



Dai's Dilemma in Da'wah Nahi Munkar in Local Muslim Communities

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the challenges faced by preachers in promoting the prohibition of alcohol (khamar), especially when it is integrated into the social traditions of the local Muslim community. The core issue is the disconnect between the religious ban on alcohol and its social acceptance, as it is often part of wedding ceremonies, celebrations, traditional events, and other communal activities. The research aims to examine the difficulties preachers encounter, the da'wah methods they use, and the community's reactions to these efforts. Using a descriptive qualitative method with field research, data were gathered through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving preachers, religious and traditional leaders, authorities, and community members. Findings reveal that preachers face cultural, psychological, social, structural, and reputational obstacles because alcohol consumption has become socially normalized. The strategies of da'wah include normative, persuasive, cultural, personal, and collaborative approaches. Community responses vary from acceptance and resistance to compromise. The study concludes that effectively prohibiting alcohol through da'wah requires a culturally transformative approach that blends the firmness of Islamic law with persuasive, gradual communication. It advocates for cooperation among preachers, traditional leaders, local authorities, and the community to foster collective awareness and reduce alcohol consumption.

Keywords : Preacher; Social Traditions; Local Muslim community

INTRODUCTION

Da'wah nahi munkar in local Muslim communities does not always deal with behavior that is socially seen as deviant. Under certain conditions, practices that are normatively prohibited in Islam can actually survive because they have been normalized in people's lives. These habits are maintained through social relations, communal activities, family relationships, and practices that take place repeatedly from one generation to the next (Maulidin & Nawawi, 2024). Conditions like this make da'wah nahi munkar more complex because it is not only dealing with the religious understanding of individuals, but also with the social environment that provides space for the sustainability of a practice.



This phenomenon can be found in the practice of khamar consumption in Huristak District, Padang Lawas Regency. In Islamic teachings, khamar has a strict legal status as something prohibited. However, in the social life of some people, its consumption and provision are still found in weddings, family celebrations, crowds, and other communal activities. (H. U. Harahap, 2024). Harahap shows that traditional alcoholic beverages in the context of marriage in the North Padang Lawas area have a relationship with the social practices of the community. Its presence at an event can be understood by some people as a complement to the atmosphere, a means of socializing, or part of togetherness. Thus, the problem faced by dai is not only the existence of khamar as an individual behavior, but the process of social normalization that causes the practice to continue to gain acceptance in the community.

In such a situation, dai occupies a dilemmatic position. On the one hand, dai has the responsibility to convey religious provisions and prevent evil. On the other hand, dai lives as part of a society bound by family relationships, kinship, customs, and various social interests. Messages conveyed through sermons, lectures, recitations, and personal advice are therefore not always automatically followed by behavioral changes. Delivery that is too confrontational has the potential to cause rejection, while an approach that is too loose can be perceived to reduce the assertiveness of religious messages (Fatimah et al., 2025). Fatimah pointed out the importance of considering local wisdom in the transmission of Islamic values, while Ahyar emphasized that cultural-based da'wah requires the ability to connect religious values with the social conditions of society (Ahyar et al., 2024).

This problem is related to the development of the study of cultural da'wah and intercultural communication. A number of studies place da'wah not just as a process of conveying religious doctrine, but as a practice of communication that takes place within certain social and cultural structures. Fadillah & As'ad, (2025), for example, show that da'wah in a multicultural society requires intercultural communication skills so that Islamic messages can be conveyed without ignoring the character of the target community. Afkarina et al., (2025) and Setyaningsih, (2020) also show that understanding local culture is an important part of building a da'wah strategy that is acceptable to the community. In an earlier context, Afkarina et al., (2025) emphasized that cultural da'wah can be done by directing cultural elements as a means of transmitting Islamic values, while Rofiq, (2017) shows how the cultural approach allows da'wah to interact more adaptively with local communities.

