

FAMILY-BASED DA'WAH AND THE MARHAMAH ECOSYSTEM: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF MUSLIM FAMILIES IN URBAN INDONESIA

Yuyun Yuningsih^{1*}, Tata Sukayat² & Ridwan Rustandi³
¹²³UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia

Email correspondance: *yuyunyuningsih@uinsgd.ac.id

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Abstract

Family-based da'wah represents a foundational yet undertheorized dimension of Islamic mission studies. This study investigates how Muslim families in urban Bandung, Indonesia, implement family-based da'wah to cultivate a marhamah (compassion-based) ecosystem through their everyday practices. Employing Alfred Schutz's interpretive phenomenological analysis, this study conducted in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation with twenty purposively selected Muslim families meeting criteria of marriage duration, child-rearing stage, and active da'wah engagement. Four interrelated themes emerged: (1) internalization of Qur'anic values in domestic contexts; (2) affective function as the relational infrastructure of marhamah; (3) dialogic and exemplary da'wah communication practices; and (4) the social radiation of family-formed compassion values into the wider community. These findings challenge prior studies that position the family primarily as a normative unit of Islamic law, by demonstrating that the family operates as a dynamic agent of da'wah-driven social transformation. The study introduces the 'marhamah ecosystem' as a new analytical framework integrating Islamic theology, communication theory, and family sociology within the field of da'wah studies ('ilm al-da'wah). Practical implications are drawn for Muslim family counselling, Islamic education policy, and community da'wah programming in rapidly urbanizing Indonesian society.

Keywords: Family Da'wah; Marhamah Ecosystem; 'Ilm al-Da'wah; Islamic Social Transformation; Phenomenology; Urban Indonesia.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Strong Muslim families are the foundation of resilient and compassionate communities. This study demonstrates that family-based *da'wah* extends beyond religious instruction by fostering a marhamah ecosystem a family environment characterized by compassion, dialogue, exemplary conduct, and mutual care. Such values not only strengthen family relationships but also contribute to social harmony and community engagement in increasingly urbanized societies. The findings provide practical guidance for parents, educators, counselors, religious leaders, and policymakers to develop family-centered programs that promote emotional well-being, strengthen Islamic values, and encourage sustainable social transformation through

everyday family life.

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Muslim societies face a structural paradox: while global Muslim populations continue to grow, the family institution classically positioned in Islamic thought as the nursery of faith and civilization is under mounting pressure from urbanization, digitalization, and shifting social values (Mulia & Farida, 2020). Indonesia, home to the world's largest Muslim population, exemplifies this tension acutely. Rapid urban expansion in cities such as Bandung has restructured family interactions, weakened intergenerational religious transmission, and generated new forms of domestic conflict. These structural transformations challenge the classical Islamic understanding of the family as the primary locus of da'wah the intentional invitation to Islamic values and demand fresh theoretical and empirical inquiry.

Yet scholarship on Muslim families has consistently failed to theorize the relational and affective infrastructure through which family-based da'wah operates. Studies in Malaysia and the United Kingdom demonstrate that erosion of parental religious authority correlates with diminished Islamic identity formation among youth (Khairiah et al., 2022; Merry, 2018), but do not explain the mechanisms through which relational environments either enable or obstruct religious value transmission. In the Middle East, research has linked family cohesion to da'wah effectiveness (Al-Qaradawi, 2013), but family cohesion is treated as a pre-given condition rather than an actively constructed relational achievement. In the Indonesian context, scholars have explored family piety practices and social resilience (Azra, 2004; Wahid, 2019), yet a significant gap persists: the absence of an integrative analytical framework connecting family-level da'wah practice to broader social transformation within the discipline of 'ilm al-da'wah.

Existing Indonesian studies on the *sakinah* (tranquil) family have largely remained within normative jurisprudential frameworks, emphasizing compliance with Islamic family law rather than examining the lived processes through which families construct compassion-based relational environments (Fatimah, 2022; Mustofa, 2008). This normative bias has produced an analytically impoverished account of family da'wah: one that describes what families should do according to Islamic law, but cannot explain how families actually generate compassion, navigate tensions, and extend Islamic values into their communities. The present study argues that this gap demands not merely additional empirical data, but a genuinely new theoretical framework—one capable of integrating Islamic theology, family sociology, and communication theory while remaining grounded in the lived realities of urban Indonesian Muslim families.

