

Piety Consumption Among Urban Muslim Youth at The Teras Dakwah Community in Yogyakarta

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Abstract

The contemporary da'wa social movement has catalyzed transformative shifts in religious practices. Da'wa no longer confined to Islamic political advocacy, revivalist agendas, or moral panics, da'wa now intersects with the commodification of faith, merging Islamic identity with pop culture and market-driven trends. This evolution has redefined religious engagement, prioritizing the symbolic appropriation of popular culture to appeal to modern audiences. Methodologically, this study employs an ethnographic field research approach, focusing on the Muslim youth community associated with Teras Dakwah Community in Yogyakarta. The findings reveal that market-oriented religious practices have fostered consumerist tendencies, exemplified by the commercialization of Islamic fashion, the redesign of da'wa study spaces into café-like environments, and the rebranding of preaching venues as social hubs for youth. Consequently, da'wa culture has transitioned into a hybrid space where religious discourse coexists with pop aesthetics, reflecting broader societal shifts toward the commodification of spirituality. This article clearly explains Schielke's argument that piety consumption is not something that can be avoided, as it is an adaptation to the condition of being a Muslim in the modern era.

Gerakan sosial dakwah kontemporer telah mengkatalisasi perubahan transformatif dalam praktik keagamaan. Da'wa tidak lagi terbatas pada advokasi politik Islam, agenda kebangkitan, atau kepanikan moral, dakwah kini bersinggungan dengan komodifikasi iman, menggabungkan identitas Islam dengan budaya pop dan tren yang digerakkan oleh pasar. Evolusi ini telah mendefinisikan ulang keterlibatan keagamaan, memprioritaskan penyesuaian simbolis budaya populer untuk menarik khalayak modern. Secara metodologis, penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan penelitian lapangan etnografi, dengan fokus pada komunitas pemuda Muslim yang terkait dengan komunitas Teras Dakwah di Yogyakarta. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa praktik keagamaan yang berorientasi pasar

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telah menumbuhkan kecenderungan konsumerisme, yang dicontohkan oleh komersialisasi mode Islami, desain ruang belajar dakwah menjadi lingkungan seperti kafe, dan perubahan citra tempat khotbah sebagai pusat aktivitas sosial bagi kaum muda. Akibatnya, budaya dakwah telah bertransisi menjadi ruang hibrida di mana wacana keagamaan hidup berdampingan dengan estetika pop, yang mencerminkan pergeseran masyarakat yang lebih luas menuju komodifikasi spiritualitas. Tulisan ini memaparkan secara jelas bahwa argumen schielke bahwa piety consumption bukanlah suatu hal yang bisa dihindari, karena merupakan penyesuaian terhadap kondisi menjadi Muslim di era modern.

Keywords: Da'wa; Young Muslim; Pop Culture; Piety; Market Islam

Introduction

This article analyzes how changes in da'wah occur among young Muslims, that symbolic consumerism is caused by the tendency towards market-oriented religious practices. The author argues that Teras Dakwah's approach to marketing Islamic study sessions and selling Islamic commodities represents an effort to reconcile consumerist culture and the pop culture of Muslim youth with piety. Rather than fostering consumerism, Teras Dakwah repackages Islamic study sessions and products as a form of *dakwah* (Islamic proselytization) that aligns with the pop culture expressions of Muslim youth. In doing so, Teras Dakwah emerges as a non-mainstream *dakwah* movement that adheres to the law of market demand.

The marketing strategies employed by Teras Dakwah blend Islamic values with modernization. This aligns with the theory of "eclecticism" proposed by Daromir Rudnycky, who argues that contemporary *dakwah* actors combine Islamic values with secular elements drawn from the outside world.¹ In line with Schielke's argument, that Muslims in the modern era are quite dynamic, cannot be distinguished in black and white, between the pious and the non-pious.² Young Muslims balance the desire to adhere to religion without avoiding the enjoyment of worldly life. This fusion of religious and secular values makes *dakwah* actors distinct and unique. Teras Dakwah is one such case that implements eclecticism in its *dakwah* marketing.

This article reinforces previous studies on *dakwah* oriented toward "market religion," as discussed by Einstein³, Jones⁴, Beta⁵, Nisa⁶, François Gauthier et

¹ D. Rudnycky. *Spiritual Economics: Islam and Neoliberalism in Contemporary Indonesia*. *Cultural Anthropology*, (2009), 24 (101–141).

² S. Schielke. Being good in Ramadan: ambivalence, fragmentation, and the moral self in the lives of young Egyptians. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, (2009), 15, S24–S40.

³ M. Einstein. *Brand of Faith: Marketing Religions in a Commercial Age*. Routledge, (2008).

al.⁷, and Kailani & Sunarwoto⁸. These scholars argue that contemporary religious actors present religion as a “supply” governed by market demand, meaning they “broadly supply religion in forms that cater to the desires of the modern market (society).” These actors position themselves as “religious entrepreneurs,” supplying religion (“supply-side religion”) based on the “law of supply”.⁹ Rather than market-oriented da'wah “reducing religion to a lifestyle”. The religion represents a new form of da'wah for Indonesian youth, combining piety, entertainment, and consumption in a single, hybrid space.

