



Da'wah Strategy of Kiai Pondok Pesantren Roudlotul Furqon Kudus in Overcoming Burnout on Asatidz

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Abstract. Burnout experienced by Islamic boarding school teachers (asatidz) has become a crucial issue that negatively affects educational effectiveness and the continuity of da'wah. This study aims to identify and analyze the da'wah strategies employed by the kyai (Islamic cleric) of Pondok Pesantren Roudlotul Furqon Al-Umariyah Kudus in addressing burnout among asatidz. The research uses a qualitative case study approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The findings reveal that the kyai's da'wah strategies include spiritual guidance, personal-experience-based advice, and regular deliberation (consultative forums), which foster emotional and spiritual solidarity. These strategies proved effective in enhancing psychological resilience among asatidz, despite challenges such as limited resources and individual resistance. This study highlights the importance of holistic, value-based da'wah approaches as instruments for managing psychological crises within Islamic educational environments.

Keywords : burnout; dakwah strategy; Islamic boarding school.

Abstrak. Fenomena burnout yang dialami oleh para asatidz di lingkungan pondok pesantren menjadi isu krusial yang dapat berdampak negatif terhadap efektivitas pembelajaran dan keberlangsungan dakwah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis strategi dakwah yang dilakukan oleh kiai Pondok Pesantren Roudlotul Furqon Al-Umariyah Kudus dalam mengatasi burnout pada asatidz. Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan jenis studi kasus. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi dakwah kiai meliputi bimbingan rohani, pemberian nasihat berdasarkan pengalaman pribadi, dan forum diskusi rutin yang menumbuhkan solidaritas emosional dan spiritual. Strategi ini terbukti efektif dalam memperkuat ketahanan psikologis para asatidz, meskipun menghadapi tantangan seperti sumber daya yang terbatas dan resistensi individu. Penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya pendekatan dakwah holistik berbasis nilai-nilai pesantren sebagai instrumen dalam manajemen krisis psikologis di lingkungan pendidikan Islam.

Kata kunci: Burnout; Strategi Dakwah; Pondok Pesantren.

INTRODUCTION

Burnout is a serious problem in the world of Islamic education, especially in the pesantren environment. Asatidz who play a dual role as teachers and spiritual mentors face high work pressure, constant moral responsibility, and social expectations from the surrounding environment. This pressure can trigger emotional exhaustion and loss of enthusiasm in preaching and teaching, which has an impact on the quality of education and guidance of Santri Freudenberg (2014).

Burnout is a psychological phenomenon that is often associated with stressful working conditions and high expectations. In the classification by *the World Health Organization* (WHO) through *the International Classification of Diseases* (ICD-11), burnout is categorized as a work-related syndrome. WHO explains that burnout consists of three main dimensions: emotional exhaustion, mental distance from work (cynicism), and decreased professional effectiveness (WHO, 2020).

Research by (Bakker and de Vries, 2021) shows that burnout is not only caused by heavy workloads, but also by lack of social support, role ambiguity, and minimal appreciation. In addition, individual factors such as perfectionism, excessive work involvement, and lack of stress management skills also increase the risk of burnout (Simbula & Guglielmi, 2021).

One of the theoretical models widely used to understand burnout is the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model developed by Demerouti et al. This model states that burnout occurs when job demands *are* too high, while job resources *are* too low (Schaufeli & Taris, 2021). The JD-R model is considered flexible and relevant to be applied in various job sectors, so it is widely used in current research.

In the context of devotion in the pesantren environment, asatidz often face complex emotional and psychological challenges. The intensity of interaction, religious moral pressure, and social expectations make them vulnerable to burnout symptoms, even though they are in a religious environment (Molero Jurado et al., 2021). A longitudinal study by (Zhang et al., 2022) even found that burnout is closely related to decreased work quality, intention to resign, and mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety.

In addition to the psychological approach, a neurobiological approach is now developing in understanding burnout. Research by (Savic, 2021) shows

that burnout is related to changes in brain activity, especially in the prefrontal cortex area which plays a role in regulating emotions and decision-making. This finding strengthens the understanding that burnout is not just a temporary emotional condition, but also has long-term physiological impacts.

In the context of pesantren, burnout symptoms in asatidz not only appear in the form of teaching fatigue, but are also characterized by a decrease in empathy for students, withdrawal from religious activities, and even feeling a loss of meaning in carrying out the mandate of da'wah. Field interviews showed that there were teachers who began to be reluctant to attend halaqah, or complained of feeling "empty" in carrying out the routine of teaching and guiding.

