Fajri pointed out that to be perceived as authoritative, the female preacher, in this case Ustadha Muna Almunawwar, must be recognized and posit a hierarchical link to the history of the Prophet. Thus, it will legitimize her as a representative speaker on behalf of the Prophet in conveying his teachings without coercion. In addition, through tough labor and maintaining the relationship with the Prophet's past, it will sustain and develop the society into a strong community.¹⁶¹ To respond to these arguments, I believe that Ustadha Muna stands out as the demand from the masses that fits the concept of authority laid out by Ismail Fajri to teach the *virtuosi* for the Muslim society, the female groups.

2.4 The Emphasis of Sufism

¹⁵⁹ Kitiarsa, *Religious Commodifications in Asia: Marketing Gods*, 1.

¹⁶⁰ Kitiarsa, *Religious Commodifications in Asia: Marketing Gods*, 37.

¹⁶¹ Alatas, *What Is Religious Authority? Cultivating Islamic Communities in Indonesia*, 4.

Sufism and the path of art are used as strategic methods in preaching to this day. Badri Yatim quoted Uka Tjandrasasmita, who wrote that in the 20th century, during the Islamization of the archipelago, Sufism and art were one of the methods of preaching that are still widespread today, even though Islamic kingdoms had previously existed significantly.¹⁶² Furthermore, *da'wa* through the role of art has actually been carried out by the spreaders of Islam in Indonesia known as *Wali Songo*. They preached through a Sufi approach that was open, flexible, and adaptive to the existence of teachings other than Islam. This was, of course, very difficult to do by the spreaders of Islam from among traders and Islamic scholars with various variants of their madhab. Such as the role of Sunan Bonang, who was an expert at teaching the science of *suluk*, an expert in making *gamelan* (a traditional music instrument very popular on Java Island), and capable of changing the rhythm of this music instrument.¹⁶³ Additionally, Sunan Kalijaga was an expert in playing a puppet (*wayang*). As a Sufi practitioner, his life was similarly oriented to Darwish people who used to wander and move from place to place. One day he held a puppet show in Tegal, Central Java, and played his role as Ki Benguk. The reward for the puppet show was converting to Islam by reciting the '*Kalimat Syahadat*.'¹⁶⁴ This important statement to differentiate between Muslims and non-Muslims status, is composed on two testaments; first, *tawhīd shahada*, "I believe that there is no god, but Allah," and second, *Rasul shahada*, and "I believe that the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) is the Messenger of Allah."¹⁶⁵ In order to understand Islam in depth, a person must study the four core sciences of Islam which are based on Sufism; first, knowing the *shari'at* (Islamic law), second, knowing the *tarekat* (Islamic *ṭarīqa*, procedures), third, knowing *hakekat* (the essence of Islam), and finally, knowing *ma'rifat* (knowing completely about the Creator).¹⁶⁶ These core knowledges should be memorized among the Kejawen Muslim, and to spread it effectively through the art channels. For that reason, music and art approaches have been used since long ago as one of the *da'wa* approaches by the Nine of 'Wali' or saints.

¹⁶² Badri Yatim, *Sejarah Peradaban Islam (History of Islamic Civilization): Dirasah Islamiyah II*, ed. Hafiz Anshari (PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 1993), 202–3.

¹⁶³ Sunyoto, *Atlas Wali Songo: Buku Pertama Yang Mengungkap Wali Songo Sebagai Fakta Sejarah (The First Book to Reveal the Wali Songo as Historical Facts)*, 160–61.

¹⁶⁴ Zainal Abidin Bin Syamsuddin, *Fakta Baru Walisongo: Telaah Kritis Ajaran, Dakwah Dan Sejarah Walisongo (New Facts about Walisongo: Critical Review of the Teachings, Preaching and History of Walisongo)*, ed. Ummu Ahmad Rifqi (Pustaka Imam Bonjol, 2017), 295.

¹⁶⁵ Pangulu Abdul Karim, "Mema'nai Syahadatain Dan Keutamaannya Dalam Kehidupan," *NIZHAMIYAH Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Dan Teknologi Pendidikan* 7, no. 2 (2017): 115. '*Kalimat Syahadat*' or *Shahadat* statement, should be said orally at least one, as the initial statement of a Muslim.

¹⁶⁶ Moh Hari Soewarno, *Serat Darmogandul Dan Suluk Gatoloco Tentang Islam (Darmogandul Fiber and Suluk Gatoloco About Islam)* (PT. Antar Surya Jaya, 1985), 12.

The development of Sufism in Indonesia with the women's role as Sufi knowledge transmitters is still understudied. For that reason, I studied this *sharīfa* with her contemporary *da'wa* approaches for filling the gap. Before going through the Sufism context in her *da'wa*, I will provide some literal meanings of it as defined by Hamka. The word *taṣawwuf* was born from the conflicted meanings between language experts. It could mean pure and clean, like the shine of glass or animal fur (*ṣūf*). Due to their reluctance to wear beautiful clothes, it may refer to a group of the Prophet's companions who chose to seclude their houses next to the Prophet's Mosque (*ahlu ṣuffah*) and the *mersik* wood that grows in the desert (*ṣūfana*). However, some of them viewed that the word *ṣūfī* comes from ancient Greek (*theosofie*), which has been Arabicized and is more familiar to their tongues as *tasawuf*.¹⁶⁷ Hence, the earlier meaning of *taṣawwuf* is to cleanse the soul, educate and elevate the degree of character, suppress all stinginess and greed, and combat excessive lust from what is needed for self-happiness.¹⁶⁸ Here, the meaning of *taṣawwuf*, according to Hamka, is very much related to the purification of the heart.

In the rise of early Sufism, Harith Bin Ramli defended Sufism as a legitimate ordinary Islamic tradition; he wrote that it was an authentic inner teaching of the Prophet Muhammad and the early Muslim community, complementary to the teachings of religious scholars (*ulama*) represented in fields of learning such as Quranic recitation (*qirā'a*) and exegesis (*tafsīr*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and the collection of narrations from the early Muslim period (*hadīth akbar*). Therefore, it was not a sectarian development.¹⁶⁹ Based on this argument, Ramli argued that *taṣawwuf* itself is not something made up; it is rooted in the Islamic traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), which were passed down to his companions as an early Islamic community and hence, collected in fields of knowledge such as *qirā'a* and interpretation of the Al-Qur'an (*tafsīr*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and the Prophets' hadiths.

2.4.1 Five Characteristics of *Thariqah al-'Alawiyya*

Alexander Knysh defined the *ṭarīqa as Sufi* mystical orders or brotherhoods that trace their spiritual lineage back to the Prophet Muhammad, too. In addition, he laid out five characteristics of Sufi communities, which may have differences from one another. First, they have their own *silsila*; the spiritual genealogy of their head community must be linked

¹⁶⁷ Hamka, *Tasauf Modern* (Penerbit Pustaka Panjimas, 1990), 1.

¹⁶⁸ Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, 7.

¹⁶⁹ Harith Bin Ramli, "The Rise of Early Sufism: A Survey of Recent Scholarship on Its Social Dimensions," *History Compass* 8, no. 11 (2010): 1299–300, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1478-0542.2010.00718.x>.

to the Prophet. It also has functioned as the crucial legitimacy of their identity for the head as well as the follower. Second, the conditions and rituals to admit into the community, such as unconditional obedience and seeking the head's advice and instruction on all subjects of worship, social behavior, and personal life. Third, their own *dhikr* practice; methods and formulas as their distinctive identity. Fourth, their own instruction; terms and conditions regarding the self-meditation or seclusion (*khalwa*). Lastly, their own rules and regulations for the community pertain to their interaction with the Syeikh and the relationship to one another in their community.¹⁷⁰ Regarding the *silsila* issue, in *Ṭarīqa 'Alawiyya*, the founding ancestor refers to Muhammad b. 'Alī 'Alawī (d. 1255), a male descendant of the Prophet Muhammad. This Sufi path was established by him, and it was by tradition reserved for men.¹⁷¹ Meanwhile, as the Head of Dar al-Zahra, Habib 'Umar posited it as a place to consult pertaining to the worship matter, communal behavior, and individual life of his students, not only from Dar al-Zahra but also from Dar al-Mustafa. In terms of *dhikr* practice, Habib 'Umar laid out some methods and formulas to be practiced with his followers as found in the *taṣawwuf* (*dhikr*) and his *Mawlid* book. "*Khulāṣa al-Madad An-Nabawī*" is a book that consisted of daily *dhikr* practices that used to be chanted repeatedly, every day, by Dar al-Zahra students, the followers of the *sharā'if* community, including the students of Nuruzzahra, Ustadha Muna's school. Each *dhikr* practice has its own distinguished readings arranged according to the prayer times. While the book "*Aḍ-Ḍiyā'ul- Lāmi*" is the recitation of praise on the remembrance of the Prophet's birth.¹⁷² In terms of *khalwa*, the scene of the application can be seen clearly noticed in Ustadha Muna's song "*Maha Cinta*." Lastly, the regulation on the relationship between the student and Habib and 'Umar, as well as among their fellow members, following the way of the Prophet's companions and his successors deeds.

Furthermore, Ira Lapidus hence supported the argument that Islamic mysticism, or Sufism, derived from the spiritual goals and religious practices of the Prophet Muhammad, his companions, and their successors. With the purchase goal of gaining a direct and

¹⁷⁰ Alexander D. Knysh, "Ascetic and Mystical Movement in Islam: Sufism," in *Islam in Historical Perspective* (Routledge, 2016), 236–37.

¹⁷¹ Husein, "PRESERVING AND TRANSMITTING THE TEACHINGS OF THE THARIQAH 'ALAWIYYAH: DIASPORIC BA 'ALAWI FEMALE PREACHERS IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA," 165.

¹⁷² Other *Mawlid* books that used to be recited by the female Ba 'Alawī preachers are "*Simṭu al-Durur*" (String of Pearls) by Habib Ali b. Muhammad bin Husain Al-Habsyi and "*Mawlid al-Dība 'ī*" by Imam Abdur Rahman al-Dība'ī. Other ritual recitations that are used as *majelis ta'lim* openings are Sūra Yā Sīn, Haḍra Bāsawdān, and Qaṣīda al-Burda.

personal experience of God's presence.¹⁷³ The face-to-face mystical experience with the Creator of universe through *Ma'rifatullah*, the highest stage of mysterious spiritual knowing in Islam as part of Sufi heritage which called as *tawajjuh*.¹⁷⁴ All this is done for the sake of God's love as practiced by the Prophet, his Companions, and the successors. I noticed her lyric song on the title "*Maha Cinta*," meaning the Most love, is another special call of God by her. Through her lyrics, it is obviously described as the night experience between a person and her God, which is perceived as *khalwa*. This is clearly stated, which aligns with Ira Lapidus's argument and Julia D. Howell, that the aim of Sufism as the spiritual goal, which, based on the Prophet's teaching, is actually to experience God's presence in life. Later, I will provide the complete lyrics of *Maha Cinta* and discuss some elements available in it, in Chapter 3.

It is so beautiful, when we are together. There is only me and You (God).

The night becomes a witness. Pathetic tears of regret.

Moreover, this situation again reminds me of the story of Rabi'ah binti Ismail Al-Adawiya (713-801 M), a historical Sufi female figure who was born and buried in Basra (Iraq). Her prolonged poverty forced her to be a slave, which led her to become a famous female singer. After meeting with Tsauban, the great ulama, she repented for her actions and renounced immoral deeds. Since then, every lonely night, she made a habit of praying to Allah with regret and longing until the end of her 80 years of life. Her *mahabah* (love) has reached a high level of *maqam* (stage), which taught us the feeling of pure love for Allah.¹⁷⁵ Love that brings piety, love that does not expect a reward from Allah, and eternal love that surpasses everything. After being free from her slave status, she isolated herself and meditated. Prayer and *dhikr* became her decoration of life. Her desire for union with God led her to pour her thirst into passionate poetry. One of her poems that she prays late at night was,

¹⁷³ Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 109.

¹⁷⁴ Julia D. Howell, "Repackaging Sufism in Urban Indonesia," *Isim Review* 19, no. 1 (2007): 22.

¹⁷⁵ Asrifin, *Tokoh-Tokoh Shufi: Mengungkap Sejarah Kehidupan Dan Ajaran Serta Karomahnya (Shufi Figures: Revealing the History of Their Lives, Teachings and Karomah)* (Karya Utama, n.d.), 90–93.

O my Lord, the stars shine brilliantly. Men have slept soundly. And kings have closed their doors. Everyone who makes love is desirous of being with their lover. And here I am alone with you.¹⁷⁶

Ustadha Muna Almunawwar, as the female Prophet's descendant, is believed to have transmitted some Sufi path teachings that she has received in Dar-al Zahra. She even encouraged her *jama'ah* to practice several *dzikr* and chantings, for example, the word of Allah for 3000-5000 times in a day.¹⁷⁷ Moreover, Al-Ghazzālī pointed out, the knowledge of the greatness of God must be accompanied by devotion and worship. Love itself is the seed of happiness. It will grow as our degree of affection moves more towards Him. It is believed that when a man dies, it has to do with God alone; however, if we want to live and die happily, we should foster our love for Him through worshipping.¹⁷⁸ These words are relevant to what Muna Almunawwar emphasized in her *da'wa*. Loving Allah and worshipping Him are the obviously detected messages that are always imposed by her through the regular *majelis ta'lim* and the cinematic seminars. Apart from that, Ustadha Muna's approach to *da'wa* on the theme of love seems to be in line with Habib 'Umar's thoughts, which are also emphasized in his preaching, namely returning the feeling of love for Allah and His Messenger to the hearts of every human being and emulating the noble morals of the Prophet Muhammad, both in terms of morals, manners, and personality.¹⁷⁹ Thus, Habib 'Umar throughout the times has exemplified for his students and the people how to preach with wisdom and love, without coercion.¹⁸⁰

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined how the migration of Arabs to the archipelago has introduced a mission of *da'wa* since the 19th century. Through trade routes and exemplifying pure Islamic culture, they had deliberately *da'wa* to the natives. Besides, the history of the Hadhramaut diaspora in seeking proper education for their children has left its dynamics

¹⁷⁶ Hery Sucipto, *The Great Muslim Scientist: Pemikiran & Penemuan 22 Ilmuwan Muslim Kebanggaan Dunia*, 1st ed. (Grafindo Khazanah Ilmu, 2008), 127.

¹⁷⁷ She instructed this *dzikr*, when her *majelis* was conducted in Masjid Pondok Indah, January 22, 2025.

¹⁷⁸ Abū Hāmid Muḥammad Al-Ghazzālī, *The Alchemy of Happiness*, ed. Claud Field and Elton L. Daniel (M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1991), 22.

¹⁷⁹ Muazzam, *Habib Umar Bin Hafidz: Menabur Cinta Dari Tarim (Sowing Love from Tarim)*, 64–70.

¹⁸⁰ Alatas, *What Is Religious Authority? Cultivating Islamic Communities in Indonesia*, 4; Mariati Harahap, "Religious Commodification: The Performance of Ustādha Halimah Al-Alaydrus on Dakwah Stage in Targeting Indonesian Audiences," in *INSIS International Seminar of Islamic Studies*, ed. Hasrian R. Setiawan (Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara, 2024), 1166.

and influences. *Da'wa* stages, which previously were predominantly filled by male preachers, were slowly replaced by female preachers, particularly after the establishment of Dar al-Zahra in Hadhramaut.

Several findings, such as the emergence of the new period and the desire for religious services, have forced the *sharā'if* to play a 'downhill action' role in conveying religious messages to society. Through music lyrics and arts are parts of the *da'wa* strategy, that has been used by the Nine Saints (*Wali Songo*) since long ago. However, some people are reluctant to join the *majelis ta'lim*. Habib 'Umar, as the founder of Dar al-Zahra and Dar al-Mustafa, cherishes music that can direct people to the glory of Allah, His love, and the Prophet Muhammad. Accordingly, he supports every preacher, both female and male, including his disciples, such as Ustadha Muna Almunawwar, to implement this preaching approach to the community.

From this study it was indicated that innovative preaching through visualization and concert nuances with the helpful assistance of social media is a new approach in the contemporary *da'wa* field. As a *Ṭarīqa 'Alawiyya* knowledge transmitter, Ustadha Muna Almunawwar emphasized her *da'wa* on the Sufism practices she received the authority for from her Hadhramaut teachers, including Habib 'Umar. She, as a student of Habib 'Umar, reasoned that to attract the interest of people who were reluctant to come to the *majelis ta'lim*, a strategy was needed. Hence, she introduced her cinematic (paid) *majelis* gathering to a segmented community, a niche group, namely the middle to upper class.