Method

To explore this research in depth, the author employs qualitative methodology through an ethnographic case study of the Teras Dakwah community in Yogyakarta. The research was conducted from December 10, 2019 to June 10, 2020, located on Jl. Nitikan, Umbulharjo, Yogyakarta. Data were collected through participation in Islamic study sessions, social activities, volunteering for *dakwah* programs¹⁰, mass preaching events (*tabligh akbar*), intensive study sessions, participate in non-religious-based dawah program¹¹, and personal interviews and communications with Teras Dakwah stakeholder in an unstructured manner, for example the initials AS (General Chairperson of Teras Dakwah), Division of Development of Da'wah and Cooperation (AH), Media and Information Technology (RZ), Research and Da'wah (AF), and

⁴ Carla Jones. Materializing piety: Gendered anxieties about faithful consumption in contemporary urban Indonesia. *American Ethnologist*, (2010), 37(4), 617–637.

⁵ A.R. Beta. *H'ijabers: How Young Urban Muslim Women Redefine Themselves in Indonesia*, (2014), 76(4–5), 337.

⁶ E. F. Nisa. Creative and lucrative Da'wa: the visual culture of Instagram amongst female Muslim youth in Indonesia. *Asiascape: Digital Asia*, (2018), 5(1–2), 68–99.

⁷ F. Gauthier, Woodhead, & Martinainen, T. Gauthier, In Francois Gauthier & T. Martikainen (Eds.), *Religion in Consumer Society: Brands, Consumers and Markets*. Ashgate, (2013), (pp. 1–26).

⁸ Najib Kailani, & Sunarwoto. Televangelisme Islam dalam Lanskap Otoritas Keagamaan Baru. In N. Hasan (Ed.), *Ulama dan Negara-Bangsa: Membaca Masa Depan Politik Islam di Indonesia*. Suka Press, (2019), (pp. 179–206).

⁹ Greag Fealy. Consuming Islam: Commodified Religion and Aspirational Pietism in Contemporary Indonesia. In G. Fealy & S. White (Eds.), *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, (2008), (pp. 1–15); F. Gauthier, Woodhead, & Martinainen, T. Gauthier, In Francois Gauthier & T. Martikainen (Eds.), *Religion in Consumer Society: Brands, Consumers and Markets*. Ashgate, (2013), (pp. 1–26); N. Kailani, & Sunarwoto. Televangelisme Islam dalam Lanskap Otoritas Keagamaan Baru. In N. Hasan (Ed.), *Ulama dan Negara-Bangsa: Membaca Masa Depan Politik Islam di Indonesia*. Suka Press, (2019), (pp. 179–206); Bryan Turner. *Religion and Modern Society: Citizenship, Secularisation and the State*. Cambridge University Press, (2012).

¹⁰ Ngaji Teras, Ngaji Qohwah, Ngaji Hadits, Ngaji Multimedia, Tabligh Akbar, and Ngaji Entrepreneurship (field observation of the Teras Dakwah's 22 October 2019).

¹¹ such as camping, outbound, traveling, and shooting to create creative da'wah content (field observation of the Teras Dakwah's 22 October 2019).

Teras Dakwah volunteers who were selected randomly. The research was carried out for six months, from December 25, 2019, to June 25, 2020. Furthermore, to strengthen the data analysis, the author conducted online observations on the Instagram accounts @terasdakwah and @ngajiasyik, the YouTube channel for Teras Dakwah.¹² Data was collected from December 25-30, 2024, on the @terasdakwah Instagram account.

Result and Discussion

The Islamic Expressions of Urban Muslims in Indonesia's Public Space and the Spread of Islamic Consumerism Trends

Post-New Order, Islamic subjectivity toward religious consumerism has increasingly resonated in Indonesia's public sphere. R. Beta, in his study, identifies this phenomenon with the terms "Urban Muslim" and "Islamic revival."¹³ Meanwhile, Mahmood Saba theorizes it as part of the "global Islamic revival movement." Saba links this global Islamic revival to a "piety movement," exemplified by the growing religious devotion of young Egyptian Muslims who engage in public religious activities.¹⁴

In their study, Greg Fealy and Sally White describe this as a "Muslim religious revival," marked by the emergence of the Muslim middle class in public spaces. These Muslim middle class express their religious identity and symbols of piety publicly. For instance, they adopt trendy Islamic fashion, consume halal products, use Islamic cosmetics, read popular Islamic literature, reside in Islamic-themed housing, and invest in Islamic banking. The middle-class Muslim community expresses piety through consumption, religious gatherings, and Islamic products.¹⁵

Fealy and White argue that this increasingly religious consumption pattern in Indonesian society reflects both "emotional" and "rational" dimensions.¹⁶ Emotional consumption is driven by religious considerations, such as purchasing hijabs, Sharia-compliant fashion, and halal goods. Conversely,

¹² Ngaji Teras is a relaxing dakwah program that is held on Tuesday evenings. This program is attended by various groups of young people from various layers of social sub-culture, education, Islamic organizations, cross-cultural, hobbies and pleasures (field observation of the Teras Dakwah's 22 October 2019).

¹³ A.R. Beta. *H"ijabers: How Young Urban Muslim Women Redefine Themselves in Indonesia*, (2014), 76(4-5), 337.

¹⁴ Saba Mahmood. *Politics of piety: The Islamic Revival and The Feminist Subject* (1st ed.). Princeton University Press, (2005), pp. 1-3.

¹⁵ Fealy Greag & White, S. Introductions. In *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*. ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute, (2008), (pp. 1-16).

¹⁶ Fealy Greag & White, S. Introductions. In *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*. ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute, (2008), (pp. 1-16).

