

History and Transformation of Da'wah Institutions in Southeast Asia: Regional Dynamics Analysis

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Abstract

This research aims to find out more about the history and transformation of da'wah institutions in Southeast Asia in the midst of regional dynamics that occur. This research uses a literature study research method by reviewing books, literature, notes, and various documents related to the problem to be solved. The results of this study show that da'wah in Southeast Asia has grown since its inception through a peaceful, adaptive, and social-interaction-based process, especially through trade routes, networks of scholars, and acculturation of local culture. This historical process became the foundation for the formation of a diverse Muslim community and gave birth to da'wah institutions that were initially cultural and community-based into modern organizations that are more structured, professional, and integrated with various sectors of life. The da'wah method has also shifted from a conventional approach to the use of digital technology that allows for a wider and cross-border reach. In addition, the role of da'wah has expanded from a religious function to an agent of social transformation that includes the fields of education, economy, and community development. However, this study only relied on library sources such as journal articles, books, magazines, and related documents, this led to a lack of empirical data.

Keywords: *Transformation, Da'wah Institutions, Regional Dynamics, Southeast Asia*

Introduction

Southeast Asia is a strategic region in Islamic studies and international relations because it has high complexity in religious, cultural, and political aspects. Geographically, the region is located on the global trade route connecting the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean, and is the meeting place of the world's major civilizations, such as Islam, China, India, and the West. This strategic position not only makes Southeast Asia a center of economic interaction, but also a space for the exchange of values, culture, and religion that forms the character of its society that is pluralistic and open to intercultural communication, which ultimately contributes to the growth and development of Islam in the region (Damayanti, 2025).

History shows that the entry of Islam into Southeast Asia took place peacefully through trade routes, social interactions, and the role of Muslim merchants and scholars. This process of Islamization not only has an impact on religious aspects, but also affects the social, cultural, and political structure of local communities. In its development, the Muslim community in Southeast Asia shows diverse dynamics, both in Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia, as well as in Muslim-minority countries such as Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore, and Myanmar. These differences in

demographic and political contexts also affect the pattern of Islamic development and religious practices in each country (Nada et al., 2026).

In this situation, da'wah institutions have a strategic role as agents of the dissemination of Islamic teachings as well as as social actors that contribute to the formation of religious identity and social cohesion of the community. Da'wah institutions not only function in religious aspects, but also play a role in the fields of education, social, and community empowerment. This shows that da'wah in Southeast Asia is not static, but has undergone development and adjustment according to the surrounding social context (Sulaiman & Arifin, 2021). However, the operation and development of da'wah institutions in the region are greatly influenced by regional dynamics which include political changes, state policies, interfaith relations, as well as the impact of globalization and digitalization. These dynamics determine the character, strategy, and challenges of da'wah in each country. On the one hand, globalization and advances in information technology open up new opportunities for da'wah to develop more widely through digital media and transnational networks. On the other hand, factors such as political limitations, social conflicts, and the position of Muslims as minorities in several countries are serious challenges that affect the effectiveness of da'wah (Septia et al., 2024).

In general, da'wah organizations in Southeast Asia face various interrelated possibilities and obstacles. Meanwhile, technological advancements, globalization, and social openness create new opportunities for da'wah to develop more widely and effectively. However, political limitations, conflict, and limited mobility are obstacles in some areas. This condition requires da'wah institutions to be able to create. Therefore, the ability of da'wah organizations to create innovative, contextual, and adaptive approaches is essential for their success in spreading Islamic teachings and encouraging harmony, social cohesion, and religious identity (Fauzi, 2024).

Various studies have discussed the development of Islam and social dynamics in Southeast Asia, but there are still limitations of studies that integratively link the history of Islamic development, the transformation of da'wah institutions, and regional dynamics in one comprehensive analytical framework. Most studies tend to address these aspects separately, both in terms of historical, institutional, and socio-political context. Therefore, this research is important to fill this gap by thoroughly analyzing the relationship between the history, transformation of da'wah institutions, and regional dynamics in Southeast Asia.

Method

This research uses a literature study research method where the author collects elements relevant to the history and transformation of da'wah institutions in Southeast Asia which is the main topic of discussion in this paper. The Library Method is a technique of collecting a number of data by studying books, literature, records, and various documents related to the problem to be solved (Nazir, 2005). Theoretically, the use of this method is rooted in the need to build a solid scientific foundation before or without conducting field testing. This method was chosen because it is considered to be able to answer research questions in depth through secondary data analysis. However, by still using original sources in the form of articles, journals, books, magazines, news, and related documents.