To work with the dynamics of innovative *da'wa* that are suited to the needs and preferences of niche groups, marketing strategies that are relevant to pop culture will be highlighted in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER III

MARKETING AND POP CULTURE IN THE CONTEMPORARY *DA'WA*

3.1 Introduction

The first time I attended her cinematic seminar in Bandung, last January 2025, I bought a first-class ticket (STAR) through online payment to observe her *da'wa* approach up close. I traveled to Bandung from Depok city using the express train to arrive promptly. Upon arrival at the venue, three lines were designated for Star ticket holders. The earlier a participant arrived, the better the chance to choose their seat. I was surprised that, before entering the ballroom, I received many gifts from the organizer. A square black box was given, containing a blue dome-head prayer mat, *siwak*, a message card encouraging a return to Allah, a bottle of perfume branded "Need" by Muna Almunawwar with the Prophet's message, "Complete your worship with the Prophet's *sunna*, because the Prophet always smelled good," and a board with a message. Interestingly, on this plaque is the text,

Know your God by taking the path of knowledge. There you will find love, that will make you drift in the ocean of His love. And the Power of Love, will make you the best servant.¹⁸¹

A simple love-message found on the plaque board with the combination of gifts, as proposed by Ustadha Muna to attract fellow female mates, are new things in *da'wa*. What a beautiful marketing product package, I said to myself. This is the first time I have participated in a contemporary paid *majelis ta'lim* with some tickets category. From the findings, it indicates that she used a marketing strategy through 'multiple packaging' of product.¹⁸² Combining different types of merchandise into a single package as a seminar souvenir, a religious practice that enters the market of religious goods that are subject to market dynamics and economic transactions, my study framework, that Kitiarsa characterized it as the commodification of religion that frequently occurred in Asia, which promoted secularism values.¹⁸³ However, because it was in line with the Prophet's hadith, "Give presents to one another, for this would increase your mutual love,"¹⁸⁴ it might not

¹⁸¹ The translation is, ***Kenali Tuhanmu*** dengan menempuh jalan ilmu. Di sana kau kan temukan ***Cinta*** yang membuatmu terhanyut dalam lautan Kasih Sayang-Nya. Dan ***Kekuatan Cinta*** akan menjadikanmu sebaik-baik hamba. The highlighted words are based on the plaque board text.

¹⁸² Alma, *Manajemen Pemasaran Dan Pemasaran Jasa (Marketing Management and Marketing Services)*, 260.

¹⁸³ Kitiarsa, *Religious Commodifications in Asia: Marketing Gods*, 3; Rijal, "Performing Arab Saints and Marketing the Prophet," 194.

¹⁸⁴ Ibnu Hajar Al-Asqalani, *Terjemah Lengkap Bulughul Maram* (Akbar Media, 2010), 252. Bulughul Maram Translation, Chapter Hibah, 'Umra and Ruqba, hadith no.961.

always support secularism; in some situations, it might even avoid it. At the same time, she succeeded in two objectives, promoting her products; cinematic seminar merchandises and her product perfume, (at another time, she introduced coffee drinks while in Ramadan class in Jakarta), and conveying the Prophetic messages, as found in the introduction part; smelled good as a Muslim and sharing *hadiya* (gifts).

Several works on pop cultural dimension in urbanist's lifestyle which affect their religion have been reviewed here. Noorhaidi Hasan emphasized the point on its influence posits as a social prestige and political tendency. The expansion of Islamic pop culture in Indonesia has become part of a broad consumer culture that functions as a status of social prestige and political affiliation.¹⁸⁵ According to Hasan, participating in *majelis ta'lim* with popular preachers such as the current case of Ustadha Muna Almunawwar, is considered a culture of urban residents that not only provides a network for the commercial product market, but also to increase high social status in society. This phenomenon highlights the point that *sharīfah's* popularity as a female preacher in this era of commercialization must be accompanied by relevant marketing decisions aligned with the popular culture.

Furthermore, Mara Einstein focuses on the mechanism to increase popularity of religious brands within religious music lyrics. To increase popularity, he pointed out, the religious publisher must attempt to turn authors, who have followers into brand, and associate them with prophecy, relationships and leadership, like found in secular marketers.¹⁸⁶ Referring to this case, The Power of Love (TPL) Management attempted to put Sharifa Muna's name into brands, who had many followers and associated her as a female preacher among the Prophet's descendants, *sharīfa* posited a noble lineage. The expected result, thus, will encourage her *jama'ah* to buy her products, as if more closely feeling spiritual side by side while using her perfume and abaya, or feeling accompanied by her through her coffee drinks during the break of performing night prayers. Song lyrics containing Islamic values are an effective tool to convey God's message, as part of *da'wa* to attract the interest of Muslims. A "faith-based lyrics" defined by Mara Einstein, as a less strict definition of Christian music was introduced in the early 2000s. Through Contemporary Christian Music (CM), this fastest growing segmented music group industry has succeeded in developing several bands to upgrade old sentimental lyrics into contemporary music lyrics as entertainment that combines religion and secular.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ Hasan, "The Making of Public Islam: Piety, Agency, and Commodification on the Landscape of the Indonesian Public Sphere," 231.

¹⁸⁶ Einstein, *Brands of Faith: Marketing Religion in A Commercial Age*, 57.

¹⁸⁷ Einstein, *Brands of Faith: Marketing Religion in A Commercial Age*, 54.

Religious song lyrics are one of the tools of preaching that are not only used by Muslims, but also by Christians, by instilling religious values to convey God's message. Muna Almunawwar also employed similar strategy to deal with those who were hesitant to attend the *majelis*.

The adoption of popular music in *da'wa* appears to hold a special place in the hearts of today's youth. Müller stood out on the point that *da'wa* through music has become an effective tool to advance the *da'wa* movement, as seen in Malaysia. Previously, the policy of PAS, Malaysia's national party, prohibited the use of any music and musical instruments in their campaigns. Only Islamic genre music was permitted, such as Islamic a cappella. However, a new stance has recently emerged, allowing modern music within certain boundaries.¹⁸⁸ These boundaries refer to modern music being acceptable only if performed by good Muslim musicians who avoid sinful behaviors such as alcohol consumption, promiscuity, or immoral content in lyrics and stage performances.

Regarding the law of music and the poetry used in music, Habib Umar, the spiritual leader of Ustadha Muna Almunawwar, be open to the improvisation of music through impactful lyrics for *da'wa* purpose.¹⁸⁹ He agreed that music can be part of good preaching if it invites people to goodness. Likewise, musical lyrics that are full of wisdom invite people to be devoted to both parents, strengthen the bonds of brotherhood between each other (*ṣilaturraḥim*), and invite them to help and care for others. For him, musicians are people who work on one's ideals, feelings, and inner self, so that they know better in comforting people through sound and poetry. However, he reminded the musician to use only the permissible tools rather than the forbidden ones in Islam.¹⁹⁰ Today, pop culture music with classical Islamic missions seems a more strategic offer to attract the attention of youngsters. This chapter argues that, in the hands of creative preachers, music can be created as an integrated *da'wa* tool with the blend of marketing strategy to reach the Islamic messages effectively.

The first part of this chapter discusses the strategies for branding religion within the pop Islamic values through creating the niche-group. The second part deals with the new phenomenon faced among female popular Ba'Alawi preachers, ticket-war. While the

¹⁸⁸ Müller, "POST-ISLAMISM OR POP-ISLAMISM? Ethnographic Observations of Muslim Youth Politics in Malaysia," 271–72.

¹⁸⁹ Muazzam, *Habib Umar Bin Hafidz: Menabur Cinta Dari Tarim (Sowing Love from Tarim)*, 91.

¹⁹⁰ Muhammad Faizin, "Habib Umar Bin Hafidz Jelaskan Hukum Musik Dan Syairnya," NU Online, August 21, 2023, <https://nu.or.id/nasional/habib-umar-bin-hafidz-jelaskan-hukum-musik-dan-syairnya-kzPiC>.

third part highlights the importance of social media in supporting female preacher's *da'wa*. And lastly, the last part focuses on the application of pop music in *da'wa* as a tool strategy.

3.2 Marketing God and the Prophet through Pop Islamic *Da'wa*

The increase of religious awareness, the rise of the pop Islam phenomenon has hit urban Muslims from middle-class groups since the 1980s. This factor encouraged them to accept Islam as a new, popular, classy, young, and cool trendy way of life among them. Yanwar Pribadi perceived this as a symbol of religious identity growth in politics resulting from after the fall of the authoritarian, Suharto regime. Moreover, he also wrote that pop-Islamic cultures will strengthen communal piety and religious commodification among them.¹⁹¹ From the use of products, services, travel, cosmetics, beauty care, and clothing to food, until the typical urban *majelis ta'lim*, all must be approached in more Islamic ways. This situation has prevailed as a trend among them.

Meanwhile, Syamsul Rijal pointed out that products of Islamic popular culture, like Islamic songs and Islamic operas, contemporary *majelis ta'lim*, and modern Islamic pop music, have been introduced since the second half of the Soeharto era and afterwards as part of his modernization projects.¹⁹² Similarly, to the previous argument, the pop culture attacks on many urban Muslims in Indonesia occurred in and after the era of the Suharto government. Furthermore, all this popular modern Islamic culture awareness has attracted urban Muslims to develop Islamic *da'wa* approaches more popularly. Furthermore, both agree that the implication of advanced technological devices and the mass communication era is another factor in developing the pop Islamic cultures,¹⁹³ that led society to the increased use of mass media and the popular preachers' phenomenon among them.¹⁹⁴

Nevertheless, before the early 1980s, pop culture in films, fashion, and music was considered a corruption of the morality of the younger generation (the West influences) that should be avoided. Additionally, any Islamic-related pop culture was considered unmade, old, and contradictory to what Western modern cultures described. However, after the era of information and communication technology arrived, the flow has changed. This resulted

¹⁹¹ Pribadi, "Pop and 'True' Islam in Urban Pengajian: The Making of Religious Authority," 220.

¹⁹² Rijal, "Consuming and Disputing Aisha Song: The Quest for Pleasure and Islamic Romance in Contemporary Indonesia," 3.

¹⁹³ Pribadi, "Pop and 'True' Islam in Urban Pengajian: The Making of Religious Authority," 219; Rijal, "Consuming and Disputing Aisha Song: The Quest for Pleasure and Islamic Romance in Contemporary Indonesia," 5.

¹⁹⁴ Hoesterey, *Rebranding Islam: Piety, Prosperity, and a Self-Help Guru*, 9.

in the rising of the Muslim middle class movement inspired piety and modernity trend, new popular inspiration for all modern Muslims.¹⁹⁵

3.2.1 The Aesthetic Element in *Da'wa*

To experience new feeling and emotion in religion, the element of 'aestheticization' needs to be adopted by contemporary cultures. Although, this aesthetic element becomes general sentiment as identified by Simmer, still, religion needs to be presented as more aesthetically pleasing to attach with new emotional experiences and trends among the Muslim's community, such as religious exciting place, ultimate (peak) experience, including art and music performance.¹⁹⁶ *Da'wa* today still in need of an aesthetic touch, to be conducted in fascinating room with the combination of art and music performance will bring the *jama'ah* entering a new appeal which lead them to experience the peak part. Furthermore, the phenomenon of attending paid *majelis ta'lim* to get religious lessons at the deluxe places, not merely fulfill the religious obligation. Hence, it also entered the aesthetic spaces, where people who joined this must bring their persona into more elegance and well manner style.¹⁹⁷ All these are the result of the blend of consumerism and the commodification of Islam which influenced the Islamic popular piety in the Muslim community of the contemporary public today.

To introduce religion into a fresh environment situation, establishing a niche marketing group is essential to distinguish it from traditional *majelis ta'lim*. Once this niche group is formed, it can foster stronger customer loyalty with fewer competitors. Ustadha Muna expertly developed her personal brand by targeting a specific audience with distinct needs, preferences, and interests that are unmet by other *majelis ta'lim* organizers. To address these challenges effectively, a well-planned and strategic approach to religious marketing is crucial. In my first interview with her, she said,

There are some people who are unreachable to target except through strategic decisions, such as celebrities, artists, and business women. I initiated this meeting to attract them by holding it in a hotel, with payment rates starting from the highest rate of Rp. 1,000,000 to Rp. 1,500,000. We sell prestige. My cinematic seminar concept is accompanied by video

¹⁹⁵ Rijal, "Consuming and Disputing Aisha Song: The Quest for Pleasure and Islamic Romance in Contemporary Indonesia," 4–5.

¹⁹⁶ Luigi Berzano, "Religious Lifestyles," in *Religion, Spirituality and Everyday Practice*, ed. Giuseppe Giordan and William H. Swatos (Springer Netherlands, 2012), 72, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-1819-7>.

¹⁹⁷ Asya Dwina Luthfia and Yusuf Rohmat Yanuri, "Nurturing Piety: The Interplay of New Media, Youth Muslim and Commodification," *Islam Realitas: Journal of Islamic and Social Studies* 10, no. 2 (2025): 218, https://doi.org/10.30983/islam_realitas.v10i2.8618.

presentations, interesting music songs, with an emphasis on, the power of love will make you the best servant.¹⁹⁸

3.2.2 The Development of 4Ps Marketing Strategy for Religion

Religious change follows changes in the religious market. This is compatible with Kitiarsa's theory, as my study framework, which mentioned religion in the market faith arena, may turn religious practices into market desire.¹⁹⁹ In the past, preachers and scholars delivered sermons from mosque pulpits, however, over time, the religious market changed along with changes in the needs and desires of religious consumers. Preachers are now required to be able to adapt to the digital era by carrying out religious branding through digital.²⁰⁰ To find out the religious branding in this digital era, the marketing concept of 4P's seems still relevant today. The marketing strategy is about the identification of the needs and wants of customers, and to respond to both, the creation of the 4P's (products, price, place, and promotion) is strategically needed. Yunshu Xia added, the product is the core marketing strategy element, which refers to the features, benefits, designs, packaging, and the product brand. Price is more about the fulfillment of the customer's needs and preferences in determining the product or service paid by the customer. While the place is the physical or virtual location of the sales channels. Lastly, the promotion is the marketing mix that refers to the communication design of the product promotion.²⁰¹ From the field observations, in the product, I could find there are two kinds of religious products being promoted here: religious services, in this case her cinematic seminar class, and the real products (commodities), such as her typical Arabic perfume with oud scent, abaya dress, brooches, and coffee drinks, which are related to Sufi habits. The use of the 'trading up' and 'trading down' strategies seem very obvious in determining the price for her cinematic *majelis ta'lim*. 'Trading up' means raising the ticket price to show prestige for certain people; on the other hand, the implementation of 'trading down' is to give other low-income customers the opportunity to buy the same service at a more affordable price.²⁰² Ustadha Muna Almunawwar created several ticket categories, providing the first-class (super platinum) and second-class (platinum) levels to attract the upper middle class, like celebrities, entertainers, and businesswomen. Similarly, she offered another category (gold,

¹⁹⁸ Interview with Ustadha Muna Almunawwar, on January 22, 2025.

¹⁹⁹ Kitiarsa, *Religious Commodifications in Asia: Marketing Gods*, 7.

²⁰⁰ Adzkiyah Mubarakah, "Market Religion and Religion Marketplace in Digital World," *Jurnal Riset Ekonomi Syariah*, July 2023, 16–21, <https://doi.org/10.29313/jres.v3i1.1724>.

²⁰¹ Yunshu Xia, "The 4Ps of Marketing and Applications in Various Brands," *Journal of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences* 16, no. EAIS 2023 (2023): 165–67.

²⁰² Alma, *Manajemen Pemasaran Dan Pemasaran Jasa (Marketing Management and Marketing Services)*, 260.

silver, and tribune) to counter people who wanted to enjoy her religious services at a more suitable price for their income. To sell her merchandise products, she used physical and virtual sales channels. In every cinematic seminar of hers, normally some stands for bazaars are allocated by the organizer for her *jama'ah*, including her stand, which sells her products, whereas her @anmaofficial29 Instagram account should be a virtual place of hers. In promoting products, I can see that she uses the marketing mix, the combination of 4Ps, to boost the sales. All these demands are actually to support her *da'wa* movements and her Islamic Schools in Semarang, Mahad Nuruzzahra.

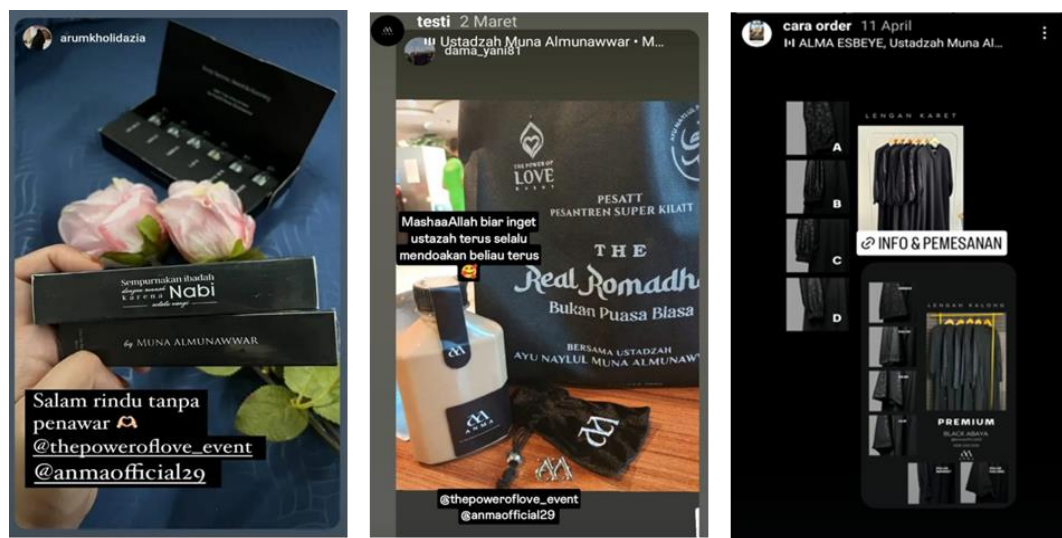


Figure 1.3. Products of ANMA. (Source: Instagram @anmaofficial29 and others).