To overcome burnout, the role of the kiai as a leader of the pesantren becomes very strategic. In the pesantren setting, symptoms of burnout among asatidz often manifest in the form of fatigue during teaching, reduced empathy toward students, irritability, withdrawal from communal activities, and even absenteeism in routine religious obligations. For example, one teacher reported feeling "emotionally numb and easily frustrated" during class, while another confessed to "losing the spirit to attend halaqah and avoiding communication with fellow teachers." These conditions not only affect their performance but also threaten the overall harmony and spiritual atmosphere of the pesantren. Such examples underscore the urgent need for a da'wah model that is both spiritually nourishing and psychologically supportive.

The kiai not only acts as a religious figure, but also as a spiritual guide who has the authority to shape the organizational culture and psychological well-being of the teachers (Rohmah, 2024) . The preaching approach carried out by the kiai in this case is not only in the form of religious lectures, but also includes holistic spiritual, managerial, and socio-cultural strategies (Rizki, 2018).

Islamic boarding schools serve not only as centers of Islamic learning but also as institutions for character and spiritual development (Haris, 2022). However, in practice, *asatidz* and administrators often face high work pressure, making them vulnerable to burnout marked by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal achievement which negatively affects both teaching and da'wah activities (Fitrah.AA, 2024) .

The da'wah strategies used by the kiai include strengthening the values of sincerity and patience, regular spiritual guidance, and the establishment of regular discussion forums to strengthen internal communication (Al-munawaroh, 2021) . This da'wah approach is believed to be a solution in restoring work enthusiasm and maintaining the psychological stability of the asatidz and pesantren administrators (Nugraha, 2020) . In several pesantren, such as the Hasan Anwar Gubug Islamic Boarding School, mental development activities through recitation of the Qur'an, dhikr, and strengthening ukhuwah have proven effective in increasing the motivation of teachers (Hasbi, 2020) .

Although burnout among educators has been widely studied, little attention is given to the emotional and spiritual struggles of asatidz in Islamic boarding schools. In this context, the kiai is more than a teacher he is a guide, listener, and source of emotional strength. This study explores how the human centered da'wah approach of the kiai at Roudlotul Furqon Al-Umariyah Kudus helps restore the mental resilience of asatidz facing burnout, through empathy, spiritual care, and personal example.

One of the strategies carried out in Roudlotul Furqon is spiritual shower, *mauidhoh hasanah*, advice from the personal experience of the kiai. Kiai Ahmad Santoso also has a principle that if it is not from direct experience he does not want to. Therefore, the asatidz received advice from the kiai to teach according to their own experiences. Basically, the book or book is not necessarily from direct experience, so it can still be refuted or not necessarily true. Therefore, the kiai of the Roudlotul Furqon Al Umariyah Kudus Islamic Boarding School suggested that it be taught according to his own direct experience, not from other people (Ahmad Santoso, 2025).

However, in its implementation, the kiai's da'wah strategy often faces challenges. Inhibiting factors can come from within or outside, such as financial limitations of the Islamic boarding school, lack of mental training for administrators, to resistance from individuals who experience severe fatigue (Sari & Sunata, Ivan, 2022) .

Theoretically, this study is grounded in the concept of holistic da'wah, an approach that goes beyond delivering religious knowledge to touching the heart and soul. It emphasizes empathy, emotional presence, and spiritual care as essential parts of preaching. As Mubarak explains, integrative da'wah that

nurtures worship, models sincerity, and builds spaces for honest dialogue helps strengthen the mental resilience of *asatidz*. In the pesantren setting, this approach is not just effective, it is deeply human. It restores meaning, uplifts tired hearts, and keeps the spirit of service alive in the face of daily pressure (Wardan, 2023) .

The results of the implementation of the da'wah strategy carried out by the kiai showed an increase in work enthusiasm, emotional strengthening, and spiritual stability of the *asatidz*. This success was supported by several main factors. Supporting factors for the success of the da'wah strategy include a strong commitment from the kiai, the existence of a structured coaching system, and trust and emotional closeness between the kiai and the management and *asatidz*. For example, at the Al-Barokah Islamic Boarding School, community-based da'wah activities through social activities and economic empowerment also support the mental and spiritual health of the da'wah actors (Marhamah et al., 2017) .

Previous studies have shown that burnout in pesantren is a real issue, and da'wah strategies offer a meaningful path to recovery. Behind their dedication, *asatidz* also face fatigue and need emotional and spiritual support. (Rizki, 2018) highlights that a holistic da'wah approach integrating spiritual and socio-cultural elements can strengthen their mental resilience, with the kiai playing a key role as a transformative spiritual guide.