This study is anchored in three specific objectives: (1) to examine how Qur'anic values are internalized within Muslim family practice in urban Bandung; (2) to analyze how the affective function of the family mediates between religious value internalization and the formation of the *marhamah* ecosystem; and (3) to trace how the *marhamah* ecosystem cultivated within the family contributes to social transformation in surrounding communities. The central research question is: How does family-based da'wah in urban Indonesia generate and sustain a *marhamah* ecosystem, and what are the mechanisms including the tensions and contradictions through which this ecosystem engenders social transformation?

This study offers three original contributions. Theoretically, it introduces the 'marhamah ecosystem' as a new analytical construct within 'ilm al-da'wah, operationally defined through three sub-constructs relational compassion (*rahmatun baynakum*), communicative exemplarity

(uswah hasanah), and social radiation (da'wah bil-hal) and critically distinguished from the adjacent concepts of family resilience and religious socialization with which it might otherwise be conflated. Methodologically, it applies Alfred Schutz's interpretive phenomenology to family da'wah research, providing a rigorous approach to lived experience data that extends beyond textual and normative analysis. Practically, it offers evidence-based recommendations for Muslim family counselling and community da'wah institutions in Indonesia and comparable urbanizing Muslim-majority contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Family-Based Da'wah in 'Ilm al-Da'wah: A Critical Survey

The concept of da'wah (Arabic: invitation, mission, call) constitutes the foundational category of 'ilm al-da'wah, the Islamic science of religious communication and mission. Classical scholars such as Ibn Khaldun (1377/2005) positioned the family as the micro-sociological unit through which Islamic civilization ('umran) is reproduced across generations. In contemporary da'wah scholarship, Al-Bayanuny (1995) systematizes family da'wah (da'wah al-usrah) as one of three concentric spheres of Islamic mission, arguing that transformation at the family level constitutes the necessary foundation for community-level da'wah. Within the Indonesian tradition, Aziz (2022) and Amin (2023) have advanced the notion that da'wah must operate simultaneously at the textual (qawliyyah), behavioral (fi'liyyah), and structural (haliyyah) levels.

However, this scholarly consensus masks a significant analytical deficit. The existing literature on family da'wah, both in Indonesia and globally, is predominantly prescriptive rather than explanatory: it establishes what family da'wah should look like according to Islamic normative sources, but does not theorize the relational mechanisms through which it actually operates. Frisk (2009) and Slama (2017) document how Indonesian Islamic revival movements have increasingly turned to the family as a site of da'wah activity, particularly through the Tarbiyah movement's usrah (family cell) model, yet their primarily sociological accounts do not penetrate the interior dynamics of family relational life. Bakti (2019) provides a communication theory perspective that begins to address this gap, but his framework privileges formal communicative acts over the embedded, habitual relational practices that this study argues are the primary vehicles of family da'wah.

This critique is not merely methodological. It reflects a deeper theoretical problem: the dominant frameworks in 'ilm al-da'wah treat the family as a container for da'wah activity rather than as a dynamic, self-organizing relational system that generates its own da'wah capacity. The present study argues that this reification of the family treating it as a pre-formed unit that merely needs to be filled with Islamic content is theoretically inadequate and empirically unsupported. Family da'wah capacity is constructed, negotiated, and sometimes contested within the daily relational life of actual families. Any analytical framework adequate to this reality must be capable of accounting for both the generative and the disruptive dimensions of family relational dynamics.

The Marhamah Concept: Theological Foundations and Conceptual Differentiation

The concept of marhamah derives etymologically from the trilateral Arabic root r-h-m, denoting mercy, compassion, and loving care. Theologically, the Qur'an presents al-Rahman and al-Rahim as among the most repeated divine names (QS. Al-Fatihah: 1), and commands that family relations be grounded in sakinah (tranquility), mawaddah (affection), and rahmah (mercy)

(QS. Ar-Rum: 21). Shihab (2000) argues that this triad constitutes not merely an emotional but an ontological framework for Muslim family life, positioning compassion as both a divine attribute and a human social obligation.

