

Institutional Popular Piety: How a Suburban Mosque Produces and Directs Islamic Lifestyle Da'wah in Urban Indonesia

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Abstract

This study examines how Masjid Raya Bintaro Jaya (MRBJ) in suburban Jakarta adapts da'wah to young urban Muslims by integrating health-oriented lifestyles and environmental sustainability. Using a qualitative single-case study design with in-depth interviews with four key informants, supported by observation and document analysis, the study finds that MRBJ operates as a form of institutional popular piety: religious expression is shaped through mosque-initiated programs that draw on middle-class popular culture, rather than market logic. First, MRBJ translates eco-theological concepts into practical mosque programs, including waste donation, biopores, solar panels, greening initiatives, and a reverse vending machine. Second, it mobilizes sport, wellness, and digital activities such as fun runs, health screenings, and online content to attract and engage young Muslims. Third, these initiatives position the mosque as a hybrid institution that combines da'wah, ecological care, and lifestyle-based engagement. The main contribution of this article is theoretical: it extends the concept of popular piety from individual practice and consumer culture to the institutional level, showing that the mosque can actively produce and direct popular piety as a da'wah strategy. These findings enrich scholarship on urban mosques, contemporary da'wah, and popular Islam in Indonesia.

Keywords: Institutional Popular Piety; Hybrid Mosque; Contemporary Da'wah; Eco-Mosque; Muslim Middle Class; Urban Youth

1. Introduction

The accelerating pace of urbanization and digitalization has fundamentally reshaped the social landscape of young Indonesians. Personal health and environmental sustainability have emerged as salient concerns among millennials and Generation Z, who increasingly prioritize natural-health lifestyles and ecological responsibility, often interweaving them with spiritual values and religious identity (Nilan, 2021). This trend is inseparable from broader middle-class dynamics in which Islamic consumption functions as a vehicle for identity construction and cultural distinction. Jati characterizes this phenomenon as "Popular Islam": the popularization of Islamic values as habitus and status markers for the Indonesian Muslim middle class (Jati, 2015). Fealy and White further identify this as "aspirational pietism," in which consumption of Islamic goods and experiences becomes a means of articulating both religiosity and class position (Fealy & White, 2008). Among young Muslims, these dynamics are amplified by social-media da'wah content promoting Qur'an- and Sunnah-based health practices (Ikhwan & Wafi, 2021), faith-based environmental movements such as Eco Pesantren (Khotimah et al., 2025; Maulida et al., 2024), and ecotheology-driven activism (Ichwan, 2012; Murtadho, 2019).

These developments can be read through the concept of popular piety, which Wildan and Witriani define as religious expressions propelled by culture and atmosphere rather than political ideology (Wildan & Witriani, 2021). Unlike Islamist movements oriented toward structural transformation, popular piety operates through the aestheticization and everyday enactment of religiosity, hijab as fashion, da'wah as entertainment, sport as worship, and environmental stewardship as theological obligation. Heryanto terms this configuration "upgraded piety and pleasure", a fusion of piety and enjoyment that marks the emerging Indonesian Muslim middle class (Heryanto, 2011). Existing formulations of popular piety, however, have theorized it primarily at two levels: the level of individual practice (hijrah lifestyle choices, health consumption, digital self-presentation) and the level of market commodification (Islamic fashion, halal products, entertainment) (Fealy & White, 2008; Heryanto, 2011; Wildan & Witriani, 2021). What remains undertheorized is the institutional level, the possibility that a religious institution, specifically the mosque, may itself act as a deliberate agent that designs, directs, and delivers popular piety experiences as a da'wah strategy. This article

operationalizes popular piety at the institutional level, referring to mosque-designed programs that adopt popular-culture formats, sport events, wellness activities, environmental campaigns, and digital content, as vehicles for engaging young Muslims, distinct from both individual lifestyle choices and market-driven commodification.

This institutional repositioning of the mosque reflects a broader transformation currently underway in urban Indonesia. No longer confined to ritual worship, the mosque is evolving into a multifunctional social space that accommodates the aspirations and lifestyles of younger generations (Han, 2019; Mustain, 2023; Saputra & Lyansari, 2025). Studies on urban mosques in Indonesia document this transformation across multiple dimensions, economic empowerment, digital literacy, environmental sustainability, and youth leadership, demonstrating that the mosque is increasingly functioning as a community-based institution capable of responding to contemporary social challenges (Widiawati et al., 2024). A prominent empirical case of this repositioning is Masjid Raya Bintaro Jaya (MRBJ) in South Tangerang, a mosque serving a predominantly upper-middle-class suburban congregation that has developed an integrated da'wah strategy combining eco-mosque programs (waste donation, infiltration wells/biopores, solar cells, greening initiatives, and a reverse vending machine) with sports and wellness events (Sahur on The Run, Family Fun Walk, Empower Run, free health screenings, and mental-health seminars), all coordinated through its youth organization, Remaja Islam Masjid Raya (REMISYA). MRBJ is analytically significant because it represents a deliberate, institution-driven integration of two da'wah agendas, ecological sustainability and healthy lifestyles, that the broader literature has consistently treated in isolation.

The literature on contemporary da'wah in Indonesia has expanded considerably, yet it remains internally fragmented in ways that obscure the phenomenon MRBJ represents. On one side, eco-mosque studies emphasize sustainable architectural and operational practices (Hidayat et al., 2018), mosque adaptation to SDG norms (Farabi & Fatharini, 2025), or sustainability frameworks such as the Quadruple Bottom Line, Prosperity, People, Planet, and Prophet (Hamidi et al., 2025). These works are analytically strong on ecological dimensions but remain insufficiently connected to youth engagement strategies or health-lifestyle trends. Critically, several studies note that the green-mosque movement in Indonesia has not yet become a popular mass movement, partly because environmental issues are still framed as elite concerns rather than lived religious practice (Sholihah et al., 2025; Testriono et al., 2024), a limitation that raises the question of whether popular-culture mediation might

provide precisely the missing link between ecological aspiration and mass youth participation. On the other side, health-oriented studies document the mosque's role in primary health education and pandemic response (Rachmawati et al., 2022) or examine how urban Muslim women redefine piety through modern yet shari'a-compliant sport (Richtig, 2020). These studies illuminate important dimensions of the health-da'wah nexus but treat mosque-based health programs in isolation from ecological agendas and without connection to the concept of popular piety.