Results and Discussion

1. Regional Dynamics in Asia Tenggara

a. Definition of Regional Dynamics

Regional dynamics are the process of change, development, and interaction between countries in a certain region. This process is not static, but is constantly moving with changes

in various aspects such as politics, economy, social, culture, and security. These interactions can be reflected in the form of cooperation, regional integration, and conflicts between countries that shape the overall pattern of regional relations (Sutopo, 2023). From the perspective of Southeast Asian regionalism, regional dynamics cannot be separated from the character of the region which has geographical proximity, common historical experiences, and high intensity of interaction between countries. The regionalism perspective views Southeast Asia as a zone of interaction that continues to develop through various regional integration initiatives, such as regional cooperation within the framework of ASEAN. This process strengthens interstate connectivity while creating a space for the exchange of socio-religious ideas, values, and practices (Hidayat & Prasetyo, 2023).

Regional dynamics in the context of Islamic da'wah institutions can be understood as a process of growth, transformation, and interaction of da'wah institutions in response to social, political, cultural, and interstate changes in the Southeast Asian region. This means that the development of da'wah institutions does not stand independently, but is greatly influenced by the regional environment that surrounds it. Factors such as the openness of relations between countries, cross-border population mobility, cultural diplomacy, and the exchange of Islamic ideas are important elements that shape the direction and strategy of da'wah in this region (Rahman, 2022). This condition encourages the formation of cross-border da'wah networks that strengthen collaboration between Islamic organizations in various Southeast Asian countries, such as in Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Southern Thailand, the Southern Philippines, and Singapore. In addition, each da'wah institution in Southeast Asia has unique da'wah methods, approaches, and strategies due to the diversity of cultures and political systems in the region. In Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei, da'wah institutions tend to develop more formally and institutionally with the support of the government and the community. In contrast, in countries with Muslim minorities such as Thailand, Myanmar, and the Philippines, da'wah institutions are more developed through community initiatives and focus on strengthening religious identity (Damayanti, 2025).

In addition, globalization and digitalization, which transform traditional da'wah practices into cross-border digital da'wah, also have an impact on regional dynamics. Da'wah ideas, practices, and narratives are spreading faster across Southeast Asia thanks to social media, online resources, and regional Islamic education networks. However, this phenomenon also raises new challenges, such as the competition of religious narratives, the emergence of digital radicalism, and the need to strengthen religious moderation in multicultural societies. Therefore, the regional dynamics of da'wah institutions in Southeast Asia show that da'wah transformation is not only influenced by internal factors of the da'wah organization, but also by external changes involving regional integration, cultural interaction, state policies, and global developments. This confirms that understanding regional dynamics is an important key in analyzing the direction, strategy, and sustainability of da'wah institutions in the Southeast Asian region.

b. Characteristics of the Southeast Asian Region

One of the most important areas in the political order of the modern world is Southeast Asia. Due to its strategic location at the confluence of the Pacific Ocean and Indian Oceans, the region has long been a major route for international trade, navigation, and economic exchange between regions. This strategic position has significant geopolitical relevance in addition to its economic value. Southeast Asia has traditionally been the meeting point of

various world civilizations, such as the West, China, India, and Islamic civilizations. This cross-civilizational interaction forms a pluralistic, dynamic, and open regional character to external influences. However, this openness also makes Southeast Asia a competition space for various global powers that seek to expand their influence. Thus, the region has never been completely detached from the political dynamics of the world, but has always been integrated into the broader system of international relations.

As the center of gravity of the world economy shifts to Asia-Pacific, Southeast Asia is seen in international relations studies as an increasingly strategically important region. Rapid economic growth in countries such as Indonesia, Vietnam, and Thailand makes this region serve as a global production base, market, and strategic partner for major countries. This strengthens Southeast Asia's position not only as a trade transit region, but also as an important actor in the global economy. In addition to the economic aspect, Southeast Asia also has important security considerations. Strategic lanes such as the Malacca Strait, South China Sea, and Lombok Strait are vital chokepoints for international energy and logistics trade. The stability of Southeast Asia is of common international interest because of the world's dependence on these channels. Due to its strategic location in the global geopolitical and economic system and the cultural complexities that influence the political behavior of its member countries, Southeast Asia is a region of great importance in the dynamics of international relations. The historical interaction between different civilizations, the experience of colonialism, and the diversity of ethnicity and religion make this region a distinctive social and political space.