It is essential, however, to distinguish the ‘marhamah ecosystem’ construct introduced in this study from three adjacent concepts with which it might otherwise be conflated: family resilience, religious socialization, and social capital. Family resilience frameworks (McCubbin & McCubbin, 1988; Kamaluddin et al., 2022) focus on a family’s capacity to adapt in the face of adversity; they are fundamentally reactive constructs oriented toward stress management and recovery. The marhamah ecosystem, by contrast, is a proactive, generative construct: it describes not how families survive stress but how they actively produce and radiate compassion as a form of Islamic social transformation. The family resilience framework asks how families maintain function; the marhamah ecosystem framework asks how families generate mission.

Religious socialization frameworks (Mahoney et al., 2003; Marks, 2006), while more relevant, are also insufficient. Religious socialization theory treats the family primarily as a transmission mechanism a channel through which religious content flows from parents to children. This model is unidirectional, content-focused, and tends to treat relational quality as an intervening variable rather than as constitutive of the da‘wah process itself. The marhamah ecosystem framework treats the relational environment not as the context for value transmission but as the substance of da‘wah: the compassion-saturated relational climate is not merely a favorable condition for Islamic teaching but is itself the most fundamental and continuous form of Islamic mission.

Sociologically, the concept of marhamah resonates with Putnam’s (2000) theory of social capital, and Ilyas’s (2020) extension of this framework into Islamic social capital theory (shabakah al-rahmah). The marhamah ecosystem framework draws on this convergence but goes beyond it by providing a da‘wah-specific account of how Islamic social capital is generated from below: not through organizational networks or institutional authority, but through the daily relational practices of individual Muslim families whose compassion overflows into the social fabric of their communities.

Affective Function and the Infrastructure of Relational Da‘wah

Structural-functional sociology, particularly as developed by Parsons (1951), positions the affective function as a core family function. Within Islamic family sociology, Helmawati (2020) operationalizes the affective function as the family’s capacity to provide emotional security, relational warmth, and mutual recognition. This function is not peripheral to Islamic family life but constitutive of it: the Qur’anic injunction to treat family members with ma’ruf (goodness and care; QS. An-Nisa: 19) establishes affective quality as a religious obligation.

International research confirms that affective function is strongly associated with family religious practice, but also surfaces important tensions. Mahoney et al. (2003) demonstrate that families reporting high levels of relational warmth show significantly stronger religious socialization outcomes, yet also note that sanctification of family relationships can introduce rigidity and conflict when family members fail to meet religiously elevated expectations. Marks (2006) similarly finds that the quality of parent-child emotional bonds mediates religious identity formation, while cautioning that the relationship between religious practice and relational quality is bidirectional and potentially disrupted by patriarchal authority structures. These findings

indicate that the affective function of the family cannot be assumed to operate harmoniously; it is a site of genuine tension between the Islamic ideal of compassionate family life and the structural realities of gender dynamics, generational conflict, and urban stress.

Research Model and Propositions

Based on the foregoing critical review, this study develops the following conceptual model: (1) Family-Based Da'wah; (2) Marhamah Ecosystem; and (3) Social Transformation. This model generates three research propositions: P1: The enactment of family-based da'wah through Qur'anic value internalization, communicative exemplarity, and relational care generates the marhamah ecosystem within the family, but this generation process is actively contested by structural and relational tensions. P2: The affective function of the family operationalized as emotional attunement, relational warmth, and mutual recognition mediates the relationship between da'wah practice and the consolidation of the marhamah ecosystem, yet is itself subject to disruption by patriarchal authority structures and digital media encroachment. P3: A consolidated marhamah ecosystem within the family radiates compassion values into the surrounding community, constituting a distinctively Islamic form of social capital generation that is irreducible to either religious socialization or family resilience processes.

