STRENGTHENING DA'I ROLES IN SOUTH SUMATRA: STRATEGIES OF THE ISLAMIC COMMUNICATION AND BROADCASTING KPI STUDY PROGRAM AND ITS ALUMNI

Achmad Syarifudin
Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang, Sumatera Selatan, Indonesia
achmadsyarifudin2021@hotmail.com

Muhamad Randicha Hamandia
Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang, Sumatera Selatan, Indonesia

Abstract: *The KPI Study Program at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang faces challenges in preparing graduates to fulfill the role of professional da'i in South Sumatra. Despite being designed to produce skilled da'i with strong academic and Islamic qualifications, the program's curriculum, planning, and evaluation processes are misaligned with this objective, leading to a lack of graduate readiness. This study, using a qualitative approach with Miles and Huberman's analysis, highlights that while there are significant opportunities for da'i. Due to the increasing number of mosques, mushallas, and da'wah institutions, these opportunities are not being fully utilized. Key obstacles include alumni perceptions that the da'i role does not exclusively require KPI graduates, inadequate public speaking skills, and insufficient grounding in Islamic teachings during the program. To address these issues, the study recommends revising the curriculum to prioritize da'wah-related courses, practical methodologies, and Islamic knowledge, ensuring that KPI graduates are better equipped to take on the responsibilities of da'i, muballigh, and ulama.*

Keywords: KPI Study Program, *Da'i*, Curriculum, Islamic Communication

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of science and technology has significantly influenced human behavior, attitudes, and ways of thinking. While these advancements have enabled humanity to better manage, process, and preserve nature for its welfare, they have also brought challenges, such as an increased tendency towards materialism and a shift away from spiritual values (Kasser & Ryan, 1993; Burroughs & Rindfleisch, 2002). In this context, da'wah, the effort to propagate Islamic teachings, must adapt to technological advancements to remain effective in addressing societal changes. Shihab (2008) highlights the need for specialized groups to handle da'wah effectively, especially in countering misleading information in the fast-paced digital era. This emphasizes the importance of aligning da'wah strategies with technological progress to engage effectively with modern audiences.

Naisbitt (1991) highlights that we are moving toward the capability to communicate "anything to anyone, anywhere, by any form—voice, data, text, or image—at the speed of light," emphasizing the urgency for da'wah practitioners to leverage technological tools. This involves not only using mass media and the internet to disseminate Islamic teachings but also engaging critically with modern culture and integrating Islamic values into the global narrative. In an era of globalization, da'wah must evolve beyond traditional practices, such as sermons and religious lectures, to embrace innovative approaches that resonate with contemporary audiences. The challenges of globalization include the proliferation of values through media that conflict with Islamic norms. However, these

same media can serve as platforms for spreading Islamic teachings if utilized strategically (Message International, 2013).

In South Sumatra, the growth in the number of mosques and mushallas reflects a rising demand for da'i (Islamic preachers). Between 2018 and 2020, the number of mosques increased by 2,908, and mushallas grew by 1,432, totaling 14,749 places of worship (BPS South Sumatra 2020). This growth indicates a need for an equivalent number of qualified da'i to serve these communities. However, with only 354 graduates (KPI-UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, 2020) from the Islamic Communication and Broadcasting (KPI) Study Program at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang in recent years, there is a significant gap between supply and demand.

To address this gap, the KPI Study Program must enhance its theoretical and practical frameworks to better prepare graduates for their roles as da'i. Theoretically, the program should integrate communication and da'wah sciences to design effective Islamic broadcasting activities. Practically, it should provide hands-on experience in areas such as media coverage, public relations, advocacy, and communication policy-making. Graduates must also develop soft skills in public speaking and social sciences, aligning with the program's mission to produce competent da'i, broadcasters, and researchers.