Southeast Asia is also characterized by high socio-cultural complexity. Ethnic, religious, linguistic, and historical experiences such as colonialism form the distinctive social and political character of each country. Non-material factors such as culture, values, and identity have an important role in shaping national interests, perceptions between countries, and patterns of regional interaction. Thus, understanding the dynamics of Southeast Asia is not enough only through material approaches such as economic and military power, but also requires a cultural perspective that looks at how identity and values affect international relations in the region (Damayanti, 2025). This approach that integrates geopolitical, economic, security, and socio-cultural dimensions allows for a more comprehensive analysis of Southeast Asia's strategic position. The region is not only an arena for interaction between countries, but also a space where culture, identity, and values play an important role in shaping regional dynamics. Therefore, the characteristics of Southeast Asia as a strategic, pluralistic, and dynamic region are the main foundation in understanding the development of international relations and the transformation of socio-religious institutions, including da'wah institutions, in this region.

c. The Influence of Globalization and Regional Integration

As a region that has a strategic position in global trade and interaction routes, Southeast Asia is inseparable from the influence of globalization and the increasingly intensive regional integration process. Globalization has accelerated the flow of information exchange, ideas, cultures, and socio-religious practices across countries, thereby strengthening connectivity between peoples in the region. In this context, Southeast Asia is not only an object of globalization, but also an active actor that shapes regional dynamics through increasingly complex economic, political, and cultural interactions (Heryanto, 2021; Nugroho & Latif, 2023).

Regional integration realized through various cooperation mechanisms, especially within the ASEAN framework, helps strengthen regional cohesion and create a more open space for interaction between countries. This integration is not only limited to economic and political aspects, but also includes the exchange of cultures, education, and social values that contribute to the formation of Southeast Asia's regional identity. Thus, regional integration accelerates the formation of increasingly close cross-border social and cultural networks (Hidayat & Prasetyo, 2023; Fauzi, 2024). In relation to socio-religious dynamics, globalization and regional integration have a significant impact on the development of da'wah institutions in Southeast Asia. The flow of globalization allows the spread of Islamic ideas more widely through digital media, educational networks, and the mobility of Muslim scholars and intellectuals. This encourages the emergence of a transformation of da'wah from conventional patterns to a more modern, transnational, and technology-based approach. In addition, regional integration also strengthens collaboration between cross-border da'wah institutions, resulting in a more organized and adaptive regional da'wah network (Septia et al., 2024).

However, globalization also presents new challenges for da'wah institutions. The entry of various religious ideologies and narratives from outside the region can trigger contestations of religious understanding, including the emergence of digital radicalism and identity polarization. On the other hand, increasingly open regional integration requires da'wah institutions to be able to adapt to the principles of moderation, tolerance, and diversity that are characteristic of Southeast Asian society. Therefore, da'wah institutions are required to be not only technologically adaptive, but also responsive to evolving social and cultural dynamics (Nugroho & Latif, 2023). Therefore, it can be concluded that globalization and regional integration are important factors that strengthen and challenge the dynamics of the Southeast Asian region. These two processes not only affect economic and political aspects, but also form patterns of socio-religious interaction and encourage the transformation of da'wah institutions. In this context, the ability to manage the influence of globalization and utilize regional integration strategically is key in maintaining the sustainability and effectiveness of da'wah in the Southeast Asian region.

2. History of the Development of Islam and Da'wah Institutions

a. The Entry of Islam into Southeast Asia

The process of the entry and development of Islam in Southeast Asia took place gradually, peacefully, and adaptively, especially from the 7th to the 16th centuries AD. In contrast to other regions that have experienced military expansion, Islam in Southeast Asia has spread through intensive social, economic, and cultural interactions. Maritime trade routes are the main medium that connects the Islamic world with strategic ports in the region, such as Samudera Pasai, Aceh, Malacca, and Palembang (Nada et al., 2026. (Nada et al., 2026):

1) Maritime Trade Lanes and Merchant Communities.

One of the main routes of the spread of Islam in Southeast Asia was through maritime trade. Muslim traders from Arabia, Persia, and Gujarat (West India) took advantage of strategic routes such as the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Strait of Malacca to connect the Western and Eastern worlds. In this process, ports in Sumatra (such as Samudera Pasai and Perlak), the Malay Peninsula, the Riau Islands, and the northern coast of Java developed into centers of economic interaction as well as centers of early Muslim communities (Hidayat & Prasetyo, 2023).

The existence of this merchant community is not only limited to economic activities, but also a means of cultural exchange and the spread of Islamic values. Traders often settled for long periods of time, forming settlements, and establishing social relationships with local communities. Over time, there was a process of integration through marriage with the local population, which then accelerated the spread of Islam to the wider social environment. Archaeological evidence such as coins, tombstones, and inscriptions suggest that Muslim communities have been present in the coastal region of Southeast Asia since the beginning of the second millennium (Nugroho & Latif, 2023).