3.2.3 Marketing Strategy for Niche Group

Furthermore, those unreachable people are those who expect *majelis* in innovative ways, such as being held in a prestigious place; like a five-star hotel, ballroom or Masjid Pondok Indah, and sitting in a reclining chair; not on the floor or carpet, and lastly using cinematic vibes for its *da'wa* visual aids. The fragmented people are celebrities, artists, business women and people who avoid joining the conventional *majelis ta'lim*. When I joined the *majelis* in Masjid Pondok Indah,²⁰³ some celebrities attended the event such as Aisyahrani and Eddies Adelia.²⁰⁴ For this group of people, *majelis* should be experienced in different

²⁰³ One of the elite areas in Jakarta.

²⁰⁴ Interview with Yasmin Jawaz, Ustadha Muna's personal assistant, on February 11, 2025.

and innovative ways, in premium venues, as if going to watching music concerts, still, at the same time, their religious knowledge has increased. To maintain the loyalty of its niche group, consistent marketing communications should be reduced. It is better to rely on word-of-mouth announcements based on positive customer experience. Thus, it will influence them to participate more in trade transactions or any similar cinematic event in the future, if it is encouraged through positive attraction.²⁰⁵ In facing promotional activities with niche marketing group, word-of-mouth communication based on positive involvement is more effective in handling the issues, rather than persistent and direct regular bored marketing communication activities.

3.3 The Phenomenon of War-Ticket among the Popular *Sharā'if*

The Power of Love Cinematic Seminar event was conducted in Bandung City for the first time. The four categories of tickets were provided by The Power of Love (TPL) team Special in Bandung for around 500 participants. The enthusiastic response from the audiences in Bandung seems not as good as if it were conducted in Jakarta, the capital city. For the Bandung event, several weeks before the event, the remaining tickets for the first-class category (star) were still available. However, the tickets for other classes were sold out at that time. Afterwards, within less than two days, the event started, and all tickets were sold. STAR with the price (IDR 1.000.000), SPECTRA (IDR 750.000), MEGA (IDR 500.000), and GRAND (IDR 350.000). For each category, the committees provided a souvenir as a sign of love for the participants. The higher the ticket purchase, the more souvenirs the participant received from the sponsors. This fact again, highlights the point of aesthetic value in the appearance of her cinematic packaging *majelis* product which creates a niche marketing group with its own uniqueness and special needs.

²⁰⁵ Kjell Toften and Trond Hammervoll, "Niche Marketing Research: Status and Challenges," *Marketing Intelligence & Planning* 31, no. 3 (2013): 281, <https://doi.org/10.1108/02634501311324618>.



Figure 2.3. Ads for the Cinematic Seminar on Bandung January 26, 2025.

(Source: Instagram @thepoweroflove_event).

Meanwhile, in the PESATT event (*Pesantren Super Kilat/ Super Lightning Pesantren*) that will be held in Jakarta (the capital city of Indonesia), at Menara 165 on March 2, 2025, the opposite happened differently. The tickets for SUPER PLATINUM (IDR 1.000.000-VIP) and PLATINUM (IDR 750.000 for the second-class upper) were sold within a few seconds after the registration day opened in early of February month. Although several days later, the organizer added allocations for other first-class seats. While the GOLD (IDR 500.000), SILVER (IDR 350.000), and TRIBUNE (IDR 250.000) were still leftover, until two days before the event was conducted. This phenomenon indeed, indicated the existence of middle-class and upper audiences obviously found in participating in paid *majelis ta'lim* of Ustadha Muna within the contemporary public spaces.



Figure 3.3. The Real Ramadhan: *Bukan Puasa Biasa* (Not an Ordinary Fast) ads.

(Source: <https://realromadhan.online/> 3 Feb 2025).

The phenomenon of ‘war-ticket’ is normally found among the popular *sharā’if* preachers’ event. This evident shows that her *da’wa* strategy to attract those considered unreachable to conventional *majelis ta’lim* was targeted successfully. It is a phenomenon like purchasing ticket for popular artist musical concert. My first experience with this war ticket was, when I tried to book the end-year *daura* of 2024 conducted by Ustadha Halimah Alaydrus. The event will be held from 27 to 28 December in Hotel Lorin, Sentul. There were only two classes of accommodation offered, the first was the DELUXE type (IDR 900.000), and the last one was, the EXECUTIVE class (IDR 1.300.000).²⁰⁶ Supposedly, the link was opened at 10.00 am. I assumed that due to the huge number of applicants,

²⁰⁶ Yayasan AhbabuzZahro, [@ahbabuzzahro_]. (2024, December 6). “SANLAT 2 DEKADE Special Event” [Foto]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DDND3MeTcxr/?igsh=bmZrMzY5MmMwMXl3>.

suddenly the link was not accessible, it was postponed until noon. Afterward, I had already stood by in front of my screen, before 12.00 pm, unfortunately at 12.07 pm when I finally could access the link, however, all the tickets were sold. Similarly, regarding the war ticket case of Ustadha Muna, the situation is not so different. I initially tried to book a Super Platinum ticket to see the stage up close, nonetheless, that changed as I did not get one.

3.3.1 Digital Practice in the Contemporary *Da'wa*

Furthermore, the advance technological communication supports the digital religion practice in the contemporary *da'wa* public space. The proliferation of digital media in supporting her *da'wa* is subject to the contemporary marketplace. The method of attendance confirmation via communication technology explains that, Ustadha Muna has applied the digital religion practice.²⁰⁷ A new digital religion way of confirmation in attending the contemporary *majelis ta'lim* which prevails among the urban Muslim communities. This context, confirmed the fact that through development of technological devices, will lead to religious interaction, easier to reach the *da'wa* objectives and make Islamic *da'wa* more enjoyable than studying at any religious formal institution.²⁰⁸ A sort of digital transformation in ticket form was obviously found in this study. From the digital ticket attached in my hand-phone that I must show during registration, to the digital ticket with QR code that I must scan during the entry. Besides, some facilities like souvenir, seminar kit and meals are provided for all categories. The big difference is the availability of a chair with a backrest and table for writing, and the front seat position for the first-class category,²⁰⁹ while the second class receives the same facilities after it, excluding the table and less souvenirs.²¹⁰ Another new finding from this contemporary *majelis ta'lim*, which is usually conducted in the hotel, is the impromptu prayer room and its ablution place, which take up some big spaces in the building, where the contemporary *majelis* are usually conducted. This fact, again, well-matched with the different characteristics I proposed in Chapter 1 in between the contemporary paid *majelis ta'lim* versus the old type one that I have discussed earlier.

²⁰⁷ Heidi A. Campbell and Ruth Tsuria, *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in Digital Media*, 2nd ed., ed. Heidi A. Campbell and Ruth Tsuria (Routledge, 2022), 27.

²⁰⁸ Moch Khafidz Fuad Raya, "Digital Religion: The Packaging and Persuasion of Celebrity Preachers in Contemporary Indonesia," *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 23, no. 67 (2024): 82–83.

²⁰⁹ Sometimes, it was named as Super Platinum or Star for VIP tickets, while the second class was named as Platinum or Specta.

²¹⁰ This experience was based on my presence in the Real Ramadhan *daura*, compared to Bandung TPL event.

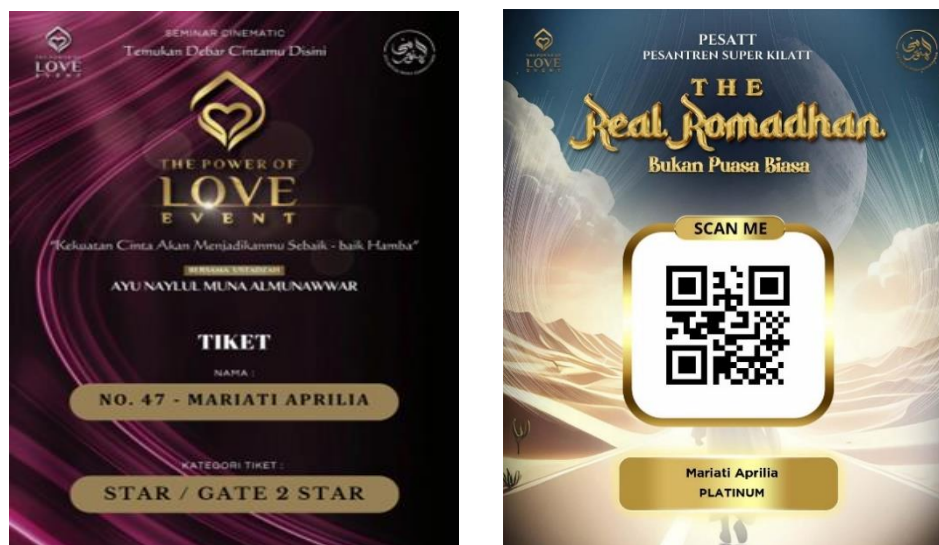


Figure 4.3. Ticket transformation from the virtual only ticket, to the virtual with QR code.

3.4 The Use of Social Media for Contemporary *Da'wa* Strategies

The emergence of a middle-class society with access to education and technology and the rise of privatization and the explosion of television and social media have formed the basic possibilities and social spaces for creating new public figures.²¹¹ The appearance of the current middle class with the support of technological communication devices creates great opportunities for the emergence of new popular preachers. Unlike previous popular preachers who were born through various exclusions and difficult processes, then became popular, appearing on TV. However, opponents say, the current new digital era has created a challenging situation faced by traditional religious central practices that use conservative methods to build religious authority.²¹² Besides, the popularity of social media as part of new communication technologies contributed significantly towards the increase of religious piety in Muslim society.²¹³ Appearing pious on social media through promoting *majelis ta'lim* for public on religious service delivery by female preacher (*ustadzah*) is another form of religious piety, now trending among the female urbanist community.

²¹¹ Hoesterey, *Rebranding Islam: Piety, Prosperity, and a Self-Help Guru*, 9.

²¹² Raya, "Digital Religion: The Packaging and Persuasion of Celebrity Preachers in Contemporary Indonesia," 84.

²¹³ Martin Slema, "Social Media and Islamic Practice: Indonesian Ways of Being Digitally Pious," in *Digital Indonesia* (ISEAS Publishing, 2017), 149, <https://doi.org/10.1355/9789814786003-015>.

Indeed, this kind of religious piety is relevant to the concept of aesthetics that brings them forward towards a more elegant personality.

In the use of social media, there are three official Instagram accounts supporting Ustadha Muna's movement of *da'wa*, @thepoweroflove_event, @ayunaylulmunaalmunawwar, and @anmaofficials29. On the TPL account, she has 23.200 followers with 302 posts.²¹⁴ This social media is prominently used as her official TPL information to communicate about her related cinematic events; past and present, Q&A sessions, and some messages and advice for her followers, while the Instagram account Ayu Naylul Almunawwar, has 5.835 followers to support the previous account,²¹⁵ and ANMA account, 1,115 followers join her, with 15 posts and following 82 other accounts.²¹⁶ This site is specifically designed to promote her merchandises, ranging from coffee drinks, perfumes, brooches to abayas with a man as the model figure. Her trading slogan is, "Keep Serene, Sweet and Stunning," a sort of motivational words which suits for high-class society. Additionally, the brand of ANMA, the short name of Ayu Naylul Muna Almunawwar, also uses another promotion on WhatsApp, Tiktok, and Shopee media to introduce her products. To engage directly in trading with the customers, it provides the link, linktr.ee/ANMAofficial29. Recently, she created her official WhatsApp Channel: Ustadzah Ayu Naylul Muna Almunawwar on April 3, 2025 which has 968 followers.²¹⁷

²¹⁴ The Power of Love Event. [@thepoweroflove_event]. (2025, May 2). "Kekuatan Cinta Akan Menjadikanmu Sebaik-baik Hamba" [Foto]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/thepoweroflove_event/.

²¹⁵ Nailul Muna Almunawwar, A. [@ayunaylulmunaalmunawwar]. (2025, July 19). "Ayu Naylul Muna Almunawwar" [Foto]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/ayunaylulmunaalmunawwar/>.

²¹⁶ ANMA. [@anmaofficial29]. (2025, May 2). "Keep Serene, Sweet &Stunning" [Foto]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/anmaofficial29/>.

²¹⁷ Ayu Naylul Muna Almunawwar, Ustadzah [Ustadzah Ayu Naylul Muna Almunawwar]. (2025, May 5). "Ustadzah Ayu Naylul Muna Almunawwar" [Foto]. WhatsApp Channel Group. <https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029VbAN1psiHphCJ6B8C121>.

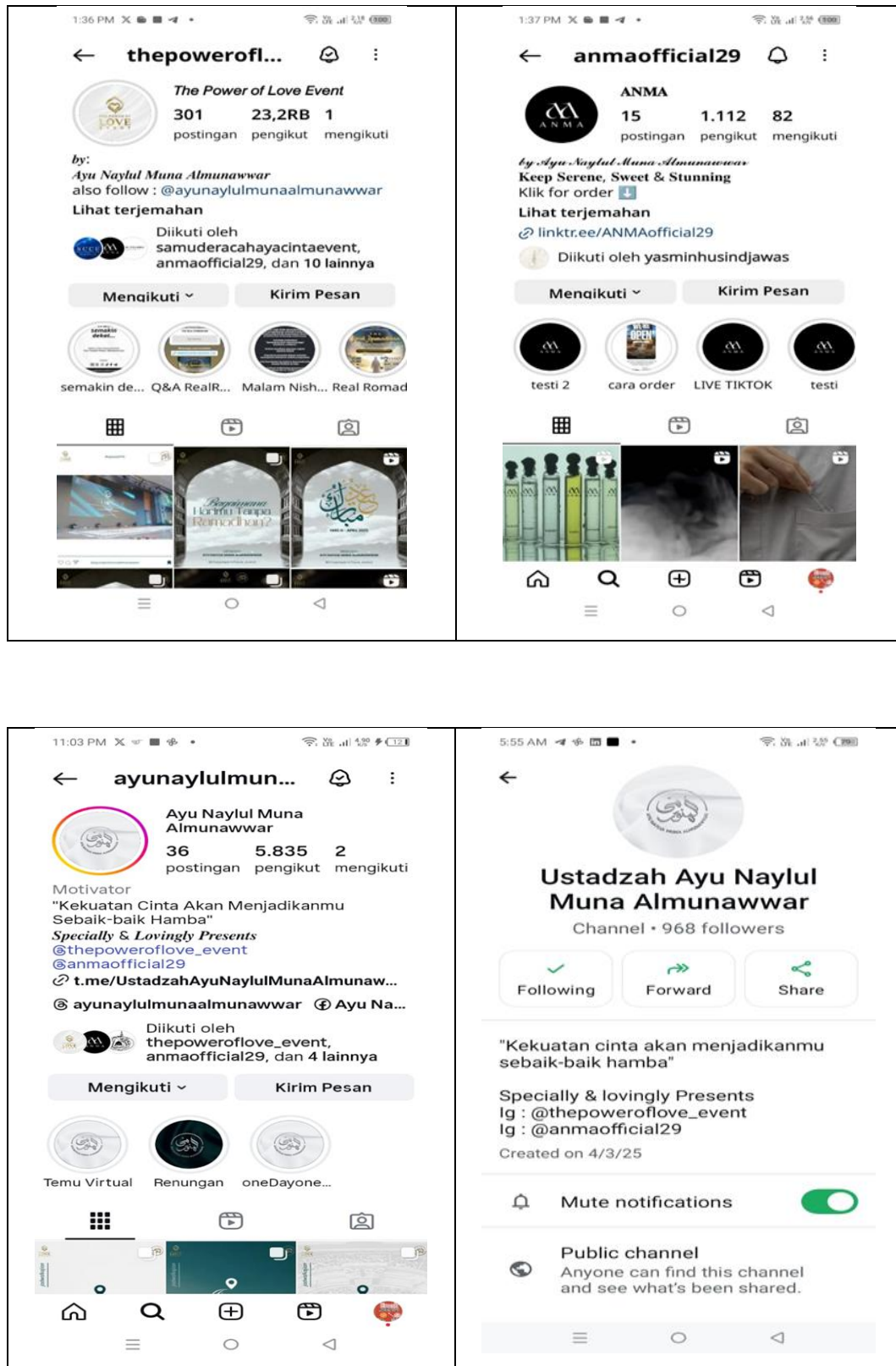


Figure 5.3. Social media accounts of Ustadha Muna Almunawwar.

(Source: Instagram and WhatsApp channels).

3.4.1 Logo as the Brand Identity

In logo, there is another distinguished logo which is always presented in every cinematic seminar's advertisement of her, The Power of Love. According to Capitman, logo is not only about the trademark, it also acts as the main feature of wrapping to influence the buyer. In the mass marketing sphere, after the 1980 era, the value and power of the logo explains the standpoint of a firm and conveys the message of identity, value, reliability, and origin of the firm itself.²¹⁸ Every time I read and watch the ads, there is noticeable point I could observe, the Arabic logo. It appears her name is 'Ayu Naylul Muna Almunawwar' as an expression of her identity as of Arab descent. According to Hoesterey, marketing is not just about communicating an attractive brand image or company logo, but more than just building and maintaining relationships between brand owners, commodity products, and buyers.²¹⁹ Marketing in this case, is more about maintaining good relationships between Ustadha Muna and her The Power of Love entity, the product itself, and her *jama'ah* as loyal customers. Hence, she carefully cultivates her brand as *sharifa* female preacher, who received religious authority from Hadhramaut, smart entrepreneur, as well as religious motivator that mediated economic and emotional relationship with her followers.