"rational" consumption involves pragmatic choices aligned with Islamic principles. These dual patterns foster "universal" and "subjective" religious practices, where faith is measured through individual needs and expressed via Islamic products and symbols. Yuswohady terms this "universalist Muslim consumption," characterized by demand for religiously oriented products.¹⁷

Fealy notes that the growth of the Muslim middle class is evident in the rise of Islamic commercial spaces—both explicitly Islamic-branded and secular establishments adhering to Islamic principles.¹⁸ This material piety, tied to consumerist lifestyles and religious symbols, signals the rapid expansion of Indonesia's middle-class Muslims in public life. Jones describes this as a "material piety of subjectivity," where middle-class Muslims commercialize their devotion through lifestyle choices.¹⁹ The shift toward subjective Islamic consumption reflects personal transformation from non-religious to religious identities. Kailani & Sunarwoto identify the urban Muslim trend of *hijrah* (religious turn) as a form of "self-fashioning" (self-improvement advocacy).²⁰ In recent years, this call for self-betterment has become a popular trend among youth, blending spiritual growth with modern consumer culture.

Urban Muslim Piety

The Teras Dakwah community's discourse on self-improvement through *hijrah* resonates with Evangelical Christianity's "born-again" narrative, which urges modern societies to return to Christian values amid secularizing modernity.²¹ However, the distinction lies in the religious frameworks promoted by each tradition. While Evangelical and Pentecostal movements frame modernity as eroding Christian values, driving secularization, Islamic actors encourage youth to "return to Islam" through *hijrah*—a call to piety that sacralizes everyday life through religious observance.

This Islamic piety aligns with Turner's concept of "personal piety" in his book *Religion and Modern Society: Citizenship, Secularisation and the State*, where devotion is expressed through consuming religious commodities.²²

¹⁷ Yuswohady. *Generasi M: Generation Muslim*. Bentang Pustaka, (2017).

¹⁸ Fealy Greag & White, S. Introductions. In *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*. ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute, (2008), (pp. 1–16).

¹⁹ Carla Jones. Materializing piety: Gendered anxieties about faithful consumption in contemporary urban Indonesia. *American Ethnologist*, (2010), 37(4), 617–637.

²⁰ Najib Kailani, & Sunarwoto. Televangelisme Islam dalam Lanskap Otoritas Keagamaan Baru. In N. Hasan (Ed.), *Ulama dan Negara-Bangsa: Membaca Masa Depan Politik Islam di Indonesia*. Suka Press, (2019), (pp. 179–206).

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Bryan Turner. *Religion and Modern Society: Citizenship, Secularisation and the State*. Cambridge University Press, (2012).

Beyond products, personal piety also manifests in the messages of popular Islamic preachers (ustaz), whose teachings are commodified into religious symbols and identities.²³ Islam itself is framed as a “market,” with religious actors skillfully merging doctrinal messages with marketable products.²⁴

The rise of *hijrah* (religious transformation) discourse alongside active piety creates an ideal momentum for contemporary *Dakwah* movements to attract youth. Despite embracing modernity, young Muslims are increasingly drawn to applying Islamic principles in daily life. *Dakwah* actors leverage identity, leisure, and lifestyle as strategies to appeal to youth, organizing religious gatherings (*pengajian*) with themes relevant to their interests.

Teras *Dakwah* community conform its efforts with youth culture, celebrating *hijrah* as a cross-cultural trend tied to identity, hobbies, and lifestyle. This is reflected in their programs, stage designs, social media documentation, and religious discussion topics tailored to youth. For example, their events blend religious lectures with modern aesthetics, using vibrant video posters and relatable themes. This approach has led young Muslims in Yogyakarta to actively participate in Teras *Dakwah*'s activities, not only attending events but also contributing as fundraisers. They support social campaigns, collect donations during gatherings, organize charity, and donate to humanitarian causes. Their involvement not merely as attendees but as members of the Teras *Dakwah* movement.

Based on the author's observations at the Teras *Dakwah* Community, young members actively disseminate messages about *hijrah* (religious transformation). This movement is initiated by youth actors from diverse social backgrounds, including Islamic activists, influencers, public figures, and volunteers from youth subcultures. These actors enthusiastically promote discourses *hijrah* and piety among young Muslims. They emphasize the importance of youth embracing religion, utilizing social media and creative proselytization (*dakwah*) to attract their peers. Their programs feature engaging, youth-centric religious activities tailored to modern cultural tastes.

²³ A. Muzzaki. Islam as a Symbolic Commodity: Transmitting and Consuming Islam Public Sermons in Indonesia. In P. Kitiarsa (Ed.), *Religious Commodification in Asia: Marketing Good*. Routledge, (2008), pp. 209–219.

²⁴ J. B Hoesterey. Marketing Morality: The Rise, Fall and Rebranding of Aa Gym. In G. Fealy & S. White (Eds.), *In Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, (2008), pp. 95–114.; J. B Hoesterey. Marketing Islam: Entrepreneurial Ethics and Capitalism in Indonesia. *Spring*, (2018) 10, pp. 1–14.

By framing *dakwah* as enjoyable and inclusive, Teras Dakwah dismantles the stigma that religion is rigid or boring. It allows youth to maintain their modern, sociable identities while embracing piety. As Han notes, the *hijrah* trend among youth, led by Ustadz who is concerned with the hijrah movement, retains elements of enjoyment, using leisure as a tool to attract followers.²⁵ In this way, piety and pleasure coexist, redefining religious engagement for Indonesia's urban Muslim youth.

