

## Communication styles and organizational da'wah practices of the *Jama'ah Tabligh* in mitigating hate speech

Furqan,<sup>1\*</sup> Abdullah<sup>2</sup>, & Sahrul<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan, Indonesia

### Abstract

This study examines the communication style of the *Jama'ah Tabligh* organization in mitigating hate speech within Aceh Besar, Indonesia. The research focuses on their strategies for delivering religious messages, the challenges encountered in implementing their communication approaches, and the broader implications of these practices in reducing hate-motivated expressions in the community. Employing a qualitative method, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis conducted from January to April 2025, involving *Jama'ah Tabligh* members, community leaders, and local residents who regularly interact with their activities. The findings reveal that *Jama'ah Tabligh* adopts a *da'wah bil hikmah* communication style characterized by persuasive, non-confrontational, and example-driven approaches. Messages are conveyed through interpersonal communication rooted in cultural sensitivity, the use of local language, and adherence to Acehnese customs. Core activities such as *khuruj* (missionary travel), *jaulah* (house visits), and *ta'lim* (study gatherings) function not only as religious practices but also as mechanisms for shaping positive community perceptions and raising awareness about the dangers of hate speech. Key challenges include persistent stigma toward *Jama'ah Tabligh*, limited technological engagement, the prevalence of online hate narratives, and differing religious traditions among local *dayah* communities. The study recommends strengthened collaboration among religious organizations, local authorities, and customary leaders to formulate more effective communication strategies for countering hate speech in culturally grounded ways.

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### Keywords:

*Jama'ah Tabligh*; style; organizational communication; hate speech.

### Article history:

Received: 15 Aug 2024

Revised: 03 Dec 2025

Accepted: 20 Dec 2025

Published: 24 Dec 2025.

### How to cite:

Furqan., Abdullah., & Sahrul. (2025).

Communication styles and organizational da'wah practices of the *Jama'ah Tabligh* in mitigating hate speech. *Islamic Communication Journal*, 10 (2), 373-396.

<https://doi.org/10.21580/icj.2025.10.2.28376>.

### \*Corresponding author:

Furqan, email: [furqan4004223024@uinsu.ac.id](mailto:furqan4004223024@uinsu.ac.id), Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan, Jl. William Iskandar Ps. V, Medan Estate, Kec. Percut Sei Tuan, Kabupaten Deli Serdang, Sumatera Utara 20371.

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji gaya komunikasi organisasi *Jama'ah Tabligh* dalam merespons dan mereduksi perilaku *hate speech* di Aceh Besar, Indonesia. Fokus kajian diarahkan pada strategi penyampaian pesan dakwah, dinamika penerapan gaya komunikasi dalam interaksi sosial, serta efektivitas pendekatan yang digunakan dalam menurunkan potensi ujaran kebencian di tingkat masyarakat. Menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan studi dokumentasi, penelitian dilakukan sepanjang Januari–April 2025 terhadap anggota *Jama'ah Tabligh*, tokoh masyarakat, dan warga yang berinteraksi langsung dengan aktivitas dakwah mereka. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *Jama'ah Tabligh* menerapkan gaya komunikasi dakwah bil hikmah yang bersifat persuasif, non-konfrontatif, dan berorientasi pada keteladanan. Pesan disampaikan melalui komunikasi interpersonal yang mengutamakan pendekatan kultural, penggunaan bahasa lokal, serta penghormatan terhadap nilai dan adat Aceh. Aktivitas dakwah seperti *khuruj*, *jaulah*, dan *ta'lim* berperan sebagai medium pembentukan persepsi positif sekaligus sarana penyadaran sosial terhadap bahaya *hate speech*. Hambatan yang ditemukan meliputi stereotip negatif terhadap *Jama'ah Tabligh*, keterbatasan teknologi informasi, intensitas ujaran kebencian di media sosial, serta perbedaan tradisi keagamaan dengan sebagian masyarakat dayah. Penelitian merekomendasikan kolaborasi antara organisasi keagamaan, pemerintah daerah, dan tokoh adat dalam membangun strategi komunikasi yang lebih efektif untuk meredam *hate speech* secara berkelanjutan.

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## INTRODUCTION

Islam has been accepted in Indonesia as a belief system (religion) that provides a conceptual framework regulating all aspects of life (Solikah, 2013; Agam et al., 2024; Safrawali & Rozi, 2022). However, in its practical implementation, this concept intertwines with local cultures as a form of acculturation. As a result, it is not uncommon to observe the coexistence of two cultural systems simultaneously, or even the partial actualization of Islamic values in social life (Pramesti, 2023; Pane et al.,

2022). Various internal and external influences, such as Islamic schools of thought (madhhab), cultural traditions, and other factors, have given rise to diverse streams manifested in the form of groups (political and non-political), communities, or congregations (Latifa et al., 2024; Luthfi, 2016). This diversity largely stems from differences in the interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunnah, which serve as the primary guidance in everyday life (Ritonga et al., 2017).