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative approach using interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), a methodology that enables in-depth examination of how individuals make sense of their lived experience (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). IPA is particularly suited to this study because it attends to the subjective, meaning-making dimensions of social practice. Alfred Schutz's phenomenological sociology provides the theoretical grounding, particularly his concepts of the 'natural attitude', first-order constructs (participants' own accounts), and second-order constructs (researchers' interpretive frameworks), which guide the analytical process from description to interpretation.

The research was conducted in urban Bandung, West Java, Indonesia a city of approximately 2.5 million inhabitants characterized by rapid urbanization, religious diversity, and high levels of participation in Islamic organizational life. Purposive sampling was employed to select twenty Muslim families. Selection criteria were: (a) Muslim marriage of minimum ten years' duration; (b) presence of at least one adolescent child; (c) active participation in da'wah or Islamic social activities; and (d) residence in urban Bandung. Participant demographics included families from diverse educational and occupational backgrounds, ensuring analytic diversity without sacrificing contextual coherence.

Data were gathered through three complementary methods. First, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with the primary caregivers in each family, lasting between 60 and 90 minutes each. Interview guides addressed: (a) practices of religious teaching and Qur'anic learning; (b) quality and texture of emotional relationships; (c) modes of religious communication; and (d) family engagement in community activities. Second, participatory observation was conducted in seven families over periods of two to four weeks. Third, documentation was collected including family religious activity records and WhatsApp group communications. Data collection was conducted between January and March 2024.

Data analysis followed Smith et al.'s (2009) five-stage IPA protocol. To ensure methodological rigor, four validation strategies were employed: source triangulation; member checking with eight participant families; peer debriefing with two independent Islamic studies researchers; and audit trail documentation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Analysis was conducted in Bahasa Indonesia and then translated for scholarly reporting, with attention to preserving conceptual nuance.

RESULT

IPA of the twenty participating families generated four superordinate themes that collectively describe the mechanisms—and the tensions—through which family-based da'wah generates the marhamah ecosystem. These themes are presented with illustrative participant quotations (translated from Bahasa Indonesia) and supported by observation data.

Theme 1: Qur'anic Value Internalization as the Foundation of Family Da'wah

All twenty families described deliberate practices of Qur'anic value internalization as the cornerstone of their family da'wah. Participants consistently distinguished between formal religious instruction and what they termed 'living the Qur'an'—embodying Qur'anic values in daily family interaction. One participant, a mother of three adolescent children, articulated this distinction: "Teaching from the Qur'an must come from doing, not just saying. When my children see that I am patient and forgiving with my husband, they learn rahmah without needing a lecture." This account captures the IPA concept of 'embodied knowledge'—knowledge transmitted through relational practice rather than cognitive instruction.

However, this process was not without tension. Several families reported significant difficulty sustaining embodied Qur'anic practice under the pressures of urban professional life, economic stress, and the competing demands of digital media. One participant acknowledged: "Sometimes I know what I should model, but I fail. I lose patience. And then my children learn the wrong thing." This observation reveals a structural tension within family da'wah: the gap between normative Islamic ideals and the compromised realities of urban family life. Rather than dismissing this tension, the marhamah ecosystem framework must account for it—recognizing that the ecology of compassion is not a stable achievement but an ongoing relational project, subject to disruption and requiring active, reflexive maintenance (muhasabah) by all family members.

Theme 2: Affective Function as the Relational Infrastructure of Marhamah

Across all families, the quality of emotional relationships emerged as the primary enabling condition for marhamah ecosystem formation. A father identified as high in marhamah described the relational climate: "In our home, if one of us is sad, everyone feels it. We do not allow anyone to suffer alone. This is what we understand by rahmah—it is not a word, it is a habit." IPA analysis revealed three specific relational patterns in high-marhamah families: (a) emotional attunement; (b) conflict humanization; and (c) appreciative recognition.

Critically, the data also reveal significant affective deficits in a minority of families, and these deficits are not incidental but structurally produced. Three families in the sample reported patterns of patriarchal authority that systematically inhibited emotional reciprocity: husbands who used Islamic authority discourse to justify emotional unavailability, and whose invocation of religious normativity effectively suppressed the affective attunement that the marhamah

framework requires. One participant wife stated: “He quotes the Qur’an about family, but he doesn’t listen to me. The children see this and they learn that religion is for men to cite and women to endure.” This finding directly challenges harmonious accounts of Islamic family da’wah and underscores the need for the marhamah ecosystem framework to incorporate a critical gender dimension: compassion as a relational achievement requires conditions of structural equity that normative Islamic family discourse does not always provide.