The core problem this article addresses is therefore twofold. First, the eco-mosque and health-da'wah literatures have never been read together as a single, interwoven institutional strategy; each strand treats its empirical domain as self-contained, leaving invisible the integrative logic that connects ecological and health agendas within a single da'wah framework. Second, and more fundamentally, neither strand connects its empirical findings to the concept of popular piety, meaning that existing frameworks can describe what mosques are doing but cannot explain why these particular program formats (sport events, wellness campaigns, environmental games) are chosen, nor how they function as a coherent strategy for constructing religious identity and engaging youth. This double gap, thematic fragmentation and the absence of an institutional-level analytical framework, leaves the mosque undertheorized as an active agent of Islamic popular culture rather than merely a site where popular piety happens to occur.

This article addresses that double gap through an in-depth empirical examination of MRBJ. The guiding research question is: how does MRBJ adopt and integrate health and environmental sustainability issues into its da'wah strategy to engage young urban Muslims? By placing the eco-mosque programs and the sports/wellness programs within a unified analytical frame, the article advances the concept of institutional popular piety, an extension of existing formulations of popular piety from the level of individual practice and market consumption to the institutional level, positioning the mosque itself as an active agent that designs and directs popular piety experiences as a deliberate strategy for youth engagement and community identity formation. This theoretical contribution responds directly to the gap identified above: it provides the framework that the existing literature lacks for explaining the integrative logic of mosque-based health and environmental programs as expressions of popular piety.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative approach with a single-case-study design focused on Masjid Raya Bintaro Jaya (MRBJ) as a contemporary da'wah institution in a suburban middle-class setting. The choice of a single-case design is methodologically justified on the grounds that MRBJ constitutes what Yin terms a revelatory case: it represents an empirically accessible instance of a phenomenon, the deliberate (Yin, 2018), institution-driven integration of health and environmental agendas as a da'wah strategy, that has not previously been documented or theorized in the literature. As Stake notes, the value of a single instrumental case lies not in statistical generalization but in analytical generalization: the capacity of a well-chosen case to illuminate theoretical propositions that extend beyond the case itself (Stake, 1995). MRBJ's institutional completeness, combining eco-mosque infrastructure, sports and wellness programming, an active youth organization, and a professional zakat management body under a single institutional roof, makes it analytically productive for examining how popular piety operates at the institutional level. The design allows for in-depth exploration of how da'wah adapts to health-lifestyle and environmental-sustainability trends among young Muslims, placing the mosque's programs, actors, and community dynamics at the center of analysis.

2.2 Research Site and Participants

The unit of analysis is MRBJ, specifically, its da'wah programs related to health and the environment, particularly those coordinated by REMISYA (Remaja Islam Masjid Raya) and LAZ MRBJ (Lembaga Amil Zakat Masjid Raya Bintaro Jaya). Participants were selected through purposive, criterion-based sampling on the basis of their direct involvement with the programs under study and their capacity to represent distinct institutional vantage points (Patton, 2015). The sampling criterion was theoretical completeness across organizational levels, strategic leadership, operational management, youth program execution, and congregant reception, rather than statistical representativeness, which is consistent with the logic of qualitative, case-based inquiry (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Miles et al., 2014). Four key informants were recruited, as detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Informants

No.	Name	Institutional Role	Organizational Level	Interview Duration
1	Prastowo M. Wibowo	Chairman, MRBJ Foundation	Strategic leadership	±90 minutes
2	Rizki Subagia	Program Manager, LAZ MRBJ	Operational management	±75 minutes
3	Debrian Ikbal	Chairman, REMISYA	Youth program execution	±60 minutes
4	Andi FN	Congregant & newly appointed secretary	Community/ participant reception	±45 minutes

The small number of informants is a deliberate feature of the single-case design rather than a limitation of sampling scope. Each informant was selected to represent a structurally distinct layer of the institution, ensuring that the analysis captures the full vertical range of institutional decision-making, from strategic conception to program execution to community reception. This approach reflects the principle that in qualitative case study research, depth and positional diversity take precedence over numerical breadth (Yin, 2018).

2.3 Data Collection

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted on 8 December 2025 at MRBJ, South Tangerang. Interview guides were organized around three thematic clusters: (1) informants' perceptions of health and environmental trends among young urban Muslims; (2) descriptions and rationales of specific programs (eco-mosque initiatives, Sahur on The Run, Family Fun Walk, Empower Run); and (3) REMISYA's role in designing and executing da'wah adaptation strategies. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' informed consent and subsequently transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Data collection followed a source triangulation strategy (Denzin, 2017; Patton, 2015), integrating three types of evidence. First, primary data from the in-depth interviews described above. Second, non-participant observation of mosque documents and physical artifacts, including program posters, activity reports, and eco-mosque facilities (solar panels, biopores, green areas, reverse vending machine), conducted during field visits to MRBJ. Third, secondary data drawn from MRBJ's official digital platforms (Instagram accounts @lazmrbj and @mrbjtangsel.official; the mosque's official website) and media publications documenting MRBJ's programs, used to enrich historical context and assess program reach.

Triangulation was operationalized by systematically cross-checking findings from each source type: interview accounts of program rationales were verified against documentary evidence (activity reports and program materials), while digital platform content was used to corroborate and extend the timeline of program development reported by informants. Points of convergence across sources were treated as confirmed findings; points of divergence were returned to informants for clarification through follow-up correspondence.