2) The Role of the Islamic Kingdom and the Process of Islamization.

An important phase in the spread of Islam in Southeast Asia was marked by the emergence of Islamic kingdoms in the 13th to 16th centuries AD. This period coincided with the weakening of the dominance of the Hindu-Buddhist kingdom and the political transformation in the region. Kingdoms such as Samudera Pasai, the Sultanate of Malacca, and Aceh played a strategic role in expanding Islamic influence institutionally (Fauzi, 2024).

In addition to the role of traders, clerics and preachers also have a significant contribution to this process. They not only spread the teachings of Islam, but also acted as royal advisors and educators of the community. In some cases, the adoption of Islam by rulers has a political dimension, such as strengthening the legitimacy of power and expanding diplomatic networks with the Islamic world. Thus, Islamization does not only take place at the individual level, but is also institutionalized through power structures (Sulaiman & Arifin, 2021).

3) Social Networking, Marriage, and Socioeconomic Change.

In addition to through trade and political power, Islam also developed through social networks formed from interactions between Muslim traders and local communities. This process takes place organically through marriage, kinship relationships, and the formation of Muslim communities in various regions. Marriage between Muslim traders and local women, especially from the nobility, is one of the important factors that accelerate the process of Islamization (Rahman, 2022). In addition, the social and economic changes brought about by the interaction with the Islamic world also influenced the public's acceptance of Islam. Values such as trade ethics, social justice, and community solidarity are the main attractions for local communities. Thus, the spread of Islam in Southeast Asia is not only religious, but also closely related to the socio-economic transformation that has occurred in the region (Heryanto, 2021).

Overall, the entry of Islam into Southeast Asia was a complex and multidimensional process, involving trade routes, political power, and socio-cultural networks. This peaceful and adaptive distribution pattern has become a typical character of Islam in Southeast Asia, as well as a foundation for the development of da'wah institutions in the future. Understanding this historical process is important as a basis for analyzing the transformation of da'wah institutions in the context of ever-evolving regional dynamics.

b. The Development of the Muslim Community.

The development of regional Muslim communities is a dynamic process that reflects not only the increase in the number of Muslims, but also changes in the social, cultural, political,

and intellectual aspects of a region. Since the 7th century AD, Islam has spread to Southeast Asia through an international trade network that connects the region with India and the Middle East. In the process, Muslim traders bring not only economic commodities, but also Islamic values and teachings which are then adopted by the local community through a persuasive and adaptive approach. In addition to the merchants, intellectuals and scholars have made significant contributions in shaping the religious structure of the Muslim community in Southeast Asia. Through da'wah activities, teaching, and the formation of cross-regional scientific networks, scholars have built close intellectual relationships between Islamic centers in the Middle East and the Malay world, this intellectual network is important in accelerating the process of Islamization and strengthening the foundations of Islamic science and institutions in the region, especially in Southeast Asia. In this case, the emergence of the concept of Nusantara Islam is a clear example of how Islam adapts to local culture without losing its essential values, thereby creating a distinctive and contextual Islamic pattern in Southeast Asia (Febriyanti et al., 2025).

Entering the modern period, the development of the Muslim community in Southeast Asia is increasingly influenced by globalization and technological advances. Islamic organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama play an important role in strengthening religious identity while encouraging social progress through various sectors, such as education, health, and economic empowerment. This role shows that the Muslim community is not only evolving quantitatively, but also undergoing a transformation in its social and institutional functions. On the other hand, the development of digital technology has changed the pattern of interaction and da'wah from the traditional way to be faster and reach more widely through social media and online platforms. This makes the Muslim community more connected in a global network no longer limited by geographical space. John L. Esposito states that Muslims today are members of the global ummah, a community that grows and changes with time. However, these developments are also accompanied by various challenges. The emergence of the phenomenon of Islamophobia in several countries, conflicts between groups, and socio-economic inequality are issues that affect the stability of the Muslim community, both at the regional and global levels. Therefore, strategic efforts are needed to strengthen religious moderation, increase regional cooperation, and encourage interreligious dialogue to maintain social harmony in the midst of the diversity of Southeast Asian societies (Wantini et al., 2025). Thus, the development of regional Muslim communities in Southeast Asia shows that there is a close relationship between historical factors, intellectual networks, social transformation, and the influence of globalization. This process not only forms a distinctive Islamic identity, but also becomes an important basis for understanding the transformation of da'wah institutions in the face of ever-evolving regional dynamics.

c. The beginning of the formation of the Da'wah Institution,

Along with the development of the Muslim community in Southeast Asia, the da'wah process that was initially individual and informal began to undergo a transformation towards a more organized form. In the early phase of Islamization, da'wah activities were carried out by traders, scholars, and community leaders through social interaction, trade, and kinship networks. However, as the number of Muslims increases and the complexity of social life increases, there is a need for a more systematic forum to manage the spread of Islamic teachings and the formation of the ummah (Hidayat & Prasetyo, 2023).