The study provides an important basis that the success of da'wah is influenced by the ability of the dai to understand the language, values, customs, power relations, and social structure of mad'u. However, the problem becomes

more complicated when something that has gained social acceptance is in direct contradiction with religious norms. Cultural da'wah in such conditions is not enough to be interpreted as the ability to adapt the message to the culture of the community. There is a critical boundary between respecting the social conditions of the community and making corrections to habits that are not in accordance with sharia values. The issue of boundaries is important in the case of khamar: the dai needs to maintain social relations with the community, but at the same time cannot give religious legitimacy to the prohibited practices.

Contemporary da'wah studies also pay a lot of attention to changes in the communication space due to the development of digital media. Rahmawati and Zaini, (2021) show that social media has shifted the pattern of da'wah from one-way communication to more interactive communication. Pimay and Savitri, (2021) also explain that da'wah in the modern era faces changes in technology, audience character, and increasingly open communication patterns. This development is continued by Manaf et al., (2026), who place social media as one of the important instruments of contemporary da'wah. However, the complexity of da'wah in local communities cannot be fully explained through media changes. In the case studied, the main challenge took place in face-to-face interactions, family relationships, community events, religious spaces, and daily social networks. Therefore, the problem of da'wah is not primarily about how the message is disseminated through the media, but how to conduct social negotiations when religious messages are directly confronted with practices that have been considered normal.

This complexity is even more visible when placed within the framework of amar ma'ruf nahi munkar. Badarusyamsi et al., (2020) explain that amar ma'ruf nahi munkar is not limited to the formation of individual piety, but is related to efforts to build a social life in accordance with Islamic values. Bahri and Abbas, (2020) and Putra et al., (2019) also place the prevention of evil as an important part of da'wah activities. However, nahi munkar has a different challenge than simply inviting kindness because it is directly confronted with the behavior to be corrected. (H. U. Harahap, 2024) shows that da'wah activities bring social consequences for dai, including challenges in maintaining acceptance and credibility in society. When a behavior has gained collective acceptance, the courage to convey the prohibition is not always enough; communication intelligence, the ability to read social relations, and change strategies are needed that allow people to receive messages without losing their normative substance.

Based on the previous study, there are three main trends. First, the study of cultural and intercultural da'wah emphasizes more on the adaptability of dai to local culture. Second, contemporary da'wah studies focus a lot on the transformation of media and digital communication. Third, the study of amar

ma'ruf nahi munkar tends to pay great attention to the normative dimension and the obligation to prevent evil. These studies have provided an important conceptual foundation, but have not adequately explained the empirical experience of dai when faced with practices that are religiously prohibited but socially normalized. There is still limited research that places dai as an actor who must negotiate between the assertiveness of religious norms, social acceptance, kinship relationships, and the sustainability of his position in the community.

Departing from this gap, this study places the consumption of khamar not solely as a problem of violation of religious law, nor does it directly claim it as an inherent part of the community's customs, but as a practice that undergoes social normalization through repetition in a number of communal activities. This distinction is important because customs, social customs, and individual behaviors do not always have the same position. The focus of the research is directed at how the normalization of a practice forms a da'wah dilemma for the dai and affects the possibility of changing people's behavior.

Thus, the novelty of this research lies in the placement of the dai dilemma as the main point of analysis in the relationship between nahi munkar and social normalization. This research not only questions how dai convey the law regarding khamar, but also how they maintain the firmness of religious values when dealing with social pressures and communal relationships. From this perspective, da'wah nahi munkar is understood as a process of transformation of social norms, not just the transmission of religious knowledge. This approach allows cultural da'wah to be understood more critically: adaptation to culture is necessary at the level of communication methods, but it does not mean accepting all social practices as something to be defended.