Furthermore, Al-Munawaroh (2021) in his research highlighted how important the existence of a deliberation forum is in the Islamic boarding school environment. This forum is not just a formal space for discussion, but becomes a warm and open place where kiai and *asatidz* can convey their aspirations, share stories, and strengthen each other emotionally. Through the dialogue that is built in the forum, a sense of togetherness and solidarity grows which strengthens the relationship between teachers, and strengthens their psychological resilience in carrying out the mandate of da'wah. Meanwhile, Nugraha (2020) found that spiritual development activities such as *dhikr*, *tilawah*, and strengthening *ukhuwah* consistently have a positive effect on the psychological stability of Islamic boarding school administrators, especially in re-growing work motivation.

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. This approach was chosen to gain a deep understanding of the da'wah strategy

implemented by the kiai of the Roudlotul Furqon Kudus Islamic Boarding School in overcoming *burnout* experienced by asatidz. The subjects in this study consisted of the kiai of the Islamic Boarding School as the main actor of the da'wah strategy, and asatidz who experienced *burnout* as the party who received the impact and intervention of the strategy.

Data collection techniques were carried out through three main methods, namely in-depth interviews, indirect observation and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore the views, experiences, and strategies of the kiai as well as the responses of the asatidz to these strategies. Documentation in the form of activity records and pesantren archives were used as complementary data to strengthen the research (Matthew B. Miles, 2019) .

The data obtained were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's analysis techniques, which consist of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification. Data reduction is done by selecting relevant data, then presented in the form of descriptive narratives, and then conclusions are drawn that answer the problem formulation.

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the preaching strategies used by kiai in dealing with burnout in the pesantren environment, and to evaluate the factors that influence its success or obstacles. Through this study, it is hoped that a clear picture can be found of the methods used by kiai in guiding and motivating teachers to remain enthusiastic in carrying out preaching duties, as well as what obstacles they may face in the process.

Based on the background and research objectives, this study focuses on two main areas of investigation. First, how does the kiai of the Roudlotul Furqon Al-Umariyah Islamic Boarding School implement his da'wah strategy in addressing burnout among asatidz? Second, what are the supporting and inhibiting factors that influence the success of this strategy in the pesantren environment? These two questions guide the exploration of the kiai's role not only as a religious leader, but also as a psychological and managerial figure in building emotional resilience and work motivation among educators. The answers to these questions are elaborated in the results and discussion sections, supported by empirical data obtained through field research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Da'wah Strategy of Kiai in Overcoming Burnout at Roudlotul Furqon Al-Umariyah Islamic Boarding School in Kudus

This study reveals that the burnout phenomenon experienced by the asatidz at the Roudlotul Furqon Al-Umariyah Kudus Islamic Boarding School is a complex problem and includes various dimensions. The asatidz face psychological pressure due to heavy workloads, high moral demands, and religious responsibilities inherent in the life of the Islamic boarding school. Burnout in this context includes emotional exhaustion, decreased work motivation, and feelings of alienation from their roles. However, the role of the kiai as a spiritual leader and psychosocial mentor is a key element in responding to this challenge effectively.

These symptoms describe a real form of burnout classified by WHO as a work syndrome, and are theoretically in accordance with Maslach and Jackson's burnout theory (Matthew B. Miles, 2019). Which identifies three main dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (emotional distance from the task), and decreased personal achievement. In practice in Islamic boarding schools, these three dimensions are seen through boredom in teaching, loss of empathy for students, and feelings of inability to carry out religious duties optimally.

The Kiai of the Roudlotul Furqon Al Umariyah Islamic Boarding School in Kudus applies a da'wah approach based on the values of the Qur'an, especially through the methods of bil hikmah (wisdom) and mau'izhah hasanah (good advice). This strategy is manifested in the form of ruhiyah (spiritual) guidance which is carried out intensively through routine activities such as halaqah, yellow book studies, and tafsir discussions involving all asatidz. In these forums, the kiai not only transfers Islamic knowledge, but also provides motivation, appreciation, and space to confide and share workloads (Ahmad Santoso, 2025).

Another asatidz stated: "Kiai always said that every burden must be passed sincerely, but he also did not only advise. He makes time each week to listen to us personally." (Interview with Ustadz F, May 13, 2025). These findings indicate that the kiai's da'wah strategy, rooted in experiential, dialogical, and spiritual support, is effective in preventing and reducing

burnout. It not only strengthens the emotional well-being of the asatidz but also revitalizes their commitment to Islamic education and preaching.