Aceh is a region located at the westernmost tip of Indonesia, situated at the northern end of Sumatra Island. According to Gibb's study, as cited by Muhammad A. R., Aceh is regarded as the first place where Islam was introduced in the Indonesian archipelago. In 1297 CE, Marco Polo, an Italian sailor, visited Aceh. Later, in 1345 CE, the Moroccan traveler Ibn Battuta also visited the region. Historical accounts indicate that when these travelers set foot in Aceh, they encountered a society that had already embraced Islam, and a kingdom known as Samudera Pasai, ruled by Sultan Malik. By the fifteenth century, Aceh had even become one of the five largest Islamic kingdoms in the world. The designation of Aceh Province as *Serambi Mekkah* (the Veranda of Mecca) is inseparable from the historical process of Islamization in the region (Marduati & Haniffa, 2022).

Aceh Besar Regency is likewise inseparable from the history of the spread of Islam in Aceh. The area is home to numerous *dayah* (Islamic boarding schools) and has produced many charismatic ulama, making it one of the most respected regions in Aceh. In addition, a wide range of religious organizations are found in nearly every subdistrict of Aceh Besar. Several organizations that remain active within society include *Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)*, *Muhammadiyah*, *Sarekat Islam (SI)*, *Persatuan Islam (Persis)*, *Persatuan Umat Islam (PUI)*, *Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyah*, *Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (Perti)*, *Mathlaul Anwar*, *Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah*, *Wanita Islam*, *Darud Dakwah Wal Irsyad*, *DDII*, *Alkhairaat*, *Hidayatullah*, *Jama'ah Tabligh*, and many others. These organizations play significant roles in advancing the Muslim community and the nation at large (Rahman, 2021; Kamaruzzaman, 2024; Riski, 2022).

Many organizations have emerged and developed in Aceh; however, in this study, the author focuses on one particular organization, namely *Jama'ah Tabligh*, an Islamic movement whose da'wah is grounded in conveying the virtues and merits of Islamic teachings to every individual within its reach (Nurlaila & Liata, 2021). This

movement emphasizes that each of its adherents should devote a portion of their time to delivering and disseminating da'wah while deliberately avoiding partisan affiliations and political issues (Pabbajah et al., 2022).

Throughout the course of *Jama'ah Tabligh's* da'wah activities in Aceh, the historical trajectory of its development has certainly not unfolded smoothly or as ideally envisioned by its preachers (Nuraedah & Mutawakkil, 2020; Susanto & Fajri, 2025). Numerous obstacles and forms of hostility have been directed at members of this da'wah organization, ranging from verbal abuse and ridicule to outright rejection by segments of society. Such reactions often stem from the perception that their methods of da'wah are outdated and traditional when compared to contemporary forms of preaching that are considered more sophisticated and modern, and that can be carried out through various platforms. A growing body of research and empirical reports indicates that *Jama'ah Tabligh* frequently encounters social resistance, stigma, and hate speech across different contexts, extending beyond mere criticism of their da'wah methods. Several anthropological studies, for example, Faizal Pool's (2021) research published in *Modern Asian Studies*, document that members of *Jama'ah Tabligh* are often subjected to negative stereotypes, suspicion, and portrayals as a "backward" group that is allegedly irrelevant to modern developments in Islamic preaching (Pool, 2021).

In Indonesia, a study by Badrianto et al. (2025) on communities in Southeast Aceh found evidence of rejection, mockery, and negative perceptions of *Jama'ah Tabligh*, expressed through derogatory speech and social exclusion. These findings demonstrate that hate speech directed at *Jama'ah Tabligh* constitutes a tangible issue that has been documented both academically and empirically. On this basis, the present study examines how the organizational communication style of *Jama'ah Tabligh* in Aceh Besar functions in responding to and reducing various forms of hate speech that emerge in their interactions with the local community.

Hate speech is a term used to describe criminal acts related to speech containing insults or abuse directed at individuals or groups based on race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and religion (Indainanto et al., 2023). Such acts constitute forms of humiliation that generate an atmosphere of hostility and intimidation and are also considered part of defamation (Zamhari & Riadi, 2022).

According to the Head of the Public Information Bureau of the Indonesian National Police (*Polri*), law enforcement authorities have detected hundreds of pieces of content suspected of containing provocative elements and insulting messages targeting ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup relations (*SARA*), as well as hoaxes and hate speech. Throughout 2018 alone, 642 pieces of provocative content were identified. These data constitute evidence that a significant segment of Indonesian society remains affected by the phenomenon of hate speech (Sazali et al., 2020; Khiyaroh, 2024).