Target Segment of Teras Dakwah's Youth Congregation

Teras Dakwah's primary target segment is young Muslims in Yogyakarta (Jogja). These youth come from diverse religious ideological backgrounds, with hybrid identities spanning Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, Salafi, Tarbiyah, Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), and Wahdah Islamiyah. As a proselytization (*dakwah*) movement, Teras Dakwah does not affiliate with any specific Islamic ideology but instead celebrates this diversity. According to field observations (Teras Dakwah, January 5, 2020), the movement avoids prioritizing religious ideology, emphasizing instead the universal Islamic brotherhood (*ukhuwah Islamiyah*) that unites Muslims regardless of sect or background. Teras Dakwah strives to reach all layers of contemporary youth culture, including street culture enthusiasts, travelers, athletes, integrating them into a single cohesive community.

This inclusivity is encapsulated in the slogan: "*Ngaji Asyik & Nongkrong Anak Muda Jogja Lintas Harakah*" (Enjoyable Religious Study & Hangout Spot for Jogja Youth Across Movements). The slogan reflects the hybrid identities of its congregation and fosters unity. Akhid, the founder of Teras Dakwah, states:

"Teras Dakwah aims to be a shelter for all congregants. We want it to be a comfortable space for everyone. We don't differentiate based on their identities. As long as they are Muslim, sincere, and eager to learn Islam, Teras Dakwah will embrace them. Here, they can mingle as one, regardless of their religious organizational background" (Akhid, Ngaji Qohwah at Teras Dakwah).

²⁵ M. I. Han. *Anak Muda, Dakwah Jalanan dan Fragmentasi Otoritas Keagamaan: Studi Atas Gerakan Dakwah Pemuda Hijrah dan Pemuda Hidayah*. UIN Sunan Kalijaga, (2018), pp. 17.



Figure 1.
Teras Dakwah's Banner

This philosophy ensures a broad congregation, transcending not only religious affiliations but also ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and class identities. Yogyakarta's status as an educational hub attracts diverse ethnic groups, further enriching the congregation's multicultural character. Teras Dakwah's slogan "Enjoyable Religious Study & Hangout Spot for Jogja Youth Across Movements" positions it as a welcoming, dynamic space where youth unite through shared interests in faith, hobbies, and leisure.

The diversity of religious identities today has opened new segments for dakwah (Islamic proselytization), moving away from ideological exclusivity. Contemporary dakwah allows religious actors to collaborate, exchange ideas, and embrace differences rather than debate them. Unlike earlier movements that focused on sect-specific agendas, today's dakwah initiatives increasingly merge into a unified approach. This shift reflects the rise of "market religion," where faith is commodified through supply and demand dynamics.²⁶ The slogan in Figure 1 exemplifies this commodification, framing religion as a marketable product.

The author argues that modern dakwah movements increasingly fragment Muslim identities, diluting their core essence. As Han notes, youth identities today require negotiation with culture, globalization, modernization, and technology, evolving alongside societal changes. Han's study highlights movements like *Pemuda Hijrah* (Shift Youth) and *Pemuda Hidayah* (Guidance Youth) in Bandung, where dakwah intersects with street culture and pop culture to form hybrid religious communities.²⁷

²⁶ F. Gauthier, Woodhead, & Martinainen, T. Gauthier, In Francois Gauthier & T. Martikainen (Eds.), *Religion in Consumer Society: Brands, Consumers and Markets*. Ashgate, (2013), (pp. 1–26)

²⁷ M. I. Han. *Anak Muda, Dakwah Jalanan dan Fragmentasi Otoritas Keagamaan: Studi Atas Gerakan Dakwah Pemuda Hijrah dan Pemuda Hidayah*. UIN Sunan Kalijaga, (2018).

Teras Dakwah's Marketing Concept: A Modern and Futuristic Cafe

A standout feature of Teras Dakwah's strategy is its innovative fusion of dakwah with the ambiance of a modern café. By blending youth leisure culture with religious gatherings, Teras Dakwah appeals to young Muslims in Yogyakarta, positioning Islam as progressive and adaptable to contemporary trends. According to Triantoro, café culture has become a hallmark of youth identity since 2016, transcending its origins among the 19th-century bourgeoisie.²⁸ Once a symbol of upper-class social critique and business discourse, cafes are now embraced across socioeconomic strata. Global influences, like Starbucks' presence in Indonesia, have cemented cafes as spaces for community and self-expression.

Teras Dakwah adopts this global trend, integrating elements like espresso bars, coffee roasteries, and modern aesthetics to attract youth. The design merges minimalist black iron pillars, golden-yellow wooden accents, mood lighting, and sleek furniture (see Figure 2). By night, the space mirrors a trendy café, creating a welcoming environment for religious study sessions (*pengajian*). Based on the findings of this research data, Fealy and Sally said that it describes this as a "Muslim religious revival," marked by the emergence of the "Muslim Middle Class" in public spaces.²⁹ These Muslim middle class express their religious identity and symbols of piety publicly. Example, they adopt trendy's Islamic fashion, consume halal products in public sphere, contemporary youth culture, including street culture enthusiasts, travelers, athletes, integrating them into a single cohesive community. The middle-class Muslim community expresses piety through consumption, religious gatherings, and Islamic products.³⁰ As Han says that, the trend among youth Muslims Indonesia, Islamic expressions doing elements of enjoyment, using leisure as a tool to attract followers to conquer pop culture.³¹ In this way, piety and pleasure coexist, redefining religious engagement for Indonesia's urban Muslim youth.