The success of KPI alumni in applying their knowledge and skills in the community is a critical measure of the program's effectiveness. Law No. 12 of 2012 on Higher Education emphasizes the importance of graduates mastering science and technology to meet national interests and enhance competitiveness. The KPI Study Program must ensure that its graduates not only secure relevant employment but also contribute meaningfully to society by fulfilling their roles as da'i and Islamic communicators.

To achieve this, a well-designed strategy is essential. The program should align its curriculum with the demands of the information age, ensuring that graduates are equipped to address modern challenges. This includes incorporating courses on digital media, Islamic ethics in technology use, and innovative da'wah methods. Furthermore, fostering partnerships with da'wah organizations and government agencies can provide alumni with platforms to practice and refine their skills.

The formulation of the problem in this study focuses on two main questions:

1. What strategies can the KPI Study Program and its alumni employ to enhance the role of da'i in South Sumatra?
2. What factors support and hinder the role of the KPI Study Program in this endeavor?

The study aims to analyze these strategies and identify the supporting and inhibiting factors to enhance the effectiveness of da'wah. Theoretically, it seeks to expand the knowledge base on da'wah strategies in the context of technological and cultural shifts. Practically, it offers insights for the KPI Study Program to refine its curriculum and for alumni to embrace their roles as da'i more effectively.

The KPI Study Program must emphasize the nobility of the da'i profession, encouraging alumni to take pride in their roles and continuously improve their competence. By fostering a strong connection between theory and practice, the program

can ensure that its graduates are well-prepared to navigate the complexities of modern society and contribute to the propagation of Islamic teachings.

The advancement of science and technology presents both challenges and opportunities for Islamic da'wah. By leveraging modern tools and addressing contemporary issues, the KPI Study Program and its alumni can play a pivotal role in meeting the growing demand for da'i in South Sumatra. Through strategic curriculum development and practical training, the program can ensure that its graduates are equipped to engage with diverse audiences and uphold the values of Islamic preaching in the digital age.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research methodology to explore the strategies of the Islamic Communication and Broadcasting (KPI) study program and its alumni in enhancing the role of da'i in South Sumatra. The qualitative approach is appropriate for this study as it seeks to understand complex social phenomena, specifically the interplay between educational strategies, alumni performance, and the socio-cultural demands of da'wah (Creswell, 2014).

The research design is descriptive and exploratory. The descriptive aspect aims to document the current state of the KPI program and its alumni in their efforts to address the growing demand for da'i. The exploratory component seeks to uncover underlying factors both supportive and inhibitive—impacting the effectiveness of these strategies (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). In-depth Interviews: Participants included faculty members of the KPI study program, alumni actively engaged in da'wah, and stakeholders from da'wah organizations and mosques in South Sumatra. These interviews aimed to gather insights into the curriculum's relevance, alumni preparedness, and the challenges faced in the field. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): FGDs were conducted with groups of alumni to encourage interactive discussions and identify shared experiences and perspectives.

Secondary data included curriculum documents, alumni employment records, and statistical reports on mosque and mushalla development in South Sumatra (South Sumatra Regional Statistics, 2020). Relevant literature and policy documents, such as Law No. 12 of 2012 on Higher Education, were also analyzed to provide context and alignment with national educational goals (Republik Indonesia, 2012).

This study used purposive sampling to select participants who are directly involved with or impacted by the KPI study program. The sample included:
1. Faculty Members: Individuals responsible for curriculum development and implementation.
2. Alumni: Graduates of the KPI program currently working as da'i or in related fields.
3. Stakeholders: Representatives from da'wah organizations, mosque management committees, and Islamic community leaders in South Sumatra.