2.4 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis as developed by Braun and Clarke, following an inductive orientation in which themes were derived from the data rather than imposed from a predetermined framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019). The analysis proceeded through six phases: (1) familiarization with the data through repeated reading of transcripts and field notes; (2) generation of initial codes by annotating meaningful units across the dataset; (3) searching for themes by collating codes into candidate thematic clusters; (4) reviewing themes against the coded dataset and the full corpus to assess coherence and coverage; (5) defining and naming themes by articulating the core concept captured by each; and (6) producing the written analysis in which themes were interpreted in relation to the theoretical framework of institutional popular piety. Coding was conducted manually without the assistance of qualitative data analysis software. To enhance analytical rigor, a process of peer debriefing was employed throughout: emerging themes and interpretations were discussed iteratively among the research team, and alternative readings were considered and documented before final themes were confirmed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

2.5 Reflexivity and Ethics

The research team approached this study as external academic observers with no prior institutional affiliation with MRBJ, LAZ MRBJ, or REMISYA. To manage the risk of over-rapport during fieldwork, interview questions were designed to elicit critical and reflective accounts alongside affirmative ones, and divergent or critical statements by informants were actively sought and preserved in the analysis. All participants provided informed verbal and written consent prior to participation. Participants were assured of their right to withdraw at any point and were informed that data would be used solely for academic research purposes. Confidentiality was maintained by storing audio recordings and transcripts on password-protected devices accessible only to the research team.

RESEARCH FLOW DIAGRAM: ADAPTATION OF DA'WAH AT MASJID RAYA BINTARO JAYA (MRBJ)

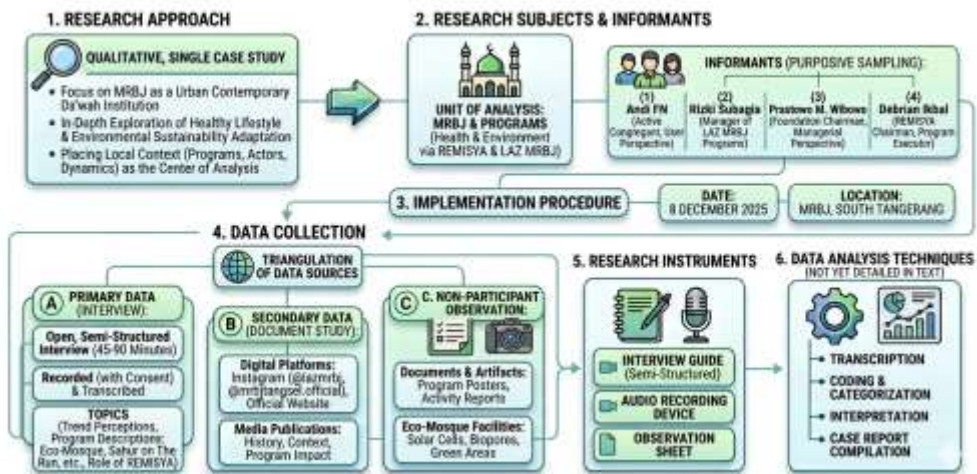


Figure 1. Research Flow Diagram

3. Results

3.1 MRBJ and REMISYA: A suburban mosque as a Muslim community center

3.1.1 Spatial and Social Context of Bintaro Jaya

MRBJ cannot be understood apart from the spatial and social context of Bintaro Jaya. The area has been developed since 1979 by PT Jaya Real Property as a satellite city south of Jakarta (Permanasari et al., 2024), growing into a planned township of approximately 1,000 hectares stretching from South Jakarta into South Tangerang, equipped with international-standard education, health, retail, and transportation facilities (Tarigan et al., 2024). South Tangerang, where MRBJ is located, is today dominated by upper-middle-class residents with high purchasing power and modern lifestyles, a spatial context that shapes, and is in turn shaped by, the forms of religious expression that take root here.

Leeuwen's ethnographic study of 1990s Bintaro Raya residents characterizes them as a "new middle class", globally oriented and democratic in outlook, yet simultaneously marked by New Order values, caught in an imagined middle-classness she describes as "lost in mall" (Leeuwen, 2011). This characterization remains analytically productive: the tension between global aspiration and locally embedded religious identity is precisely the field within which MRBJ's da'wah strategy operates. Bintaro's development also produced spatial and social segregation from pre-existing local communities (Wardhani et al., 2022), making the mosque's positioning as a bridging institution between "new"

and "old" residents a strategic as well as pastoral choice. In this milieu, the dynamics that Jati identifies as "Popular Islam", Islamic values as instruments of middle-class identity formation (Jati, 2015), and that Alam traces to the New Order-era depoliticization of Islam find direct empirical expression (Alam, 2018).

3.1.2. Institutional History and the Foundation Model

MRBJ was built in 1997 on a 5,000 m² plot in Sector 9 as a social and public facility. Its most consequential transformation came in 2017, when management was transferred from Yayasan Amal Jaya to Yayasan Masjid Raya Bintaro Jaya, a foundation established and governed by congregants themselves. Prastowo M. Wibowo, the Foundation Chairman, explains what this structural shift enables:

"DKM and Yayasan differ in that Yayasan has higher legal standing, registered with the Ministry of Law and Human Rights, with articles of association and a notarial deed. This allows us to collaborate with corporations without changing bank accounts every time leadership rotates. It also enables us to stand as an equal institutional partner." (P. M. Wibowo, personal communication, Desember 2025)

This statement is analytically significant beyond its administrative content. What Prastowo describes is the deliberate construction of institutional durability: a governance architecture that survives leadership turnover, enables corporate partnership, and positions the mosque as an actor with legal standing, not merely a community gathering point. This distinction between the mosque as a venue and the mosque as an institutional agent is foundational to the concept of institutional popular piety developed in this article. All four informants confirmed, from their respective positions, that this foundation model underpins the professionalization and programmatic consistency that distinguishes MRBJ from mosques operating under traditional DKM structures.