On that basis, this study aims to analyze three main issues, namely: first, the challenges faced by dai in conveying the prohibition of khamar in a society that has normalized the practice; second, the methods and strategies of da'wah used by dai in dealing with these social conditions; and third, the community's response to da'wah nahi munkar carried out by dai. This study argues that the gap between knowledge about religious prohibitions and social practices is not solely caused by low religious understanding, but also by the strong social norms that maintain a habit. Therefore, da'wah nahi munkar requires a cultural-transformative approach that still maintains the firmness of sharia values, but is carried out contextually, persuasively, gradually, and supported by the formation of collective community consciousness.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a type of field research to understand experiences, dilemmas, strategies, and social responses in

da'wah nahi munkar to khamar practices in Huristak District, Padang Lawas Regency. This approach was chosen because the focus of the research lies on meaning, social relations, and normalization processes that cannot be explained through statistical measurement alone. Data were obtained in a natural context through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation (Creswell & Poth, 2024).

Informants were selected purposively based on their involvement and knowledge of the practices being studied. The informant group included preachers, religious leaders, traditional stakeholders, community leaders, government elements, and relevant citizens. Primary data was obtained through interviews and observations, while secondary data came from relevant documents, archives, and literature. Triangulation of sources and techniques was used to compare information between informants with the results of observation and documentation (Yin, 2018); (Sugiyono, 2020).

Analysis was carried out through data reduction, initial coding, repetitive code grouping, thematic presentation of data, and conclusion drawn/verification (Miles et al., 2019). In the preparation of the article, the challenge category was not treated as a defined list before reading the data. Cultural, psychological, social, structural, and reputational labels were formulated after the repeated units of meaning were grouped based on the similarity of their experiences and sources of stress. The same pattern was used to group da'wah strategies and community responses. The available field records did not detail the type or brand of beverage and consumer distribution by gender; therefore, the study used the term khamar/liquor in general and did not draw on gender-based generalizations.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Field data show that khamar consumption takes place mainly in the context of crowds such as weddings, family celebrations, and a number of communal activities, including mourning events. The practice is described as taking place openly in the event environment so that people who do not participate in drinking in some situations actually feel awkward. The research material also notes that families or hosts may face pressure to provide drinks or give money to community members who ask for the purchase of drinks. Thus, the problems faced by dai are not only individual decisions to drink, but also social expectations that arise around the organization of events.

One of the field records records a resident's statement: "if we do not provide the liquor, the community will not want to participate in this celebration" (Tongku, 2024). This statement shows the position of the host who is not completely free from social pressure. In the same note, a researcher who also acts as a khatib and a preacher experienced a situation when his family held a

celebration and the community asked for money for the purchase of liquor, even though the khamar prohibition had been repeatedly conveyed through sermons and lectures. This experience clarifies that the dai dilemma arises when religious roles meet directly with social obligations as members of the community.

These findings need to be read conceptually carefully. This study did not find a sufficient basis to state that khamar is a normative element of the Huristak custom as a whole. What was identified were social habits that were repeated in the event space, some of which were also labeled customary or communal. This distinction is important because customs, social customs, and individual practices are not identical. In fact, the study noted the existence of Padang Lawas Regency Regional Regulation Number 7 of 2015 concerning the prohibition of serving liquor at weddings, which shows the tension between social practices and formal norms. Therefore, the term social normalization is more appropriately used than mentioning khamar as a standard customary tradition.

Dai's Challenge in Conveying Khamar's Prohibition to the Community

The main challenge faced by dai in Huristak District in conveying the khamar ban lies in the strong social acceptance of the practice. Khamar is no longer understood solely as a drink that is prohibited in crowded events, but has become part of the social customs of the community, especially in weddings, celebrations, traditional crowds, and several other communal activities (H. U. Harahap, 2024). In this context, the khamar prohibition is not only dealing with individual behavior, but also with the structure of habits that have been inherited and considered part of the smooth running of social events. Dai who convey the khamar prohibition through da'wah pulpits, sermons, lectures, or personal advice often face the fact that the religious message is not automatically accepted as a guideline for social behavior. This shows that da'wah nahi munkar faces obstacles when the iniquity has been justified in the practice of daily life (Situmorang et al., 2025).

