



## BUILDING POLITE DA'WAH: ETHICS AND BOUNDARIES OF JOKING IN CONVEYING RELIGIOUS MESSAGES

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Submitted: 09 April 2025	Accepted: 23 April 2025	Published: 26 Juni 2025
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**Abstract:** *The use of humor in da'wah has become increasingly common across various platforms such as sermons, social media, and podcasts, particularly in engaging younger audiences. While humor can enhance audience engagement, its use requires careful consideration to avoid diminishing the sacredness of religious messages or offending certain groups. This study aims to explore the ethical boundaries of humor in da'wah and its impact on the comprehension and acceptance of religious messages. Employing a literature review method, the study draws on the perspectives of religious scholars such as Imam Al-Ghazali and communication theorists like Marshall McLuhan. The findings indicate that humor, when aligned with Islamic values, can serve as an effective tool to build rapport between preachers and audiences. However, it is essential to maintain a balance between humor and the seriousness of da'wah to ensure the religious message remains clear and respectful. This study underscores the importance of using humor wisely to enhance the effectiveness of da'wah in an increasingly digital era.*

**Keywords:** *Humor in Da'wah; Ethics of Joking; Religious Messages*

**Abstrak:** Penggunaan humor dalam dakwah semakin marak melalui berbagai media seperti ceramah, media sosial, dan podcast, terutama dalam menjangkau generasi muda. Di satu sisi, humor dapat meningkatkan keterlibatan audiens; namun di sisi lain, penggunaannya memerlukan kehati-hatian agar tidak mengurangi kesakralan pesan agama atau menyinggung kelompok tertentu. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji batas-batas etis penggunaan humor dalam dakwah serta dampaknya terhadap pemahaman dan penerimaan pesan keagamaan. Metode yang digunakan adalah studi pustaka, dengan merujuk pada pandangan tokoh agama seperti Imam Al-Ghazali dan teori komunikasi dari tokoh seperti Marshall McLuhan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa humor dalam dakwah dapat menjadi sarana yang efektif untuk membangun kedekatan antara dai dan audiens, selama tetap berlandaskan pada nilai-nilai Islam. Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya keseimbangan antara unsur humor dan keseriusan pesan dakwah agar makna keagamaan tetap terjaga dan dapat diterima dengan baik, terutama di era digital yang semakin berkembang.

**Kata Kunci:** *Humor Dakwah; Etika Bercanda; Pesan Keagamaan.*

## INTRODUCTION

Da'wah is a significant activity in spreading religion, especially in the context of Islam. As one method of delivering religious messages, da'wah aims to convey religious teachings and values to the people in a good and touching way. <sup>1</sup> In the world of preaching, the delivery of messages is not only done with firm and serious words but also with a more relaxed and laughter-inducing approach, namely through joking or humor. Humor in preaching, if used wisely, can have a positive effect. Humor can reduce tension, touch the hearts of listeners, and make heavy messages lighter and easier to accept <sup>2</sup>. However, humor in preaching also needs to be considered carefully. If not properly regulated, joking in preaching can give the wrong impression and even damage the image of religion itself. Therefore, this study focuses on the importance of building polite preaching, effectively conveying messages and maintaining ethics and boundaries in joking.

Delivering the message of da'wah through humor or joking requires careful consideration of the existing social, cultural, and religious context. In a diverse society, humor that is well-received by one group may not be acceptable to another group. <sup>3</sup>. Therefore, polite preaching must adapt to various levels of society and maintain the feelings of all parties. In this case, ethics are fundamental in every interaction in sermons, lectures, and daily conversations. Along with the development of the times and the rapid development of technology, preaching is now carried out in mosques or other places of worship and through various social media and digital platforms. <sup>4</sup>. The use of humor in preaching on social media is increasing due to its more accessible nature to many people. However, this also poses challenges, given that humor has various interpretations and acceptances, especially when discussing sensitive issues such as religion. Here, it is essential to have clear guidelines regarding the ethics and limitations of using humor in preaching.

In this study, the research will look at how humor can be utilized in preaching without offending others or damaging the moral message that is intended to be conveyed. The approach used in this study is qualitative descriptive by exploring the perspectives of various religious figures,

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<sup>1</sup> Muhammad Aldi, "Peran Pidato Islam Dalam Penguatan Pendidikan Agama Islam: Membangun Karakter Generasi Berakhlak Mulia," *Jurnal Ragam Pengabdian* 1, no. 3 (2024): 293–303.

<sup>2</sup> Lukman Ramdani, Sitty Sumijati, and G Nuraeni, "Pesan Dakwah Dalam Buku Humor Karya Mustofa Bisri," *Tabligh: Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Penyiaran Islam* 3, no. 1 (2018): 46–67.