²⁸ D. A. Triantoro. *Dakwah dan Kesalehan: Studi Tentang Gerakan Teras Dakwah Di Kota Yogyakarta*. *Jurnal Masyarakat & Budaya*, (2018), 20(2), 273–286.

²⁹ Fealy Greag & White, S. Introductions. In *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*. ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute, (2008), (pp. 1–16).

³⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 3.

³¹ M. I. Han. *Anak Muda, Dakwah Jalanan dan Fragmentasi Otoritas Keagamaan: Studi Atas Gerakan Dakwah Pemuda Hijrah dan Pemuda Hidayah*. UIN Sunan Kalijaga, (2018).



Figure 2.

Teras Dakwah's Café.

Source: field observation of the Teras Dakwah's 22 October 2019

Teras Dakwah's architectural concept, which incorporates profane elements like cafés and terraces, reflects a form of "negotiated piety." This represents "active piety"—piety expressed through the adoption of popular culture. Upon closer examination, the preaching model of *Teras Dakwah* shares similarities with the *Forum Lingkar Pena* (FLP), both employing popular cultural approaches. The key difference lies in *Teras Dakwah's* conceptualization, which adopts the packaging of modern café culture infused with profane elements, whereas FLP utilizes popular culture through magazines and novels framed in contemporary, trendy language. The fusion of popular culture with Islam produces a form of "popular Islamic literature." This hybridity, as termed by Kailani³², is referred to as "dynamic piety" (a form of piety that is unstable). Such piety necessitates negotiation, often characterized by ambivalence or ambiguity.³³ Piety and pleasure, or worldly pleasures and obedience, can be reconsidered based on youth contests. Therefore, the Islamic positioning of today's urban youth is in stark contrast to that of traditional Muslims.

The ever-shifting piety of young people is negotiated through their dynamic youthfulness. Herrera and Bayat argue that youth identities are not fixed; rather, they are constructed by cultural, social, and political forces.³⁴ Thus, these factors play a crucial role in shaping their identities. Young people forge their identities

³² Najib Kailani. Forum Lingkar Pena and Muslim youth in contemporary Indonesia. *RIMA: Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*, (2012). 46 (1), 33.

³³ S. Schielke. Being good in Ramadan: ambivalence, fragmentation, and the moral self in the lives of young Egyptians. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, (2009), 15, S24–S40.

³⁴ L. Herrera, & A. Bayat. Conclusion: Knowing Muslim Youth. *Being Young and Muslim in Neoliberal Times: New Cultural Politics in the Global South and North*, (2010). 355–364.

through processes of *reinvention* and *self-conscious invention*.³⁵ Youth identities are largely influenced by both global and local dynamics. These dual forces drive young people to continually carve out their identities within social spaces.³⁶

Following Kailani's analysis, as well as Bayat and Herrera's perspectives on the fluidity of youth identity, the author argues that the diverse identities of *Teras Dakwah*'s young members stem from processes of social construction. Their identities are shaped by social, cultural, and global influences. In this context, youth identity is seen as dynamic, evolving in response to encounters with globalization and modernization.

According to Akhid, the founder of *Teras Dakwah*, the café-style preaching concept was designed with several considerations in mind. First, *Teras Dakwah* aims to be an enjoyable Islamic study space that attracts young people to learn about religion. Islam is no longer portrayed as rigid but as flexible and adaptable to modern times. It represents a form of resistance against "mainstream Islam," which here refers to overly rigid, conservative, or inflexible interpretations of Islam. This stands in contrast to Salafi Islam. Second, the increasing trend of youth lifestyles centered around leisure and pleasure. This is reflected in the coffee-drinking culture, which serves as an incentive for congregants to visit *Teras Dakwah*. Combining Quranic study (*ngaji*) with coffee (*ngopi*) creates a more enjoyable experience—"studying while sipping coffee." This is encapsulated in their slogan: "*Sambil Ngaji Nyeruput Kopi*" ("Study While Sipping Coffee"). Third, Akhid's disappointment with certain preachers (*aktor dakwah*) who claim Islam cannot coexist with modernization. This drove Akhid to rethink and modernize preaching strategies to make Islam more relatable.

The contemporary design of *Teras Dakwah*'s building was inspired by Kang Puji Hartono, a key figure in the *Pesantren Masyarakat Yogyakarta* (PMJ) or Community Islamic Boarding School movement. With Kang Puji's support, *Teras Dakwah* began as a study group gathering on the terrace of a house. Over time, it evolved into a favored study hub, eventually becoming the social movement. The community primarily targets young audiences, a shift that also redefined its congregational orientation. Today, *Teras Dakwah* operates as a legally registered entity.³⁷

³⁵ P. Nilan & C. Feixa. *Global Youth? Hybrid Identities, Prural World*. Routledge, (2006).

³⁶ L. Herrera, & A. Bayat. Conclusion: Knowing Muslim Youth. *Being Young and Muslim in Neoliberal Times: New Cultural Politics in the Global South and North*, (2010). 355–364

³⁷ D. A. Triantoro. Dakwah dan Kesalehan: Studi Tentang Gerakan Teras Dakwah Di Kota Yogyakarta. *Jurnal Masyarakat & Budaya*, (2018), 20(2), 273–286.