Since 2017, MRBJ has positioned itself around the Masjid 5.0 concept: Baitullah (worship), Baitul Dakwah (da'wah), Baitul Qur'an (Qur'anic education), Baitul Mal (financial management), and Baitul Mu'amalah (socio-economic activities). It also declares itself an "open mosque" with no affiliation to practical politics, a stance consistent with the depoliticized religiosity Alam identifies as characteristic of the Indonesian suburban Muslim middle class, and one that strategically broadens the congregation it can attract (Alam, 2018).

This transformation places MRBJ within a broader Indonesian trend of mosques shifting from ritual-worship centers toward socio-economic empowerment (Mustain, 2023). What distinguishes MRBJ from comparable cases, such as Masjid Jogokariyan's community-based

philanthropy (Firdaus, 2025) or Masjid Istiqlal's SDG-aligned green programs (Farabi & Fatharini, 2025), is the deliberate integration of da'wah with lifestyle programming explicitly targeting urban middle-class youth as its primary constituency.

3.1.3. REMISYA: Youth Agency within Institutional Architecture

REMISYA (Remaja Islam Masjid Raya) is the organizational node through which MRBJ's youth-oriented strategy operates. Youth mosque organizations in Indonesia are generally autonomous sub-units of the mosque board, with authority over their own programs and leadership selection (Rahmadon, 2020). Whereas most such organizations focus on routine religious study and Islamic holiday celebrations, REMISYA adopts popular-culture formats: Empower Run, Sahur on The Run, Family Fun Walk, health screenings, and the Campus of Marriage program.

This programmatic distinctiveness is not the product of unconstrained youth creativity. Rather, it reflects a deliberate intergenerational architecture. Prastowo describes how this is structured:

"We do not let them loose. They still need direction and guidance. We have a group for consultation, including myself. We have dinner together, we hold meetings. This breaks down the wall that normally separates the older and younger generations in mosques, where the two typically remain segregated." (P. M. Wibowo, personal communication, Desember 2025)

Debrian Ikbal, REMISYA Chairman, confirms that the innovation initiative flows bottom-up but is resourced top-down:

"In fun runs, it was the youth who conceived the idea and approached management. We had already prepared everything, and then management backed us with funding." (D. Ikbal, personal communication, Desember 2025)

Taken together, these accounts reveal a structural pattern confirmed across all informants: MRBJ has institutionalized a two-directional flow in which youth generate program ideas in response to peer-cultural trends, while senior leadership provides governance, resources, and theological framing. This is not the informal co-optation of youth energy common in many mosque organizations; it is a consciously designed governance architecture. The pattern corresponds to what Qodir and Nashir's term "extraordinary" religiosity among middle-class Muslim communities, piety expressed through organized activities and lifestyle programs (Qodir & Nashir, 2019), but adds a crucial institutional dimension: the mosque does not merely enable this religiosity; it designs and directs it.

3.2. Popular piety through popular culture: Sport and wellness as da'wah experience

3.2.1. Theoretical Frame: Why Popular Piety Fits

This section analyses MRBJ's sport and wellness programs through the lens of popular piety (Wildan & Witriani, 2021). The framework is appropriate because MRBJ's offerings, sport events, wellness programming, a mosque café, digital content, are more accurately understood as everyday piety practices mediated by popular culture than as transformations of political ideology. Heryanto's (2011) The concept of "upgraded piety and pleasure" explains why lifestyle programming can function as a da'wah vehicle: modernization has not marginalized religion but generated new Islamic lifestyle variants, particularly among young middle-class Muslims who redefine what it means to be a good Muslim while remaining embedded in global consumer culture (Alnizar, 2020). Jati identifies social piety as a characteristic middle-class ritual in which material and spiritual dimensions converge within an economy of recognition (Jati, 2015). Hasan further demonstrates that this economy of recognition is not merely cultural but institutional: new da'wah agents, including mosques, actively deploy media and popular formats to shape how Islam is consumed and performed in the public sphere (Hasan, 2009).

3.2.2. Program Appeal: Evidence from the Field

The appeal of MRBJ's sport and wellness programs is, significantly, not primarily theological but social and experiential. Andi FN, a long-standing congregant, describes what draws him and others:

"What attracts me to this mosque is that its programs are unlike mainstream mosques, they are more social, more community-oriented. People from every background come here: the strictly devout, the moderately practicing, the pensioner, those with money, and those without. And they all feel: this is my mosque." (A. FN, personal communication, Desember 2025)

The phrase "this is my mosque" is analytically important. It signals not merely satisfaction but a sense of ownership, a form of belonging that transcends transactional participation. This is precisely the configuration Heryanto described as "upgraded piety and pleasure": an experience where religious identity and lifestyle enjoyment are mutually reinforcing rather than in tension (Heryanto, 2011). The heterogeneity of the congregation Andi FN describes, spanning age, class, and religious style, is not accidental. It is the outcome of MRBJ's deliberate inclusivity as a programmatic and theological strategy.

Debrian Ikbal describes REMISYA's practice of using viral cultural references as da'wah entry points:

"We look at what's happening outside, what could attract young people. We have used song titles, even film titles that were going viral at the time, as the titles for our Islamic study sessions. When Layangan Putus was viral, we ran a session under that title. The goal is to get them through the door; once they're in, the substance is da'wah." (D. Ikbal, personal communication, Desember 2025)

What this excerpt reveals is a consistent strategic logic, cultural trend-watching followed by Islamically-framed repurposing, that operates at the level of institutionalized practice rather than individual improvisation. REMISYA does not stumble upon viral trends; it systematically monitors them and translates them into da'wah formats. Similarly, the Campus of Marriage program, a weekly online series addressing the financial, psychological, and fiqh dimensions of marriage preparation, was launched as a direct institutional response to the trending discourse on underage marriage, as Debrian confirms: "We understand that romantic feelings are a natural part of being young. So instead of rejecting that, we facilitate it properly." The pattern across both examples is the same: identify a culturally resonant concern, design an Islamically-grounded response, and deliver it through a format already familiar to the target demographic.