<sup>3</sup> Siti Aminah and Siti Muyassaroh, "Analisis Konten Tiktok War Takjil Ramadhan Dalam Menumbuhkan Sikap Toleransi Antar Umat Beragama," *Jurnal Bisnis dan Komunikasi Digital* 2, no. 1 (2024): 11.

<sup>4</sup> Amir Hamzah and Mahasiswa Komunikasi Penyiaran Islam, *Dakwah Di Masa Pandemi* (CV Jejak (Jejak Publisher), 2021).

community leaders, and the general public regarding the boundaries of joking in preaching. This study will also look at examples of preaching that use humor and evaluate whether the humor successfully achieves the goals of preaching without causing misunderstanding. Through this research, it is hoped that more straightforward guidelines can be found regarding the limits of joking in preaching, which consider not only the humorous aspect but also politeness, civility, and applicable religious principles. Polite preaching prevents the creation of divisions between religious communities and helps maintain harmony in a pluralistic society.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, balancing entertaining humor and delivering a profound message is essential.

On the other hand, although humor is essential in preaching, some circles believe that joking can damage the image of religion and demean the seriousness of religious teachings.<sup>6</sup> Da'wah is often a debate, especially for those who believe that preaching should always be done seriously and without jokes. Some critics argue that joking in preaching can lead to neglect of the substance of the religious teachings themselves and risks reducing respect for the teachings conveyed. In addition, in practice, not everyone can use humor wisely. Uncontrolled humor can turn into hostile, demeaning, or even offensive jokes to specific groups.<sup>7</sup> Da'wah can damage the true purpose of da'wah, which is to convey a message of goodness and noble morals. Therefore, there is a need for guidelines or limits in joking that must be considered by da'is or religious message delivery so that the humor used remains in a positive and beneficial corridor.

Another factor that needs to be considered is the tendency of society to be more open to the use of social media. Preaching carried out through social media allows the message of preaching to be spread more widely, but at the same time, it also opens up space for potential misunderstandings.<sup>8</sup> Humor that is out of context or insensitive can cause adverse reactions, both from within religious communities and from the general public. Therefore, it is essential to consider ethics in every preaching that involves humor, especially in the digital public space.<sup>9</sup> This study will also examine

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<sup>5</sup> Riska Kurnia Sari, Ade Irma Suryani, and Salsa Bilqis Nabila, *Merawat Sikap Toleransi Beragama Di Tengah Masyarakat Majemuk* (uwais inspirasi indonesia, 2022).

<sup>6</sup> Refki Rusyadi, "Bahasa Arab Pesantren" (2021).

<sup>7</sup> M Amin Nurdin and Ahmad Abrori, "Mengerti Sosiologi: Pengantar Memahami Konsep-Konsep Sosiologi" (Pustaka Pelajar, 2019).

<sup>8</sup> Bubuh Syihabudin and Ajeng Nurbaeti Rahman, "Strategi Dakwah Digital: Meningkatkan Misi Dakwah Dan Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar Melalui Media Sosial," *Al-Balagh: Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Penyiaran Islam* 1, no. 1 (2024): 57–68.

<sup>9</sup> Fenny Mahdaniar and Alan Surya, "Perumusan Etis Humor Dalam Desain Pesan Dakwah," *INTELEKSIA: Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Dakwah* 3, no. 2 (2022): 291–312.

the various views and thoughts of scholars, religious scholars, and communication experts regarding using humor in preaching. Many points of view can be analyzed in this context. Some may argue that joking in preaching is effective, while others believe humor should be limited to particular contexts. Therefore, these views must be collected to provide a more comprehensive picture of how polite and meaningful preaching can be built through humor.

It is also essential to see the role of education in building polite preaching. Religious education from an early age, both at school and home, will help people understand how to preach politely and not overstep the line. This education can also teach about the ethics of joking, which are based on religious principles, so the younger generation can continue preaching more wisely.

The researcher presents three previous studies related to the research that the researcher will write. The research "Humor in the Message of Preaching" written by Mustofa Hilmi <sup>10</sup> More focus is on using humor as a communication strategy in preaching. In this study, humor is seen as a tool to attract the audience's attention, make it easier to understand the message, and create a more intimate and pleasant atmosphere while delivering preaching. Researchers may examine how humor strengthens religious messages, makes them more easily accepted, and builds better relationships between preachers and audiences. Meanwhile, the study "Building Polite Da'wah: Ethics and Boundaries of Joking in Conveying Religious Messages" highlights the importance of ethics and limits in using humor in preaching. This study emphasizes that although humor can be an effective tool in preaching, it must be used carefully so as not to offend religious values or degrade the sanctity of spiritual messages. Researchers focus on maintaining politeness and caution when joking, ensuring that the humor used remains according to religious norms and does not damage the essence of preaching.