Acts of hate speech are carried out, among other ways, by denigrating other schools of thought or religious groups, accusing the practices of other groups of being *bid'ah* (illicit religious innovations). In some cases, individuals do not hesitate to label others who hold different interpretations as unbelievers (*takfir*) (Husda et al., 2021). Another strategy employed to confront da'wah targets perceived as deviant is to search for weaknesses in the figures or leaders being targeted by disseminating negative issues or narratives about those individuals to the public (Agus et al., 2020; Adde & Rifa'i, 2022; Udin et al., 2021). Forms of religiously motivated hate speech are also manifested through the production and dissemination of content, both verbal and non-verbal, such as videos or images accompanied by captions or textual messages, aimed at spreading negative stigma toward groups or sects deemed to deviate from one's religious teachings (Badriza et al., 2022; Pabbajah et al., 2022).

The phenomenon of religion-based hate speech directed at *Jama'ah Tabligh* in Aceh Besar indicates a gap in understanding and acceptance of the da'wah methods they employ. Although *Jama'ah Tabligh* emphasizes *da'wah bil hikmah*, non-confrontational approaches, and practices grounded in Islamic values, segments of society continue to perceive these approaches as outdated and incompatible with contemporary developments. This condition has the potential to generate social tension, reinforce stigma, and hinder the effectiveness of da'wah activities. Based on these issues, this study aims to analyze the organizational communication style of *Jama'ah Tabligh* in responding to hate speech behavior in Aceh Besar; to identify the obstacles encountered in implementing this communication style; and to examine the implications of applying such a communication style for efforts to mitigate hate speech within the community.

A number of previous studies have examined *Jama'ah Tabligh* activities from various perspectives, ranging from da'wah methods to societal responses to their practices. Studies such as those by Nurlaila and Liata highlight the methods of *khuruj*, *jaulah*, and *ta'lim* as efforts to strengthen individual faith (Nurlaila & Liata, 2021); Pabbajah emphasizes the apolitical character of *Jama'ah Tabligh* (Pabbajah et al., 2022); and Nuraedah and Mutawakkil report societal resistance to da'wah methods perceived as less relevant to modern communication (Nuraedah & Mutawakkil, 2020). Meanwhile, research on hate speech has generally focused on legal aspects and patterns of dissemination on social media (Zamhari & Riadi, 2022; Khiyaroh, 2024).

However, to position this study within an organizational communication framework, it is necessary to consider broader organizational communication literature and its application in religious contexts. Research on organizational communication patterns during the pandemic by Mochamad Taufiq Hidayat demonstrates how organizational structures, communication channels, and policies determine communication effectiveness in crisis situations (Hidayat, 2022). This finding is relevant for examining how religious organizations organize their internal and external communication practices when facing social pressures. Wardani's study emphasizes that organizational communication is a key determinant of effectiveness and productivity (Wardani, 2023), a perspective that encourages analysis of the structural and functional aspects of *Jama'ah Tabligh's* communication. In the field of da'wah, Pramesti's analysis of rhetorical styles and preacher personas provides a micro-level framework for unpacking the communication styles of da'wah figures, which can be adapted to examine the organizational communication style of *Jama'ah Tabligh* (Pramesti, 2023).

By integrating organizational communication literature with studies of da'wah and rhetorical styles, as reflected in prior scholarship, this study simultaneously occupies two significant research gaps. First, only a limited body of research has connected organizational communication practices with the phenomenon of hate speech in religious contexts; therefore, the empirical novelty of this study lies in mapping the organizational communication practices of *Jama'ah Tabligh* that have the potential to mitigate hate speech at the local community level. Second, from the theoretical perspective of organizational communication, this study contributes to



ongoing debates regarding the scope and flexibility of organizational communication theory itself. Specifically, it examines whether concepts such as formal–informal communication, organizational culture, and boundary-spanning communication, originally developed within secular organizational studies, remain relevant and can be adapted to explain the communication practices of religious organizations that are culturally grounded and persuasive in nature. In other words, the novelty of this study resides not only in its focus on *Jama'ah Tabligh*, but also in how its empirical findings enrich organizational communication theory, particularly with respect to the role of religious organizations as agents for mitigating hate speech through cultural strategies, internal structures, and collective communication styles.

## **METHODS**

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach (Ratnaningtyas et al., 2023) grounded in a constructivist–interpretivist paradigm and the practice of naturalistic inquiry. The choice of a constructivist paradigm is based on the ontological assumption that social reality, including the meanings and practices of organizational communication within *Jama'ah Tabligh*, is multidimensional and socially constructed by actors through their interactions. Epistemologically, knowledge about this organizational communication style is understood as the result of co-construction between the researcher and the participants, rather than as a single, neutral, or objective truth. The naturalistic inquiry approach supports this study by allowing research to be conducted within the natural socio-cultural context of Aceh Besar without experimental manipulation, thereby enabling communication phenomena to be observed and understood holistically (Crotty, 1998).

Based on this paradigmatic foundation, the research procedures include purposive selection of informants (shura leaders/*mas'ul*, active members, majlis participants, and affected community members), data collection through semi-structured in-depth interviews, participant observation of *khuruj/majlis/ta'lim* activities, and document analysis (majlis notes, da'wah writings, and public recordings) for data triangulation. The selection of these techniques is consistent with the study's objective of understanding the meanings and practices of communication from the perspectives of the actors and within their contextual settings.