Theme 3: Dialogic Da’wah Communication and Exemplary Conduct

Participants consistently identified two complementary modes of family da’wah communication: *uswah hasanah* (exemplary conduct) and *hiwar tarbawi* (educational dialogue). An Islamic teacher stated: “My students can hear me lecture for an hour and forget everything. My children watch me for five minutes at home and remember it for life. The home is the most powerful classroom.” Regarding dialogic communication, families reported that the most productive contexts were informal and participatory rather than formal and instructional—during shared meals, evening gatherings, and vehicle journeys.

The study also found that digital media functions as a double-edged sword. Families with high levels of unregulated digital media use reported specific affective deficits reduced quality of empathic attention and diminished shared relational time that directly impair marhamah ecosystem formation. This finding reveals a structural contradiction within contemporary family da’wah: the same digital platforms that can extend and amplify Islamic communication simultaneously erode the face-to-face relational depth that compassion practices require. Several families reported implementing deliberate digital governance strategies screen-free mealtimes, collective agreements on gadget use as da’wah-motivated responses to this contradiction. Yet others reported that such governance was contested within the family, particularly by adolescent children, introducing further relational friction that the marhamah framework must navigate.

Theme 4: Social Radiation of Marhamah from Family to Community

All twenty families reported active engagement in community religious and social activities, and eleven families were identified by community members as recognized centers of Islamic social influence in their neighborhoods. Participants described this social radiation in terms of a perceived moral obligation: “Goodness that stays inside the house is not yet goodness,” stated one participant, echoing QS. Al-Baqarah: 143. IPA analysis revealed that the mechanism of social radiation operated through what participants termed ‘overflow’ the experience of marhamah values becoming so habituated within the family that they naturally expressed themselves in community interaction.

However, the relationship between family marhamah and community transformation is neither linear nor uncontested. Three families reported that their community da’wah engagement generated resistance or conflict within their neighborhoods—from families who felt implicitly judged, or from community leaders who perceived family-centered da’wah as a challenge to institutional authority. This finding reveals that social radiation is not simply an outflow of compassion but a potentially disruptive social force: the marhamah family, by embodying an alternative relational norm, implicitly challenges the relational norms of families and communities that are structured along lines of hierarchy, authority, and emotional suppression. This critical dimension of social radiation is entirely absent from the harmonizing accounts of

Islamic social capital theory and must be integrated into any adequate theoretical framework.

Table 1
Summary of Thematic Findings

Theme	Core Finding	Tension/Contradiction	Da'wah Dimension
1. Qur'anic Value Internalization	Embodied, consistent practice more effective than formal instruction; parental self-renewal is prerequisite	Gap between Islamic ideals and urban pressures; parental failure creates counter-models	Da'wah fi'liyyah (action-based da'wah)
2. Affective Function	Emotional attunement, conflict humanization, and appreciative recognition as marhamah infrastructure	Patriarchal authority structures can suppress emotional reciprocity; gender inequity undermines compassion	Maw'izah hasanah (wholesome exhortation in relational context)
3. Dialogic Communication	Exemplary conduct primary vehicle; informal dialogic contexts most productive	Digital media erodes face-to-face relational depth; digital governance is contested by adolescents	Uswah hasanah + hiwar tarbawi
4. Social Radiation	Family marhamah overflows into community through concrete acts of Islamic social engagement	Social radiation can generate community resistance; challenges institutional da'wah authority	Da'wah bil-hal (da'wah through deeds)

Source: Author's Observation, 2024

DISCUSS

The Marhamah Ecosystem as a Theoretically Differentiated Framework

The central theoretical contribution of this study is the operationalization of the 'marhamah ecosystem' as an analytical framework within 'ilm al-da'wah that is genuinely differentiated from existing concepts and not merely a rebranding of familiar constructs. This differentiation must be argued, not assumed.