4. A total of 15 participants were selected to ensure diverse perspectives and in-depth insights.
5. The data analysis process followed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), consisting of three key stages:
6. Data Reduction: Data was organized and coded to identify key themes related to the study's objectives, such as curriculum relevance, alumni challenges, and strategies for improvement.
7. Data Display: The coded data was presented in matrices and diagrams to facilitate comparisons and identify patterns.
8. Conclusion Drawing and Verification: Conclusions were drawn based on the recurring themes and patterns, ensuring they were grounded in the data and aligned with the study's research questions.
9. To enhance the validity and reliability of the study, the following strategies were employed:
10. Triangulation: Data was triangulated through multiple sources, including interviews, FGDs, and document analysis, to ensure consistency and accuracy.
11. Member Checking: Preliminary findings were shared with participants for feedback and validation.
12. Peer Review: The research process and findings were reviewed by academic peers to ensure rigor and objectivity.

Participants were informed about the study's objectives, and their consent was obtained before participation. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained to protect participants' identities.

The study is limited to the context of the KPI study program at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang and its alumni operating in South Sumatra. Therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to other regions or institutions.

The qualitative methodology adopted in this study provides a comprehensive understanding of the strategies employed by the KPI study program and its alumni in enhancing the role of da'i in South Sumatra. By combining in-depth interviews, FGDs, and document analysis, this approach ensures a nuanced exploration of the study's objectives and contributes to the development of effective da'wah strategies in the region.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
RESULTS
A. KPI Study Program Profile

The Islamic Broadcasting Communication (KPI) Study Program, established in 1998 at the Faculty of *da'wah* and Communication, UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, focuses on Islamic Communication and Broadcasting. Over its history, the program has seen leadership transitions among eight heads, starting with Dra. Hamidah, M.Ag, and most recently led by Neni Noviza, M.Pd.

The KPI Study Program aspires to be a leading Southeast Asian educational institution in Islamic Communication and Broadcasting by 2030, emphasizing

integrity, national insight, and Islamic character. Its mission includes providing education, conducting research, contributing to society, and fostering cooperation in Islamic Communication and Broadcasting. It aims to produce graduates with expertise in Islamic Communication and Broadcasting, integrity, professionalism, and global standards. Graduates are expected to excel as preachers, scholars, media practitioners, researchers, and policy advocates.

The program participates in the Islamic Communication Association (ASKOPIS), aligning graduate profiles with its standards. These include roles as practitioners, academics, and developers in Islamic communication, emphasizing the integration of Islamic principles with contemporary communication and *da'wah* strategies. Graduates are prepared to address societal needs and workplace challenges, contributing to the advancement of Islamic broadcasting and communication.

B. The Study Program's strategy in increasing the role of preachers

From the results of interviews conducted by researchers, the following data was obtained:

No	Informant	Description
1	Head of KPI Study Program	The KPI Study Program offers Public Relations, Broadcasting, and Advertising as electives, emphasizing rhetoric, public speaking, and MC protocol in semester 4. Courses like *da'wah* science, psychology, and philosophy complement practical activities, though traditional *da'wah* initiatives like safaris have become rare. The 2014 curriculum, aligned with KKNI, prioritizes public relations, broadcasting, and advertising skills. However, the 2016-2020 Head of Program highlighted equal focus on preaching and tabligh skills. Given alumni diversity, integrative *da'wah* skills are cultivated across university, faculty, and program courses to balance graduate competencies.
2	Dean	The Faculty of *da'wah* and Communication emphasizes developing *da'wah*, tabligh, and Islamic communication competencies, with special focus on graduates of the KPI program. While da'i and *muballigh* roles can be pursued by all, KPI graduates should excel in public speaking, *da'wah*, and modern media use. The faculty aims to revitalize these skills, blending traditional and digital platforms. It envisions establishing a professional certification institution for religious communicators, collaborating with the government and Islamic organizations.
3	Islamic Communication and Broadcasting Association (ASKOPIS)	ASKOPIS coordinates with all KPI study programs across PTKI in Indonesia, addressing issues faced by students and alumni at undergraduate and post raduate levels. Through annual conferences, it provides updates and discussions on emerging challenges. The KPI curriculum includes the Graduate Qualification Standard (SKL), emphasizing da'i, preacher, and *muballigh* competencies, while also offering skills in public relations, broadcasting, and advertising for interested students.
4	Islamic Community Guidance of the Ministry of Religion Regional Office	The Ministry of Religion of South Sumatra Province has conducted two training sessions for preachers and religious instructors, in 2019 and 2020. Initially called the "Certified Preacher Program," the name was changed to "Increasing Da'i