The research site is Aceh Besar Regency, purposively selected because of its long history of Islamic dissemination, the presence of traditional *dayah* institutions, and the relatively intensive da'wah activities of *Jama'ah Tabligh*. The study was conducted over four months, from January to April 2025, encompassing the pre-field phase, data collection, and analysis.

Data analysis was conducted inductively using thematic analysis to identify patterns, categories, and themes related to organizational communication styles and mechanisms for mitigating hate speech. The analytic process followed the stages of data familiarization, initial coding, theme development, theme verification, and thematic writing as outlined by Braun and Clarke. To enhance analytical rigor, data reduction and data display techniques (matrices) as proposed by Miles and Huberman were employed (Huberman & Miles, 2002).

To ensure the quality and credibility of the study within the constructivist paradigm, this research applied the criteria of trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, as developed by Sugiono. These were operationalized through source and method triangulation, member checking, maintenance of a documentary audit trail, and rich contextual description to enable readers to assess the transferability of the findings (Sugiono, 2016). These measures were intended to ensure that the researcher's interpretations of the organizational communication style of *Jama'ah Tabligh* are scientifically accountable.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The da'wah strategy of *Jama'ah Tabligh*

The da'wah strategy of *Jama'ah Tabligh* essentially emerges from the informal, cultural, and non-structured character of the movement. The designation "*Jama'ah Tabligh*" itself did not originate from within the group, but was instead attributed by the broader community in reference to its routine da'wah activities, which follow a patterned practice of *tabligh* from one mosque to another (Mandiro, 2022). Various labels such as *Jama'ah kompor*, *Jama'ah jenggot*, *Jama'ah khuruj*, and *Jama'ah silaturahmi* indicate that their da'wah is rooted in a model of cultural da'wah, namely, da'wah that adapts to the social context of the community (Adde & Rifa'i, 2022). This model of cultural da'wah enables *Jama'ah Tabligh* to gain broad acceptance, as the approach



they employ is simple, non-confrontational, and exemplary in nature. This aligns with the findings of several scholars who argue that da'wah strategies constructed through everyday social interactions, rather than through formal organizational structures, exert a stronger influence (Noor, 2012; Sakareeya, 2014; Adde & Rifa'i, 2022; Ali et al., 2025; Gozali & Novriandi, 2024).

The informal character of *Jama'ah Tabligh* is reflected in the absence of offices, membership cards, and formal organizational structures at both local and global levels (Zamhari & Riadi, 2022). This informality constitutes an integral part of their da'wah strategy: rather than constructing a rigid institutional identity, they emphasize networks of social presence within the community. This approach is consistent with the literature on non-structural da'wah strategies, which highlights flexibility and natural social penetration as key elements (Nuraedah & Mutawakkil, 2020; Susanto & Fajri, 2025). By not binding the community through formal membership requirements, the strategy of *Jama'ah Tabligh* supports the opening of participatory spaces across different mazhab, social backgrounds, and age groups. This approach has been shown to be effective in the contexts of Indonesia and Southeast Asia, as discussed by Noor and Badriza, who argue that structural flexibility is a crucial factor in the successful expansion of this movement (Noor, 2012; Badriza et al., 2022).

Based on this cultural da'wah strategy, *Jama'ah Tabligh* can be categorized as a non-structural Islamic movement that relies on the strengthening of social interaction, interpersonal communication, and the habituation of religious practices as instruments of moral transformation. This structural flexibility also constitutes the basis for the researcher's use of the term "*Jama'ah Tabligh*" in this study for the sake of academic communication effectiveness (Zamhari & Riadi, 2022). Their da'wah strategy reinforces what Crotty (1998) conceptualizes as a meaning-making process, namely, a da'wah process that constructs religious meaning through direct experience rather than formal indoctrination. This approach is consistent with Pramesti's findings that effective da'wah strategies emphasize simplicity of messages, closeness between communicator and communicant, and the presence of consistent role models (Pramesti, 2023).

The core strategy of *Jama'ah Tabligh* is formulated into six characteristics (six points), which constitute the heart of their spiritual educational method. This method

represents a da'wah strategy based on value internalization, emphasizing the strengthening of the foundations of faith, the habituation of worship, and character improvement through practical stages. This value-habituatation-based da'wah concept aligns with Arifin's research, which demonstrates that the *Jama'ah Tabligh* strategy is capable of influencing family behavioral patterns through internal transformation (Arifin et al., 2021). These six characteristics form the basis of a transformative rather than merely verbalistic da'wah approach, as also emphasized by Agus, who argues that effective da'wah must engage cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions (Agus et al., 2020).