Figure 6.3. Arabic Logo of the Power of Love. (Source: WhatsApp channel).

3.5 Pop Music Touch in the Cinematic Seminar: Innovative Way of *Da'wa*

²¹⁸ Pantea Foroudi et al., "Corporate Logo: History, Definition, and Components," *International Studies of Management & Organization* 47, no. 2 (2017): 178, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00208825.2017.1256166>.

²¹⁹ Hoesterey, *Rebranding Islam: Piety, Prosperity, and a Self-Help Guru*, 35.

Music is another first-step strategy to catch those who evade presenting in *majelis ta'lim*, for Ustadha Muna. She argued that those whose hearts are reluctant to join the *majelis* due to its backwardness are busy with their business and worldly matters due to their lack of religious lesson. She said, they do not know Allah yet; following that, they would never fall in love with Him or surrender to Him. *Da'wa* itself is a form of Islamic communication that invites people to the religion of Allah. *Da'wa* through personal or mass communication media, not only in the form of lectures. Writing, books, art, and even music can be a means of preaching in the current era of Industrial Revolution 4.0 and digitalization.²²⁰ Music today is another form of preaching style as long as it does not violate the Islamic values within the religion. For some people, especially those who attached their life strongly with music, should be provided with another form of music which not against the religion. To counter this problem, she comes with music lyrics and the cinematic seminar *majelis*. Hew Wai Weng referred to this phenomenon as a strategic repackaging of religious authority. Ustadha Muna, as a newly risen popular preacher, has effectively utilized marketing strategies to maintain her Islamic traditional authority. By positioning herself as a *Ṭarīqa 'Alawīyya* educator, she aims to propagate Islamic *da'wa* messages while employing sophisticated persuasion techniques that align with contemporary consumer economy trends, media technology, and elements of popular culture.²²¹ As a new popular preacher, Ustadha Muna Almunawwar tries to repackage her role as a disseminator of *Ṭarīqa 'Alawīyya* using marketing strategies, to spread the messages of Islamic *da'wa* through sophisticated persuasion methods in the consumer economy, media technology, and popular culture at the same time. This approach not only enhances her reach but also resonates with a broader audience, making her teachings more accessible and relatable in today's context.

Religious music through its influential lyrics may create the sense of responsibility in completing the religious obligation. Religious songs through the use of allegorical language convey deep messages about the spiritual belief or spiritual experience that are

²²⁰ Sayyid Muhammad Yusuf Aidid, "Peran Dakwah Wasathiyah (Moderat) Habib Umar Bin Hafidz Di Asia Tenggara (The Role of Habib Umar Bin Hafidz's Wasathiyah Da'wah (Moderate) in Southeast Asia)," in *Asean Episentrum Pertumbuhan Dunia: Gagasan Konstruktif Masyarakat Indonesia*, ed. Yanuardi Syukur (Mata Kata Inspirasi, 2023), 645–46.

²²¹ Hew Wai Weng, "Packaging, Persuasion and Propaganda: Popular Preaching and Islamic Counter-Publics in Indonesia," *Asian Studies Review*, Informa UK Limited, March 28, 2022, 71, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357823.2022.2052801>.

easy for listeners to understand.²²² Through strong beliefs, allegorical language²²³ and spiritual experiences, a song can convey a deep message that can inspire the listener. For such, music through songs can have a strong impact on a person's obedience in carrying out the obligation of praying five times a day. Likewise in the life story of Chrisye, another legendary Indonesian musician in the period of (1947-2007). In 1997, he asked Taufiq Ismail, a popular Indonesian litterateur, to write lyrics for a religious-themed song inspired by Surah Yasin verse 65. When he tried to sing the song about the Last Day of Judgement to be recorded, after only two lines, he stopped. He could not continue, he said, as if there was a mysterious power in the song that was so gripping and heart-shaking. After the song was successfully recorded, his wife said, since then, Chrisye never missed praying five times a day again.²²⁴

3.5.1 Music Involvement in *Da'wa* to Increase the Spiritual Piety

Regarding the music involvement which engaged in the element of spiritual piety of *da'wa*, some scholars have identified the progression. Muller wrote that previously, the PAS (Islamic Party of Malaysia) had strictly banned music as a strategic tool in their early political movements. Only Islamic music like Capella and permissible acoustic drums are allowed. Until the 1990's they gradually shifted to targeting new supporters from the young Malays. However, *da'wa* and music in the presence of celebrities have become a colorful entertainment program included in the PAS General Assembly in Malaysia for the current times.²²⁵ Currently, a new line of PAS, younger wing of this Islamic party in Malaysia, opening its Islamic party to music and arts, has led the party to integrate pop music into its party organizational culture and has increased acceptance.²²⁶ Now, the party open to the Islamic entertainment with the sort of genre of 'pop' for its entertainment.

Rudnycky pointed out that to produce more pious and productive workers, Ari Ginanjar combined his spiritual company training with Islamic traditional practices and Euro-American management knowledge. He developed his 'spiritual economies' formula

²²² D. F. N. Khasanah et al., "Alegori Dalam Lirik Lagu Bermakna Religiusitas Guna Meningkatkan Pemahaman," *Jurnal Bastra (Bahasa Dan Sastra)* 9, no. 4 (2024): 761–62, <https://doi.org/10.36709/bastra.v9i4.737>.

²²³ Allegorical language means a style of language that expresses something using metaphors or depictions to convey a meaning.

²²⁴ Tri Yulistira, "Mengenang Chrisye Sang Maestro Keturunan China," PPID KOTA SERANG, August 23, 2021, <https://ppid.serangkota.go.id/detailpost/mengenang-chrisye-sang-maestro-keturunan-china>.

²²⁵ Müller, "POST-ISLAMISM OR POP-ISLAMISM? Ethnographic Observations of Muslim Youth Politics in Malaysia," 272.

²²⁶ Dominik M. Müller, *Islam, Politics and Youth in Malaysia: The Pop-Islamist Reinvention of PAS* (Routledge, 2014), 5.

called as “Emotional and Spiritual Quotient” (ESQ Training) to educate the Krakatau Steel employees using slide power point presentation, video clips, colorful photographs and popular music.²²⁷ The power point slide was a sophisticated tool for presentation in 2002. At that time, combined with popular music, led to his spiritual lecture motivation became one of the prominent company trainings often used not only in Indonesia, but also abroad.

Meanwhile, Syamsul Rijal explained, in the realm of *da'wa* performances, Islamic music in Indonesia has experienced a gradual development from old '*gambus*' music, *qasidah*²²⁸, *nasyid*²²⁹ to modern pop music. Rhoma Irama, a legendary Indonesian musician, has transformed local Malay '*dangdut*' that has been modified and popularized into songs with more expressive Islamic messages, to make a rival with western rock genre bands. Subsequently, followed by the Islamic songs within Pop genres as popularized by Bimbo, Opick, Ungu, Wali, and, rock genres by Gigi and Slank Band.²³⁰ Music that was previously tied to Western values, gradually underwent transformation and development over time to become more expressive with Islamic messages, as a form of expression of Islamic piety in the public space.

Though music has developed in playing its role on the *da'wa* stage in Indonesia, in facing the challenges of contemporary *da'wa*, among the *ḥabā'ib* and *sharā'if* who use music as a strategic path for *da'wa* are Habib Syech, Ustadha Amira and Ustadha Muna Almunawwar. Zamhari, et al., wrote that Habib Syech had to ride a bicycle to carry out his *da'wa* duties from one village to another. He was known as a preacher who used to share food among his *jama'ah*. At first, few people were encouraged to attend his *majelis*. One day, his uncle, Habib Ahmad bin Abdurrahman Assegaf gave him the book "*Simṭu al-Durur*" (String of Pearls), a Salawat book that is famous among the *ḥabā'ib* in Yemen and the Muslim community in Indonesia. Thus, it inspired him to change his *da'wa* strategy. Since then, he has composed the Salawat songs contained in the book accompanied by tambourine musical instruments into beautiful music song compositions. Sometimes, he also composed other Javanese songs that were popularized by the Wali Songo, such as “Ilir-Ilir”, “Turi-Turi Putih” and “Padang Bulan.” As time went by, with his fluency in Javanese and his ability to compose Salawat songs, his preaching was increasingly accepted by the

²²⁷ J, “Spiritual Economies: Islam and Neoliberalism in Contemporary Indonesia,” 106–12.

²²⁸ A form of Arabic poetry or song with a religious theme, especially Islam.

²²⁹ Islamic vocal music art.

²³⁰ Rijal, “Consuming and Disputing Aisha Song: The Quest for Pleasure and Islamic Romance in Contemporary Indonesia,” 2–5.

community.²³¹ Again, it is evident that the involvement of music within *da'wa* sphere will create approval by the public.

Ustadha Amirah bt. Jindan has no official social media, however, she is very productive in composing Islamic songs. She created the lyric song of "*Ya Tarim wa Ahlaha*," uploaded on YouTube on the account of 2 Heaven 2gether with 4,57 subscribers. According to YouTube descriptions, this song has been uploaded since 2 September 2022, covered by several singers, males, and females, watched by 136.674 viewers, and achieved 2.5 thousand likes.²³² This song describes the city of Tarim as a unique and blessed part of the city, apart from Mecca and Medina. Tarim is claimed as a thousand saints city (*Kota Seribu Wali*) which, its road could be a teacher for those who have no teacher. In that song, she mentioned her ancestors, Faqih al-Muqaddam, and some important figure clans of Banu Alawiyyah (Ba'Alawi descent) such as Sayyid 'Umar al-Muhdor and Sayyid Abu Bakr al-'Adny to show the greatness and blessings of the city.

3.5.2 The Presence of the Artist in Her Innovative *Da'wa*.

Amidst the Cinematic TPL event in Bandung, Ustadha Muna Almunawwar invited a female singer to perform her song on stage. She shared her religious experience, where she routinely recites 1000 *Salawat* prayers per day, divided into four times—morning, afternoon, evening, and night—for 250 times each. When she faced a difficult problem, impossible to tackle, Allah made it easy for her, she said.

One day, when I urgently needed 8 million rupiahs very soon, somehow, suddenly my friend phoned and wanted to lend me the money. When many things occurred unexpectedly, Allah helped me to solve the problem. Besides, I also have three prayer requests that I have never changed throughout my life, namely, hoping to end in *husnul khatima*, asking for forgiveness for all my sins and mistakes and all creatures on earth, and asking for guidance to always be on the path of Allah.

Before the sharing session ended, she closed the session by singing her popular song, "*Dia Menunggu*" (He is Waiting), a song written by Panji Sakti, a writer and literary figure from West Java, about the God's invitation to the mosque, a comfort place that is filled with people but feels spacious, not cramped. The point that is highlighted here is that Ega could never sing it completely; she kept crying while singing the song. The Islamic

²³¹ Zamhari and Mustofa, "The Popular Da'wah Movement in Urban Communities: The Role of Hadrami Scholars' Da'wah in Response to Religious Radicalism in Indonesia," 197.

²³² 2 Heaven 2gether, "Ya Tarim Wa Ahlaha BY UMI - Thomas H," YouTube, 2 Heaven 2gether, September 2, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZEh3kqRq0g>.

message contained in the song stuck tightly in her heart. The same case happened again when she had to show on the TPL Bandung stage and continued with another song, “*Jiwaku Sekuntum Bunga Kamboja*” (My Heart is a Frangipani Flower). After her performance, the audience was carried away by the story that was conveyed and felt entertained by her melodious voice. Most of the comments stated that she can sing the song emotionally, and people accepted her performance in positive ways. This situation highlighted the point that *da'wa* accompanied by the appearance of popular artists, the presentation of “Islamic” pop songs, and good visualization will be able to attract messages and, thus, stick in the hearts of the audience.





Figure 7.3. Ega, an invited artist in the Power of Love Event, last January 2025.

(Source: Instagram @eghadelatoya)²³³

3.5.3 Good Musical Lyrics as Good Preaching Strategy

To provide input for those who are already close to music, Sharifa Muna Almunawwar gave some lyrics of musical songs from Risna Ories' collaborations,²³⁴ sung by popular female artists in the country, such as Alma Esbeye, Tantri from Kotak Band, Donita and Aisyahrani. Her first debut song was "*Candu Dalam Rindu*" (Addiction in Longing) sung by Tantri, a 'hijabi' rock singer from Kotak band, who was known for her heavy voice character.²³⁵ This song was publicly launched on YouTube by RK Musikindo, two years ago, on February 21, 2023 with 187 subscribers, and 140,095 viewers with 1.7K likes. This

²³³ Eghadelatoya. [@eghadelatoya]. (2025, January 27) "Ustadzah Ayu Naylul Muna Almunawwar" [Video]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/eghadelatoya/>.

²³⁴ Risna is one of the Indonesian popular 'hijabi' music composer, who composes many popular songs in collaboration with the country artists and celebrities.

²³⁵ Tantri Syalindri - Topic, "Candu Dalam Rindu (Indonesia)," YouTube, Tantri Kotak Ustadzah Muna Almunawwar Present, February 21, 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_POp6l7q3Q.

song talks about a series of hopes for longing for the figure of the Prophet Muhammad. Full of passionate love, unquenchable longing to be with him (in the Hereafter) and receive his intercession (*shafā'a*), special assistance from him, as the Prophet of the End Times (*Akhir Zaman*) for his *umma*. There were 124 comments found on the site, most of which responded positively and agreed with the same sentiment. Expecting the same emotions towards the Prophet's *shafā'a*.

The second song was entitled “*Maha Cinta*” posited as the original soundtrack of her Cinematic seminar. It was publicly launched on You Tube by RK Musikindo on January 26, 2024 with 2.2K subscribers, and 154.178 viewers with 1.9K likes. The comments are closed for this video.²³⁶ Behind the story of this song, Ustadha Muna was on her way to Mecca when she wrote the lyrics. She dedicated the lyrics of this song to Allah, The Most Love. And the reason Donita, the Indonesian ‘hijabi’ women celebrity, was chosen as the singer to collaborate with Risna Ories is because of her distinctive voice which will give 'spirit' to the song.²³⁷ To capture the meaning of the song in English translation lyrics, here I provide with the text.

Calm with You

My longing is too deep

You are the one who deserves to be loved

Only You are the Perfect

Beautiful when we are together

There is only me and You

The night becomes a witness

Pathetic tears of regret

²³⁶ Ustadzah Muna Almunawwar - Topic, “MAHA CINTA (Feat. Donita, Risna Ories) (Original Soundtrack ‘The Power of Love’),” YouTube, TEMAN HIJRAHKU_PROJECT USTADZAH MUNA ALMUNAWWAR, January 26, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GEh754Eh74w>.

²³⁷ Ichsan Suhendra, “Kolaborasi Menggetarkan Hati, Risna Ories, Donita, Dan Ustazah Ayu Di Lagu Maha Cinta Artikel Ini Sudah Tayang Di VIVA.Co.Id Pada Hari Sabtu, 1 Juni 2024 - 10:09 WIB Judul Artikel: Kolaborasi Menggetarkan Hati, Risna Ories, Donita, Dan Ustazah Ayu Di Lagu Maha Cinta,” VIVA News & Insights, June 1, 2024, <https://www.viva.co.id/showbiz/musik/1719087-kolaborasi-menggetarkan-hati-risna-ories-donita-dan-ustazah-ayu-di-lagu-maha-cinta?page=1>.

Maybe I'm not the best
 Maybe I'm not the most beautiful (in manner towards God)
 But look at my heart, calling your name, Almighty Love
 My soul is tormented, bearing sin
 I want to be loyal and to serve only You, forever
 My God, ya Rā'uf
 My God, ya Wadūd
 My God, ya Raḥīm
 You are the Most Love.

The text is full about the deep feeling to God's love, being a good servant of Him. The last part of the songs, describes the three good names of Allah, *Asma'ul Husna*; *Ar-Rā'uf* means, the Gracious, *Al-Wadūd* is (the Friendly God), and *Ar-Raḥīm* (The Merciful), all of these are descriptions of characteristics associated with loving-kindness. From this study I found that, only in her contemporary *majelis ta'lim*, the religious session was ended by singing together with all *majelis* participants. This practice has been implied twice, both in her cinematic seminar events in Bandung, and Jakarta based on my participatory observations.