Next, research entitled "Theory of Relevance in Sheikh 'Assim's Humorous Da'wah as an Alternative to Contemporary Da'wah: Critique of the Principle of Cooperation" by Anisa Anisa & Mohamad Zaka Al Farisi <sup>11</sup> It focuses on applying Relevance Theory in Sheikh 'Assim's humorous preaching, emphasizing how humor can make preaching messages more relevant and appropriate to contemporary social contexts. This study also critiques the principle of cooperation in preaching and

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<sup>10</sup> Mustofa Hilmi, "Humor Dalam Pesan Dakwah," *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 38, no. 1 (2019): 87–110.

<sup>11</sup> Anisa Anisa and Mohamad Zaka Al Farisi, "Teori Relevansi Dalam Dakwah Humor Sheikh 'Assim Sebagai Alternatif Dakwah Kontemporer: Kritik Terhadap Prinsip Kerjasama," *Jurnal Onoma: Pendidikan, Bahasa, Dan Sastra* 9, no. 2 (2023): 919–930.

tries to see humor as an effective alternative to conveying religious messages. In contrast, the study "Building Polite Da'wah: Ethics and Boundaries of Joking in Conveying Religious Messages" emphasizes the importance of maintaining ethics and politeness in using humor in preaching by highlighting the limits that need to be maintained so that humor does not damage the integrity of the religious message. The main difference lies in the focus of the study: the first is more on the relevance of humor in contemporary preaching. In contrast, the second emphasizes ethics and limits in the use of humor.

The following research is entitled "Semiotic Analysis of Humorous Preaching Strategy of Nunuzoo Instagram Account," written by Saida Nafisah Abdullah & Yayah NurhidayahK. It focuses more on semiotic analysis in understanding how humor is used as a da'wah strategy through social media, especially Nunuzoo's Instagram account. This study examines the symbolic elements, signs, and meanings of humor delivered on digital platforms and how humor conveys da'wah messages to young audiences creatively and interestingly. Meanwhile, the study "Building Polite Da'wah: Ethics and Limits of Joking in Delivering Religious Messages" focuses more on the ethical aspects and limitations of using humor in da'wah, especially to maintain politeness and decency in delivering religious messages. The main difference between these two studies is in the approach: the first is more directed at semiotic analysis in the context of digital da'wah, while the second emphasizes the ethical principles of joking in da'wah.

Overall, this study aims to contribute to the development of polite da'wah in this modern era, which not only emphasizes the serious and formal aspects of conveying religious messages but also recognizes the importance of humor, which has a positive impact. Through this study, it is hoped that there will be a clearer understanding of how da'wah with humor can go hand in hand with strengthening morals and correct religious knowledge. In the long term, the results of this study can be used as a guide for preachers, preachers, and individuals who want to convey religious messages more politely and wisely without sacrificing the substance of the religious message they wish to convey.

## **METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative method with a library research approach to analyze the role of humor in preaching and the ethics and limitations that must be considered in its use. This method was chosen because this study aims to explore concepts, theories, and principles related to polite

preaching and the use of humor in religious communication. By using secondary data from written sources, this study will examine relevant literature in the form of books, journal articles, papers, and other scientific works that discuss the topics of preaching, ethics of religious communication, and humor in conveying religious messages.<sup>12</sup>.

In this study, the researcher will explore various literatures that discuss the ethics of preaching and humor in the context of religion and the boundaries that preachers need to maintain in conveying religious messages. The literature includes works from religious figures, communication experts, and previous studies that discuss the importance of politeness in preaching and how humor can be an effective tool without reducing the depth of religious messages. The researcher will study various perspectives on using humor in preaching, both from a religious and communication perspective.

Data collected from various library sources will be analyzed using a thematic analysis approach.<sup>13</sup>, where researchers will identify key themes related to ethics, limitations, and the impact of humor in preaching. This study aims to develop theoretical guidelines to help preachers understand how humor can effectively and politely convey religious messages. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of preaching that is more inclusive, polite, and by religious values.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This study shows that humor in preaching has the potential to make religious messages easier to understand, especially if delivered in a polite and non-offensive manner. The results of the literature analysis revealed that using humor carefully can strengthen the relationship between the preacher and the audience while facilitating the delivery of moral messages. However, in its use, humor must always be based on ethics and clear boundaries, not to reduce the greatness of the religious message itself. Humor used in preaching must still prioritize manners, respect the dignity of others, and not damage the seriousness of the religious message. Therefore, preachers must understand well when and how humor can be used in preaching without disrupting the main objective, namely conveying moral messages that lead to goodness and depth of understanding of religion.