The first characteristic, *kalimah thayyibah*, functions as a strategy for shaping theological identity; the second, *khushu'* prayer, serves as a strategy for habituating worship; the third, knowledge and *dhikr*, emphasizes an educational strategy; the fourth, *ikram al-muslimin*, represents a social strategy grounded in service and respect for others; the fifth, *tashhih al-niyyah*, constitutes a strategy for cultivating spiritual integrity; and the sixth, *da'wah ilallah* and *khuruj fi sabilillah*, represents a strategy of direct da'wah mobilization within society (Latifa et al., 2024; Muchith, 2015). The combination of these six characteristics illustrates a holistic da'wah approach that emphasizes practice, social interaction, and exemplary conduct. Within the contemporary da'wah literature, these six characteristics can be mapped as effective interpersonal communication strategies, as explained by Ritonga and Khiyaroh, who argue that value transformation is more effective through repeated and consistent direct interaction (Ritonga et al., 2017; Khiyaroh, 2024).

This six-point method subsequently became the core strategy that attracted public sympathy, including among individuals who had previously been involved in deviant behavior. Studies such as those by Pabbajah and Pool emphasize that the success of *Jama'ah Tabligh* lies in its simple, non-judgmental da'wah practices that prioritize the strengthening of faith through togetherness (Pabbajah et al., 2022); (Pool, 2021). It is precisely this da'wah strategy based on direct engagement that has enabled the movement to expand globally, including in Aceh Besar. The method emphasizes moral improvement through a vibrant environment of worship rather than through formal da'wah structures.

In Aceh Besar, the da'wah strategy of *Jama'ah Tabligh* is centered at the Cot Goh Headquarters in Montasik. The placement of this headquarters constitutes a contextual strategy, as the location is considered appropriate as a center for consolidating the movement. Explanations of the mukim structure, geographical conditions, and the social dynamics of Montasik indicate that their da'wah strategy is based on community engagement, namely, embedding da'wah within areas that have strong potential for social transformation. Research by Marduati and Haniffa, as well as Rahman, demonstrates that Aceh possesses a strong religious tradition, making community-based strategies such as that of *Jama'ah Tabligh* highly relevant to implement (Marduati & Haniffa, 2022); (Rahman, 2021).

Historical data on the arrival of *Jama'ah Tabligh* in Aceh, originating from Malaysia in the 1970s, reveal a cross-border da'wah strategy that strengthened the movement's international networks (Noor, 2012; Hilmi, 2022). Processes of social adaptation, Malay-Acehnese cultural proximity, and mosque-to-mosque visitation-based da'wah models became important capital in fostering acceptance among Acehnese society. This has been demonstrated by Nurlaila and Liata, who found that community acceptance of *Jama'ah Tabligh* in Aceh is strongly determined by their egalitarian approach, their non-sectarian stance, and their emphasis on moral conduct (*akhlaq*) (Nurlaila & Liata, 2021).

The statement by Ustadz Muammar indicates that, at its initial stage, the da'wah strategy of *Jama'ah Tabligh* focuses on the habituation of worship in mosques, social interaction, and adaptation to local figures. Activities such as congregational prayer, *i'tikaf*, *silaturahmi* (social bonding), and *musyawarah* (deliberative consultation) constitute parts of a da'wah strategy grounded in role modeling and direct experience. This pattern of interaction aligns with the concept of religious communication articulated by Husda and Wardani, who argue that effective socio-religious change occurs through intensive communication that unfolds naturally, rather than through one-way preaching (Husda et al., 2021; Wardani, 2023). This strategy also reflects the principle of *dakwah bil hāl* (da'wah through action), as analyzed by Susanto and Fajri (Susanto & Fajri, 2025).

Ustadz Zulkarnen emphasizes that the variability in the naming of *Jama'ah Tabligh* across different regions reflects a strategy of adaptation to local contexts. Each

area has its own designation, such as *Jama'ah Jalan Gajah* in Medan or *Jama'ah Kebun Jeruk* in Jakarta, yet all remain connected through centralized da'wah guidelines originating in India. This demonstrates a transnational da'wah strategy that maintains local flexibility (Noor, 2012; Badriza et al., 2022). Their da'wah strategy, which avoids disputes over *mazhab* and *khilāfiyyah* issues, also constitutes a form of conflict-avoidance strategy, as analyzed by Nuraedah and Mutawakkil, thereby facilitating their acceptance across diverse segments of society (Nuraedah & Mutawakkil, 2020).

The geographical description of Cot Goh further reinforces the understanding that this location was selected as a headquarters based on considerations of community-based da'wah strategy and the social structure of the mukim. Regional accessibility, proximity to centers of community activity, and the distinctive characteristics of Aceh's mukim structure render this site strategic as a provincial-level da'wah center. Ustadz Hilmi's account of social change in Montasik following the arrival of *Jama'ah Tabligh* illustrates the effectiveness of a da'wah strategy based on the habituation of worship, the revitalization of mosque functions, and community renewal. The transformation from an area vulnerable to criminality into a community characterized by vibrant religious activities reflects the success of a long-term transformative da'wah strategy. This finding is consistent with Sazali's research, which shows that changes in youths' religious behavior can be achieved through a living environment of worship and sustained religious activities (Sazali et al., 2020; Muharudin et al., 2023; Widiastuty & Anwar, 2025).