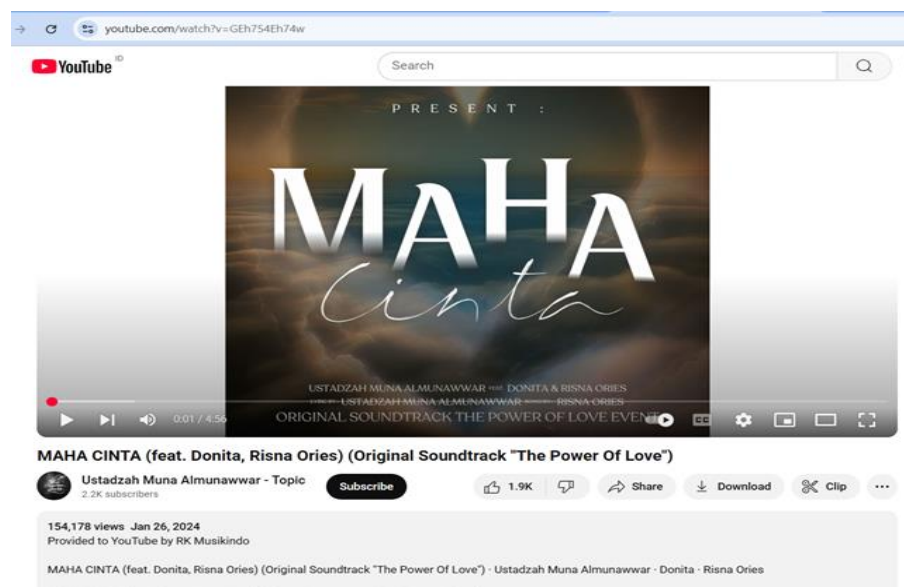


Figure 8.3. Maha Cinta Song. (Source: You Tube)

The third song is “*Beri Aku Cinta*” (Give Me Love) which, was popularized by Alma Esbeye, who is known as one of the Gambus singers in Indonesia. She has a melodious and calm voice character, which made her suited to covering this song. In this song I found that there is an excerpt of a prayer in Arabic,

*Allahumma inni as'aluka hubbaka wa hubba man yuhibbuka wa hubba kulla ,
'amalin yuqarribunī ilā hubbaka,*

Which means, (O God, I ask You for Your Love, the love of those who love You, and the love of every deed that brings me closer to Your Love). And one Arabic phrase, *ya Allah, aghithna* (O Allah, please help us) to escape from the fleeting and despicable objects, and to live in a good life so that I may die in good condition (being able to say the name of Allah before dying). It was reported in You Tube, this video has been viewed by 93.958 viewers with 1K likes. Furthermore, it was composed by Risna Ories, however, released publicly by the Orchard Enterprise.²³⁸

The last and current video, “*Tuhan Dengarkan Do'aku*” (God, Hear My Prayer). First publicly announced in her Cinematic Seminar in Malaysia, at Bangi Avenue Convention Centre on February 16, 2025. The song sung by Aisyahrani, the sister of Syahrini,²³⁹ a ‘hijabi’ popular artist in Indonesia, who came along directly to Malaysia to join Ustadha Muna’s *majelis* and entertain the *jama'ah*.²⁴⁰ From the You Tube report, although this video has just been released two months ago, it captured that the video has been viewed by 20k viewers, with 79.2K subscribers with 912 likes.²⁴¹ This song is about the unknown mystery of life, but hoping for the God's guidance to walk orderly in His path. It has 114 comments, and most of the commentators responded positively to the song. They agreed on the sentimental lyrics part, because it touched their heart. From the comments, it was clearly identified that the viewers were her loyal *jama'ah*. They often commented that they loved Ustadha Muna and missed coming back to her *majelis* to meet her.

From the You Tube Analytic Checker, Lenos I found that “*Maha Cinta*” video was viewed by 156.687 viewers with 1954 likes, meanwhile, the average channels, viewed by

²³⁸ ALMA ESBEYE - Topic, “Beri Aku Cinta,” YouTube, Alma Esbeye Ustadzah Muna Almunawwar, June 28, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9EwNuR3L9iU>.

²³⁹ Syahrini is one among the top artists in Indonesia.

²⁴⁰ Interview with Kak Salwa on February 18, 2025.

²⁴¹ RKM Entertainment X TemanHijrahku project, “VIDEO LYRICS " TUHAN DENGARKAN DO'A KU " USTADZAH MUNA ALMUNAWWAR & RISNA ORIES FEAT AISYAHIRANI,” YouTube, " TUHAN DENGARKAN DO'A KU " USTADZAH MUNA ALMUNAWWAR & RISNA ORIES FEAT AISYAHIRANI, March 2, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QS4kyR1faf4>.

55.884 viewers with 768 likes. Comparing to the other videos, “Maha Cinta” song, was the mostly watched by people. On the other hand, although “Tuhan Dengarkan Aku” was released currently, two months ago, it shows that this video has attracted the public attention, watched by 8284 viewers with 257 likes. And the estimate revenue for all videos is approximately \$ 213.09 - \$532.74.

LENOS

Views Likes Subscribers Comments Monetization Seo Artist Support Free Tools

Want to analyze the statistics and secrets of a YouTube video? This tool will do exactly that. Simply enter the video link, and discover a plethora of interesting statistics, from tags to engagement rate!

MAHA CINTA (feat. Donita, Risna Ories)
(Original Soundtrack "The Power Of Love")

Video's Likes Eng. Rate: 1.25% | Comments Eng. Rate: 0%

Channel's Likes Eng. Rate: 3 % | Comments Eng. Rate: 0 %
We used last 10 videos to calculate engagement rate.

Video's Metrics: 156687 Views | 1954 Likes | 0 Comments

Channel's Avg Metrics: 55884 Views | 768 Likes | 0 Comments
We used last 10 videos to calculate average.

Ustadzah Muna Almunawwar - Topic

2.2k Subscribers

Video Tags:

Ustadzah Muna Almunawwar, Donita, Risna Ories, MAHA CINTA (feat. Donita, Risna Ories) [Original Soundtrack "The Power Of Love"]

LENOS

Views Likes Subscribers Comments Monetization Seo Artist Support Free Tools

Current Video vs. Channel Average Performance

- Compare this video's metrics against the average performance of the channel.

	VIDEO METRICS	AVERAGE CHANNEL METRICS
Views	156687 ▲ 180.38%	55884
Likes	1954 ▲ 154.43%	768
Comments	0	0

Daily Average Metrics Overview

- Showing daily averages of views, likes, and comments based on the video's performance since upload.

UPLOADED DAYS AGO	464 days ago
DAILY VIEWS	338
DAILY LIKES	4
DAILY COMMENTS	0

Estimate Revenue For The Video

- The values below are based on the typical RPM range from \$1.36 to \$3.40

Total Video Views

156,687

Estimated Revenue

\$213.09 - \$532.74

70

Last 10 Videos Comparison				
- Below you can see how the previous videos performed, in comparison to the video				
VIDEO TITLE	DATE	LIKES	COMMENTS	VIEWS
MAHA CINTA (feat. Donita, Risna Ories) (Original Soundtrack "The Power Of Love")	1 year ago	1954	0	156687
Tuhan Dengarkan Do'a Ku (feat. Aisyahrani)	2 months ago	257 ▼ 86.85%	0 ▼ 0%	8284 ▼ 94.71%
MAHA CINTA (feat. Donita, Risna Ories) (Original Soundtrack "The Power Of Love")	1 year ago	1954 ▼ 0%	0 ▼ 0%	156687 ▼ 0%
Candu Dalam Rindu (Instrumental)	2 years ago	94 ▼ 95.19%	0 ▼ 0%	2681 ▼ 98.29%

Figure 9.3. The result of You Tube Analyst Checker. (Source: lenostobe.com).²⁴²

3.6 Conclusion

According to this chapter, the spread of popular Islamic culture with the aid of cutting-edge technical communication tools presents a significant chance to establish a new star as a well-liked preacher, as I discovered in the instance of Ustadha Muna Almunawwar. The results indicated that the goal of *da'wa* was to boost the value by combining it with religious marketing techniques. According to the 4Ps marketing plans, the aestheticization component and helpful social media for religion branding were helpful in accomplishing the primary objective of the religion. In particular, the power of love events was used as a source of direction for worshipping Allah as the creator of the universe.

From this study, it indicated that several digital practices took place in the public *da'wa* environment of today. Examples of modern digital practices include using digital forms to fill out attendance forms, creating logos for social media, and addressing strategic concerns like word-of-mouth marketing, which are thought to be crucial for preserving the niche market. Due to distinguished preferences and tendencies, a niche group is made. Therefore, it also created brand loyalties who followed the offered product with less effort in marketing.

In this chapter, I highlighted the point that music consisting of religious Islamic messages is a powerful tool to influence urban people. Through Islamic songs, people will be aware of God's existence, the Prophet's goodness, the importance of seeking religious

²⁴² LENOS, "YouTube Video Analytics Checker: MAHA CINTA (Feat. Donita, Risna Ories) (Original Soundtrack 'The Power of Love')," YouTube Video Analytics Checker, accessed May 5, 2025, <https://www.lenostube.com/en/youtube-video-analytics-checker/?share=f853cc9892147f1f>.

knowledge, religious duty as personal obligation, and so on. These communicated the importance of religious piety as self-prestige among the middle group of society.

Next chapter, listening to the voice of the followers on how they perceive Ustadha Muna as their life changer to be closer to the Power of God's love will be explained in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER IV

VOICES OF DEVOTION: FEMALE FOLLOWERS AND THE SPIRITUAL IMPACT OF THE POWER OF LOVE EVENT

4.1 Introduction

On March 2, 2025, on the second day of the month of Ramadan 1446 Hijriya, the Menara 165 Jakarta building, which had the word Allah (*lafz*) written on its top, was suddenly filled with a thousand Muslim women crowd. Most of them were wearing abayas of various colours and intended to attend the cinematic event of Ustadha Muna. The topic discussed was the Ramadan preparations, the 'Real Ramadan: *Bukan Puasa Biasa*' (Not an Ordinary Fast). Suddenly, the *hadrhrah* team stopped singing, and serious music was heard from the stage; then the event began with her lecture, "How were your days in the month of Ramadan?" The first question was addressed with a heart-rending tone, surprisingly to the audience, which later answered with emotion and non-verbal reactions. "What did you prepare yesterday to welcome this holy month, food or faith?" (continued with) "How many times have you broken your fast with the slandered corpse of your sister?" The followers heard weeping from the ballroom, as if such spiritual hits attached to their hearts, then replied with hysterical reactions and echoed, *Ustadha...*" regretting the sins. This phenomenon shows clearly that the presence of Sharifa Muna Almunawwar brings the spiritual attachment of God through her utterances and creates a big impact for her followers to attend and reattend her *majelis ta'lim* as a pathway to increase the spiritual piety in the contemporary marketplace.

If we refer to the contemporary public sphere, religious authority within the traditional Hadhramaut framework continues to evolve, particularly related to *sharā'if da'wa* performances. Sharifa Muna Almunawwar, as recognized by Tarimi's authority, has been granted the authority to engage in *da'wa*. She has incorporated innovative methods into *da'wa*, as found in her cinematic concert vibes, while maintaining classical Islamic teachings. The Power of Love, with an emphasis on God as her core teaching's value, with additional Sufism based on love, is another approach she conveys in every *majelis ta'lim* of hers. Fatimah Husein noted that Aisyah Farid used another innovative method of *da'wa* by incorporating *da'wa* events with the element of theatre, while Halimah Alaydrus was considered the prominent female *sharīfa preacher* who successfully attracted over ten thousand women from the Ba'Alawi and non-Ba'Alawi that were held in various (hotel) ballrooms and meeting halls, who could persist with her huge audiences online as well as offline followers that were seldom found among the contemporary Ba'Alawi male

preachers. She also highlighted the new generation from *the sharā'if* who use social media as the tool of *da'wa*, such as Sania bt. 'Umar Almutahhar, who was born in the year 2001 and has around 135K Instagram followers, and Fatimah bt. Mundzir al-Musawa, born in 1998, who has approximately 333K Instagram followers.²⁴³ Apart from that, there was Salwa Alattas, who has inspired innovation in the art of *hadrah* music in Medan, North Sumatra. She succeeded in modifying the use of various musical instruments to suit the richness of local culture, as well as adding more dynamic dance movements as a reflection of the combination of Arab traditions and Indonesian culture. As a result, it has not only enriched the treasures of Islamic art in Indonesia but also served as an effective medium for preaching that has combined spiritual elements and interesting entertainment that can be enjoyed by all groups, especially Muslim women in Medan.²⁴⁴ All these are clear evidence of the dynamics of contemporary Indonesian Ba'Alawi female preachers, along with the development of Hadhrami Studies, which has coloured the role of women in Indonesian Muslim history, as agreed by Fatimah Husein.

Good visualization of images is also another recommendation preferred among her followers. Not only through spiritual attachment, a good depiction of image as an Arab identity is another vivid clue among the Hadrami diaspora. Arabs, as depicted by Freitag, always kept close contact with their homeland through remittance providers or visiting the land throughout history.²⁴⁵ The scene of Tarim City also appeared as part of her cinematic screen. She described Tarim as a city full of faith, where their people are busy with Qur'an and *dhikr* practices, the male population prays in congregation in the mosque, their women cannot be found in any public market, and every night of Ramadhan is filled with men prostrating themselves to Allah in their night prayers, as propagated by Ustadha Muna in her PESATT event. To maintain her connection to Hadhramaut, she played as a remittance personal actor, where she shared mostly the ticket revenues received on the special occasion of Ramadhan class for the fast-breaking menus provided for Tarim people. This condition was agreed upon by her audiences through their positive responses when she asserted through the coverage photos on the atmosphere before cooking the food, which was explained on the screen. To find out how she managed to maintain her Tarim authority, which is connected to the teachings of the Prophet, in the contemporary public space,

²⁴³ Husein, "Ba 'Alawi Women and The Development of Hadrami Studies in Indonesia," 152–53.

²⁴⁴ Yusra Dewi Siregar et al., "Syarifah Salwa Al-Attas Dan Majelis Nururrahmah: Memperkuat Muslimah Di Medan," *Islam & Contemporary Issues* 4, no. 1 (2024): 26, <https://doi.org/10.57251/ici.v4i1.1414>.

²⁴⁵ Freitag, *Indian Ocean Migrants and State Formation in Hadhramaut: Reforming the Homeland*, 4.

informal interviews were conducted among nine participants, ending with in-depth interviews from Ustadha Muna, two *majelis ta'lim* leaders in Bogor and Malaysia, and two persons from the exclusive member of Ustadha Muna. Total respondents are fourteen persons.

4.2 Social composition of the Followers

Based on my observation, there are two kinds of *majelis ta'lim* gatherings offered by Ustadha Muna, the regular session (unpaid attendance) and the paid one (cinematic seminar session). The number of followers in her *majelis ta'lim* varies depending on the event. In her regular *majelis* circles, such as every Wednesday morning at Masjid Pondok Indah, MT Kiswatun Nabi in Depok, MT Nur Khodijah in South Tangerang, MT Nurul Burhani in Bendungan Hilir (Limboto), MT at Dalail Khoirot Building in Cidodol, at Ms. Yelin's house in West Jakarta (Hankam Slipi), the number of participants ranges from 600 to 1,000.²⁴⁶ Other *majelis ta'lim* by invitations depends on the place where it holds, like in Majelis Az-Zikra, around 500 attendees have joined the *majelis*, however, the charity gained more than the committee expected in any special religious event they held, as reported by the Committee Leader of Majelis Az-Zikra.²⁴⁷ When her *majelis* was held in a prestigious place such as the Convention Center in Medan, last February 2, 2025, for free, thousands of people have attended her events.²⁴⁸ While in her cinematic events, the allocation seats are provided around 600-1,200 seats.²⁴⁹ However, when I started to observe her study, it was not occurred in the month of *Maulid* events, therefore I have no detailed information on the exact number of attendees in the special events.

Most of the followers are young, and working women aged 22 to 62 years. If we refer to Buchari Alma, the followers of Ustadha Muna are classified between these two groups. Firstly, between the ages of 22 and 45 years, and secondly, between the ages of 45 and 65 years.²⁵⁰ They usually wear black dominant Arab long dress (*abaya*), with variant colour veils. Some of them wear black veil, and some also wear the face-veil. My engagement with the followers indicates that most of them come from middle class to upper family backgrounds, especially for the cinematic *majelis* event of her. Since she relied more

²⁴⁶ Interview with Yana on June 16, 2025.

²⁴⁷ Interview with Ustadha Ajeng Kamaliah on February 15, 2025.

²⁴⁸ Interview with Yasmin Jawaz on February 11, 2025.

²⁴⁹ Interview with Yasmin Jawaz on February 11, 2025.

²⁵⁰ Alma, *Manajemen Pemasaran Dan Pemasaran Jasa (Marketing Management and Marketing Services)*, 206–7.

on the promotion based on her official Instagram @thepoweroflove_event, @ayunaylulmunaalmunawwar, and word-to-mouth communication marketing, while she gives her regular sessions, most of her followers are social media literate. They grew up and live in an era of rapidly evolving communication media; they are also called digital natives or the internet-connected generation, closely associated with a consumerist lifestyle²⁵¹ that promotes religion as a desirable new product or service. It is entirely understandable, since she focused on her niche group that she usually held her *majelis* in prestigious places or five stars hotel of the city. Normally, seven days before the event, the tickets are sold.²⁵²

Many of the attendees are young adult followers, who came from high school graduates up to university degree achievers. Some of them work in white-collar jobs such as administrator of company, the employee, and others are school teacher and freelancer. While others are housewives, and working women who came from educated family background. None of them are seen from low paid jobs.