		Competence" after coordination with the Provincial MUI, as the Central MUI disagreed with the certification of preachers. The training involved both ASN and non-ASN religious instructors, with material focused on national insight, resilience, security against radicalism, and Islamic teachings. However, the program planned for 2021 was delayed due to funding revisions, and its format was expected to differ from previous years.
5	IKADI- *Ikatan Da'i Indonesia* (Indonesian Preachers Association)	The Indonesian Da'i Association (IKADI) aims to empower preachers in facing complex societal challenges by promoting Islam based on the Qur'an and Sunnah. IKADI provides a platform for building moral, professional, and visionary da'i who address socio-political and cultural issues. The organization organizes national events, offers training, and engages in philanthropic and entrepreneurial activities, fostering unity, open membership, and the development of preachers in line with Islamic values and national goals.
6	*Majelis Ulama Indonesia* (MUI) Indonesian Ulema Council	Da'i, *ulama*, *muballigh* are professions that are closely related to their role in the development of Islamic society. Their existence cannot be separated from the society that has appointed them as *ulama*, da'i and *muballigh*. Therefore, in fact, as long as Islamic society lives, grows and develops, the profession of *da'wah* is an absolute necessity.
7	Muhammadiyah Regional Executive Board	For the Muhammadiyah organization, the role of da'i is the mission of this organization. Structural *da'wah* carried out by Muhammadiyah is sufficient evidence that Muhammadiyah has a special division that handles *da'wah* issues. This means that Muhammadiyah does not remain silent on changes in society, lifestyle and sociality of Muslims so that the role of *Da'i* is very much needed in developing Islamic insight.
8	*Pengurus Wilayah Nahdlatul Ulama* (PWNU) [Nahdlatul *Ulama* Regional Management]	PW NU itself recently became a mosque, meaning that the role of preachers is very much needed, but currently more attention is needed towards the organization of preaching, both methodologically and substantively.
9	Jaringan Suara Indonesia (JSI) [Indonesian Voice Network]	JSI fully supports the role of *Da'i* because through *da'wah* Islamic insight can be increased.
10	Provincial Chairman of DMI-Dewan Masjid Indonesia [Indonesian Mosque Council]	In South Sumatra, the role of *Da'i* is closely tied to the activities of mosques, with a focus on enhancing the qualifications of preachers and imams. These roles are sacred and have a direct influence on the congregation. The Provincial DMI supervises mosque management in each district and city, ensuring the strengthening of competencies. Preachers are trained through mosque management and ta'lim assemblies, with an increasing societal demand for qualified *Da'i*. The use of varied methods, including IT tools, local languages, and contemporary themes, is crucial to meet community expectations
11	Palembang City Government's Social Welfare implements the dawn Da'i of Palembang City	The *da'wah* and the existence of the *Da'i* community are undeniably the result of a political promise. For example, the initiation of the Subuh Safari program started as a promise or desire during elections. Once the city government took office, the program was implemented.

DISCUSSION

A. Study Program Strategy to Increase the Role of Graduates as *Da'i*

From the results of research conducted through interviews with the Head of the KPI Study Program, the analysis of UPPS reveals that the curriculum implemented in the KPI Study Program does not yet fully represent the profile of a preacher as a KPI graduate. This is because the university's mandatory courses related to Islamic studies, faculty-mandated courses on *da'wah* science, and study program-specific courses and practicums, when aligned with KKNI standards, tend to distribute focus evenly between core and supporting competencies. Consequently, the curriculum's orientation becomes unclear as it aims to fulfill all graduate competencies in public relations, broadcasting, advertising, and other fields.