Thus, the da'wah strategy of *Jama'ah Tabligh* in Montasik and other regions of Aceh focuses on revitalizing mosques, habituating the performance of the five daily congregational prayers, and fostering communities that support moral transformation. This strategy is not merely an internal operational pattern of *Jama'ah Tabligh*, but also constitutes a form of cultural da'wah that emphasizes social interaction, the habituation of worship, role modeling, and community strengthening. This model has proven effective in fostering sustainable social change.

### **Da'wah materials of *Jama'ah Tabligh***

The description of the da'wah materials of *Jama'ah Tabligh* in this study is derived from primary data in the form of direct observation, the researcher's

involvement in several *ta'lim* and *bayan* activities, and in-depth interviews with the Amir, senior members, and novice participants at several markaz in Aceh Besar. These field data were then compared with the literature on cultural da'wah in order to produce a more comprehensive analysis (Adde & Rifa'i, 2022). In general, the da'wah materials of *Jama'ah Tabligh* are oriented toward strengthening faith, reinforcing moral conduct (*akhlaq*), and internalizing the values of worship, which, according to Nuraedah & Mutawakkil, constitutes a distinctive feature of a non-confrontational and exemplar-based da'wah approach (Nuraedah & Mutawakkil, 2020). This indicates that da'wah content is not merely a set of religious messages, but also functions as a communication instrument used by the organization to shape the behavior of both its members and the wider community.

The results of interviews with the Amir of *Jama'ah Tabligh* show that one of the core materials consistently conveyed is the obligation to revive the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad through routine practices such as enlivening mosques and maintaining congregational prayers. This emphasis is consistent with Arifin's findings, which assert that the religious practices of *Jama'ah Tabligh* are characteristically ritualistic and oriented toward strengthening habitus through repetitive activities (Arifin et al., 2021). From the perspective of organizational communication, such repetition of messages constitutes part of message standardization aimed at shaping the organization's internal culture (Hidayat, 2022; Wardani, 2023; Andrezal, 2024; Yuliana, 2012). Thus, da'wah materials function as an internal mechanism within *Jama'ah Tabligh* to ensure uniformity of meaning and religious behavior among its members.

Across multiple sessions of field observation, the *jama'ah* consistently demonstrated the use of *dhikr* and *wird* as da'wah materials emphasized after congregational prayers. These practices were reinforced through motivational narratives delivered in *bayan*, highlighting the importance of inner purification, submission to Allah, and mental preparedness for da'wah. Pramesti explains that such dimensions of collective spirituality constitute the foundation for the formation of solidarity within the *Jama'ah Tabligh* community. From an organizational perspective, these spiritual materials foster internal cohesion through shared values, which

represent one of the core principles of organizational communication in maintaining the stability of group identity (Pramesti, 2023).

The observational findings also indicate that the da'wah materials conveyed almost never enter the realms of politics, economics, or other worldly issues. This affirms *Jama'ah Tabligh's* orientation toward the cultivation of faith and righteous deeds that are transhistorical in nature (Noor, 2012). Within the framework of organizational communication, the avoidance of worldly topics constitutes a form of boundary setting that enables the organization to remain focused on its core values and to prevent meaning deviation (Wardani, 2023; Luthfi, 2017). At the same time, this strategy can also be understood as part of risk communication, insofar as it limits the potential for conflict with society arising from the discussion of sensitive issues that may provoke resistance.

Interviews with several senior members reveal that they perceive the roots of various social problems, such as corruption, the moral degradation of youth, gambling, and alcohol abuse, as stemming from the weakening of public faith. Da'wah materials that emphasize faith-based aspects are consistent with the normative da'wah approach discussed by Adde & Rifa'i. From the perspective of organizational communication, such messages form part of a sensemaking strategy, whereby the organization assists its members in interpreting social phenomena through an internally established value framework (Adde & Rifa'i, 2022).

Narratives concerning human dependence on intellect, material resources, and personal competence were also repeatedly identified in the observed bayan. Such materials represent a form of reframing that invites *jama'ah* members to reorient their life perspectives toward spiritual strength. This narrative-based spiritual da'wah approach is likewise noted in studies of Sufi-oriented da'wah (Mandiro, 2022), and, within the context of organizational communication, functions to shape an internal belief system that influences individual decision-making within the community (Ritonga et al., 2017; Rintaningrum et al., 2025; Yuliana, 2012).

The emphasis on the mind-body relationship and the importance of maintaining spiritual balance also emerged across various *ta'lim* sessions observed. These messages were conveyed through simple stories and the use of religious metaphors to facilitate the understanding of the *mad'u*. This narrative-based mode of



delivery constitutes an effective interpersonal communication strategy within traditional da'wah (Udin et al., 2021). At the organizational level, this method reflects a humanistic and contextual communication style that is attuned to the spiritual needs of the audience.