Key findings show that dai face various challenges as the results of an interview with preacher Raihan said:

"The community actually knows that khamar is forbidden by religion, but in parties and crowds it is still considered a habit that is difficult to separate. For us as dai, reprimanding it is also not easy because the ones who are reprimanded are often family, neighbors, or people close to us. If it is too harsh, it is feared that it will offend and damage social relationships. On the other hand, the support of community leaders and the organizers' families is also not always strong. Sometimes a firm dai is considered not to understand the habits of the community. Even people who do not

participate in drinking can be considered less sociable. Therefore, da'wah must be firm, but still consider the way it is delivered."

From the results of this interview, it can be understood that, first, cultural challenges arise from the community's assumption that khamar is part of a social tradition that is difficult to separate from crowded events. Second, psychological and social challenges are related to hesitation, fear of offending, or worrying about damaging social relationships when dai rebukes khamar practices directly. Third, structural challenges arise from the weak collective support of community leaders, organizer families, or other social elements in limiting the provision of khamar. Fourth, reputational challenges related to the perception that dai is too harsh if it is still prevented and the tone of the assumption that they do not understand the customs, or are unable to adapt to the habits of the community. In fact, in some cases, people who do not participate in drinking khamar actually feel isolated in their social environment. This situation shows that dai are not only dealing with khamar perpetrators, but also with social pressures that support the sustainability of the practice.

The findings of this study are in line with the perspective of Muhtadi et al., (2025) who place da'wah not solely as the delivery of religious messages, but as a process that takes place in social reality as well as the psychological of society. In this perspective, the effectiveness of da'wah is related to the ability of dai to read social changes, relationships between individuals, psychological conditions of mad'u, and the environment in which da'wah messages are delivered. This framework is relevant to the findings of the research that dai in conveying the prohibition of khamar faces interrelated challenges, namely cultural, psychological, social, structural, and reputational. Cultural and social challenges are seen when the practice of khamar gains acceptance through customs and communal relationships; psychological challenges arise in the form of hesitation and concern that offend the community; Meanwhile, structural challenges are related to the lack of strong collective support from community leaders and the families of the organizers. At the same time, reputational challenges arise when the firmness of the dai has the potential to be perceived as an attitude that is too harsh or lacks understanding of people's habits. Thus, the findings of this study strengthen the view of Muhtadi et al that da'wah needs to be understood contextually by paying attention to the social and psychological dimensions of the community, so that the firmness of religious messages can still be conveyed through an empathetic and humanistic approach.

Da'wah Da'wah Methods and Strategies in Dealing with Khamar Habits

The habit of consuming khamar that has taken root in the life of the community encourages the need to apply da'wah methods that are not only

normative, but also persuasive, humanist, and carried out in stages. Considering that the consumption of khamar has become a deep-rooted habit in some communities in Huristak District, a da'wah approach is needed that not only emphasizes the normative aspect, but also prioritizes persuasive and gradual strategies so that the message of da'wah can be received effectively. Da'wah is carried out through religious lectures, Friday sermons, recitations, personal advice, and social approaches to the community and family to build awareness about the prohibition of khamar and encourage changes in community behavior (Bahtiar, 2018).

Therefore, dai tends to choose an approach that balances firmness in conveying the law of khamar with prudence in maintaining social relations. As the preacher Rahalim said:

"In conveying the prohibition of khamar, we not only explain that khamar is haram based on the Qur'an and hadith, especially through sermons, lectures, and recitations. The community also needs to be invited to see the consequences, such as fights, commotions, loss of consciousness, and family disturbances. The way to convey it must also look at the condition of the community, the language used, customs, and family relationships. Sometimes advice is better to be conveyed privately to people or their families, not directly in public. In addition, dai cannot work alone. Religious leaders, traditional leaders, communities, organizing families, and officials need to make an agreement so that khamar is no longer provided in crowded events."