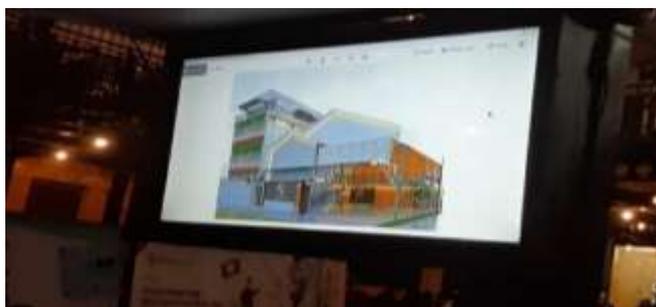


Figure 3.
Design of the Teras Dakwah Building

One participant, Hidayat, was deeply impressed by the café-like design of the Teras Dakwah study space. He noted that the building resembles a modern café, making it uniquely appealing compared to other preaching movements that hold sessions in mosques, such as the Dakwah Masjid Jogokariyan, Masjid Nurul Asri, Masjid Suciati, and UGM Mosque, including the UIN Sunan Kalijaga Mosque Laboratory. These groups typically center their activities in mosques.³⁸ The blend of café and home terrace elements creates a relaxed, flexible atmosphere at Teras Dakwah, resonating with youth culture.

Teras Dakwah’s Religious Programs: Youth-Centricity and Piety

Over the past decade, the trend of *self-fashioning* or *hijrah* (spiritual transformation) has become a prominent topic among scholars.³⁹ Their research explores popular Islamic preaching movements among urban Muslim youth, which now adopt trendy, modern packaging. Teras Dakwah exemplifies this shift, cleverly tailoring its messages to youth preferences. During fieldwork at Teras Dakwah, the author observed its religious activities, which focus on themes like *hijrah* (spiritual migration), *ta’aruf* (Islamic courtship), youth issues, and relationships. Examples of session titles include “*Gagal Move On*” (“Failed to Move On”), “*Nikah Ruwet*” (“Complicated Marriage”), “*Sabar Ya Sayang Ini*

³⁸ D. A. Triantoro, E. Saputra & T. Wahyuni. Mengelola Hibridisasi Identitas Anak Muda Islam: Studi Pada Lembaga Teras Dakwah di Yogyakarta. *Jurnal MD*, (2019), 5(2), 113–138.

³⁹ M. I. Han. *Dakwah Jalanan Kaum Muda: Dinamika Keagamaan Anak Muda Geng Motor dan Skateboard* (1st ed.). Omah Ilmu, (2019).; K. N. Lyansari. Hijrah Celebrity Creating New Religiosities, Branding Economics of Lifestyle in the Age of Muslim Mass Consumption. *Analisis: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, (2018), 18(2), 211–232.; E. F. Nisa. Creative and lucrative Da’wa: the visual culture of Instagram amongst female Muslim youth in Indonesia. *Asiascape: Digital Asia*, (2018), 5(1–2), 68–99.; A.R. Beta. *H’ijabers: How Young Urban Muslim Women Redefine Themselves in Indonesia*, (2014), 76(4–5), 337.; F. Husein & M. Slama. Online Piety and Its Discontent: Revisiting Islamic Anxieties on Indonesian Social Media. *Indonesia and the Malay World*, 2018, 46 (134), pp. 80-93.

Ujian” (“Be Patient, Darling, This is a Test”), and *“Hijrah Total”* (“Total Transformation”). These contemporary themes, packaged in slang and relatable language, appeal to urban youth seeking a pious yet modern identity. Field observations noted enthusiastic attendance, with young people arriving in groups. Agus, a Teras Dakwah member, shared: “*The themes are so current and Instagrammable, fitting our youth expression. The modern design, trendy topics, and casual vibe make me eager to join.*” He highlighted *Ngaji Teras* (“Wednesday Terrace Study”) as a flagship program.

Ngaji Teras is Teras Dakwah’s most popular program, attracting diverse youth—students, professionals, and even street artists. Sessions use light, accessible language, as seen in Ustaz Handy Bonny’s talk “*Sabar Ya Sayang Ini Ujian*” (see Instagram @terasdakwah). Ustaz Handy shared his personal journey from a wayward youth to a pious Muslim, using slang and relatable anecdotes. His storytelling deeply resonates with attendees, fostering emotional connections. As shown in Figure, the preaching style and setting are distinctly youth-oriented—casual, modern, and engaging. This approach has made Teras Dakwah a thriving hub for young Muslims seeking faith in a contemporary framework.



Figure 4.
Ustaz Handy Bonny’s preaching.

In addition to the *Ngaji Teras* program, Teras Dakwah offers other initiatives such as *Ngaji Qobwah* (Coffee Study), *Ngaji Hadis* (Hadith Study), *Teras Tahfiz* (Quran Memorization Terrace), *Super Booster Ramadhan* (Ramadan Spiritual Boost), and *Ruang Tamu Podcast* (Guest Room Podcast). The organization invites diverse *ustaz* (Islamic preachers) from various backgrounds to lead these sessions. Beyond religious studies, Teras Dakwah organizes outdoor programs like *Teras Camp*, *My Adventure*, *Teras Outbound*, and *Futsal Ayik* (Fun Futsal). These outdoor preaching activities focus on communal bonding with nature, emphasizing how the natural world reflects the greatness

of Allah SWT (the Creator). Similarly, futsal sessions promote physical and mental well-being while strengthening Islamic brotherhood among participants.