The marhamah ecosystem differs from family resilience frameworks in its orientation: where resilience is reactive and adaptive (maintaining family function under stress), the marhamah ecosystem is proactive and generative (actively producing compassion as a form of Islamic social mission). A family can be resilient maintaining its internal function despite adversity without generating marhamah in any theologically significant sense. The marhamah ecosystem, by contrast, is constitutively da'wah-oriented: it is not merely a quality of family life but a modality of Islamic social transformation.

The marhamah ecosystem also differs from religious socialization theory in its directionality and its subject. Religious socialization theory treats value transmission as primarily unidirectional (parent to child) and primarily content-focused (what values are transmitted). The marhamah ecosystem framework treats compassion as bidirectional it is generated through relational dynamics that involve all family members, including children and constitutive rather than transmitted: the compassion-saturated relational climate is not the context for da'wah but its most fundamental expression. The marhamah is not transmitted like information; it is

generated like weather, through the ongoing interaction of relational elements that create a self-sustaining ecology.

This framework advances beyond existing literature in three additional ways. First, it extends Ilyas's (2020) Islamic social capital concept by providing a micro-level account of how compassion-based social capital is generated within the family before being extended to the community. Second, it operationalizes the classical Qur'anic triad of *sakinah-mawaddah-rahmah* (QS. Ar-Rum: 21) through empirically observable relational patterns emotional attunement, conflict humanization, appreciative recognition thereby bridging theological normativity and sociological analysis. Third, it integrates the *da'wah* dimensions of *fi'liyyah*, *qawliyyah*, and *haliyyah* (Aziz, 2022) into a unified relational model, demonstrating that family-based *da'wah* operates simultaneously across all three communicative registers.

Tensions, Contradictions, and the Limits of Harmonious Theory

A central methodological commitment of this study is to resist the harmonizing tendency that has characterized much prior research on Islamic family *da'wah*. The *marhamah* ideal a family saturated with compassion that radiates Islamic values into its community is theologically compelling and empirically achievable, as this study's data confirm. But it is not the default condition of Muslim family life, and treating it as such produces a normatively charged account that cannot explain failure, conflict, or resistance.

This study identifies three structural tensions that any adequate account of family-based *da'wah* must address. First, the tension between Islamic relational ideals and urban structural pressures: urban professional life, economic precarity, and time poverty systematically constrain the conditions under which *marhamah* practices can be sustained, producing families who aspire to the *marhamah* ideal but cannot consistently realize it. Second, the tension between Islamic authority discourse and affective reciprocity: patriarchal interpretations of Islamic family authority can suppress the emotional attunement that *marhamah* requires, producing families in which Islamic language is deployed in ways that undermine rather than generate compassion. Third, the tension between digital connectivity and relational depth: digital media simultaneously extends the reach of family *da'wah* communication and erodes the face-to-face relational texture that is the *marhamah* ecosystem's primary substrate.

These tensions are not incidental to the *marhamah* ecosystem; they are constitutive of the conditions under which it must be constructed. A theoretical framework that ignores them produces an idealized portrait of Muslim family life that is both analytically insufficient and, more troublingly, potentially harmful in practice: it can generate unrealistic expectations, obscure the structural causes of relational failure, and deflect attention from the gender and power dynamics that materially affect the lived experience of Muslim families in urban Indonesia.

Affective Function as Da'wah Infrastructure: Extending Prior Research

The finding that affective function constitutes the primary enabling condition of family-based *da'wah* both confirms and extends prior research. It confirms Helmawati's (2020) and Sutoyo's (2021) arguments for the centrality of emotional quality in family Islamic education. It extends these arguments by demonstrating that affective function does not merely facilitate *da'wah* communication but constitutes its infrastructural condition: families in which affective

deficits prevail report not merely reduced da'wah effectiveness but the active association of Islamic practice with relational negativity.