3.2.3. Three Mechanisms of Institutionalized Popular Piety

Inductive analysis of the interview data across all four informants yields three distinct mechanisms through which MRBJ operationalizes popular piety at the institutional level. These mechanisms are not articulated as such by any single informant, but emerge from the convergence of accounts from different institutional positions, leadership, operations, youth, and congregation, lending them cross-positional validity.

The first mechanism is graduated da'wah (*tadarruf*) through needs facilitation. Prastowo articulates the underlying principle:

"If young people are suddenly confronted with da'wah that is too heavy, they will not come back the next day. So our strategy is to start from their needs, self-actualization, community, belonging, and facilitate those within a mosque context. Even if at first they come in shorts and don't pray, let them. Everything has its stages. We do not force them." (P. M. Wibowo, personal communication, Desember 2025)

This is not informal pastoral flexibility but a deliberate program-design philosophy. Andi FN's description of the congregational diversity that results, participants spanning the devout and the nominally Muslim, confirms that this strategy is producing its intended outcome: a mosque that functions as an entry point rather than an enclosure. The *bil-hikmah* principle in classical da'wah theory (Ni'amah & Pramayuani, 2020) It is

here applied not through individual counseling but through the architecture of institutional programming.

The second mechanism is spiritual content embedded within popular culture formats. In Sahur on The Run, participants receive the experience of an urban running event, shareable on social media, amplified by the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) effect, while the substantive content is dhikr delivered via headset. Prastowo summarizes the design principle precisely: "What you see is running; the substance is dhikr." Rizki Subagia adds that digital strategy for such events is governed by timing sensitivity: "In digital, timing is everything. If you are late, it is already stale. We catch the moment, and we catch it fast." (R. Subagia, personal communication, Desember 2025). This real-time responsiveness, confirmed by both the operational and youth leadership informants, ensures that the mosque's cultural productions remain current and competitive within the attention economy.

The third mechanism is bottom-up program innovation with top-down resourcing. Rizki describes the operational philosophy:

"We do not just invite young people as participants. We involve them as co-creators. When they feel it is their program, they take responsibility for it. That is the strategy, involvement creates ownership, and ownership drives commitment." (R. Subagia, personal communication, Desember 2025)

This mechanism is confirmed from the youth side by Debrian's account of how fun runs were conceived and resourced: youth ideation followed by management backing. The result is a governance arrangement that avoids both the rigidity of top-down programming and the inconsistency of unconstrained youth creativity, a balance that all four informants, from their different positions, identify as central to MRBJ's organizational distinctiveness.

3.2.4. Analytical Synthesis: Riding the Logic of Distinction

Globally, marathon and endurance sports have become markers of upper-middle-class lifestyles and instruments of class-identity construction through Bourdieusian distinction (Stempel, 2005; Sui & Yang, 2023). In Indonesia, social-media "physical flexing" signals a shift in status display from material goods to bodies and activities (Bellezza et al., 2017; Rosida et al., 2023).

MRBJ does not reject this logic of distinction, it rides it. Empower Run and Sahur on The Run adopt a format already laden with status and symbolic capital, then reframe it as a da'wah medium. A productive irony emerges: globally, distance running operates as a mechanism of Bourdieusian distinction that separates the upper-middle class from other

classes through embodied cultural capital. At MRBJ, the same format is deployed inclusively. As Prastowo's account makes clear, mosque fun runs become a gateway for participants "in shorts" and "without headscarves", individuals who would be unlikely to attend a formal religious study session. MRBJ thus adds a layer of spiritual capital to an experience that already confers social capital, without eliminating the latter. The mosque does not purify popular culture of its distinction-logic; it selectively appropriates that logic as the carrier for religious transmission.



Figure 2. (a) Documentation of the Sahur on the Run 2025 activity, running while reciting dhikr (b) Documentation of the Empower Run 2025 activity, running while giving charity to (Source: <https://www.instagram.com/lazmrjb/>)

3.3. Eco-mosque as applied ecotheology

3.3.1. Theological Foundations

MRBJ's eco-mosque program links institutional piety and ecological consciousness through what may be called applied ecotheology: the translation of Islamic ecotheological concepts into institutional operations and daily governance. Islamic ecotheology rests on several interconnected concepts: *khalifah* (humans as God's vicegerents charged with stewardship of the earth) (Arsyad & Hasanah, 2025; Rakhmat, 2022); *amanah* (the trust entailed in that stewardship); *mīzān* (the cosmic balance whose violation constitutes ecological damage) (Rakhmat, 2022); and *maṣlahah* (public welfare as a collective responsibility extending to the environment). These concepts found institutional expression in Indonesia through the national

eco-mosque program launched by MUI and DMI on 11 November 2017, organized around *idarah* (management), *imarah* (prosperity activities), and *ri'ayah* (maintenance/facilities) (Hidayat et al., 2018).