Teras Dakwah's Islamic Products: Modern, Trendy, and Pious

Being modern does not necessitate secularism, as argued by José Casanova (1994) in his book *Public Religion in the Modern World*. Casanova asserts that modernity and religiosity can coexist—individuals can embrace modernity without relegating religion to the private sphere.⁴⁰ This challenges secularization theory, which posits that religion diminishes with modernization.⁴¹ Islam, as a religion, adapts swiftly to modernization. Modern Muslims reflect this by integrating religious values into contemporary life. Examples include trendy branded hijabs, public Quran recitations, advocacy for *hijrah* (spiritual transformation), consumption of halal products (cosmetics, food, beverages), and patronage of Islamic banking. These practices exemplify a synthesis of modern, urban lifestyles with piety—a balance of being “trendy yet devout.”

Kailani & Sunarwoto describe this as *self-fashioning*—the sacralization of daily life through subjective religiosity, such as adopting Islamic products, alternative medicine, or faith-based housing.⁴² Similarly, Turner terms it *pietization*, where piety is expressed through religious consumption tied to lifestyle.⁴³ This reflects a broader trend of public spaces becoming increasingly religious, marked by the rise of Islamic symbols and identities, particularly in Indonesia's urban Muslim communities.⁴⁴

Teras Dakwah embodies this fusion. Unlike traditional preaching movements centered in mosques, it employs youth-centric pop culture. Its congregants—mostly young, urban Muslims—blend modernity with piety, using slang and contemporary fashion while engaging in religious practices. Beyond religious programs like *Ngaji Teras* (Terrace Study), *Ngaji Qobwah* (Coffee Study), *Teras Tabfiḥ* (Quran Memorization), and *Ruang Tamu*

⁴⁰ J. Casanova. *Public Religions in the Modern World*. University of Chicago Press, (1994).

⁴¹ P. Norris & R. Inglehard. *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide 2nd*. (1994).

⁴² Najib Kailani, & Sunarwoto. Televangelisme Islam dalam Lanskap Otoritas Keagamaan Baru. In N. Hasan (Ed.), *Ulama dan Negara-Bangsa: Membaca Masa Depan Politik Islam di Indonesia*. Suka Press, (2019), (pp. 179–206).

⁴³ Bryan Turner. *Religion and Modern Society: Citizenship, Secularisation and the State*. Cambridge University Press, (2012), pp. 272–273.

⁴⁴ Fealy Greag & White, S. Introductions. In *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*. ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute, (2008), (pp. 1–16).; J. B Hoesterey. Marketing Islam: Entrepreneurial Ethics and Capitalism in Indonesia. *Spring*, (2018) 10, pp. 1–14.; N. Hasan. The Making of Publik Islam: Piety, Agency and Commodification on the Landscape of the Indonesia Publik Sphere. *Contemporary Islam*, (2009), 3(3), 229–250.

Podcast (Guest Room Podcast), Teras Dakwah offers outdoor activities (e.g., *Teras Camp*, *My Adventure*, futsal) that emphasize community bonding and appreciating nature's divine beauty. Teras Dakwah also markets Islamic merchandise—t-shirts, flannel shirts, beanies, slim bags, stickers, and souvenirs—to foster communal identity. Its culinary brand, *Warunk TD*, sells coffee, herbal drinks, fried potatoes, noodles, and snacks, merging commercial enterprise with religious community-building.

Young members of *Teras Dakwah* consider not only the functional and emotional benefits of products but also their *spiritual value* as emphasized by the community. Their purchasing decisions blend piety, lifestyle, and social status, merging leisure, hobbies, Islamic brotherhood (*ukhuwah*), and preaching. Religious consumption has become a marker of identity and social standing among *Teras Dakwah* youth, reflected in slogans like: “*Tempat Ngaji Asyik Lintas Harokab*” (“A Fun Cross-Movement Study Space”); “*Bergerak Bersama Manfaat Semua*” (“Moving Together for Universal Benefit”); “*Nyurut Kopi Sambil Ngaji*” (“Sip Coffee While Studying”); “*TD Tempat Ngaji Asyik*” (“TD: The Cool Place for Study”); “*Sak Dulur Sak Lavase*” (a Javanese phrase meaning “One Brotherhood, One Lifetime”).

These slogans reinforce Islamic solidarity among congregants (Field Observation, *Teras Dakwah*, December 25, 2019 – January 2, 2020). This emphasis on *religious value* aligns with Yuswohady's (2017: xv) analysis of Gen @GenM (Millennial/Gen Z Muslims), who prioritize daily lifestyle considerations in their fashion choices, as explored in his 2014 book “@GenM.”

The integration of religious activities with product sales at *Teras Dakwah* reflects the *commodification of religion* as a marketing strategy. Tama, a *Teras Dakwah* administrator, explains that their merchandise matches the quality of mainstream fashion boutiques (*distro*), using breathable fabrics, stylish and trendy designs. For instance, their T-shirts cater to youth aesthetics, fostering pride and confidence among members who wear them. This strategy bridges piety with modern consumer culture, making religious identity both fashionable and marketable.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ W. Akmaliah. The Rise of Cool Ustadz: Preaching, Subcultures, and the Pemuda Hijrah Movement. In N. Saat & A. N. Burnahni (Eds.), *The New Santri: Challenges to Traditional Religious Authority in Indonesia*, (2020), (pp. 239–257). ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute.