The followers I met in Jakarta and Bandung were mostly Javanese, Sundanese, and Batavians who were close to traditionalist Islam, while some of them were Malaysians and Singaporeans. Javanese, especially from the islands of Central Java to East Java, are the largest ethnic group in Indonesia.²⁵³ Historically, Islam entered the island when its people already had strong beliefs in their old traditions; however, through the process of interrelation and acculturation, Javanese culture and traditions underwent a transformation. Furthermore, Islamic teachings acculturated these cultures and traditions, contributing to the unique character of Islam in Indonesia.²⁵⁴ Additionally, Sundanese is the second largest ethnic group in Indonesia after Javanese. Although Shuhufi and Purkon cited Hurgronje, who argued that Islam came to Sunda land when their people already had their inherited ancestral beliefs, Islamic values had influenced the Sundanese traditions and cultures. For that reason, Sundanese people perceived Islam as the central point in almost all their

²⁵¹ Bhirawa Anoraga and Minako Sakai, "From Pemuda to Remaja: Millenials Reproducing Civic Nationalism in Post-New Order Indonesia," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 51, no. 150 (2023): 7, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2023.2225928>.

²⁵² Interview with Yasmin Jawaz on February 11, 2025.

²⁵³ Muhammad Shuhufi and Arip Purkon, "Harmonization of Islamic Law and Local Culture: A Study of Indonesian Sundanese Ethnic Culture," *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Syir'ah* 21, no. 1 (2023): 140, <https://doi.org/10.30984/jis.v21i1.1870>.

²⁵⁴ Muh Syauqi Malik and Maslahah Maslahah, "THE INTERRELATIONSHIP OF JAVANESE AND ISLAMIC VALUES ON EDUCATIONAL ASPECTS AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS," *Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities* 6, no. 2 (2021): 120–21, <https://doi.org/10.21580/jish.v6i2.8717>.

lives.²⁵⁵ Meanwhile, Rijal quoted Fadhli that the Batavians, as natives of Jakarta, had a strong attachment to religious rituals brought by local *habā'ib* and ulama who spread traditional Islamic values based on traditional Sunni Islamic teachings since the 19th century.²⁵⁶ In line with Rijal, Zubair mentioned that Abdullah Syafi'ie, as one important local ulama from Batavia, grew and studied in the religious circles of Ulama from Hadhramaut. This Islamic legacy has been inherited throughout several period of times in the Muslim societies of Batavian people.²⁵⁷ Furthermore, these three ethnicities, if they are Muslim, are willing to strive to become good Muslims by joining several *ta'lim* assemblies to increase their knowledge of Islam.

Meanwhile, in transnational zone stages, Malaysia organized the Cinematic TPL event last February 16, 2025, for the first time; previously, her sister, Ustadha Alina Almunawwar, had preached in the country between 2012 and 2013. The followers from Malaysia used to visit Semarang around the years, specifically Mahad Nuruzzahra.²⁵⁸ Furthermore, Malaysia has enjoyed Islam as the federation religion since 1957 based on its Federal Constitution of Malaysia 2010;²⁵⁹ therefore Islam held strongly by their people. Whereas in Singapore, she has a regular schedule preaching in the country, previously every month before the COVID pandemic.²⁶⁰ Although Islam is a minority religion in Singapore, Malay culture, Islam, and language are the primary identities of Singaporean Malays. Malay is one of the state-recognized racial categories, representing 15% of the total population of 5.6 million in Singapore, of which 90% are Muslim.²⁶¹ Therefore, Singaporeans who participate in UM assembly meetings must be Singaporean Malays of proper standing.

Since the membership is not strictly managed in Muna Almunawwar's gatherings, her disciples are free to join and circulate to any *majelis ta'lim*. This is exactly similar to what has been experienced by the followers of Habib Munzhir (Majelis Rasulullah), who

²⁵⁵ Shuhufi and Purkon, "Harmonization of Islamic Law and Local Culture," 141–45.

²⁵⁶ Syamsul Rijal, "Following Arab Saints: Urban Muslim Youth and Traditional Piety in Indonesia," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 48, no. 141 (2020): 150, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2020.1729540>.

²⁵⁷ Zubair, "K.H. Abdullah Syafi'ie: Ulama Produk Lokal Asli Betawi Dengan Kiprah Nasional Dan Internasional," 319.

²⁵⁸ Interview with Kak Salwa on February 18, 2025.

²⁵⁹ Müller, *Islam, Politics and Youth in Malaysia: The Pop-Islamist Reinvention of PAS*, 10.

²⁶⁰ Interview with Ustadha Muna Almunawwar on January 22, 2025.

²⁶¹ Norshahril Saat, "Managing Islam in Singapore: A Strong and Resilient State," *Studia Islamika* 29, no. 2 (August 19, 2022): 215–16, <https://doi.org/10.36712/sdi.v29i2.25215>.

correspondingly attended the *Majelis* in Kwitang and other similar religious gathering places.²⁶² In addition, most of the followers have immersed their souls in the pleasures of life in the religious *ta'lim* assembly; some of them have just started attending the study at UM in 2023; therefore, they will look for other *majelises* that have the same goals and vision, especially as conveyed by the preachers who graduated from Dar al-Zahra, for example, Ustadha Halimah Alaydrus.²⁶³ Despite the lack of rigorous membership standards, followers of UM typically show their devotion to her by regularly taking part in a variety of her paid and non-paid *majelis* assemblies. I classify them as 'the loyalists of TPL events.' According to a number of comments posted on Ustadha's official social media, these regular followers appear to buy items from ANMA's physical and virtual businesses, including the black abaya, perfume, brooch, and her delectable coffee. Her crew, on the other hand, was made up of only two or three professionals, one of whom was a graphic designer who lived in Semarang, the actual home base of UM. In order to organize the major Cinematic Seminars event, UM hires a vendor and collaborates with a number of her regular religious gatherings that are distributed around Indonesian cities.²⁶⁴

The female voices in search of spiritual attachment, effective visualization, and an other-oriented preacher in the persona of Ustadha Muna are examined in this chapter. This chapter's first section explores whether Muna Almunawwar becomes a place of fulfilment for her followers' spiritual attachment. The second section examines her as a preacher who gives her *jama'ah* a good visualization when delivering her *da'wa* materials. In the meantime, the final section of this chapter explores her as an other-oriented preacher who prioritizes the needs of her followers over her own.

4.3 Seeking for God's Attachment

To maintain the commitment based on interpersonal relations among her followers, the *agapic* type of love, in Islamic context, seems more relevant to her. It is more about spiritual-based relationships, where the 'spiritual love' is to pursue God's love through commitment, giving, caring, self-sacrifice, and loving. As Jesus and Buddha preached toward unqualified love without concern for reciprocity.²⁶⁵ The attachment to God as the peak goal in pursuing the happy life will direct people to attain God's love without looking

²⁶² Rijal, "Following Arab Saints," 150.

²⁶³ Interview with Yaya on May 18, 2025. Interview with Yana on June 16, 2025.

²⁶⁴ Interview with Ustadha Muna Almunawwar on January 22, 2025.

²⁶⁵ Joseph A. DeVito, *The Interpersonal Communication Book*, Tenth (Pearson Education, Inc., 2004), 289.

for feedback, without expecting anything in return, unlike human expectations of love, which are generally mediocre in this world.

On February 13, 2025, *Kajian Muslimah Az-Zikra* (Muslimah Studies of Az-Zikra) in Sentul Bogor held a 'Temporary *Tawaqqufan*, 'a kind of break of Muslimah Studies due to the welcoming of the Ramadhan month preparation, inviting Ustadha Muna Almunawwar to give '*tausiyah*' on religious advice. **Ustadha Ajeng Kamaliah** (43) acted as the head organizer of the program and also as a *hadrah* player on that day to welcome her. She said that it was her first time meeting Ustadha Muna. She described her feeling to me like this.

The first time I saw her, I felt nothing, but when she started speaking, just saying a word, I immediately cried non-stop. From the beginning of the *majelis ta'lim* to the end, I kept crying for almost two hours. I felt like such a 'spiritual attack' pulled my soul so that I wanted to cry continuously. As if Allah spoke to me, conveying messages through her utterances. I was not the only one who experienced this; my other three friends at Az-Zikra Muslimah Study also faced the same thing. We have invited several preachers, both from Ba'Alawi and non-Ba'Alawi; nonetheless, she has such a 'spiritual energy' that distinguished her from other preachers. If we hope to get the blessing light from the Prophet Muhammad through his descendants, Sharifa Ustadha Muna, in my opinion, was the right person to get to.²⁶⁶

Regarding the *da'wa* performance of UM, she commented further, saying that UM was a complete package of a female preacher figure, not only smart in stage performance; likewise, she knew how to play dynamically with her voice, when to speak softly, when to be strong, or shout. She also said that she was more fascinated by her radiance of 'spiritual energy' compared to her material delivery. In her opinion, UM must have completed an extraordinary 'religious' practice and maintained a very pure heart. This fact shows that Ustadha Muna not only emphasized her *da'wa* subject on the power of God's love but also the sense of attachment to God as His creation, which grew stronger than before after joining her *majelis*.

Another perspective from **Yaya** (36), an employee from Jakarta who has joined UM's *majelis ta'lim* since 2023, in a regular non-paid *majelis ta'lim*. I met her at a PESATT event in Menara 165, Jakarta. She said to me, as long as it was held on Sunday, I attempted

²⁶⁶ Interview with Ustadha Ajeng on February 15, 2025.

to join it. The first time she joined her paid *majelis ta'lim* was during the 'Maha Cinta' event at Menara 165 Jakarta.

I got many impressions from joining her lessons. Before, I felt far from Allah. Now, I feel His closeness. All the materials given from beginning to end are the parts I like the most in her Cinematic Seminar. It feels like Allah is closer. So far, we have been the ones distancing ourselves and avoiding each other. Besides, she gave me many religious practices, starting from reading *Salawat* recitations according to our ability, *dhikr* practicing 'Yā Laṭīf' 700 times (some are 1000 times), doing *sunna* prayers such as Tahajjud prayers (obligatory prayers should not be forgotten), and other *sunna* practices. With her, studying religion becomes an interesting activity that leads us to become better people.²⁶⁷

Building a relationship with Allah, in the context of attachment to Him, is a core teaching of Islam in Islamic piety (*taqwa*) and the Islamic faith. The relationship between a man and the Creator, as an attachment figure, is considered not only by the longing for closeness and fear of separation but also through the involvement and dependence on shelter, satisfying the important need and secure function of an attachment relationship.²⁶⁸ Islam highly values the sense of attachment from the believer towards God as a central theme in Islamic teaching. Thus, it is very clear, as described by Yaya, that after she participated in UM's *majelis ta'lim*, she tried to reconnect the bond with Allah in order not to feel loved only, but also to be guided, protected, provided and maintained as part of an attachment relationship.

4.4 Offering Good Visualization

In the "Six Thinking Hats," popularized by Edward de Bono, a framework of thinking based on six imaginary colours of hats, widely accepted not only for business but also for education for its simplicity, practicality, and work-based approach. I believe that Ustadha Muna must wear a 'green hat,' as she always comes up with new and innovative ideas related to her slot presentations, prepared in her Cinematic Seminar events.²⁶⁹ To visualize her 'green hat' imaginary thinking into practical action, "The Six Action Shoes" of a 'purple riding boots' are needed to be worn by her. Purple colour represents authority, which she got from Habib 'Umar, as the leader of Dar al-Zahra.²⁷⁰ To apply it into practical action based on this shoe, she must do the actions consistently with the duties, obligations, and

²⁶⁷ Interview with Yaya on March 2, 2025.

²⁶⁸ Bagher Ghobary Bonab et al., "Attachment to God in Islamic Spirituality," *Journal of Muslim Mental Health* 7, no. 2 (2013): 78–79.

²⁶⁹ Edward De Bono, *Six Action Shoes* (The McQuaig Group, 1991), 4.

²⁷⁰ Bono, *Six Action Shoes*, 25.

expectations taught by the Prophet Muhammad, as the Muslim representative of God, who coincided as her great-grandfather.²⁷¹

‘Green hat’ is identical with innovative, new tracks of *da’wa* approaches and interesting slots in *da’wa* presentations to make people uneasily bored and attentive to the message given. This is clearly found in UM Cinematic seminars, where she usually comes up with fresh ideas in conceptualizing the event. Different events have their own distinguished character uniqueness, as explained by **Dea** (24), the ex-committee of *Majelis Bersalawat* in Bandung, who currently works as one of the committees in the TPL event in Bandung, too. She conveyed that she was excited to be part of a team, at the same time, working as the Prophet Muhammad 's honourable guests’ server. She previously attended a religious event with Ustadha Muna for the first time in 2023, which was hosted at Masjid Al-Laṭīf Bandung. She does not even know her yet because she could not find anything online when she looked up her name. She was happy to attend any kind of *majelis* meeting at the time, but this time her heart was automatically guided to follow it. In addition, she became curious about who UM's true identity was. She was captivated by her preaching style, which involves speaking quietly yet assertively and presenting complex ideas in a subtle way. Dea was able to understand Islamic standards and values from her *da’wa* while remaining joyous.

I was joyful to witness the *jama’ah* progress in contemplating and becoming aware of the power of Allah. I was sure they were among the chosen ones to have a strong desire and guidance to be here, although I was tired as a committee that took care of the event preparation, handling different emotions and reactions from the *jama’ah*. This cinematic event was held for the first time because each city was only held once. The favourite part was, it made you feel not bored and sleepy. Ustadha Muna knew how to deliver the materials with a varied style, very smooth, well-prepared, and packaged with a beautiful delivery. Everything fits perfectly.²⁷²

Furthermore, people believe and perceive that some people may have authentic power over others to influence and control their behaviour. Religious teachers, in this case, were endowed with the ‘legitimate authority’ by virtue to influence others in reshaping their behaviours.²⁷³ This is related strongly to the case of Ustadha Muna, who played as the

²⁷¹ Bono, *Six Action Shoes*, 174.

²⁷² Interview with Dea on January 26, 2025.

²⁷³ DeVito, *The Interpersonal Communication Book*, 341.

religious teacher and, similarly, received the power by virtue of being the female Prophet's descendant (*sharīfa*) and Hadramaut's authority recipient.

The story from **Rosmayani** (55), a housewife who came from Parung Bogor, highlighted the point of charisma and unforgettable representative illustration by her. She said,

The first time I saw her face, I immediately cried, as if there was a special charisma from the radiance of her face. In my view, she was like a lion on the podium when giving a lecture, very vocal and a '*saklek*' (bluntly speaking) figure. When something went wrong, she assertively said it was wrong. In every cinematic show of hers, there was always a short video discussing the illustration of the afterlife at *Padang Mahshar*.²⁷⁴ The best part of this session not only consisted of lectures but also visualizations. When the scene of life, full of sin, propagated, I prayed, "O Allah, please make me better than yesterday." With a cost of IDR 500,000, I have already received her *tausiyah* (spiritual needs are met), I got a comfortable place, and all the facilities received during the session. For me, it was not a big deal.²⁷⁵

Another story from **Jihan** (26), who started to follow her *majelis* since January 2024. As a high school graduate, she was impressed with the simple language used by Ustadha Muna; it was easy to understand. Besides, she was very humble, smiled a lot, and was not an overly emotional person. When UM told the story about the Prophet's Companions (*Ṣaḥāba*), she listened to it pleasantly. She just realized the fact that people can emulate the good qualities of the Prophets' *Ṣaḥābas* too. Jihan reported to me that when she joined her first Cinematic Seminar, she bought the *Grand* ticket. She shared her experience while joining the event expressively; she felt happy at that time because she could stay with Ustadha Muna longer. She also confirmed that the materials given were more familiar due to the visualization's usage. While explaining the movements in prayer (*gerakan salat*), UM immediately exemplified how the Prophet prays accordingly. Jihan said,

In my opinion, the paid ticket was very reasonable because she explained the materials in more detail. Every time I study with her, I feel calmer; I want to be a better person than before, and I want to become a consistent person (*istiqāma*) in the future. Once, Ustadha shared a practice that she got directly from Habib 'Umar, such as the dhikr practice of '*Lā ilāha illa Allah*,' as many as 70,000 times; at least, we should practice it once in a lifetime

²⁷⁴ *Padang Mahshar* is a place where people will be gathered altogether in the afterlife time.

²⁷⁵ Interview with Rosmayani on January 22, 2025.

to get Allah's blessings. Besides, this practice has a chain of narration all the way to the Prophet.²⁷⁶

Dhikrullah, or remembering Allah in free time, either by reading the Qur'an, *wirid*, or praying, is considered an activity that can calm the mind and relieve stress, as recommended in Islam.²⁷⁷ From my observation, UM often provides *wirid*, as conveyed by Jihan. It is surprising that Ustad Muna is able to provide a number of *dhikr* practices in her routine religious gathering at the Pondok Indah Mosque. When I asked her again whether she was serious about carrying out the *dhikr* practice, she said, "Yes, I am on my way to complete the amount requested by her, I do not feel burdened by this task," she said firmly. Therefore, I can say that UM is not only good at delivering messages but also good at balancing her *jama'ah* with calming activities so that they remain in a happy mood according to Islamic teachings.