Materials concerning the Day of Judgment, *targhib*, and *tarhib*, which were delivered consistently in every gathering, were also identified across all research sites. Such a structured body of material not only conveys eschatological teachings but also functions as emotional communication aimed at instilling moral awareness through the reinforcement of religious emotions. According to Pool, intense spiritual experiences form part of the way *Jama'ah Tabligh* builds long-term commitment among its members (Pool, 2021). Within organizational communication, this strategy is referred to as affective involvement, namely the use of emotions as an instrument for fostering loyalty.

In the context of da'wah directed toward the wider community, field data indicate that materials are consistently delivered directly through interpersonal approaches and close accompaniment. During *khuruj*, members visit residents' homes and employ subtle persuasive techniques through exemplary behavior rather than normative argumentation. This method is consistent with the cultural da'wah framework examined by Adde & Rifa'i, as well as participatory da'wah methods developed to address social problems within communities (Adde & Rifa'i, 2022; Agus et al., 2020). From the perspective of organizational communication, this pattern represents a flexible and situational form of downward communication designed to ensure that messages are received in accordance with local contexts.

Materials concerning the sacrifice of time, energy, and wealth were obtained through interviews with new members and senior members who mentor them. Messages about sacrifice function as a mechanism of organizational socialization, shaping commitment and increasing the participation of new members. Badriza demonstrates that the social structure of *Jama'ah Tabligh* relies heavily on the value of collective sacrifice as the community's symbolic capital. In organizational communication terms, this value constitutes a cultural norm that determines the behavioral standards of members (Badriza et al., 2022).

Interpersonal communication processes conducted through telephone calls, direct visits, and the accompaniment of the Ustadz to prospective new members were also identified in the field data. This communication pattern forms part of mentor-based communication, an organizational strategy for transmitting values and ensuring the sustainability of cadre regeneration. Personal communication is highly effective within religious organizations because it fosters emotional closeness and trust. Moreover, these micro-level communication patterns illustrate how da'wah materials are operationalized within the organizational communication structure of *Jama'ah Tabligh* in Aceh Besar.

### ***Jama'ah Tabligh* and the challenge of hate speech**

As previously noted, hate speech constitutes a form of verbal violence aimed at undermining, demeaning, or marginalizing particular groups based on social identity, including religion. Within the Islamic context, this term is often associated with the concept of *ḥaṭaba al-karāhah*, which etymologically refers to hatred and actions that incite hostility toward others (Husda et al., 2021; Noor, 2012). In various local contexts in Indonesia, hate speech directed at religious groups frequently manifests through negative labeling, stereotyping, or the dissemination of information that degrades the dignity of the targeted group (Mandiro, 2022). Therefore, an analysis of hate speech directed at *Jama'ah Tabligh* must be situated within an academic framework that affirms this phenomenon as empirically grounded and identifiable through social data as well as prior scholarly documentation.

As a transnational da'wah organization, *Jama'ah Tabligh* has experienced various forms of rejection and negative stereotyping, including in Aceh Besar. Several studies indicate that this group is often perceived as exclusive, conservative, or even "foreign" to local Islamic traditions (Nurlaila & Liata, 2021; Zamhari & Riadi, 2022; Pool, 2021). In an interview conducted by the researcher with Tgk. M. Yusuf, a community leader in Indrapuri District (Interview, March 7, 2025), stated that some residents view the da'wah methods of *Jama'ah Tabligh* as "*incompatible with Acehese culture*," thereby triggering disparaging comments on social media and in public discourse. Yusuf further noted that some residents even employ terms such as "*agam bak Arab*" or "*a deviant worship group*" as forms of hate-laden speech. These findings

are consistent with regional social reports indicating cultural resistance to the da'wah style of *Jama'ah Tabligh* (Badriza et al., 2022; Pabbajah et al., 2022). Consequently, the hate speech experienced by *Jama'ah Tabligh* is not merely an assumption, but a verifiable reality substantiated by field data and prior academic studies.

The communication style of *Jama'ah Tabligh* in the context of Aceh Besar demonstrates distinctive characteristics as a pattern of organizational communication. First, their communication flow is structural, organized through the division of roles such as *amir*, *mas'ul*, and members, which regulates da'wah coordination in a hierarchical manner (Arifin et al., 2021; Susanto & Fajri, 2025). This structure shapes internal communication patterns that flow from *jama'ah* leaders to members through instructions, deliberation (*musyawarah*), and *ta'lim*. Second, the forms of external communication they employ, whether through the delivery of bayan, the arrangement of da'wah schedules, or engagement in mosque-based activities, constitute institutional organizational communication practices rather than simple interpersonal interactions. The da'wah messages conveyed in these formats follow organizational guidelines and policy structures, so that each communicative activity functions as an implementation of the organization's vision, mission, and values (Wardani, 2023; Ritonga et al., 2017). Accordingly, the da'wah character of *Jama'ah Tabligh* must be understood within an organizational communication framework that emphasizes formal coordination, instructional mechanisms, and the construction of collective identity.