Additionally, the practicum programs and material enrichment related to enhancing graduates' profiles as *Da'i* remain minimal. As a result, the practical skills of graduates in the field of *Da'i* are often questioned. Therefore, it is crucial to consider alumni feedback regarding the curriculum, courses, and practical training related to the role of *Da'i*.

No	Curriculum improvement	A more appropriate method of preaching	Course Practicum	Strengthening the orientation of graduates to become *Da'i*
1	Faith, worship and morals	Preaching through social media by utilizing stories of the prophets and their companions packaged through films or animated cartoons.	Not very effective because it takes a very long time.	Yes, it is necessary.
2	Morals	Door to door	Need	Need
3	Sharia worship *Muamalah*	Community empowerment program	Yes	Yes
4	Practice of preaching	lecture	Yes, it is necessary because it helps one's mental state in dealing with the general public.	yes
5	Quran Hadith material and insight into Indonesia	Community empowerment program	Yes, it is necessary.	Need
6	Al-Qur'an, Hadith and Fiqh	Social media	It could depend on the needs and passion of the alumni.	Not really, it could be that some KPI graduates have expertise in the broadcasting field.
7	Al-Quran, Hadith, Sharia worship materials	Social media	It is very necessary to provide skills	It is very necessary to prioritize the KPI study program
8	Quran and Hadith material and a more comprehensive insight into Islam	The method of preaching when conveying Islamic knowledge is packaged in an attractive way by utilizing existing	Yes, it is very necessary for mental maturity when entering society.	Not really. However, KPI graduates have a better grasp of the material and methods of preaching than other graduates.

		media...		
9	Preaching and art	Donors	Yes, if possible there is a third party who can finance it.	Yes, it must be improved, not only those who are on the path of preachers/da'i, but wherever alumni are involved.
10	Al-Quran Hadith	Community empowerment program	Is indispensable	Is indispensable
11	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
12	Al Quran Hadith	lecture	need	need
13	Sharia worship *Muamalah*,	Community empowerment and social media programs	Yes, it is necessary.	Yes
14	Preaching science material in all things	Everything	It seems necessary to provide supplies	Need to be prioritized
15	Sharia worship *Muamalah*	Social media	Yes, it is necessary.	Yes
16	What needs to be developed is Indonesian insight material	Community empowerment program	Participate in the activities of Islamic missionary institutions individually	Need
17	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18	Everything	Everything	Yes. Necessary	Yes. Necessary
19	Sharia Worship, Tahsin of the Koran, Fiqh, Fiqh Proposals	Social media, lectures,	Yes	Yes
20	Quran and Hadith Material	Lectures and social media	Participating in mobile preaching activities by preaching institutions	Need
21	Quran Hadith Material	lectures, stories and books	very necessary	very necessary
22	Material 4 Mosque practices during the time of the Prophet.	The Method of *Khuruj Fisabillah*.	Absolutely necessary, at least 4 months in a lifetime, 40 days every year, 3 days every month	Yes
23	SPI, Preaching Methods, Fiqh *Munakahat*, etc.	Creative and innovative methods	Yes	Yes
24	Jurisprudence	Social Media	Yes it is necessary	Not really
25	In my opinion, the material is about insight into Indonesia.	Social Media and Books because with these two things, preaching will always live on.	In my opinion, it is very necessary.	Very necessary
26	Sharia *Muamalah* Worship	Social media	*da'wah* Institution	Need
27	Field preaching practice	Islamic short films on social media	Need	No
28	sharia worship	lecture	yes it is very	Yes