Another story I listened to **Fiona** (25), a young and working woman from Surabaya. She came to Jakarta to work as an officer in an accounting company. She has joined the *majelis ta'lim* since August 2024. I met her twice, the first time at the Masjid of Pondok Indah and the second time at the Menara 165. While asking her to be interviewed, she asked me to wait for a moment because she had to send some reports to her employer. This time, I focused the interview session on her impression of the cinematic event at Sharifa Muna Almunawwar, Fiona said,

The first time I met her was at the Women's Festival event, entitled "Are We True Believers?" The seminar discussed true love that we must fight for. The advantages of joining the Cinematic Seminar event: it made me cry more easily, felt very poetic, and I liked the part where I sang together with her. Her *da'wa* stimulated me; my heartbeat was more pronounced. After that, my life felt better and brighter. I understood more about the purpose of life and true love in our lives.²⁷⁸

She shared with me her experience when she bought the VIP ticket; she commented further that it had a big impact on her; her faith increased higher than before. She became a more enthusiastic person in life, more obedient, and more comfortable. All these are due to the reason that she can join the *majelis* by sitting on a chair. A concept of the

²⁷⁶ Interview with Jihan on January 22, 2025.

²⁷⁷ Karimulloh Karimulloh et al., "LEISURE IN PSYCHOLOGY AND ISLAM: COMPARATIVE STUDIES," *Psikis: Jurnal Psikologi Islami* 9, no. 1 (2023): 115, <https://doi.org/10.19109/psikis.v9i1.14013>.

²⁷⁸ Interview with Fiona on January 22, 2025.

contemporary *majelis ta'lim* raised by Ustadha Muna is to fill the niche marketing group of the avoidant people.

When I attended the TPL event in Bandung last January 2025, I met **Marni** (29), who worked as the MUA (Make-Up Artist) from Cilacap. She reported to me that, indeed, it was her third time attending the Cinematic Seminar of UM. She deliberately came to Bandung to attend the event. When I asked her opinion regarding this event, she expressively revealed it.

In my opinion, every event she conducted was heart-rending. They were always found interesting because of the diverse nuances and presentations, even though the goal was the same purpose. Although I have attended the TPL before, I always wanted to rejoin it again. I wished I could participate in all of her *majelis ta'lim* wherever I could, if I could attempt to do so. Regarding the paid tickets, those who have attended her events will definitely not feel disappointed with the price. It was worthy because the event was not boring. Moreover, it was a peak starting point of life to be better than before.²⁷⁹

Ega de Latoya (31), the performance artist in Bandung, also agreed with the visualization part in this Cinematic Seminar event. When I asked her opinion regarding the TPL event she attended, she said, indeed, it was very helpful.²⁸⁰

Besides Ega, I met **Nurul Wahyuni** (28) from West Jakarta; it was her first time attending the Cinematic Seminar that day. Previously, she attended several offline *majelis ta'lims*, such as those held at Masjid Pondok Indah, *Majelis Bersalawat* in Bandung, and other offline *majelises* of hers that were held in Bandung too.

Unexpectedly, today I was able to attend the TPL event. Events like this were usually only held in certain cities. In Jakarta, I never had the opportunity to attend. Thank you to Ustadha Muna; in every *da'wa* she gave, her presentation was very meaningful and touching, reminding me of Allah's religion and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad as his *umma*. These eyes were tired of crying, regretting many sins, and often forgetting to be grateful. Indeed, we realized that this world was just a deception; we must always remember Allah. The best part that I liked the most was when she explained and illustrated the Prophet's behaviours; I hope to get help through his hands in the afterlife. For me, buying a ticket to attend this cinematic event felt very meritorious.²⁸¹

²⁷⁹ Interview with Marni on January 26, 2025.

²⁸⁰ Interview with Ega on January 26, 2025.

²⁸¹ Interview with Nurul Wahyuni on January 26, 2025.

From the responses given, it is strongly indicated that Ayu Naylul Muna Almunawwar is a *relegere*, defined by Emile Benveniste as a female preacher who gathers all her *jama'ah* to gather in one place, and the awaited *da'wa* materials is, *religare*. Two terminological roots of the word religion (*religio*), are found in Western thought about the division of religion.²⁸² From her *da'wa* approach, at least, we can prove that the root of the word 'religion' has revealed two embedded components of religion, *relegere* acts as an actor of religion, and *religare* posits as the conveyed meaning of the Islamic message. The role of preacher (*relegere*) can connect individuals to God in practicing the faith and sharing the beliefs (*religare*) within the community. Therefore, religion through this concept not only focuses on *da'wa* principles only but also on deep engagement between the spiritual and ethical ethics of Islam. Besides, visual dimension through oral and written visual expressions, sharing *da'wa* materials in captivating pictures, videos, and infographics, and using advanced media and compatible sound systems will add the element of "beautification" to *da'wa* as Weng has noted. This raises awareness and attracts attention, which will persuade her followers to believe in her messages without a doubt.²⁸³

In this chapter part, I can say that well-crafted messages and creative use of media are the keys to the success of UM's preaching style. These efforts have earned the loyalty of its followers and are one of its strengths in contemporary preaching for niche marketing groups. As Ross states, efforts to test and design messages and select and use media in creative ways all contribute to success. Scheduling and coordination of media and messages are considered essential.²⁸⁴ All of these are powerful information and multimedia persuasion campaigns that require face-to-face interaction to work together.

4.5 An Other-Oriented Preacher

Good communicator knows how to express her message effectively and appropriately. To communicate in effective ways means the message delivered is understood and creates impactful meaning as the intended goal by the receiver (audience). While communicating in the appropriate manner means the communicator, in this case the preacher, considers the time, place, the message context and the sensitive feelings and attitude found from the audience. Thus, to produce a preacher who has a competency skill in communication, Beebe et.al. suggested two important communication strategies, firstly, a competent

²⁸² Kitiarsa, *Religious Commodifications in Asia: Marketing Gods*, 37.

²⁸³ Wai Weng Hew, "THE ART OF DAKWAH: Social Media, Visual Persuasion and the Islamist Propagation of Felix Siau," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 46, no. 134 (2018): 63, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2018.1416757>.

²⁸⁴ Raymond S. Ross, *Understanding Persuasion*, 4th ed. (Prentice Hall Inc., 1994), 212.

preacher should be a knowledgeable, skilled, and motivated person. Secondly, the competent communicator should be other-oriented. Becoming knowledgeable means understanding how communication works, which involves the components, principles, rules of process in communication. Hence, all this knowledge should be put into action. Therefore, to improve the skill in the first strategy, a preacher encourages a lot of practice to get helpful feedback from others, to see whether the appropriateness of action has been done effectively and appropriately by her. Besides, the preacher needs to be a motivated person to use her knowledge and skill into action, and be connected with others. The second strategy implies, the competent preacher should come up with other-oriented goal, by considering the thoughts, needs, experiences, personality, emotions, motives, desires, culture, and other communication goals, still, while maintaining her integrity as a female preacher from Ba‘Alawi in building the relationship with her disciples.²⁸⁵ Becoming *other-oriented* means, a preacher focuses on the interest, preference, needs and goals of another person, in this case, her *jama'ah* or followers.²⁸⁶ Moreover, pertaining to the requirement of practices to attain the feedback from others, as an attempts to put these two strategies proposed by Beebe et.al. To improve the competency, Ustadha Muna Almunawwar before proceeding her innovated Cinematic concert vibes *da'wa*, already involved actively as a full-time teacher, who taught the students at Nuruzzahro school, as confirmed by Kak Salwa.

The first time I met **Kak Salwa** (62), while attending the TPL event held in Bandung. In fact, she is the Leader of Muslimat at Masjid Al-Falah, Selangor Malaysia. She came directly all the way from Malaysia with a few friends of her. She said that, in the near future, we are going to conduct the same event in Malaysia. Following that, I asked her to be interviewed after the event held in that country. It was surprising me, due to the fact that she was already involved in a relationship as her disciple from 2012-2013, coinciding, with her sister, Ustadha Alina who was well-known before by Malaysian society. She said that, approximately, a year after that, she went to Semarang. There, she saw Ustadha Muna Almunawwar actively teaching the students at her informal school, located in front of her terrace. She also said that, when she saw the way UM taught the female students, it was very impressive, as she commented. Now, the school has been established under the name of Ma'had Nuruzzahra, with its own building located in the same city.

²⁸⁵ Beebe et al., *Interpersonal Communication Relating to Others*, 24–27.

²⁸⁶ Beebe et al., *Interpersonal Communication Relating to Others*, 25.

Every time she holds a big event, such as the TPL in Bandung, and Malaysia, I always join her *majelis*. I like her delivery skills, her intonation and tone, high and low voices, her message points were very impressive. In addition, her appreciation (*penghayatan*) when delivering materials, reading verses of the Qur'an and poetry, was very deep. Her songs were melodious; her supplications (*du'a*) were harmonious. Of all the responses that attended the TPL in Malaysia²⁸⁷, the majority were satisfied with the event, although there were few criticisms for the later improvement, such as the place seemed too dark for the praying session (*do'a bersama*), when the lights were turned off, and the sound system was too loud.²⁸⁸

In the PESATT event, on last March 2, 2025 held in Tower 165 Building Jakarta, a special event for welcoming Ramadhan month, **Zihan Alfira** (25), factory administrator in Cikarang, shared her view regarding Ustadha Munas' presentations. She said,

It was amazing, Ustadha Muna's performance never disappointed the *jama'ah*. She always preferred others, rather than herself. She was not merely focusing on the profit only. She attempted hard to give lectures in different ways, still, at the same time, she made her *jama'ah* feel comfortable. Like in the PESATT event, actually we gained more than we paid, from the goody bag, many facilities at the Menara 165's ballroom, and also the charity provision for breaking fast menus of Tarim people. For me, she was other-oriented preacher. Although I bought the *Silver* ticket at that time, but felt the *Platinum* service I guessed. I sit rightly beside her, very close to her. Similarly in that event, it was the first time we did congregational prayer, before, it was very rare to happen in any *majelis ta'lim* event of her. Besides, I got many new things from her, for instance, applying lipstick to the lips during fasting, can actually be swallowed, thus it breaks the fast without us realizing it.²⁸⁹

From the interview with Zihan, she claimed that Ustadha Muna is indeed, a competent communicator, who equips herself as a knowledgeable, skilful, motivated preacher, and an other-oriented one.

It is true that love and hate in Allah's way are complicated topics, but sisterhood based on love in Allah's way can grow through participation in religious gatherings, close proximity to one another, and intense meetings with the goal of learning from Ustadha

²⁸⁷ Beautiful Journey, the first TPL in Malaysia, conducted on February 16, 2025 at Bangi Avenue Convention Centre.

²⁸⁸ Interview with Kak Salwa on February 18, 2025.

²⁸⁹ Interview with Zihan Alfira on May 18, 2025.

Muna and absorbing Islamic values. For the sake of Allah, this cultivates a sisterhood-based aspect of love, unlocking the door to an enduring love in Allah's way.²⁹⁰

In addition, by participating in UM's *ta'lim* assembly, her followers fulfil their need for a social bond by making new friends or preserving existing ones through Islamically-recommended leisure activities.²⁹¹ I have observed a kind of agape-type love within an Islamic context—between the teacher and her disciples—and the disciples' relationships with each other grow rapidly through the interactions in these kinds of religious gatherings. This environment not only nurtures spiritual growth but also cultivates a sense of community that encourages individuals to support one another in their journeys toward deeper understanding. As they share their experiences and insights, the bonds of friendship strengthen, creating a network of love and support that transcends the boundaries of the gathering itself.

Moreover, Maulana saw this as the establishment of Islamic authority through constant "articulatory labour," as Alatas defined it, which is typical among the male descendants of the Prophet Muhammad (*habā'ib*). In this case, the traditional religious authority was built not only on the preacher's intellectual competence but also on the preacher's and the community's ongoing cooperation.²⁹² The network community of the Prophet's female descendants (*sharā'if*) also continues to follow this practice, particularly in UM religious meeting circles. Again, this is effective because Muna Almunawwar has the ability to communicate in a way that is focused on other people.

4.6 Group Classification: The Exclusive Versus Non-Exclusive Membership

After the PESATT event ended, the last cinematic event of her was held on April 26, 2025, at the Grand City Hall Medan in Medan City. Subsequently, she went to Medina city for Hajj Pilgrimage preparations, to fill the gaps in her various *majelis ta'lims*, and address the longing of her *jama'ah*. For both cinematic events and regular ones, she offered a member Zoom exclusive. This is very much related to the trusted value of Ustadha Muna's religious brand, as pointed out by Hoesterey, where the value of a brand depends on affective loyalty,

²⁹⁰ Imam Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' Ulumiddin (Terjemah Ihya' Ulumiddin 3)*, ed. Mohammad Zuhri and Ashari (CV Asy.Syifa', 1992), 518.

²⁹¹ Karimulloh et al., "LEISURE IN PSYCHOLOGY AND ISLAM," 114–15.

²⁹² Moch Dimas Maulana, "Building Religious (Algorithmic) Authority through Social Media Collaboration? New Preacher and Interfaith Podcast Collaboration in Digitalizing Indonesia" (Thesis, Universitas Islam International Indonesia, 2024), 8; Alatas, *What Is Religious Authority? Cultivating Islamic Communities in Indonesia*, 5.

the intersubjective belief between the preacher and followers regarding the truth of the brand narrative.²⁹³ To comfort her followers, Sharifa Muna and her teams facilitated special live Zoom sessions from Mecca and Medina, the ‘Virtual Visit in Front of the *Qubba Al-Mustafa*’ (the Prophet’s Tomb) and the ‘Virtual Live Study, the *Qibla* of Faith’ in Mecca. To gain the *baraka* without missing the golden opportunity through the distant learning from the holy cities. By paying IDR 100K, her *jama’ah* will receive four live Zoom sessions with her, directly live from the two holy places of Muslims around the world.

Zihan’s heart has been attached to Ustadha Muna; she attempted to join her *majelis ta’lim* at least once a week, she said to me. Although the meeting was conducted virtually on May 14, 2025, only her voice can be listened to, thus, enough to heal her longings for Ustadha Muna Almunawwar. During the first Zoom, the session highlighted the prayers and dhikr practice done by her, continued with her journey walking closer towards the Prophet Muhammad’s Tomb, and invited the members to raise their own supplication near it. Besides, through her short lecture, she stressed the importance of the doubled blessing of Medina city compared to Mecca, due to the Prophet’s request to Allah. She again described her feelings, like this.

During a virtual pilgrimage to the Nabawi Mosque in the city of Medina, I cried continuously. Apart from that, it felt like I hadn't seen her for a long time, about two months. The peak moment that I felt was the first time I heard her praying and dhikr after the Zoom meeting opened; it sounded so solemn, full of tears. After that, she walked towards the tomb of the Prophet Muhammad in Raudah, very touching.²⁹⁴

Another story from **Yana Nuna** (34), a primary school teacher who had joined the *majelis ta’lim* of Ustadha Muna since 2023, was fascinating. She had participated actively in more than 50 sessions of her *majelis ta’lims*. Sometimes during the school holiday time, she caught her up to Cirebon, Magelang, Yogyakarta, Semarang, and Jepara to attend several *majelises* of hers. She perceived Ayu Naylul Muna Almunawwar as her mother through religious bonding.

Throughout the virtual Zoom, I cried when the Zoom was first opened and the camera was pointed at her face (at that time she was not only wearing a *cadar* but also a *burqa*)²⁹⁵. Although only her eyes were visible, it was as if she was looking at me. I still remember when she was talking or listening to someone else talking, she would look at her interlocutor with all her heart, as the Prophet did when talking to his interlocutor. Then, the

²⁹³ Hoesterey, *Rebranding Islam: Piety, Prosperity, and a Self-Help Guru*, 17.

²⁹⁴ Interview with Zihan Alfira on May 18, 2025.

²⁹⁵ *Burqa* is a kind of face-veil with several layers; sometimes, it has three layers.

camera was pointed at *Qubba Mustafa*. When she prayed while crying, I also cried. Ustadha Muna is indeed the best at bringing out our emotions; even so, she is someone who cries quickly. When we see her, we definitely cry too, especially when talking about her to other people. Right now, while I am telling you this story, I am indeed crying. When on Zoom sessions, she used a deep voice, the voice she usually uses when she comes down from the pulpit/stage, very soft. Different from the voice she uses when on stage, very loud and firm.²⁹⁶

Here are Yana's comments, which were also posted by Sharifa Muna Almunawwar on Instagram @ayunaylulmunaalmunawwar. A way of communicating *da'wa*, called soft *da'wa*, which is a part of *da'wa* itself, to motivate each other among the Followers of Ustadha Muna, notified by Eva F. Nisa as Instagram culture among female youths in Indonesia.²⁹⁷ Yana often gives positive comments after attending various of her *majelis ta'lim* activities, as she said to me. In the first posting, she wrote enthusiastically, "All by Allah's permission. To Ustadha @ayunaylulmunaalmunawwar, @thepoweroflove_event. Thank you for taking the time for us to relieve our longing for the Prophet Muhammad through a virtual pilgrimage in a city full of blessings, a city full of secrets, namely the City of Medina Al-Munawwar. While in the second posting, she inscribed, "Thank you, Ustadha, for inviting us to take blessings from the city of Mecca, the city where the Kaaba is located. The first place of worship, built as a *qibla*, a place of many secrets, a holy place, a place of prayer, a safe place, a place to purify oneself, a place where Allah's grace descends." This feedback demonstrates her happy reaction, fulfilling the desire as though they were having an engaging face-to-face meeting. Therefore, it is proposed that, even though virtual involvement, spiritual attachment with powerful messages will sustain a positive social commitment between teacher-student connections. In an attempt to keep her followers devoted to her as their spiritual guide, Ustadha Muna also accomplished this goal with success.