The method of *khuruj fi sabilillah* represents one of the most significant forms of organizational communication within *Jama'ah Tabligh*. *Khuruj* is not merely a da'wah activity, but an internal mechanism for the internalization of organizational values, carried out in a structured manner through orientation sessions, task allocation, and systematically designed da'wah agendas (Nuraedah & Mutawakkil, 2020). During *khuruj*, each member follows communication flows established by the organization, such as *ta'lim* sessions, daily *musyawarah*, task reporting, and the delivery of bayan, all of which are hierarchically regulated by the amir of the *jama'ah*. The *jaulah* activities conducted during *khuruj* are not merely persuasive communication practices, but constitute the implementation of organizational strategies for disseminating religious messages in a structured manner to the wider community. Thus, *khuruj* functions as

an instrument of organizational communication that connects the internal values of *Jama'ah Tabligh* with external communicative processes directed toward the public.

Within the framework of organizational communication, message and practice consistency constitutes an integral component of *Jama'ah Tabligh's* communication strategy. The reinforcement of collective identity through symbols such as dress, da'wah rituals, and standardized formats of message delivery strengthens organizational cohesion and facilitates public recognition of their communication structure (Pramesti, 2023; Arifin et al., 2021). The courteous demeanor and simplicity evident in message delivery are no longer understood merely as interpersonal practices, but as organizational guidelines that have been institutionalized within the da'wah curriculum of *Jama'ah Tabligh*. Consequently, the communication of da'wah messages by members does not represent individual expression, but rather communicative acts that embody the official identity of the organization and collectively established values. This aligns with organizational communication theory, which views the communicative behavior of members as an expression of the organization's structure, culture, and objectives (Mochamad Taufiq Hidayat, 2022).

The response of the Aceh Besar community to the communication style of *Jama'ah Tabligh* is strongly influenced by cultural foundations, religious traditions, and collective perceptions of da'wah practices. Aceh, as a region with a long history of Islamization (Marduati & Haniffa, 2022), possesses a robust value framework concerning religious authority and ritual practices. Some segments of the community perceive *Jama'ah Tabligh* positively due to its contribution to the revitalization of mosque life, as reflected in an interview with Tgk. Hasbi, a community leader from Gampong Lam Ilie (Interview, March 10, 2025). However, others regard the da'wah structure of *Jama'ah Tabligh* as too divergent from local traditions, generating resistance and, at certain levels, triggering hate speech. This analysis underscores that community acceptance is not merely a matter of personal preference but is closely linked to the interaction between *Jama'ah Tabligh's* organizational communication system and local religious culture.

The cultural adaptation undertaken by *Jama'ah Tabligh* in Aceh Besar should be understood as an organizational communication strategy rather than mere interpersonal flexibility. Their efforts to respect local traditions such as *kenduri*,

*peusijuek*, and other religious–social activities represent a form of organizational accommodation—that is, an organizational strategy to adjust messages and communicative approaches in order to enhance acceptance among target publics. Their non-confrontational stance toward local culture, insofar as it does not contradict core Islamic principles, indicates an institutionalized process of cultural negotiation rather than an individual one, reflecting a mode of communication that avoids extremist orientations (Adeni, 2020). The use of the Acehnese language in *bayan* or *ta'lim* likewise constitutes a communicative policy that reflects the organization's understanding of the sociolinguistic context of the local community. Accordingly, *Jama'ah Tabligh's* cultural adaptation forms part of an organizational communication strategy that strengthens message relevance and reduces the potential emergence of resistance or hate speech within society.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that the communication style of *Jama'ah Tabligh* in Aceh Besar Regency operates as a form of organizational communication constructed through structured da'wah mechanisms such as *khuruj*, *jaulah*, *bayan*, *ta'lim*, and *khidmat*. All of these activities function as channels for coordination, value transmission, and the maintenance of group identity through uniform interaction patterns that are globally transmitted within the *Jama'ah Tabligh* network. This organizational communication strategy emphasizes non-confrontational, persuasive, and cultural approaches, with adaptations to Acehnese language, norms, and culture, thereby minimizing social resistance and reducing the potential for religion-based hate speech. The sustainability of da'wah through mosque-based activities and repeated interactions within the community positions *Jama'ah Tabligh's* organizational communication as a model of moderate and effective cultural da'wah in fostering more harmonious social relations.

Nevertheless, this organizational communication pattern continues to face several challenges. Internal constraints include variations in communicative capacity among members, differences in educational backgrounds, and unequal levels of understanding regarding *Jama'ah Tabligh's* global communication standards. External constraints encompass negative stereotypes, the proliferation of hate speech in digital

media that has not yet been adequately addressed by *Jama'ah Tabligh* due to limited online engagement, resistance from certain local religious leaders, and the complex socio-political dynamics of Aceh. Therefore, strengthening organizational communication capacity, enhancing media literacy, and fostering collaboration with customary leaders, ulama, and local government are necessary to improve the effectiveness of *Jama'ah Tabligh's* communication strategy in responding to the phenomenon of hate speech within society.

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