	Muamalah		necessary	
29	Al-Quran and Hadith	book	yes	yes
30	Many religious science practices	Question and answer method	Yes	No
31	*Tawhid*	Exemplary	His preaching is continuous	No need
32	Al-Quran Hadith	Story	Yes	Yes
33	Al Quran and Hadith	lecture	very necessary	very necessary
34	Indonesian insight material	Community empowerment program	Need to be equipped for six months	Yes
35	Sharia worship materials	Community empowerment program	Yes it is necessary	Yes, it is true
36	Quran, Hadith, Islam/Indonesian preaching material	Social media and religious approaches in society	Yes, of course	Yes, of course
37	Moderate preaching	Social media	Need	Not necessarily, because the KPI study program can also take the media and journalism path.
38	Faith, worship and morals	Preaching through social media by utilizing stories of the prophets and their companions packaged through films or animated cartoons.	Not very effective because it takes a very long time	Yes, it is necessary.

B. The role of KPI alumni in increasing the role of preachers/preachers

The findings of this study underline the significant role that high school educational background plays in shaping alumni involvement in *da'wah* activities in South Sumatra. Hartono et al. (2020) emphasized that early educational exposure profoundly impacts individuals' engagement with religious roles and activities. This suggests that foundational Islamic education at the high school level not only instills a strong religious identity but also prepares students for active participation in roles such as *Da'i*. The inclusion of Islamic values, leadership training, and public speaking opportunities during high school fosters a mindset geared toward religious and community service.

The study also highlights the pivotal role of academic preparation during tertiary education. Courses specifically designed to enhance *da'wah* skills, such as public speaking, sermon delivery, and Islamic communication methods, significantly impact the effectiveness of *Da'i*. Farid (2024) supports this view, asserting that specialized training in public communication and religious content delivery enhances the competency of preachers. Furthermore, qualified lecturers who provide hands-on experience and mentorship in *da'wah*-related subjects help build confidence and practical skills among students.

Toha Yahya Umar and HM Arifin M.Ed. provide theoretical underpinnings to the concept of *da'wah*, emphasizing its broad scope as a multifaceted activity. Umar describes *da'wah* as inviting others to the right path in a wise and non-coercive manner for their holistic well-being, while Arifin highlights its planned, intentional, and diverse approaches, including oral, written, and behavioral methods. These definitions underscore that *da'wah* extends beyond mere religious sermons, encompassing a holistic approach to influencing individuals and communities toward spiritual, moral, and social betterment.

C. *Da'wah* in the Digital Era

The digital era has transformed traditional modes of *da'wah*, making it imperative for preachers to adapt to technological advancements. Hartono et al. (2020) note that social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube have become effective tools for reaching a broader audience. *Da'i* can now share live sermons, create interactive posts, and disseminate religious content tailored to diverse demographic groups. This transition to digital *da'wah* aligns with the growing dominance of technology in everyday life and the increasing preference of younger generations for digital interactions.

However, the shift to online platforms also requires new competencies. *Da'i* must master digital tools, understand audience engagement techniques, and craft visually appealing and relevant content. The lack of these skills among some *Da'i* highlights the need for educational institutions to integrate IT and digital media training into their *da'wah* curricula. Research by Ahmad and Ramli (2022) emphasizes that digital literacy is now a critical component of religious education, enabling preachers to remain relevant in a rapidly evolving communication landscape.

D. Challenges in the KPI Study Program

Despite the growing opportunities for *da'wah*, the study identifies gaps in the KPI Study Program at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang. The program's curriculum does not fully align with the competencies required for *Da'i* or *ulama*, focusing instead on broader areas such as public relations, broadcasting, and advertising. This diffusion of focus undermines the development of specialized *da'wah* skills, leaving graduates less prepared for roles as professional *Da'i*.

Alumni feedback further reveals dissatisfaction with the minimal emphasis on practical *da'wah* training. Practical courses and experiential learning opportunities, which are essential for building confidence and hands-on skills, are insufficiently integrated into the program. This lack of focus on practical training is a missed opportunity to prepare students for the demands of real-world *da'wah*.