At MRBJ, ecotheology is not confined to doctrine but extends into an educational channel: teachers specializing in *āyāt kawniyyah* (Qur'anic verses concerning the natural world) conduct regular sessions connecting ecological responsibility to Islamic obligation. The reported effect on congregant worldview is significant. Andi FN describes a shift in how he understands the scope of piety:

"One teacher I follow here keeps reminding us that worship (*ibadah*) does not stop at the mosque door. Allah is inside the mosque and outside the mosque. I encountered the argument that the Qur'an places far more emphasis on social dimensions than on private ritual, and that changed my thinking entirely. Perfecting one's *akhlaq* must include one's relationship with the natural environment." (A. FN, personal communication, Desember 2025)

This testimony documents a theologically mediated shift in ecological disposition. What is significant analytically is not merely that the informant now holds more ecological views, but that the shift is attributed to a structured teaching program within the mosque, confirming that the educational channel of applied ecotheology is operative and producing its intended effect at the level of individual worldview.

3.3.2. Program Implementation

MRBJ's eco-mosque program encompasses solar panels, biopore infiltration wells, waste donation (*sedekah sampah*), greening initiatives, a reverse vending machine, and systematic plastic-reduction measures.

Rizki Subagia describes the organizational architecture of the waste donation program:

"We have *sedekah sampah*, specifically plastic bottles, which has been running for three years now, under the tagline 'from waste to blessings' (*dari sampah menjadi berkah*). It is managed by REMISYA, under the social-economic division of LAZ MRBJ. It is not a ceremonial activity; it has a structural home in the organization." (R. Subagia, personal communication, Desember 2025)

The phrase "structural home in the organization" is the key analytical signal here: it distinguishes institutionalized practice from event-based greenwashing. This distinction is further underscored by the extension of plastic-reduction logic into governance:

"We have promoted tumbler use, we distribute tumblers and provide dispensers at religious study sessions. SMEs operating on mosque premises are required to replace styrofoam packaging with paper. These are not

requests; they are internal regulations." (R. Subagia, personal communication, Desember 2025)

The shift from voluntary encouragement to internal regulation represents a move from symbolic commitment to behavioral governance, from green identity to green policy. Prastowo frames the biopore program in explicitly moral-Islamic terms, extending the logic of khalifah to hydrological responsibility: "With biopores, when it rains, the water is absorbed into the soil first. Our goal is not to cause flooding downstream, we must not be unjust to those who live downriver." (P. M. Wibowo, personal communication, Desember 2025). This statement is analytically significant because it connects physical infrastructure to theological obligation, illustrating how applied ecotheology operates not only in the classroom but in the rationale offered for engineering decisions.

Andi FN confirms the institutionalized rather than episodic character of these programs: "I asked the administrators, and there is a structural unit for this, under the social-economic division. It is not a one-off activity; there is a structure that sustains it." (A. FN, personal communication, Desember 2025). The convergence of this observation across the operational manager (Rizki) and the congregant (Andi FN) lends it cross-positional validity.

3.3.3. The Habitus Gap: Infrastructure Ahead of Behavior

Critical evaluation is necessary, and the data provide it directly. Andi FN offers an unsolicited self-assessment of the eco-mosque program's effectiveness:

"If I had to score the eco-mosque program out of 100, I would say 80–85. The remaining 15 still need to be reminded, and that reminder is needed not only from congregants but from staff as well. The clean-as-you-go culture is still being instilled. The basic step, throwing waste in the right bin, is there, but the further step of proper sorting is not yet consolidated." (A. FN, personal communication, Desember 2025)

This honest assessment from a supportive, informed congregant is analytically productive precisely because it is unsolicited and self-critical. It draws a distinction between two levels of achievement: infrastructural piety, the installation of solar panels, biopores, and a reverse vending machine, and the formalization of regulations as in figure 3, and habitual piety, the internalized, unreflective ecological behavior that operates without reminder or enforcement.

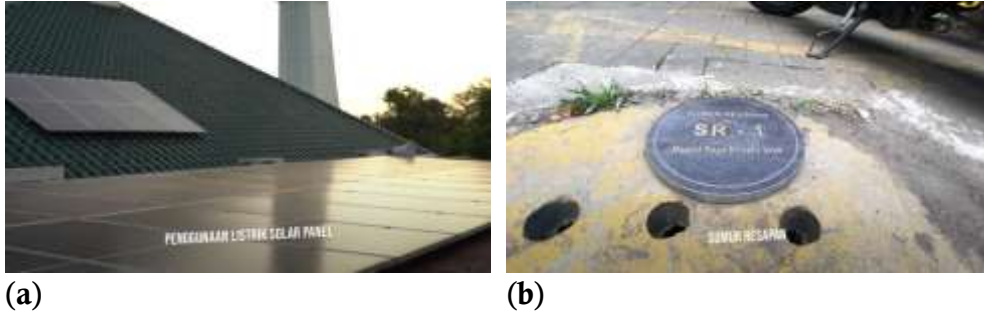


Figure 3. (a) Solar panels installed at MRBJ as part of the eco-mosque program (b) Biopore infiltration wells in the MRBJ compound (Source: <https://masjidrayabintarojaya.org/eco-masjid/>)

The former MRBJ has demonstrably achieved; the latter remains aspirational. This gap resonates with broader critiques in the literature: that ecological da'wah focused on individual behavioral change cannot address structural drivers of the environmental crisis (Mustofa et al., 2025), and that the green-mosque movement nationally remains elitist in reach (Sholihah et al., 2025). MRBJ is further advanced institutionally than most comparable cases, but the distance between infrastructure and habitus transformation remains real and unresolved, a finding the discussion will return to.