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<sup>12</sup> Muhammad Rijal Fadli, "Memahami Desain Metode Penelitian Kualitatif," *Humanika, Kajian Ilmiah Mata Kuliah Umum* 21, no. 1 (2021): 33–54.

<sup>13</sup> Namirah Adelliani, Citra Afny Sucirahayu, and Azmiya Rahma Zanjabila, *Analisis Tematik Pada Penelitian Kualitatif* (Penerbit Salemba, 2023).

## **Humor in Preaching: An Effective Tool to Increase Audience Engagement**

Using humor in preaching can be an effective tool for building closeness between the preacher and the audience.<sup>14</sup> In the preaching world, the audience often feels awkward or hindered by the seriousness of the topic, which can reduce communication effectiveness. Humor, in this case, can break the ice, create a more relaxed atmosphere, and help the audience feel more comfortable receiving the message. When the atmosphere becomes lighter, the audience is more open to listening and reflecting on the religious message shared by the preacher.

Humor in preaching has a significant psychological function, reducing tension and creating a closer relationship between the preacher and the audience.<sup>15</sup> People tend to remember messages more easily when they are conveyed in a fun way. Lighthearted humor can help convey complex concepts in religion in a way that is more easily understood by a wider audience.<sup>16</sup> Humor can speed up understanding and provide a more profound impression. In this case, humor can bridge the delivery of profound religious teachings and an audience who may be less familiar with the topic.

As the main role model in preaching, the Prophet Muhammad SAW also used humor in daily interactions with his friends and people. Hadiths that describe him laughing or joking with his friends show that humor was part of his character that prioritized emotional closeness with the people.<sup>17</sup> One famous example is when the Prophet Muhammad SAW joked with an old friend who asked for permission to enter heaven. The Prophet SAW responded to the request with a light joke that remained within the corridor of politeness without damaging the moral message. Humor shows that the humor used by the Prophet was always within the limits of religious values and did not reduce the seriousness of the teachings he conveyed.

However, although humor can be an effective tool, some limits must be maintained so that humor does not interfere with the essence of da'wah itself. Humor in da'wah must maintain politeness and respect for others. One of the principles taught in Islam is not to criticize or belittle

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<sup>14</sup> Mohammad Rofiq, "Strategi Komunikasi Dakwah Melalui Public Speaking KH. Abdul Ghofur Lamongan Jawa Timur," *JADID: Journal of Quranic Studies and Islamic Communication* 4, no. 02 (2024): 18–42.

<sup>15</sup> Ard May, *Retorika Dakwah* (Guepedia, 2022).

<sup>16</sup> Wardah Akmaliah Rahmat and Yenanda Putri Zanuba, "Living Hadis Dan Strategi Komunikasi Dakwah Pada Osdpodcast 'Marriage Is Scary,'" *Muqaddimah: Jurnal Studi Islam* 15, no. 5 (2024): 91–107.

<sup>17</sup> Abdillah Mubarak Nurin, *Islam Agama Kasih Sayang* (Serambi Ilmu Semesta, 2015).



others through humor. Humor in da'wah is in line with the message in Surah Al-Hujurat (49:11), which says, "Let not a people make fun of another people; perhaps those who are made fun of are better than those who make fun." Therefore, humor in da'wah must always be directed to strengthen brotherhood and increase understanding, not to belittle or offend others.

Humor must also be tailored to the audience that will receive the message. Preachers must understand the social and cultural context of the audience to ensure that the humor used is well received. Different groups have different norms and values, and humor that may be considered funny in one place may be regarded as inappropriate in another.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, preachers must be wise in assessing the time, place, and method of using humor to avoid confusing or even rejecting the religious message being conveyed. In addition, humor in preaching must still have a clear purpose, namely to strengthen moral messages and religious values, not merely for entertainment. As the Prophet Muhammad SAW exemplifies, humor must always have educational and ethical values.<sup>19</sup> No humor aims to mock or belittle religious teachings but rather to introduce goodness more lightly and enjoyably. In this case, humor becomes a means to make preaching more interesting and acceptable to various groups without reducing the message's essence.

Considering these things, humor in preaching can be a very effective means to reach a broader and more diverse audience. The proper use of humor can make preaching more alive and touching so that religious messages can be accepted more easily and translated into real actions in everyday life. Therefore, humor is a way to lighten the mood and a tool that can strengthen and spread religious values in society.

### **Ethics in Using Humor in Da'wah**

Ethics in preaching humor are critical because they are directly related to the manners of speaking taught in Islam. In Islam, speaking politely is part of good morals and preaching.<sup>20</sup> Humor used in preaching must maintain the dignity of other individuals or groups. There should be no humor that demeans or offends other people, let alone demeans a particular religion or belief.