The beginning of the formation of da'wah institutions can be traced to the emergence of traditional religious institutions such as mosques, suraus, Islamic boarding schools, and madrassas that function as centers for education, worship, and the spread of Islamic teachings. These institutions not only serve as places of worship, but also as centers for the transmission of Islamic knowledge and the formation of people's religious identities. In this context, early da'wah institutions were more cultural and community-based, and firmly rooted in local values that had undergone an acculturation process with Islamic teachings (Sulaiman & Arifin, 2021; Fauzi, 2024).

In addition, the role of Islamic scholars and intellectual networks has helped accelerate the institutionalization of da'wah in this region. The scholars who had connections with scientific centers in the Middle East brought scientific traditions as well as institutional models that were later adapted in Southeast Asia. This gives birth to a more structured network of education and da'wah, as well as strengthens the social legitimacy of religious institutions in the community (Febriyanti et al., 2025). Entering the later period, especially in the colonial and post-colonial periods, da'wah institutions experienced more formal and modern development. Islamic organizations began to emerge in response to social, political, and educational changes, as well as as an effort to strengthen the position of Muslims in the face of external challenges. Da'wah institutions no longer only function as religious centers, but also develop into social organizations engaged in education, health, and community empowerment (Fauzi, 2024).

In the context of the Southeast Asian region, the early development of da'wah institutions was also influenced by the differences in political and demographic structures in each country. In Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei, da'wah institutions tend to grow faster and be institutionalized with the support of the state and society. In contrast, in countries with Muslim minorities such as Thailand, the Philippines, and Myanmar, da'wah institutions develop in a more limited and community-based manner, with a focus on strengthening religious identity and social resilience (Wantini et al., 2025; Rahman, 2022). Thus, the beginning of the formation of da'wah institutions in Southeast Asia was the result of a long process involving the interaction between historical, social, and cultural factors. From a simple and informal form, da'wah institutions then developed into institutions that were more organized and adaptive to regional dynamics. This process is an important foundation for the transformation of da'wah institutions in the modern era, especially in the face of the challenges of globalization and increasingly complex social changes.

3. Transformation of Da'wah Institutions in Southeast Asia.

a. Institutional Transformation

Along with the development of the Muslim community and the formation of early da'wah institutions based on traditional institutions such as mosques, Islamic boarding schools, and suraus, da'wah institutions in Southeast Asia underwent a significant process of institutional transformation. In the early stages, da'wah institutions are simple, community-based, and rely on the authority of scholars and religious leaders in conveying Islamic teachings. This pattern reflects the character of da'wah that is cultural, adaptive, and integrated with the social life of the local community (Sulaiman & Arifin, 2021). However, with increasing social complexity, political changes, and the influence of colonialism and modernization, da'wah institutions began to shift towards a more organized and systematic form. This transformation was

marked by the emergence of modern Islamic organizations that had a clear institutional structure, an orderly administrative system, and a planned work program. Da'wah institutions no longer only function as centers for worship and informal education, but develop into institutions that are able to manage various social activities professionally (Nugroho & Latif, 2023).

Institutional transformation also includes changes in the orientation and function of da'wah. If in the traditional phase da'wah focuses more on ritual aspects and basic religious teaching, then in the modern phase da'wah institutions begin to expand their role to the fields of formal education, health, economy, and community empowerment. This shows a shift from normative da'wah to transformative and solutionive da'wah to social problems (Fauzi, 2024). In addition, globalization and technological developments have also accelerated the process of institutional modernization of da'wah. Da'wah institutions now not only operate at the local level, but also connect in national and international networks. The use of digital media, technology-based management, and cross-border collaboration are the characteristics of modern da'wah institutions in Southeast Asia. This transformation allows da'wah to reach a wider audience and increase the effectiveness of spreading religious messages (Septia et al., 2024; Heryanto, 2021).