Figure 5. T-Shirts from Teras Dakwah
Source: @tdmerchandise, #tede.merchandise

For instance, Hasan, an interviewee, shared:

“When I wear TD clothing, it reminds me of the study sessions! Hehe... because Teras Dakwah’s sessions are so enjoyable. Wearing TD apparel makes me think of those fun gatherings. It’s not just about the study sessions—they also sell merchandise like Islamic-themed T-shirts, jackets, beanies, souvenirs, and stickers. I love Teras Dakwah’s products. The shirts are comfortable, the designs are cool and modern, perfect for young people like me.”

Hasan’s remarks highlight his fondness for Teras Dakwah’s religious merchandise. Beyond the engaging study sessions, the availability of trendy products during these gatherings enhances the experience. The integration of merchandise sales with religious activities (*pengajian*) serves as both a spiritual and marketing strategy for Teras Dakwah. For Hasan, purchasing these products is driven by *spiritual value*—a consideration of how they align with his religious needs and identity. The clothing Hasan wears transcends mere religious adherence or piety; it acts as a form of *self-expression, lifestyle, and identity*. His connection to Teras Dakwah is not solely religious but also intellectual and global, reflecting a broad-minded engagement with faith and modernity. Crucially, Hasan’s bond with Teras Dakwah is deeply *emotional*. This emotional commitment fosters loyalty, motivating him and other young members to choose Teras Dakwah not only as a space for Islamic learning but also as a platform to consume products that affirm their dual identity as *modern and devout* Muslims.

Based on Schielke's argument, Da'wah models like Teras Dakwah attempt to convey religious messages in language that is more easily understood by the general public.⁴⁶ In contrast to da'wah models that deliver material concerning rigid ideology and law, Teras Dakwah focuses more on universal aspects of Islam, such as honesty, empathy, and self-management. The outcome of this

⁴⁶ S. Schielke. Being good in Ramadan: ambivalence, fragmentation, and the moral self in the lives of young Egyptians. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, (2009), 15, S24–S40.

preaching is expected to build a more inclusive social morality. Furthermore, the target of this da'wah is indeed upper-middle-class young Muslims, so an emphasis on spiritual happiness is prioritized. Religion is not just about prohibitions, but also about solutions for facing the pressures of modern life. Similar to market logic, this fluid form of da'wah also faces significant challenges. Young Muslims become accustomed to selecting religious messages that 'suit their taste' and lifestyle. In this context, religious understanding can become governed by personal preference or anchored to specific figures, rather than being grounded in the authority of religious texts and Islamic scholarly tradition.

Conclusion

This study concludes that contemporary *dakwah* (Islamic proselytization) has undergone significant transformation. Modern *dakwah* is no longer solely understood through frameworks of Islamic revival⁴⁷, political Islam⁴⁸, religious authority⁴⁹, Islamic healing⁵⁰, moral panic, piety and identity⁵¹, class resistance⁵², or religious ideology.⁵³ Instead, it increasingly operates within the logic of "market religion," where faith is commodified into products or brands tailored to youth preferences. This phenomenon is changing the way we understand the religion-market-identity relationship in Indonesia.

Teras Dakwah exemplifies this shift by packaging Islam in ways that resonate with young consumers—selling Islamic merchandise during religious gatherings, designing study sessions to resemble modern cafes, and merging piety with trendy lifestyles. These strategies allow youth to embrace devout Muslim identities while remaining fashionable, modern, and socially connected. By blending spiritual values with consumer culture, Teras Dakwah represents a

⁴⁷ R. Rosyad. *A Quest for True Islam: A Study of the Islam Resurgence Movement among the Youth in Bandung*. ANU E Press, (2006).

⁴⁸ N. Hasan. *Laskar Jihad, Islam, Militancy, and Quest for Identity in Post-New Order Indonesia*. Cornell Southeast Asia Program, (2006).

⁴⁹ I.L. Jannah. Kontestasi Makna Hijab dalam Ruang Media Sosial Instagram. In Sunarwoto (Ed.), *Islam: Antara Teks, Kuasa dan Identitas* Arti Bumi Intara, (2018), (1st ed., pp. 137–162).; D. A. Triantoro. Dakwah dan Kesalehan: Studi Tentang Gerakan Teras Dakwah Di Kota Yogyakarta. *Jurnal Masyarakat & Budaya*, (2018), 20(2), 273–286.

⁵⁰ D. A. Triantoro, F. Husna & A. Amna. Ruqyah Syar'iyah: Alternatif Pengobatan, Kesalehan, Islamisme dan Pasar Islam. *Harmoni*, (2018), 17(2), 460–478.

⁵¹ A.R. Beta. *H'ijabers: How Young Urban Muslim Women Redefine Themselves in Indonesia*, (2014), 76(4–5), 337.

⁵² H. Saefullah. Nevermind the Jahiliyah, Here's the Hijrah's: Punk and the Religious Turn in the Contemporary Indonesia Underground Scene. *Punk & Post Punk*, (2017), 6(2), 263–289.

⁵³ Hew W. Weng. THE ART OF DAKWAH: social media, visual persuasion and the Islamist propagation of Felix Siauw. *Indonesia and the Malay World*, (2018), 46(134), 61–79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2018.1416757>

new form of da'wah for Indonesian youth that blends piety, entertainment, and consumption within a single hybrid space.

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