Table 2. Matrix of MRBJ Program Findings and Their Da'wah Meaning

Program category	Example activities	Main audience	Da'wah mechanism	Key finding
Sport and wellness	Empower Run, Sahur on The Run, Family Fun Walk, and health screenings	Young urban Muslims and the middle-class congregation	Packaging physical activity as a pleasant religious experience	Helps attract younger participants through a popular lifestyle format
Eco-mosque	Solar cells, biopores,	Congregants and	Linking worship with	Shows that environmental care is

Program category	Example activities	Main audience	Da'wah mechanism	Key finding
	waste donation, reverse vending machine	mosque users	ecological responsibility	institutionalized as part of da'wah
Digital and community media	Instagram content, short stories, and event promotion	Online audiences and potential new congregants	Da'wah through social media and everyday narratives	Extends the mosque's reach beyond its core congregation
Internal governance for sustainability	Tumblr policy, styrofoam ban, refill system	Vendors and facility users	Internal regulation as ecological habit formation	Indicates early behavioral change, though not yet fully consolidated

4. Discussion

4.1 MRBJ as a Hybrid Mosque: Extending the Concept

The findings converge on a conceptualization of MRBJ as a hybrid mosque: an institution that programmatically hybridizes da'wah logic with the logics of popular culture, ecology, and digital media at the level of operational strategy, not merely spatial accommodation. This concept differs from the familiar "multifunctional mosque," which typically refers to physical space diversification. At MRBJ, hybridization is strategic and ideological: the mosque does not merely host diverse activities; it deploys diverse cultural logics as instruments of a unified da'wah mission.

Three analytically distinct dimensions of hybridization emerge from the findings. First, the hybridization of da'wah and popular-culture lifestyle: sport events, viral-title *kajian*, and social-media content are not decorative add-ons but the primary vehicles of religious transmission for young congregants who would not otherwise cross the mosque's threshold. Second, the hybridization of spirituality and ecology: ecotheological concepts (*khalifah*, *amanah*, *mīzān*) are translated into operational programs, internal governance policies, and regular teaching of *āyāt kawnniyyah*, a translation that moves ecotheology from doctrinal statement to institutional practice. Third, the hybridization of traditional authority

and youth agency: REMISYA exercises genuine creative autonomy while remaining connected to senior leadership through institutionalized consultation structures that deliberately bridge the generational divide.

Comparative perspective sharpens the distinctiveness of MRBJ's model. Masjid Jogokariyan, Yogyakarta, is renowned for community-based Islamic philanthropy. (Firdaus, 2025) Masjid Istiqlal has engaged SDG frameworks through its green mosque infrastructure (Farabi & Fatharini, 2025). These are meaningful precedents, but neither integrates health-lifestyle programming with ecological sustainability under a single youth-engagement strategy. MRBJ's distinctiveness lies in three features that together explain why its hybridization is sustainable rather than episodic: programmatic coherence (all programs unified by the logic of responding to suburban middle-class aspirations through popular-culture mediation); institutional capacity (the foundation model enables corporate partnerships, professional staffing, and organizational continuity across leadership transitions); and deliberate inclusivity (openness to diverse teachers and diverse participants as a brand identity, not merely a pastoral posture).

4.2. Institutional Popular Piety: A Conceptual Extension and Its Theoretical Positioning

The central theoretical contribution of this article is the concept of institutional popular piety: popular piety that is not merely an individual practice or a market phenomenon, but one actively produced, designed, and directed by a mosque as an institution.

Existing formulations of popular piety, from Heryanto's (2011) "upgraded piety and pleasure" to Jati's "Popular Islam." (Jati, 2015) to Wildan and Witriani's culture-driven religiosity (Wildan & Witriani, 2021) They share a common limitation: they theorize popular piety at the level of individuals, communities, or markets. The consuming, performing, or expressing subject is an individual Muslim or a market segment. The mosque, in these accounts, is at most a venue, a locus where popular piety is expressed, not an actor that shapes it.

Placing this gap in dialogue with the broader sociology of religion sharpens what is at stake. Casanova's framework of deprivatization or public religion theorizes how religious institutions re-enter the public sphere through civil-society activity rather than state power (Casanova, 1994), a formulation that captures much of what MRBJ does, but that was developed primarily in relation to Christian institutional actors in Western democratic contexts. Casanova's framework describes the fact of religious institutional agency in civil society but does not specify the cultural logics through which contemporary Muslim institutions operate in non-Western,

post-Islamist settings. Bourdieu's theory of the religious field is complementary: in his account, religious institutions are actors that produce and distribute religious capital, not merely spaces in which individual religiosity is expressed (Bourdieu, 1979, 1986). MRBJ's case substantiates this Bourdieusian insight empirically; the mosque produces and distributes a specific form of capital (spiritual experience embedded in popular-culture formats) to a specific market segment (urban Muslim youth) through deliberately designed institutional channels, while extending it by showing that this production can take popular-culture form without sacrificing its da'wah mission.

The concept of institutional popular piety thus occupies a specific theoretical niche: it goes beyond Casanova by specifying the cultural-mediating mechanisms through which a Muslim institution engages civil society (not merely that it does so), and beyond Bourdieu by grounding the analysis in a non-Western, Islamic institutional context where the "religious field" operates through popular culture rather than clerical hierarchy. It also extends the Indonesian popular piety literature, Heryanto, Jati, Wildan, and Witriani, by moving the analytical lens from the individual or market to the institutional level.

MRBJ's case also invites comparison with Hasan's observation that new da'wah agents in post-New Order Indonesia actively deploy media and popular formats to shape the Islamic public sphere (Hasan, 2009). What MRBJ adds to this picture is the institutionalization of such agency within a single mosque structure: rather than individual celebrity preachers or informal digital communities, it is the mosque itself, with a legal foundation, a youth organization, a zakat management body, and a professional staff, that functions as the da'wah agent. This is a qualitatively different configuration, with different implications for accountability, sustainability, and generalizability.

The evaluative implications of this distinction are significant. When popular piety is commodified, as in halal fashion or Islamic tourism markets, critique typically focuses on dilution: the risk that religious content is hollowed out by commercial logic. When popular piety is institutionally produced for da'wah purposes, the appropriate evaluation criteria shift: not whether the commodity retains doctrinal purity, but whether the cultural mediation is effective, whether behavioral change is durable, and whether the institutional mission is consistently maintained across program types and generational transitions.