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<sup>18</sup> Roosita Cindrakasih et al., "Keragaman Dan Inklusi Dalam Kampanye Komunikasi Konten Habib Jafar," *Jurnal Review Pendidikan dan Pengajaran (JRPP)* 7, no. 4 (2024): 16074–16081.

<sup>19</sup> Muhammad Ainur, *Gus Muwafiq: Menggenggam Dalil, Merawat Tradisi, Menjaga Kebangsaan Indonesia* (Laksana, 2019).

<sup>20</sup> Adzah Zahzuli, "Etika Berkomunikasi Dalam Islam," *Busyro: Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi Islam* 4, no. 1 (2022): 1–8.



Preachers must never forget that words have the power to influence, both positively and negatively. Therefore, humor in preaching must be used with full responsibility.<sup>21</sup>

In his monumental work, *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*, Imam Al-Ghazali emphasized that uncontrolled joking can damage the seriousness of religious teachings. Undirected humor can reduce the severity of the message of da'wah and damage the image of Muslims in the eyes of society. Al-Ghazali reminded us that excessive joking and disregard for speaking etiquette can worsen people's perception of Islamic teachings.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, he emphasized the importance of maintaining the honor of religion and the dignity of the people, even though humor is used in preaching. A wise preacher will always place humor in the proper context, by the main purpose of preaching, which is to guide the people to the right path.

Humor used in preaching must remain in line with the noble goal of preaching itself, namely, to improve the people's morals. Good and correct humor entertains, educates, reminds, and improves people's morals. The Prophet Muhammad often used humor to teach moral values and good morals, but within limits that do not damage the sanctity of religious teachings. He frequently joked with his friends within the corridor, who still respect religious values. Shows that humor in preaching must function as an educational tool, not just entertainment<sup>23</sup>.

It is important to remember that humor in preaching is not to seek popularity or gain attention alone. The primary purpose of humor in preaching is to convey moral messages and religious values in a way that is more easily accepted and understood by the audience. Preachers must ensure that any humor used does not distract from the greater goal of preaching, inviting people to delve deeper into religious teachings and improve themselves. If humor is used without considering the goal of preaching, it can become unproductive and even counterproductive.

In addition, humor in preaching must also prioritize the principle of compassion and respect for other people's feelings.<sup>24</sup> One of the ethics taught in Islam is to not hurt others with words or actions. Surah Al-Hujurat (49:11) reminds us not to make fun of or belittle others because it could be that the person being made fun of is better than the one making fun of. A wise preacher will ensure

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<sup>21</sup> Khairi Syekh Maulana Arabi, *Dakwah Dengan Cerdas* (Laksana, 2017).

<sup>22</sup> K H Nasaruddin Umar, *Menjalani Hidup Salikin* (Gramedia Widiasarana Indonesia, 2022).

<sup>23</sup> Jalaluddin Rakhmat, *Islam Aktual* (Mizan Publishing, 2021).

<sup>24</sup> Muhamad Agung Setiawan, "Humor Atau Hina? Menilai Etika Komunikasi Publik Dalam Kasus Gus Miftah Dan Penjual Es Teh," *Jurnal STIKOM Semarang/ Semai Komunikasi* 7, no. 2 (2024): 1–9.

that the humor does not offend or hurt anyone directly or indirectly. Humor delivered with affection and respect will be more easily accepted by the audience and more effective in conveying the preaching message.

Humor should also be used with attention to the social and cultural context of the audience. Every society has different norms and values, and what is considered funny in one place may not be well received in another. A wise preacher must understand his audience and adapt humor to the culture and values that apply in that society. Using humor that is not sensitive to cultural context can cause confusion, discomfort, or conflict. Therefore, preachers need always to be sensitive to the social and cultural conditions of the audience so that the humor delivered can be well-received.<sup>25</sup>

Finally, humor in preaching must remain within limits that do not reduce the sanctity of religious teachings. In Islam, there is a prohibition on degrading religious teachings or playing with things that are considered sacred. Therefore, humor in preaching must always prioritize respect for religious teachings and not reduce the authority of Islamic teachings. Humor not by religious values can damage the image of religion and lessen the people's trust in preaching itself. Preachers must always maintain the integrity of religious teachings and ensure that the humor conveyed does not damage the sanctity of the teachings.

Thus, ethics in preaching humor is an essential aspect. Humor in preaching must always be used with good intentions, namely to strengthen moral messages and improve the people's morals. Preachers must be wise in choosing humor appropriate to the context, maintain politeness in speaking, and not demean or offend others. By paying attention to these ethics, humor can effectively convey religious messages more lightly and touchingly without reducing the religious teachings' sanctity.