However, this process of institutional transformation does not take place simultaneously throughout the Southeast Asian region. In Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia, da'wah institutions tend to grow more rapidly and are institutionalized with the support of the state and society. In contrast, in countries with Muslim minorities, institutional transformation takes place more limited and often faces political and social constraints, so that da'wah institutions maintain a community-based character (Wantini et al., 2025). Institutional transformation from traditional to modern forms is a process of adaptation influenced by social, political, and global changes. This transformation not only changes the organizational structure of da'wah institutions, but also expands the functions, strategies, and reach of da'wah. Therefore, understanding this transformation process is key in analyzing how da'wah institutions in Southeast Asia are able to survive and develop in the face of increasingly complex regional dynamics.

b. Method Transformation.

In addition to the institutional transformation of da'wah from traditional to modern forms, da'wah methods have also undergone significant changes from conventional patterns to digital directions. In the initial stage, da'wah is carried out through a direct approach such as lectures in mosques, recitations, taklim assemblies, and community-based social interactions. This method emphasizes personal closeness, scholarly authority, and attachment to local space (Sulaiman & Arifin, 2021; Rahman, 2022). However, the development of globalization and information technology has encouraged a shift in da'wah methods to be more open, fast, and cross-border. Social media, digital platforms, and internet-based applications allow the spread of da'wah messages to reach a wider audience without being limited by space and time. Da'wah is no longer local, but is evolving into a globally connected transnational network (Septia et al., 2024)

This transformation increases the effectiveness and efficiency of da'wah, but at the same time presents new challenges, such as the fragmentation of religious authority, the spread of radical narratives, and the need for digital literacy and religious moderation. Therefore, da'wah institutions are required to not only adopt technology, but also manage da'wah content

wisely, adaptively, and contextually in accordance with the character of plural Southeast Asian society (Nugroho & Latif, 2023). Thus, the transformation of da'wah methods from conventional to digital is part of the strategic adaptation of da'wah institutions in responding to regional and global dynamics, as well as being a key factor in maintaining the relevance and sustainability of da'wah in the modern era.

c. Role Transformation.

The role of da'wah institutions in Southeast Asia has also expanded from a religious function to a more multidimensional role. In the initial phase, da'wah institutions focused on spreading Islamic teachings, fostering worship, and strengthening religious values in society. This role then develops following increasingly complex social needs (Rahman, 2022; Sulaiman & Arifin, 2021). In its development, da'wah institutions began to take a strategic role in the field of education through the establishment of Islamic boarding schools, madrasas, and modern educational institutions. In addition, contributions in the social sector can be seen from involvement in health services, humanitarian assistance, and strengthening social cohesion in multicultural societies. In the economic sector, da'wah institutions also encourage the empowerment of the people through entrepreneurship programs, sharia economics, and the productive management of zakat and waqf (Fauzi, 2024; Wantini et al., 2025).

This expansion of the role shows that da'wah is no longer understood narrowly as a lecture activity, but as a social transformation movement oriented towards improving the quality of life of the community. Globalization and regional dynamics also strengthen this direction by opening up opportunities for cross-sectoral and cross-country collaboration, as well as demanding da'wah institutions to be more professional, adaptive, and responsive to contemporary issues (Nugroho & Latif, 2023). This transformation of the role is an important indicator that da'wah institutions in Southeast Asia have adapted from traditional religious institutions to social actors that contribute to the development of society as a whole.

4. Regional Studies of Da'wah Institutions.

a. Muslim-majority countries.

In the Southeast Asian region, countries with a Muslim majority such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei, show a pattern of development of da'wah institutions that are relatively more institutionalized and integrated with the social system and state policies. This demographic condition provides a wider space for da'wah institutions to develop structurally, professionally, and sustainably. In Indonesia, the role of Islamic community organizations (CSOs) such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama has become the main pillar in the transformation of da'wah. These two organizations are not only engaged in the religious field, but also develop roles in the education, health, and economic empowerment sectors. The da'wah model developed is moderate, adaptive, and community-based, and utilizes digital technology to expand the reach of da'wah (Fauzi, 2024).

In contrast to Malaysia, da'wah institutions develop in a more structured framework through state support, one of which is through the Malaysian Islamic Da'wah Foundation (YADIM). This institution plays a role in coordinating da'wah activities nationally, including in strengthening religious moderation, Islamic education, and the dissemination of da'wah based on digital media. State involvement provides stability as well as strategic direction in the development of da'wah (Hidayat & Prasetyo, 2023; Rahman, 2022). Meanwhile, in Brunei Darussalam, da'wah is directly integrated with the Islamic-based government system.

The state has a dominant role in regulating and developing da'wah activities, both through educational institutions, the media, and religious policies. This model reflects a strong integration between religion and the state, so that da'wah becomes part of the social and political system as a whole (Nugroho & Latif, 2023).