The preaching strategy used by Kiai Ahmad Santoso emphasizes a sincere approach based on personal experience. Kiai provides advice and guidance that comes from his own life journey, not just from religious texts (Ahmad Santoso, 2025). This approach is in line with David Kolb's experiential learning theory (2016), which emphasizes that meaningful learning occurs through real experiences that are reflected. This allows the asatidz to absorb spiritual values more authentically and deeply. The asatidz respond positively to this approach because they feel closer, emotionally connected, and gain contextual learning. This experience-based strategy also reflects the local wisdom of the pesantren in transmitting spiritual values authentically.

In a broader context, previous studies on preaching strategies in various settings, rural, urban, multicultural, and digital underscore the importance of adapting da'wah methods to meet the psychological and sociocultural needs of the audience. For example, (Zulkarnain (2018) emphasized cultural and participatory approaches in rural communities, while Sari (2020) and Rahman (2019)) highlighted the effectiveness of social media and action based preaching (*bil hal*) in engaging millennial audiences and strengthening public perception. These findings reinforce the notion that preaching is not merely the act of conveying religious content, but a strategic, context-sensitive process that can address deeper personal and communal issues, including mental and emotional challenges such as burnout.

On the other hand, a study by (Fitriani, 2021) explores the strategy of preaching in multicultural areas, where the approach of interfaith dialogue and values of tolerance are the main foundations in avoiding conflict and creating mutual understanding between religious communities. Finally, research by (Yusuf, 2022) discusses the strategy of preaching among urban communities, which tend to be more rational and critical. He found that the use of argumentative and data-based approaches is a more acceptable method in this context.

In contrast to the preaching strategies used in multicultural and urban communities which emphasize interfaith dialogue, rational argumentation, and data-based approaches, the da'wah strategy implemented by the kiai in the pesantren environment focuses on internal spiritual strengthening. At the

Roudlotul Furqon Al-Umariyah Islamic Boarding School, the kiai has developed a structured spiritual guidance system as part of his holistic preaching approach. Periodic activities such as *spiritual showers*, Qur'an recitation, congregational *dhikr*, and joint prayers function as spiritual 'release valves' that help alleviate psychological pressure experienced by the asatidz (Ahmad Santoso, 2025). This internal guidance nurtures emotional resilience and strengthens the asatidz's relationship with God, demonstrating that a spiritually centered approach remains highly effective in traditional religious settings, particularly in responding to issues like burnout.

This research contributes to the development of da'wah psychology studies, by showing that da'wah strategies are not only the delivery of religious values, but also as a form of psychosocial intervention that can restore emotional exhaustion. In the context of pesantren, the role of kiai as a spiritual figure as well as an emotional guide presents an alternative leadership model in preventing burnout based on Islamic values.

Factors that influence preaching strategies in Islamic boarding schools

The strategy of preaching in the Islamic boarding school environment cannot be separated from various factors that influence its effectiveness and sustainability, especially in facing psychological challenges such as burnout. Burnout experienced by preachers or students, especially those directly involved in preaching activities, can be triggered by excessive workload, spiritual pressure, and lack of emotional support. Internal factors such as mental resilience, personal motivation, and sincerity in preaching are very important in maintaining the emotional and spiritual stability of preachers.

Meanwhile, external factors such as the Islamic boarding school environment, leadership patterns, and the availability of supporting preaching facilities also play an important role. An adaptive preaching strategy that takes into account the psychological condition of preachers will be more effective in being implemented. For example, strengthening the aspect of *tarbiyah ruhiyah* (spiritual guidance) and providing proportional rest time can be a form of strategy that helps prevent burnout. In addition, the creation of a supportive social environment that is open to dialogue between fellow preachers and students is also key to keeping the spirit of preaching alive (Ahmad Santoso, 2025).

Regular deliberation forums organized by the kiai function as a strategic means of maintaining social cohesion and strengthening healthy interpersonal communication in the pesantren environment. This is in line with House's (2019) Social Support theory, which states that emotional and informational support from the social environment can reduce stress levels while improving individual performance. In this forum, the asatidz are given space to express their feelings, convey complaints, and build emotional solidarity that strengthens resilience to work pressure. The inclusive and constructive deliberation atmosphere reflects democratic values in the management of the pesantren and strengthens horizontal relations between administrators.

Social support such as this is an important element in the *Job Demands-Resources* (JD-R) Model, where the availability of job resources serves as a buffer against high job demands that have the potential to cause *burnout*.