This finding challenges studies that have framed family-based da'wah primarily as a cognitive and instructional enterprise. Rahman's (2021) research on prophetic parenting, while valuable, focuses predominantly on educational method rather than relational climate. This study reframes such accounts: practice intensity and methodological sophistication are effective only within a relational ecology of marhamah. The container must be constituted before the content can take effect. More critically, this study demonstrates that the container can be actively undermined by structural factors patriarchal authority, urban stress, digital fragmentation that normative da'wah scholarship has consistently undertheorized.

Social Radiation and the Da'wah Ecology of the Community

The theme of social radiation confirms and extends the concept of structural da'wah as developed by Amin (2023). The study's finding that family marhamah ecosystems function as nodes of community social capital generation aligns with Al-Qaradawi's (2013) classical da'wah theory and with Putnam's (2000) social capital research, while extending both within a specifically Indonesian urban Muslim context. This challenges the institutional assumption that social transformation is best pursued through mass public da'wah (tabligh akbar): the most durable form of Islamic social transformation may be generated through the quiet accumulation of marhamah practices within individual families.

Yet this finding must also be held in productive tension with its complications. Social radiation is not a spontaneous overflow of goodness; it is a social practice that carries its own risks and resistances. The da'wah implications are significant: Indonesian da'wah institutions must develop not only family-level capacity-building programs but also community-level structures that can receive, support, and integrate the social radiation that marhamah families generate. Without such structural support, the social radiation of individual families may remain isolated, contested, or appropriated into institutional da'wah frameworks that domesticate rather than amplify its transformative potential.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated how Muslim families in urban Bandung, Indonesia implement family-based da'wah to generate a marhamah ecosystem, and how this ecosystem—with its internal tensions and contradictions contributes to social transformation. Four interrelated themes were identified through interpretive phenomenological analysis: Qur'anic value internalization as embodied and continuous da'wah practice; affective function as the relational infrastructure enabling marhamah; dialogic and exemplary da'wah communication as the primary transmission mechanism; and the social radiation of marhamah values from family into community. The study's principal theoretical contribution is the introduction of the 'marhamah ecosystem' as an analytically differentiated framework within 'ilm al-da'wah. Unlike family resilience frameworks, the marhamah ecosystem is proactive and da'wah-oriented, not merely adaptive. Unlike religious socialization theory, it treats compassion as constitutively generated through relational practice, not merely transmitted as content. And unlike Islamic social capital theory, it provides a micro-level, da'wah-specific account of how compassion is generated and radiated from the family into the social fabric of the community. This framework bridges Islamic theology,

family sociology, and da'wah communication theory while remaining grounded in the lived realities including the tensions and contradictions of urban Indonesian Muslim families.

Practically, the findings recommend that: (1) Muslim family counselling programs systematically address affective function, relational quality, and gender equity alongside religious practice content; (2) da'wah institutions develop digital literacy as an integral element of family da'wah capacity-building; (3) community da'wah organizations identify and support high-marhamah families as community da'wah anchors while building reception structures for their social radiation; and (4) Islamic higher education institutions integrate family-based da'wah as a core curriculum component within da'wah studies programs. The study's limitations include its geographic restriction to urban Bandung and exclusive use of qualitative methods. Future research should extend the marhamah ecosystem framework to rural and peri-urban contexts, examine its applicability within diverse Islamic organizational backgrounds (Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama, Salafi communities), and test the framework's propositions through mixed-method or quantitative designs. The incorporation of a systematic gender analysis into the marhamah ecosystem framework represents a particularly urgent direction for future inquiry.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization, Y.Y. and T.S.; methodology, Y.Y.; software, Y.Y.; validation, Y.Y., T.S. and R.R.; formal analysis, Y.Y.; investigation, Y.Y.; resources, Y.Y.; data curation, Y.Y.; writing—original draft preparation, Y.Y.; writing—review and editing, T.S. and R.R.; visualization, Y.Y.; supervision, T.S. and R.R.; project administration, Y.Y.; funding acquisition, Y.Y. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and approved by the Institutional Review Board (Ethics Committee) of UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung.

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study. Written informed consent has been obtained from the participants to publish this paper.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI AND AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this work the author(s) used Claude (Anthropic) to assist with language

editing and structural improvement of certain passages. After using this tool, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the publication.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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