### **Maintaining a Balance between Humor and Seriousness of Preaching**

One of the main challenges in using humor in preaching is maintaining a balance between comedy and the seriousness of the message being conveyed. Preaching is the process of conveying religious teachings, which contain moral values, ethics, and life guidance that comes from divine

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<sup>25</sup> H Isep Zaenal Arifin et al., *Komunikasi Terapeutik: Manfaat, Dan Aplikasinya Dalam Komunikasi Penyiaran Islam* (Greenbook Publisher, 2025).

revelation.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, humor should not be the primary focus in preaching but should be positioned as a tool to refine and strengthen a more profound message. Excessive or inappropriate use of humor can reduce the seriousness of the religious teachings to be conveyed. A wise preacher must be able to regulate the portion of humor so that the profound moral message is still clearly communicated to the audience.

In this case, the preacher must understand the purpose of preaching well to guide the people towards a better understanding of Islamic teachings and invite them to improve themselves.<sup>27</sup> Humor can be a means to create a more pleasant atmosphere and reduce tension, but it should not distract from the central message of the preaching. The preacher must ensure that the humor used does not damage the depth of the moral message and does not make the audience forget the more important core of religious teachings. Therefore, the balance between humor and seriousness in preaching is essential to maintain the effectiveness of message delivery.

This principle of maintaining balance can be understood through Surah Al-A'raf (7:28), which reminds us of the dangers of following customs without proper understanding. The verse states: "And when they do an abominable deed, they say: 'We found our fathers doing it, and we only follow their guidance.'" This verse teaches us not to unthinkingly follow traditions or customs without understanding their values. In the context of humor in da'wah, humor must be used with full awareness of its impact. Inappropriate or excessive humor can obscure the purpose of da'wah itself and make the audience lose focus on the religious message that is being conveyed. Therefore, the preacher must be wise in using humor while maintaining the noble purpose of da'wah.

In addition, this principle of maintaining balance is also reflected in Surah Al-Mulk (67:15), which reminds us of the importance of thinking and acting consciously: "It is He who made the earth for you to walk on, so walk on it and eat of the sustenance He has provided. To Him, you will be returned." This verse teaches the importance of living life with consideration and awareness. Likewise, preachers must act consciously, including in the use of humor. The humor must be adjusted to the context and purpose of preaching and must not distract from the more important teachings of

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<sup>26</sup> Nur Marwah, "Etika Komunikasi Islam," *Al-Din: Jurnal Dakwah dan Sosial Keagamaan* 7, no. 1 (2021).

<sup>27</sup> Muhammad Qadaruddin, "Pengantar Ilmu Dakwah" (CV. Penerbit Qiara Media, 2019).

the religion. A wise preacher will always be aware that every word spoken, whether serious or joking, must bring benefits and strengthen the teachings of Islam.<sup>28</sup>

Using humor in preaching must also avoid humor that leads to insults or ridicule of other groups. Surah Al-Hujurat (49:11) reminds us not to mock or belittle each other: "O you who believe let not a people mock another people, perhaps those who are mocked are better than those who mock." In this case, humor in preaching must remain within the boundaries of politeness and mutual respect. Preachers must ensure that the humor does not hurt others or cause division. Humor in preaching must strengthen relationships, not create distance or tension between people. Preachers also need to pay attention to the social and cultural context of the audience when using humor. In a more serious or conservative society, humor used in preaching must be more careful and not excessive. Conversely, lighter humor can create closeness with the audience in a more relaxed and open society. Therefore, preachers must be able to read the situation and adjust the use of humor so as not to ruin the atmosphere or make the audience uncomfortable.

Finally, preachers must remember that humor is a tool, not an end. The main goal of preaching is to convey the profound message of Islam and guide the people to goodness. Humor, if appropriately used, can be a tool that strengthens the message of preaching, but it should not distract from the primary goal of preaching itself. A wise preacher will always balance humor and seriousness, ensuring the religious message is conveyed well and the audience still benefits from the preaching.

### **Humor in Preaching in the Digital Era**

In today's digital era, humor in preaching is increasingly developing and becoming an effective tool to reach a wider audience, especially the younger generation who are more familiar with technology and social media. Platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and podcasts are places that preachers often use to convey religious messages in a lighter and more easily accepted way.<sup>29</sup> Humor can be a compelling way to reduce the distance between the preacher and the audience, especially since humor can break the ice and create a stronger emotional bond. The

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<sup>28</sup> Astrid Novia Pahlupy, "Gaya Retorika Dakwah Ustadz Hanan Attaki Di Youtube," *Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo Semarang* (2019).