This pattern in Muslim-majority countries shows that the transformation of da'wah institutions tends to develop more systematically, with strong institutional support, the use of technology, and the expansion of its role into the social, educational, and economic realms. This strengthens the position of da'wah institutions as strategic actors in community development at the national and regional levels.

b. Muslim Minority Countries.

In contrast to Muslim-majority countries, da'wah institutions in Muslim minority countries such as Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore, and Myanmar develop in a more limited socio-political space. This condition forms a more adaptive, community-based, and oriented approach to strengthening religious identity and social harmony.

In Thailand, especially in the Southern Thailand region, da'wah develops in the context of identity tensions and social conflicts. The approach used tends to be cultural and educational, with an emphasis on Islamic education, strengthening local communities, and religious moderation to maintain social stability (Rahman, 2022). In the Philippines, especially in Mindanao, da'wah intersects with political dynamics and the struggle for Muslim identity. Da'wah institutions play a role not only in religious aspects, but also in social development, conflict resolution, and post-conflict community empowerment. The approach used is more contextual and oriented towards social reconciliation (Fauzi, 2024). In Singapore, as a secular country with a multicultural society, da'wah is carried out within a strict regulatory framework and emphasizes interreligious harmony. Da'wah institutions prioritize an intellectual approach, interfaith dialogue, and the use of controlled digital media to maintain a balance between Islamic identity and social integration (Hidayat & Prasetyo, 2023).

Meanwhile, in Myanmar, the Muslim community faces significant social and political pressures. Da'wah focuses more on strengthening the internal community, basic religious education, and efforts to maintain identity in the midst of limited space for movement. Da'wah activities tend to be defensive and based on community solidarity (Sulaiman & Arifin, 202). These contextual differences show that the da'wah approach in Muslim minority countries emphasizes more on social adaptation, identity strengthening, and cultural strategies, compared to the structural and expansive approach in Muslim-majority countries. Da'wah not only functions as a dissemination of teachings, but also as an instrument of social resilience in the face of external pressures and regional dynamics.

5. Analysis of the Influence of Regional Dynamics on Da'wah Transformation.

a. Government Policy.

State policies are a key factor in shaping the direction and space for movement of da'wah institutions in Southeast Asia. In Muslim-majority countries, government support allows the institutionalization of da'wah to proceed more systematically through regulation, funding, and integration with national development programs. In contrast, in Muslim-minority countries, more restrictive policies limit da'wah activities to encourage a more adaptive and community-based approach (Hidayat & Prasetyo, 2023).

b. Social Conflict and Interreligious Relations.

Social conditions and interreligious relations significantly affect da'wah strategies. In areas with potential conflict, da'wah tends to be directed at strengthening religious moderation, interfaith dialogue, and social reconciliation. This approach places da'wah as an instrument of social stability, not just the dissemination of teachings (Fauzi, 2024; Wantini et al., 2025).

c. Globalization and Digitalization.

Globalization accelerates the exchange of religious ideas and practices across countries, while digitalization is changing da'wah methods to be faster, broader, and transnational. Da'wah institutions utilize social media and digital platforms to reach a global audience. This change also raises challenges such as the fragmentation of religious authority and the spread of extreme narratives, so it is necessary to strengthen digital literacy and religious moderation (Septia et al., 2024).

d. Majority and Minority Positions.

Demographic differences determine the character and approach of da'wah. In Muslim-majority countries, da'wah develops structurally, formally, and expansively with the support of state institutions. In Muslim minority countries, da'wah is more cultural, defensive, and oriented towards strengthening identity and social harmony. This variation shows that the transformation of da'wah is very contextual and influenced by the socio-political environment of each country (Sulaiman & Arifin, 2021).

6. Challenges and Opportunities of Da'wah Institutions.

The development of da'wah institutions in Southeast Asia cannot be separated from regional dynamics which include government policies, social conditions, globalization flows, and differences in the context of the Muslim majority and minority. These factors form a complex da'wah landscape, where da'wah institutions are required to be able to adapt strategically to remain relevant and sustainable.

a. The Challenges of Da'wah Institutions.

One of the main challenges stems from the different aspects of government policies in each country. In Muslim-majority countries, regulations tend to support the development of da'wah institutionally. Meanwhile, in Muslim minority countries, stricter policies limit da'wah activities, so da'wah institutions must adapt their approach to sensitive socio-political conditions (Hidayat & Prasetyo, 2023; Rahman, 2022).