4.3. Tensions, Limitations, and Alternative Explanations

Three tensions within the findings deserve explicit acknowledgment, and each opens rather than closes analytical inquiry.

The first is the tension between inclusivity and theological depth. MRBJ's deliberate moderation, exposure to sixty or seventy teachers spanning classical and contemporary, local and Middle Eastern Islamic scholarship, produces congregants with broad religious horizons. Andi FN describes the effect as intellectual breadth rather than doctrinal consolidation. An alternative reading of this outcome is not "inclusive moderation" but "theological diffuseness": a community where exposure breadth substitutes for depth of commitment to any particular tradition. The data available to this study cannot adjudicate between these readings, and this constitutes a genuine limitation. Future research employing longitudinal observation of congregant religious development would be necessary to assess whether MRBJ's inclusivity produces durable, coherent Muslim identity formation or a more fluid religious sensibility that remains susceptible to external doctrinal influences.

The second tension is the middle-class particularity of the model. The programs analyzed here, fun runs, tumbler campaigns, Campus of Marriage, and Leader Talk, are legible, attractive, and accessible primarily to an educated, economically secure, urban population. MRBJ's foundation chairman acknowledges serving a congregation with the resources to "actualize itself" through these programs. This raises the question of whether institutional popular piety of this type is inherently class-specific or whether its mechanisms can be adapted for less affluent or more structurally constrained communities. MRBJ's own attempt to address this through the MIBA (Masjid Indonesia Berdaya Akademi) program, which Rizki describes as having trained mosque administrators from other institutions across seven cohorts, is promising but requires independent evaluation. The broader concern resonates with Sholihah et al.'s critique of the green-mosque movement's elitism (Sholihah et al., 2025). The question is whether the institutional popular piety model constitutes a genuinely scalable da'wah strategy or one that presupposes the very middle-class conditions it serves.

The third tension is the gap between event-based engagement and durable habitus change. The eco-mosque data are the most direct evidence of this gap, Andi FN's 80–85 score documents the distance between infrastructure achievement and behavioral consolidation, but the tension applies equally to the sport and wellness programs. Participation in Empower Run or Sahur on The Run is an event; whether these events generate lasting changes in religious practice, ecological behavior, or communal commitment cannot be determined from the present data. This is a fundamental limitation of single-occasion case-study fieldwork, and it points to the need for longitudinal research designs capable of tracking

habitus change over time. Naming this limitation explicitly is important: institutional popular piety at MRBJ succeeds demonstrably at cultural engagement and infrastructure-level institutionalization; its capacity to produce durable transformation of religious and ecological habitus remains an open empirical question, and the most significant challenge facing the concept as a da'wah strategy.

5. Conclusion

This study set out to answer a single guiding question: how does MRBJ integrate health and environmental sustainability into its da'wah strategy to engage young urban Muslims? The findings reveal three institutionalized mechanisms through which this integration operates: graduated da'wah (*tadarruj*) that uses sport events and wellness programs as entry points rather than ends in themselves; spiritual content deliberately embedded within popular-culture formats (dhikr via headset during fun runs; viral-title Islamic study sessions); and bottom-up program innovation supported by top-down institutional resourcing through the REMISYA-Yayasan governance architecture. The eco-mosque programs operate through a parallel but complementary logic, translating Islamic ecotheological concepts (*khalifah*, *amanah*, *mīzān*) into organizational structure and internal governance, not individual voluntarism. Together, these programs are unified by a single institutional rationale: the selective appropriation of popular culture and ecological aspiration as vehicles for da'wah, which is what distinguishes MRBJ from urban mosques that have pursued either lifestyle programming or ecological sustainability in isolation. Theoretically, the study advances two propositions: MRBJ can be conceptualized as a hybrid mosque that hybridizes da'wah logic with popular-culture, ecological, and digital logics at the level of operational strategy; and more centrally, the case extends the concept of popular piety to the institutional level through institutional popular piety, repositioning the mosque not as a venue where popular piety occurs, but as an agent that actively designs, produces, and directs it, in dialogue with Casanova's (1994) public religion framework and Bourdieu's (1986) theory of the religious field. This repositioning carries an evaluative implication: the appropriate criterion for assessing institutional popular piety is not whether its formats retain doctrinal purity, but whether its cultural mediation produces durable behavioral and dispositional change.

The study's limitations must be acknowledged with attention to their consequences for validity and transferability. The single-case design and four-informant sample achieve analytical depth across organizational levels but cannot support generalization to other mosque contexts; the

point-in-time fieldwork documents program design and congregant reception but cannot assess whether event-based engagement produces lasting changes in religious practice or ecological habitus. The congregant's self-reported "80–85 out of 100" on eco-mosque behavioral consolidation is the most direct evidence of this constraint: it demonstrates that infrastructural piety, solar panels, biopores, and internal regulations have been achieved, while habitual piety, unreflective, internalized ecological behavior, remains aspirational. These limitations do not invalidate the concept of institutional popular piety, but they constrain the confidence with which it can be asserted as a generalizable da'wah model rather than a context-specific achievement of a well-resourced, upper-middle-class suburban mosque.

Future research should pursue three specific directions: first, comparative case studies across mosques serving different socioeconomic constituencies to test whether the three mechanisms identified here transfer beyond MRBJ's particular class context; second, longitudinal research tracking ecological and religious habitus change over three to five years to distinguish event-based engagement from durable transformation; and third, systematic evaluation of the MIBA replication program, MRBJ's own hypothesis that its institutional model is transferable, which has not yet been independently assessed. For practitioners, three actionable insights emerge: treat program formats as entry points rather than endpoints; embed programs in organizational structure rather than relying on events alone; and design intergenerational collaboration architectures deliberately, giving youth organizations genuine creative authority while maintaining institutional guidance, as the REMISYA-Yayasan model demonstrates.

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