<sup>29</sup> M Chanra and Ramsiah Tasruddin, "Peran Media Sosial Sebagai Platform Dakwah Di Era Digital: Studi Kasus Pada Generasi Milenial," *Jurnal Kolaboratif Sains* 8, no. 1 (2025): 872–881.

younger generation, who often use social media, is more easily attracted to preaching engaging, creative, and relevant messages.

However, although humor in preaching on social media can be an effective tool, preachers must remain wise in choosing the humor they use. One of the main challenges is ensuring that the humor used does not demean others or offend certain groups or individuals. When using humor on social media, preachers must be careful not to make jokes that can cause division or hatred, especially in a pluralistic society. One thing to avoid is using humor that has the potential to trigger hatred or discrimination against certain groups.<sup>30</sup> This contradicts Islamic teachings, which teach us to respect other human beings regardless of background or beliefs.

As reminded in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:13): "And when it is said to them: 'Believe as others have believed.' They answered: 'Shall we believe as the fool believed?' Remember, they are the fools, but they do not know." This verse teaches the importance of conveying a religious message that is not confusing and does not offend others. In preaching humor, humor must be used wisely and not contain elements demeaning others. A good preaching message can be invited without hurting or insulting others.<sup>31</sup> Preachers must always maintain politeness when using humor on social media and not insult or embarrass people. The humor used must be able to enlighten and provide better understanding, not make people feel offended or lose respect for the message conveyed.

Social media offers a broad reach, and as such, preachers must be mindful of the impact that their humor can have. On the one hand, positive humor can strengthen the bond between the preacher and the audience. On the other hand, inappropriate humor can damage the reputation of preaching and create misunderstandings. Therefore, preachers must always ensure that the humor used is based on religious values and does not detract from the sanctity of Islamic teachings. Wise humor entertains and can guide the audience to a deeper understanding of religious teachings. As active social media users, the younger generation has great potential to become an audience that accepts preaching through humor. They are more open to content that combines humor with a profound message as long as the humor is delivered in a way that does not demean religious values.<sup>32</sup> In this case, preachers need to use language appropriate for young audiences, namely language

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<sup>30</sup> Purnama Pangaribuan, "Perspektif Humor," *Merayakan Keberagaman Berbahasa* (2021): 86.

<sup>31</sup> Muhammad Ridwan, "Dakwah Persuasif Nabi Musa Dalam Perspektif Komunikasi Dakwah Kontemporer," *Ad-DA'WAH* 21, no. 2 (2023): 112–130.

<sup>32</sup> Badrah Uyuni, *Media Dakwah Era Digital* (Penerbit Assofa, 2023).

that is light and easy to understand but still maintains the substance and depth of the message. Humor can be used as a door to invite them closer to Islam without having to reduce the seriousness of religious teachings.

However, preachers must also consider the ethical aspects of using humor in cyberspace. Social media often has a wide and fast impact but is also very susceptible to misinterpretation. Another group may not receive things considered funny by one group well. Therefore, preachers must always try to convey messages well, avoid humor that can cause controversy, and ensure that the humor does not lead to division or conflict.<sup>33</sup> Islam teaches us always to maintain peace and spread love, so humor in preaching must reflect these principles. Ultimately, humor in preaching in the digital era must be used as an effective tool to introduce religious teachings in a way that is relevant, interesting, and readily accepted by the audience. With proper use, humor can be a bridge that connects religious messages with a broader audience without reducing the depth and sanctity of the teachings. A wise preacher will always pay attention to the context, maintain ethics, and ensure that the humor used provides benefits, strengthens relationships, and brings the audience closer to a proper understanding of Islam.

### **Thoughts of Religious Figures and Communication Experts on Humor in Da'wah**

Imam Al-Ghazali's Thoughts on Humor in Da'wah Imam Al-Ghazali's monumental work, *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*, provides many instructions on communication ethics, including joking. He emphasized that humor in da'wah must be kept within the corridor of politeness and good intentions. Al-Ghazali reminded us that uncontrolled joking can damage the seriousness of religious teachings and even affect the image of Islam in the eyes of society. Joking should strengthen relationships, reduce tension, and facilitate moral message delivery without reducing religious teachings' sanctity. Humor used to attract attention or simply for entertainment can distract the audience from the greater goal of da'wah, namely the development of morals and understanding of religious teachings. Therefore, humor in da'wah must always be based on Islamic values, which emphasize politeness, noble morals, and avoidance of actions that can damage the image of religion.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Sapriallah Sapriallah et al., "Kontestasi Keagamaan Dalam Masyarakat Muslim Urban," *Al-Qalam* 26, no. 1 (2020): 39–56.

<sup>34</sup> Kelestarian D A N Cabaran, "Seni Budaya Dalam Peradaban Islam" (n.d.).