The main findings show that the da'wah strategy carried out by the dai can be classified into several forms. First, the normative da'wah strategy is based on the delivery of the postulates of the haram of khamar through verses, hadiths, and explanations of rules in Islam. Usually, this strategy is applied in sermons, lectures, and recitations. Second, a persuasive da'wah strategy that invites the public to understand the adverse effects of khamar on themselves, their families, and the social environment, such as fights, riots, loss of consciousness, and disturbance of order in events. Third, cultural da'wah strategies that pay attention to customs, regional languages, family relationships, and the psychological condition of the community when conveying prohibition messages. Fourth, personal da'wah strategies are carried out directly to individuals or families, both before and after social events. Fifth, a collaborative strategy that invites religious leaders, traditional leaders, communities, and social apparatus to work together to build an agreement so that the provision of khamar is no longer an obligation in crowded events.

Based on these findings, the da'wah method applied by the dai shows that there is an effort to adapt to the social conditions of the community. Dai plays a

role not only as a conveyor of religious teachings, but also as a social communicator who must be able to choose the right time, language, approach, and da'wah goals. However, the success of this strategy is highly dependent on the available social support. If da'wah is carried out by dai without the support of traditional leaders, families, and communities, behavior change becomes difficult to achieve widely (Hanifah, 2024). Therefore, da'wah nahi munkar against the habit of drinking khamar requires a collective strategy. This religious prohibition must be interpreted as a shared awareness that khamar is not part of an honorary event, not a condition for togetherness, and is not a symbol of the smooth running of social activities.

Community Response to Dai's Da'wah Nahi Munkar

The community's response to the da'wah nahi munkar conveyed by the dai of Huristak District is not uniform. Some receive the message normatively because they know that khamar is prohibited in Islam, but this does not always lead to a change in social behavior. Many still maintain the habit of providing or consuming khamar due to customary factors, togetherness, environmental pressure, or the assumption that the event is not festive without the drink. On the other hand, there are also people who are ambivalent: they admit religious prohibitions, but find it difficult to reject long-standing social customs. This response shows that there is a gap between religious knowledge and social practices in da'wah nahi munkar.

From the results of interviews with community leaders regarding the community's response to several responses, as conveyed by community leaders, His Majesty said:

"The response of the community to da'wah regarding khamar is indeed different. Some accept and agree, even starting to realize that khamar brings many problems in the family and the environment. But there are also those who do not accept it because they think that the drink is common in parties and crowds, so that if it is banned, they feel that the event becomes less festive. There are also those who actually admit that khamar is haram and do not deny it when we convey it in lectures, but in practice they cannot leave it completely. So, there are those who accept and change, some still maintain their habits, and there are also those who accept the prohibition religiously but still allow khamar in certain events."

The main findings identified three levels of community response. From the results of this interview, it can be understood that, First, the response to acceptance, namely people who agree with the ban on dai and begin to realize the negative impact of khamar on social life. This group is generally more open to religious advice and supports efforts to reduce the practice of khamar in social

events. Second, the response of resistance, which is a society that rejects or ignores the message of da'wah because it considers khamar to be part of an inherent custom. For them, the ban on dai is considered to disrupt tradition or reduce the excitement of the event. Third, the compromise response, which is a society that religiously recognizes the ban on khamar, but socially has not been able to abandon the practice completely. They do not openly reject da'wah, but allow the practice of khamar to continue in certain events.

Thus, the community's response to da'wah nahi munkar shows that changing religious behavior requires a gradual process. Da'wah has contributed to building people's normative awareness of the prohibition of khamar, but has not been fully able to change entrenched social practices. This confirms that the success of da'wah depends not only on how often the message is delivered, but also on its ability to build broader social support. Change is more likely to occur if dai, traditional leaders, community leaders, officials, and families of event organizers have the same commitment to reduce, even eliminate, the practice of khamar in social activities. Therefore, da'wah nahi munkar to local Muslim communities needs to move from simply conveying prohibitions to forming collective awareness and changing social norms.

Contextually, these findings show that the meaning of khamar changes depending on the social space. In Islamic normative texts, khamar is expressly considered haram. However, in a society that has long considered khamar as part of a social event, its meaning is not only as a legal object, but also as a symbol of togetherness, smooth events, and social acceptance. In other words, religious prohibitions clash with local culture, creating tension of meaning. Khamar, which is normatively categorized as evil, can be understood socially as a tradition, custom, or complement to the event. This is where the challenge of da'wah arises, because what is faced is not only drinking behavior, but also the construction of meaning formed from the social experience of the community. Therefore, da'wah nahi munkar requires sensitivity in reading the context, not just repeating the legal text.