The success of the preaching strategy implemented by the kiai is evident in the increased emotional resilience, spiritual stability, and work enthusiasm among the asatidz. This success is supported by three mutually reinforcing factors. First, the strong moral and spiritual commitment of Kiai Ahmad Santoso, who serves as a living role model for the asatidz, builds emotional closeness and a sense of being valued. Second, the presence of a structured and consistent coaching system including spiritual mentoring and regular discussion forums provides sustainable support and reflection space. Third, the socially supportive and open pesantren environment encourages continuous participation in da'wah activities and helps maintain motivation even in the face of fatigue or pressure. These factors collectively contribute to the effectiveness of the kiai's holistic da'wah strategy in mitigating burnout.

However, there are also inhibiting factors in the implementation of the da'wah strategy, which need to be considered. *First*, the financial limitations of Islamic boarding schools are the main obstacle, especially in providing welfare facilities and developing the capacity of teachers. *Second*, the lack of mental and psychological training for asatidz, which makes it difficult for them to recognize and manage stress independently. *Third*, there is resistance from some individuals to the spiritual and non-structural approaches used in da'wah, especially from those who have experienced severe burnout and lost religious motivation.

Theoretically, the da'wah approach applied by the kiai is in line with the holistic da'wah paradigm that integrates spiritual, emotional, and socio-cultural aspects in forming individual psychological resilience. This strategy is also based on the principles of da'wah psychology, which combines Islamic values with mental strengthening methods to achieve spiritual balance. In this context, da'wah is not only interpreted as conveying teachings, but also as a process of healing, coaching, and empowering individuals. This is in line with the *Holistic Da'wah concept* from (Mubarok, 2015), which emphasizes the importance of touching the spiritual, psychological, and social dimensions in an integrated manner. This kind of strategy has proven to be able to form the mental resilience of the asatidz and maintain their spirit of service in facing high work pressure.

From a practical perspective, the findings of this study provide important contributions to the development of human resource management strategies in Islamic boarding schools. The position of the kiai is not only as a spiritual leader, but also as a psychological crisis manager who has the moral and social authority to regulate organizational dynamics. A personal approach, exemplary life, and a value-based coaching system are the foundations for creating an effective support system in preventing burnout in a sustainable manner.

Furthermore, these results open up new discussion spaces regarding the importance of mental health in Islamic education. Pesantren as traditional institutions are expected to begin adopting an integrative approach in the development of educators, including through stress management training, religious consultation forums, and systematic spiritual development. This study shows that the traditional da'wah approach remains relevant, as long as it is developed contextually and responsive to the psychological needs of educators.

This finding also confirms that the strategy of preaching based on local values of Islamic boarding schools can remain contextual and effective, if packaged in an approach that is appropriate to the culture and character of the audience. This is in line with the idea of *contextual pedagogy*, which emphasizes the importance of the suitability of strategies to the local cultural background. In this framework, Islamic boarding schools become a strategic social arena

for instilling spiritual values through daily practices, not just formal instructions.

This is in line with the opinion of (Wahyu, 2024) who emphasized that da'wah bil hikmah can increase individual resilience in dealing with work pressure, because it prioritizes a dialogical and humanistic approach. Thus, da'wah activities are not only *top-down*, but also prioritize the active participation of the asatidz to convey their concerns.

Thus, the strategy of the kiai's da'wah in dealing with burnout at the Roudlotul Furqon Al-Umariyah Kudus Islamic Boarding School can be used as an applicable model for other Islamic boarding schools facing similar problems. This strategy emphasizes the importance of synergy between the spiritual and managerial dimensions in maintaining the sustainability of da'wah and improving the quality of Islamic education. The success of da'wah is not only measured by the extent to which knowledge is conveyed, but also by how strong the mental and spiritual resilience of educators is in carrying out their roles and devotion.

CONCLUSION

The preaching strategy implemented by the kiai of the Roudlotul Furqon Al-Umariyah Kudus Islamic Boarding School has an important role in responding to the symptoms of burnout experienced by the asatidz. The approach used is not limited to religious aspects alone, but rather combines spiritual, social, and managerial elements as a whole. The kiai acts as a spiritual guide, moral leader, as well as a director in psychosocial aspects that help shape the emotional and spiritual resilience of the teachers. Various efforts such as religious lectures, advice based on personal experience, and discussion forums have proven effective in creating a space for psychological recovery and increasing work enthusiasm. However, the success of this strategy is highly dependent on the kiai's personal commitment, the trust of the boarding school administrators, and support from a solid coaching and community structure.

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