In this context, the humor used by the preacher must always be considered carefully, aiming to guide and educate the audience without degrading the dignity of others. Imam Al-Ghazali taught that the primary goal of preaching is to increase the spiritual and moral awareness of society, not just entertainment. Therefore, humor must be used wisely and must not distract from the more important core values of Islam. This principle is an essential foundation for understanding the role of humor in preaching, where humor must not reduce the essence of the religious message to be conveyed.

**Marshall McLuhan's Thoughts on Humor as a Communication Media** From the perspective of communication science, Marshall McLuhan, a leading communication scientist, put forward a theory about media as the "message" itself. According to McLuhan, media, in any form, not only conveys information but also influences the way the audience receives and processes the message <sup>35</sup>. In this case, humor can be seen as one form of media that can change how the audience understands Da'wah's message. McLuhan argued that the form of communication (including humor) significantly impacts the audience's perception of a message. Humor, as a form of light and entertaining verbal communication, can help create a more open atmosphere, reduce tension, and make the audience more ready to receive the message of da'wah.

McLuhan also stated that media can shape social and cultural reality. In the context of humor in preaching, humor can function to convey moral or religious messages in a more easily accepted way, especially by audiences who may have difficulty accepting serious or strict religious messages. Humor can introduce ideas that are more difficult to understand in a lighter, more smile-inducing way. A wise preacher, according to McLuhan, will use humor as a medium to change the way people think and feel about religious messages so that they can more easily accept and apply them in their daily lives.

However, McLuhan also reminded us that every form of media, including humor, has the potential to change the audience's perception significantly. Therefore, preachers must be careful when using humor to avoid damaging the religious message they want to convey. Humor that is used wisely can be a bridge that connects the preaching message with the audience. Still, humor can divert focus or damage the audience's understanding of religious teachings if not careful. McLuhan

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<sup>35</sup> Fatmawaty Rumra et al., *Pengantar Ilmu Komunikasi* (CV Rey Media Grafika, 2024).



emphasized that media, in this case, humor, must always be chosen and used with full awareness of its impact on the audience.

## **CONCLUSION**

The results of this study indicate that humor or joking in preaching has great potential to increase audience engagement and make religious messages more straightforward to understand. However, humor in preaching must be used carefully, and certain ethics must be adhered to so as not to reduce the honor of religious teachings or offend others. From the analysis of existing literature, it was found that humor in polite preaching can strengthen moral messages and convey religious teachings in a way that is more easily accepted by diverse audiences; this is in line with the view that preaching should not only be oriented towards conveying information, but also on how to convey it that touches the heart and does not cause misunderstanding. In terms of limitations, this study identified several essential principles that must be considered when using humor in preaching. First, humor used in preaching must always be relevant to the context of the religious message being conveyed. Humor not in context can distract attention from the core message and even damage the image of religious teachings. Second, humor must maintain politeness and not offend or demean others. The use of humor that belittles certain parties or has the potential to hurt the feelings of other people must be avoided. Third, humor in preaching should not reduce the seriousness of the moral message or religious teachings. Preaching must still balance delivering a profound message and using humor to entertain.

In further discussion, it is essential to refer to the thoughts of religious figures and scientists regarding the use of humor in preaching. For example, in Islamic teachings, the Prophet Muhammad SAW is a figure full of compassion and humor but maintains politeness and seriousness in conveying religious messages. Several hadiths show that he used humor to make others comfortable and more receptive to the message. Still, the humor always maintained manners and did not conflict with religious values; this shows that when used wisely, humor in preaching can effectively convey religious messages without reducing the depth or integrity of the teachings. The thoughts of figures such as Imam Al-Ghazali also guide the importance of manners in religious communication, including jokes. Al-Ghazali emphasized that uncontrolled joking can damage the seriousness and depth of religious teachings. Therefore, he reminded us to use humor with good intentions and within the proper limits; this is also supported by the thoughts of contemporary Muslim scholars, such as Muhammad al-Ghazali, who argue that humor in preaching must be done with full awareness of the purpose of preaching itself, namely to guide people on the right path.

In addition, scientists in religious communication, such as Marshall McLuhan, state that communication media, including humor, significantly impact how messages are delivered and received by the audience. McLuhan argues that messages delivered through humor are more easily absorbed because they reduce tension and create a closer relationship between the preacher and the audience. However, this must be balanced with an awareness of the social and cultural context of the audience because humor that is accepted in one group may not be accepted in another group. Overall, the results of this study indicate that polite preaching using humor can be a practical approach if done with full consideration and following existing ethical boundaries. The thoughts of religious figures and related scientists indicate that humor in preaching must maintain values of politeness, not belittle others, and remain focused on conveying profound moral messages. Humor in preaching not only serves to entertain but also to strengthen relationships between people, convey messages more gently, and help strengthen religious understanding.

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