If it is associated with the theory of cultural da'wah, the results of this study show that da'wah is not enough to be done with a confrontational approach alone; it is also necessary to consider the social conditions of mad'u. Cultural da'wah emphasizes the importance of understanding customs, language, social psychology, and the structure of society so that religious messages can be received gradually (Mirwazi & Muhid, 2025). However, this study also provides a critical note of cultural da'wah. Cultural adaptation is important, but not all social customs must be accepted as part of the culture that needs to be maintained. In the case of khamar, the dai is on a sensitive line between respecting society and correcting practices that are contrary to the sharia. Therefore, this study expands

the understanding of cultural da'wah: it does not mean justifying all traditions, but rather seeking the wisest way to transform problematic traditions. These findings are in line with the concept of amar ma'ruf nahi munkar which demands moral courage, but that courage must be conveyed through appropriate communication strategies (Badarussyamsi et al., 2020).

One important understanding of this study is that the failure of social religious change is not always caused by the lack of religious knowledge of the community. Many people know that khamar is forbidden, but they still practice it because of social pressure, shared habits, and fear of outside influence. This shows that there is a real distance between knowledge of norms and social practices. A dai may succeed in conveying laws, but not necessarily able to change habits if social norms still support the practice. Therefore, da'wah nahi munkar must target not only individual understanding, but also collective norms. Behavior change will be more difficult if people begin to view khamar no longer as a symbol of togetherness, but as a source of social problems that threaten order, family, and religious values.

The main implication of this study is the importance of more systematic social policies and actions in supporting da'wah nahi munkar. The ban on khamar must be more than just conveyed through dai lectures; there needs to be a social agreement involving religious leaders, traditional leaders, communities, local governments, security forces, and the families of the event organizers. In terms of policy, local governments can encourage social rules or agreements at the village level that prohibit the sale of khamar at events such as weddings, celebrations, and other community activities. In da'wah, dai needs to design a gradual communication strategy, starting from education about the dangers of khamar, increasing family awareness, approaching traditional leaders, to building a shared commitment. At the community level, it is important to create alternative traditions that maintain solidarity without the need for khamar. In this way, this research not only contributes academically to the study of cultural da'wah and nahi munkar, but also becomes the basis for practical action to develop a collaborative da'wah model that is able to change social habits contrary to Islamic values.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that da'wah nahi munkar on the practice of khamar in local Muslim communities is not only limited to conveying religious prohibitions, but also as a social process that interacts with traditions, social pressures, and normalization of habits. Dai faces multidimensional challenges, ranging from cultural, psychological, social, structural, to reputational challenges, because khamar has been commonly seen in weddings, celebrations, traditions, and

community activities. Although da'wah has played a role in increasing normative awareness of the khamar prohibition, behavioral change has not fully occurred because this practice is still supported by customary relations, social solidarity, and mutual acceptance. Therefore, the scientific contribution of this article confirms that the success of da'wah nahi munkar is not only measured by the delivery of religious messages, but also by the ability of da'wah to build collective awareness and change social norms that support the sustainability of evil.

Theoretically, this article reinforces the concept of cultural-transformative da'wah, namely da'wah that remains based on the firmness of sharia values, but is carried out through contextual, persuasive, and gradual social strategies. This study places the dai dilemma as a socio-religious position when the dai must balance the obligation to uphold nahi munkar with the need to maintain social relations in the community. The practical implication is that da'wah on the practice of khamar cannot only be imposed on the dai through lectures or sermons, but also needs to be supported through the synergy of religious leaders, traditional leaders, community leaders, officials, event organizing families, and local governments. Further research can be directed to testing collaborative da'wah models, comparisons with other local communities, as well as a more in-depth study of the role of traditional leaders and families in changing social habits that have long been normalized.

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