²⁹⁶ Interview with Yana on May 19, 2025.

²⁹⁷ Eva F. Nisa, "Creative and Lucrative Da'wa: The Visual Culture of Instagram amongst Female Muslim Youth in Indonesia," *Asiascape: Digital Asia* 5, nos. 1–2 (2018): 71, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22142312-12340085>.

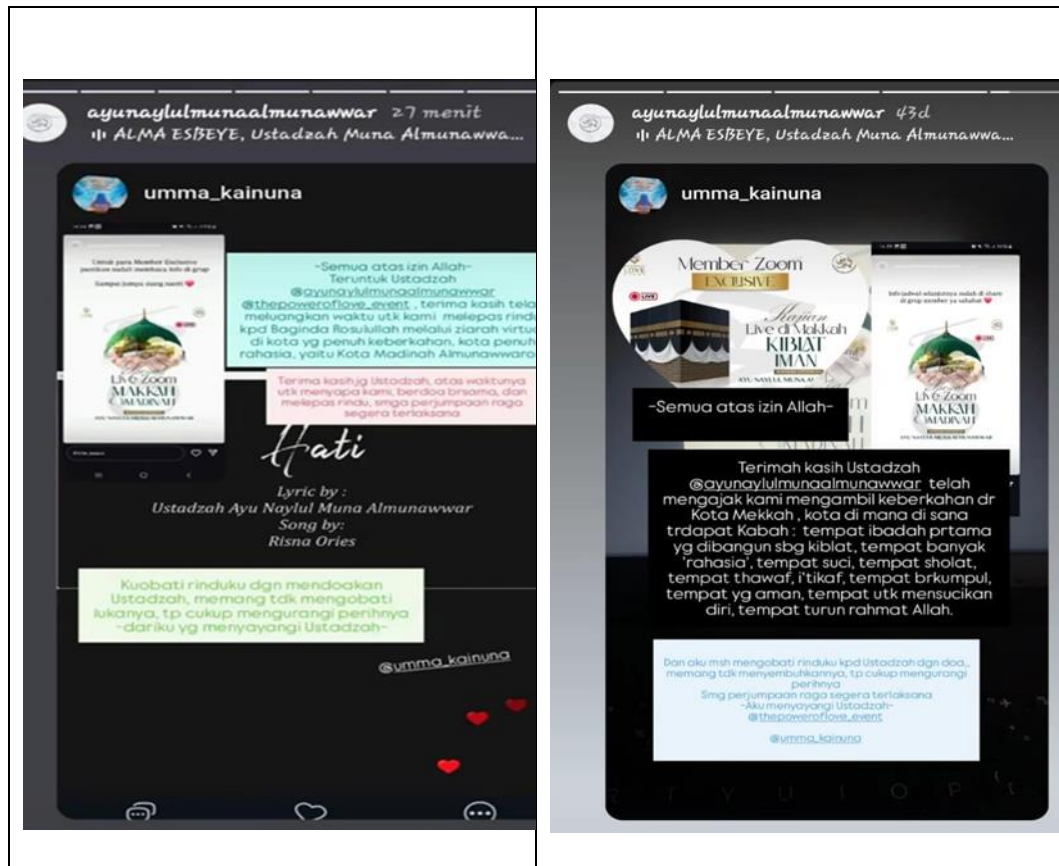


Figure 1.4. Yana's comments which posted on @ayunaylulmunaalmunawwar Instagram.

(Source: Instagram @umma_kainuna)

Similarly, the same case occurred in the second virtual Zoom live in Mecca on May 18, 2025; around 425 members accessed the virtual meeting. Although only her voice could be listened to, still, the members shared their emotions virtually through several emoticons. In the second meeting, Ayu Naylul Muna Almunawwar shared her purpose in having the virtual session actually was to gain the virtue from the blessed Mecca city. While any good things we do in Mecca, the reward will be doubled. Therefore, she highlighted the importance of joining the study circle (*majelis ta'lim*) based on the Prophet's sayings, "Whoever learns a chapter of knowledge that is beneficial for her, the world, and the hereafter, it is as if she has received the reward of someone who fasts during the day and worships at night for 7,000 years, without being denied the slightest reward." How much goodness God has given to humans, Sharifa Muna added.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁸ Participatory observation in Zoom Exclusive Membership session on May 18, 2025.

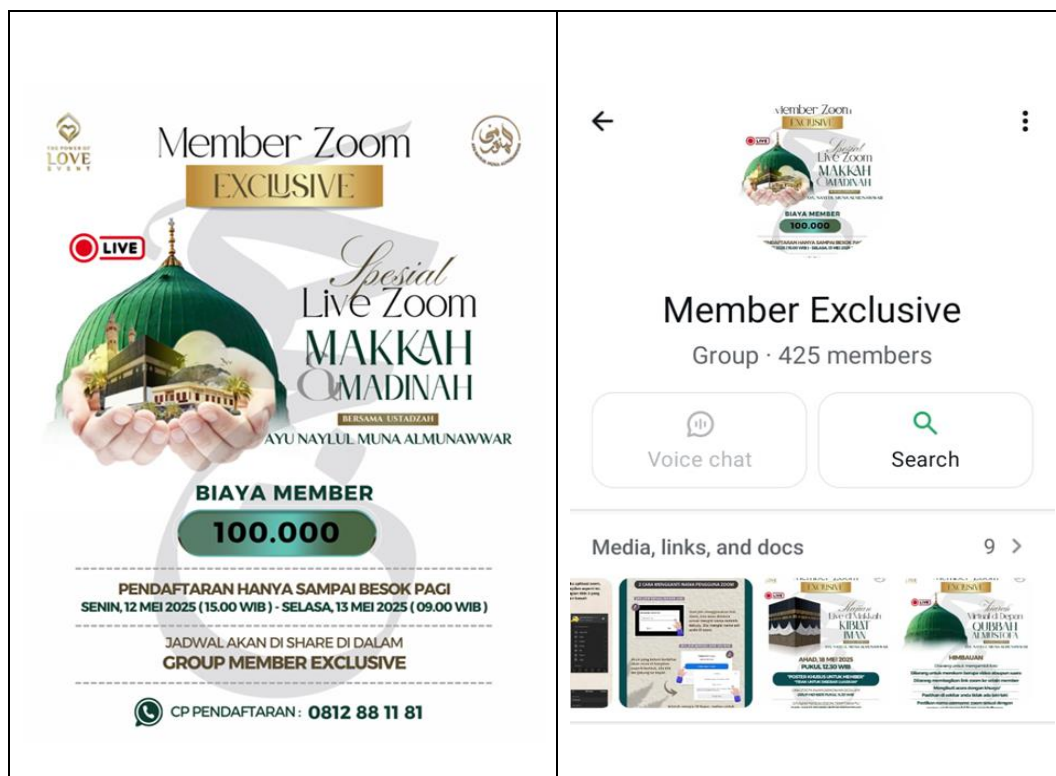


Figure 2.4. The ads of Exclusive Member Zoom and the participants of membership.

(Source: WhatsApp Member Exclusive group)

From the evidence, it can be concluded that Ayu Naylul Muna Almunawwar's *da'wa* has attached the hearts of the followers emotionally. As conveyed in the meeting via Zoom, the feeling of longing was not only felt by her students, but she also felt the same way.²⁹⁹ All of these women's voices are their confession that Sharifa Muna Almunawwar's *da'wa* has had a big impact on their lives.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter investigates the female voices for their perception of the spiritual attachment found in the figure of Ustadha Muna Almunawwar, ability of good message designer as well as communicator targeting the middle-class and upper of urban societies. UM builds her teacher-disciple relationship based on the *agapic* type of love within Islamic context, where the intention of her *majelis ta'lim* is to pursue God's love to create a happy life. Most of them agreed that Sharifa Muna Almunawwar has supported her *jama'ah* and provided

²⁹⁹ Participatory observation in Zoom Exclusive Membership session on May 14, 2025.

them with the good visualization to increase their understanding of the topic taught. Some voices were taken from her offline *majelis ta'lim*, such as *Kajian Muslimah Az-Zikra* in Sentul Bogor and *Majelis An-Nuha* at Masjid Pondok Indah. While other voices, the samples were taken from the participants in the TPL event in Bandung, the PESATT event in Jakarta, and the followers of Member Zoom Exclusive.

From the perspective of her *jama'ah*, Ayu Naylul Muna Almunawwar was not only a competent preacher who had the spiritual attachment and the ability to provide good visual attraction, but also posited as an other-oriented goal preacher. She has the power by virtue, as the Prophet's female descendant and the recipient of authority from Hadhramaut, to reshape others' behaviours without compulsion. As the proof of her social commitment with her followers, when she had to fulfil her Hajj Pilgrimage obligation in near future, which took several months of being apart, she launched her new product of "Exclusive Zoom Membership," as her niche-within niche group marketing strategy, to end the longing between her and her disciples, is highly appreciated.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The role of Ba‘Alawi descents, who mostly were originated from Hadhramaut Yemen play an important role in conveying the Islamic *da‘wa* missionary in Indonesia throughout the history. Moreover, it remained continuously and developed until now. Starting from the first wave of migration of the Arabs, which occurred in the 7th-8th centuries and continued until the era between the 13th century, reaching the peak of its movement in the 19th century. Those Arab diasporas, not only entered into religious motives, but also penetrated to economic, social, and political purposes. Furthermore, the political instability situation in Yemen, which led the Arab diaspora scattered throughout the South East Asia archipelago, however, led to the unification tied between North and South Yemen areas in 1990. This situation has led to Sufi movement revival by Habib ‘Umar, who went back and forth into several parts of Yemen using his new Toyota Landcruiser for conveying Islamic messages with fiery preaching.

As a matter of the fact, due to the need for educational purposes, which the Dutch government could not provide at the time, the Arab diaspora in Indonesia had to overcome the challenge of establishing educational institutions that fulfilled traditional religious knowledge while maintaining their Arab identity at the same time. This situation led to the Hadhramaut Revival through the establishment of a school for males, Dar al-Mustafa, in 1993, which took place in Hadhramaut and was founded by Habib ‘Umar, focusing on *‘ilm*, *suluk*, and *da‘wa* based on the teachings of the Sufi *Ṭarīqa ‘Alawiyya*, followed by a boarding school for girls, Dar al-Zahra, in 1998.

By the time, Dar al-Zahra has produced its female graduate preachers who received an authorized Islamic traditional teaching, this concided with the departure era of massive transmission of Islamic pop cultures, which began after the fall of the Soeharto regime in 1998. Thus, it allowed wide access to education and the rise of mass media among the middle class society. All the evidences led to the inevitable emergence of populist preacher. Moreover, since its early establishment, Dar al-Zahra with Habib ‘Umar and other Hadramaut teachers, has attracted Muslim women over the world to study Islam and other traditional Islamic knowledge. Far before the physical building was established, several female students such as Ustadha Khadijah Al-Junayd, Ustadha Khodijah Abdulqodir Hud Assegaf, Ustadha Amirah Novel Jindan, and Ustadha Halimah Alaydrus were among their early gradutes. Afterwards, followed by other students after the establishment of the permanent Islamic boarding school. Thus, this situation became a bright spot for Dar al-

Zahra graduates when they returned to their homeland with sufficient religious knowledge to convey *da'wa* to the Indonesian people in general.

This study uses a qualitative research method with multidisciplinary approaches to examine the role of Ayu Naylul Muna Almunawwar as a new generation Ba'Alawi female preacher, namely *sharīfa*, a woman descendant of the Prophet who received authority from Habib 'Umar and Hadramaut teachers to convey *da'wa* using a pop music culture approach and cinematic scene while maintaining her traditional authority for contemporary public space. Before studying in Hadramaut Tarim, Ustadha Muna had studied at Al-Fachriyah School, an Islamic school rooted in the family of Ustadha Amirah Novel Jindan, who was her teacher at that time. While this school was an extension of the Habib 'Umar Preparatory School before leaving for Hadhramaut Tarim, both Dar al-Mustafa and Dar al-Zahra were intended for female students.

This study examines the emergence of new popular preachers from the *sharā'if* community as an extension of Habib 'Umar to help providing guidance for fellow women, to be closer to Allah and the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Previously, these religious preachers were mostly dominated by male scholars. Before, Abdullah Syafi'ie and his wife, Siti Rugayah, were among the early initiators of *pengajian*, which allowed women in Batavia to participate as participants, even if only as listeners. The aim was to protect them from the propaganda of the Dutch colonial government about modern issues. Continued by his daughter, Tutty Alawiyah, as their successor in improving the management of the *majelis ta'lim* in Indonesia. At that time, several popular female preachers had emerged in society, such as Ustadha Tutty Alawiyah, Ustadha Lutfiah Sungkar, and Mamah Dedeh. Most of them were local female preachers who graduated from good and prominent universities in Indonesia. Only Ustadha Lutfiah Sungkar was of Arab descent.

This thesis argues that Ustadha Ayu Naylul Muna Almunawwar represents a new form of female Islamic authority in Indonesia by strategically fusing traditional Ba'Alawi religious legitimacy with contemporary visual media, marketing and branding techniques, and innovative *da'wa* practices that employ cinematic aesthetics, popular culture, and lifestyle imagery to reimagine female *da'wa* and appeal to urban-middle and upper-class Muslim followers, thereby transforming the landscape of Islamic authority and gender representation in the digital age.

Moreover, this study focuses on the emphasis of Ayu Naylul Muna Almunawwar's *da'wa* on the value of love in Sufism, with her main teaching that the power of love is directed towards Allah and His Messenger. Thus, it will enable humans to become the best

servants of God. Sharifa Muna Almunawwar, as the conveyor of the knowledge of *Tarīqa ʿAlawīyya* exemplified by her seniors, the early students of Dar al-Zahra, also encouraged her followers to practice *dhikr* and maintain the purity of the heart as taught by Habib ʿUmar.

Another important finding in this study is, that music with improvisation and poetry with touching lyrics for the purpose of *daʿwa* become strategic tools to attract the interest of young people, especially the upper middle class. In fact, Islamic popular music culture has mushroomed since the second half of the Soeharto period. The presence of popular artists on the contemporary *daʿwa* stage, in fact, is a real breath of fresh air in targeting the *jamaʿah* of the *majelis taʿlim* to instil Islamic *daʿwa* messages in their hearts.

Furthermore, the addition of aesthetic elements in *daʿwa*, such as getting religious lessons in an attractive room through commoditized worship services, with a polite persona brought by its participants, is another need of special groups. Thus, it will bring people to unforgettable emotions in practicing religion, which sooner or later will significantly affect their spiritual piety. All of this aims to provide the desired market, as mentioned by Pattana Kitiarsa, where religious worship services in commoditized elements create special marketing groups that have their own preferences and tendencies. This situation is where Ustadha Muna Almunawwar and her TPL management play a role in creating special groups and instilling certain marketing strategies for the purpose of seeking spirituality for the sake of closeness to God.

Some digital practices also highlighted in this study, such as the war-ticket phenomenon, the odd occurrences that usually happen when purchasing the ticket for a concert, digital presence through digital tickets, and the use of social media for popular preachers to maintain social commitment, seem relevant to today's situation.

Finally, to close the topic about the cinematic approach to *daʿwa* brought by Ustadha Muna, the voices of her *jamaʿah* will be tested regarding the reasons for choosing Ustadha Muna as their favorite preacher, namely to seek spiritual closeness with Allah, and acknowledge her ability in presenting good message visualization, as well as her image as a preacher who is oriented towards others, which is also bravely carried out, especially those related to the likes and needs of her followers in the context of the Power of Love event. The Power of Love event serves as a platform for Ustadha Muna to connect deeply with her followers, fostering a sense of community and understanding. Her approach not only caters to the spiritual needs of them, however it empowers them to engage in meaningful religious gathering about their faith and life challenges.

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Dea. Committee Member of TPL Event. Interview. Bandung. January 26, 2025.

Ega de Latoya. Artist Performer at TPL Event. Interview. Bandung. January 26, 2025.

Fiona, Follower of UM. Interview. Jakarta. January 22, 2025 and March 2, 2025.

Jihan. Follower of UM. Interview. Jakarta. January 22, 2025.

Kak Salwa. Follower of UM from Malaysia. Interview. Bandung. January 26, 2025 and Online Zoom meeting. February 18, 2025.

Marni. UM's Follower. Interview. Bandung. January 26, 2025.

Nurul Wahyuni. UM's Follower. Interview. Bandung. January 26, 2025.

Rosmayani. UM's Follower. Interview. Jakarta. January 22, 2025.

Ustadha Muna Almunawwar. Interview. Jakarta. January 22, July 6 and Bandung. January 26, 2025.

Yana. Interview. Online Zoom meeting. May 19, 2025 and June 16, 2025.

Yaya. Interview. Jakarta. March 2, 2025.

Yasmin Jawaz. Interview. Jakarta. February 11, 2025.

Zihan Alfira. Interview. Online Zoom meeting. May 18, 2025.