Additionally, while alumni view the role of *Da'i* as open to anyone interested in developing relevant skills, this perspective inadvertently diminishes the unique qualifications of KPI graduates. The widespread availability of *da'wah* opportunities

in South Sumatra, coupled with the rapid growth of mosques and prayer rooms, highlights an urgent need for qualified *Da'i*. Yet, the imbalance between the demand for religious leaders and the supply of adequately trained alumni underscores systemic inefficiencies in the program.

To address these challenges, the KPI Study Program must undertake a strategic curriculum overhaul to prioritize *da'wah* competencies. Farid (2024) advocates for a blended approach, combining traditional Islamic studies with modern communication techniques and digital media skills. Such a curriculum would prepare graduates not only for classical *da'wah* roles but also for contemporary platforms and contexts.

Incorporating digital *da'wah* training into the curriculum is essential. Courses on video production, social media marketing, and content creation would equip students with the skills to effectively engage online audiences. This recommendation is supported by Ahmad and Ramli (2022), who emphasize that the integration of digital tools into religious education enables preachers to adapt to changing societal dynamics.

Practical training must also be enhanced. Establishing partnerships with local mosques, prayer rooms, and *da'wah* institutions would provide students with real-world exposure and mentorship opportunities. Such collaborations could include internships, community service programs, and supervised preaching sessions. These initiatives would bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, fostering professional growth and confidence among students.

Finally, fostering a sense of identity and purpose among KPI students is crucial. The program should emphasize the unique role of KPI alumni as *Da'i*, instilling pride in their specialized training and motivating them to take up leadership roles in religious and community settings. This approach would counteract the perception that *da'wah* is a general skill and reinforce the value of professional qualifications in the field.

The study underscores the importance of early educational experiences, specialized training, and technological adaptation in shaping the role of *Da'i* in South Sumatra. While the KPI Study Program at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang provides a foundation in Islamic studies, its curriculum must evolve to meet the contemporary demands of *da'wah*. Integrating digital literacy, enhancing practical training, and fostering strategic partnerships with local institutions are critical steps toward producing competent and impactful *Da'i* graduates.

In the digital era, *da'wah* is no longer confined to traditional methods. The integration of technology and modern communication tools offers unprecedented opportunities for religious outreach. However, to seize these opportunities, educational institutions must equip their students with the necessary skills and knowledge. By addressing the gaps identified in this study, the KPI Study Program can position itself as a leader in *da'wah* education, contributing to the growth of qualified religious leaders in South Sumatra and beyond.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the significant factors influencing the role of da'i among KPI alumni in South Sumatra, with findings pointing to gaps in curriculum design, practical training, and technological adaptation. Early educational experiences, particularly at the high school level, have been identified as critical in shaping alumni engagement with religious roles. However, the curriculum of the KPI Study Program at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang does not fully cater to the development of da'i competencies, instead dispersing focus across various fields like public relations, broadcasting, and advertising. This lack of emphasis on da'wah-specific skills leaves graduates less prepared to meet the growing demand for qualified preachers in South Sumatra.

The study also underscores the transformative role of technology in modern da'wah. With the proliferation of social media and digital platforms, there is a growing need for da'i to adapt to new modes of communication to reach broader audiences effectively. However, the program's current approach does not sufficiently prepare students for these emerging challenges, creating a gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

Addressing these shortcomings requires a strategic overhaul of the curriculum. Integrating digital literacy, enhancing practical training, and fostering partnerships with local mosques and da'wah institutions are essential steps. By aligning the program with contemporary needs, the KPI Study Program can better equip its graduates to excel as professional da'i and religious leaders.

Ultimately, this study emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive and adaptive approach to religious education. By bridging traditional methods with modern demands, the program can empower its alumni to play a pivotal role in community building and religious outreach, ensuring the sustainability and relevance of da'wah in an evolving societal and technological landscape.

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