From the social side, conflicts and interreligious relations are also important factors. In some regions such as Southern Thailand and the Southern Philippines, da'wah not only serves as a medium for disseminating teachings, but also as a means of social reconciliation and strengthening community cohesion. This requires a more moderate, dialogical, and inclusive da'wah approach so as not to trigger new tensions (Fauzi, 2024; Wantini et al., 2025). The development of globalization and digitalization presents new challenges that are no less complex. The rapid flow of information allows for the emergence of a variety of diverse religious narratives, including extreme ideologies that can affect society at large. The fragmentation of religious authority in the digital space is also an important issue, where anyone can be a source of da'wah without adequate control. This condition requires da'wah institutions to increase digital literacy and strengthen capacity to produce credible and moderate content (Septia et al., 2024; Nugroho & Latif, 2023). In addition, socio-economic disparities and limited resources in several regions are also obstacles in the development of da'wah. Da'wah institutions in Muslim-minority countries often face limited access,

infrastructure, and financial support, thus affecting the effectiveness of the programs they run (Rahman, 2022).

b. Opportunities for Da'wah Transformation.

In the midst of these various challenges, there are great opportunities that can be taken advantage of by da'wah institutions. Globalization and technological advances have opened up space for da'wah to develop more widely, quickly, and efficiently. The use of digital media allows da'wah institutions to reach cross-border audiences and build a stronger transnational da'wah network (Heryanto, 2021; Septia et al., 2024). In addition, the increasing awareness of the importance of religious moderation in Southeast Asia is a strategic opportunity for da'wah institutions to play a role as agents of peace and social stability. In a pluralistic society, da'wah that emphasizes the values of tolerance, inclusivity, and interreligious harmony has high relevance (Wantini et al., 2025; Fauzi, 2024).

From the institutional side, the transformation of the role of da'wah which extends to the educational, social, and economic fields also opens up opportunities to strengthen the position of da'wah institutions in community development. Economic empowerment programs, Islamic value-based education, and social services make a real contribution that increases public trust in da'wah institutions (Sulaiman & Arifin, 2021). The difference in context between majority and minority Muslim countries can also be seen as an opportunity to develop a diverse and contextual model of da'wah. In majority countries, structural and institutional approaches can be strengthened through well-established policies and systems. Meanwhile, in minority countries, cultural, dialogical, and community-based approaches can be an effective model of da'wah in maintaining identity while building social harmony (Nugroho & Latif, 2023).

Overall, the challenges and opportunities faced by da'wah institutions in Southeast Asia show that da'wah transformation is not only influenced by internal organizational factors, but also by complex regional dynamics. The ability to integrate institutional approaches, digital methods, and broad social roles is key in ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of da'wah in the midst of changing times.

Conclusion

The history of the development of Islam in Southeast Asia shows that da'wah has grown from the beginning through a peaceful, adaptive, and social-interaction-based process, especially through trade routes, networks of scholars, and acculturation of local culture. This historical process became the foundation for the formation of a diverse Muslim community and gave birth to da'wah institutions that were initially cultural and community-based. Along with the changing times, da'wah institutions in Southeast Asia have undergone significant transformations, both institutionally, methodically, and in roles. Da'wah institutions have evolved from traditional institutions to modern organizations that are more structured, professional, and integrated with various sectors of life. The da'wah method has also shifted from a conventional approach to the use of digital technology that allows for a wider and cross-border reach. At the same time, the role of da'wah expanded from a religious function to an agent of social transformation that includes the fields of education, economy, and community development.

This transformation does not take place uniformly, but is greatly influenced by regional dynamics which include government policies, social conditions, globalization, and the demographic position of Muslims as a majority or minority. In Muslim-majority countries, da'wah is developing structurally and expansively with strong institutional support. In contrast, in Muslim minority

countries, da'wah tends to be adaptive, cultural, and oriented towards strengthening identity and social harmony. This difference confirms that the practice of da'wah in Southeast Asia is contextual and cannot be separated from the socio-political environment of each country. In the midst of these dynamics, da'wah institutions face complex challenges, ranging from state regulations, social conflicts, to digital disruption that gives rise to fragmentation of religious authority and the potential for radicalism. At the same time, globalization and technological advances open up great opportunities to expand the reach of da'wah, strengthen regional networks, and develop more innovative and inclusive approaches. In the end, the success of da'wah institutions in Southeast Asia is not only determined by their ability to convey Islamic teachings, but also by their capacity to adapt to regional dynamics, integrate Islamic values with local contexts, and play an active role in responding to the social needs of the community. Contextual, moderate, and innovation-based da'wah transformation is the main key in maintaining the relevance and sustainability of da'wah in the midst of increasingly complex global changes.

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