

## Da'wah communication strategies in soldiers' mental development for strengthening religious moderation within the military environment

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### Abstract

Da'wah communication plays an important role in fostering moderate religious attitudes amid the challenges of extremism, radicalism, and intolerance in plural societies. In military institutions, strengthening religious moderation is essential to maintain soldiers' professionalism, social stability, and national commitment. This study aims to analyze the strategies of da'wah communication in soldiers' mental development to strengthen religious moderation within the military environment. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method using a da'wah communication approach. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, and were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that da'wah communication strategies in soldiers' mental development are implemented through religious lectures, interfaith dialogue, and the internalization of national and historical values using persuasive, rational, and humanistic approaches. These strategies contribute to shaping inclusive and tolerant religious attitudes while strengthening national integration within the military environment. Theoretically, this study enriches the field of Islamic communication by demonstrating that da'wah communication in military settings functions not only as a medium for transmitting religious values but also as an integrative instrument that connects religiosity, nationalism, and military professionalism in strengthening religious moderation.

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### Abstrak

Komunikasi dakwah memiliki peran penting dalam membangun sikap keagamaan yang moderat di tengah tantangan ekstremisme, radikalisme, dan intoleransi dalam masyarakat plural. Dalam lingkungan militer, penguatan moderasi beragama menjadi bagian penting untuk menjaga profesionalitas prajurit, stabilitas sosial,

### Keywords:

da'wah communication; soldiers' mental development; religious moderation; military environment

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serta komitmen kebangsaan. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis strategi komunikasi dakwah dalam pembinaan mental prajurit untuk memperkuat moderasi beragama di lingkungan militer. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan komunikasi dakwah. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi yang kemudian dianalisis melalui reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi komunikasi dakwah dalam pembinaan mental prajurit dilakukan melalui ceramah keagamaan, dialog lintas agama, serta internalisasi nilai-nilai kebangsaan dan sejarah perjuangan bangsa dengan pendekatan persuasif, rasional, dan humanis. Strategi tersebut berkontribusi dalam membentuk sikap keagamaan yang inklusif, toleran, serta memperkuat integrasi nasional di lingkungan militer. Secara keilmuan, penelitian ini memperkaya kajian komunikasi Islam dengan menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi dakwah dalam lingkungan militer tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai sarana transmisi nilai-nilai keagamaan, tetapi juga sebagai instrumen integratif yang menghubungkan nilai religiusitas, nasionalisme, dan profesionalisme keprajuritan dalam penguatan moderasi beragama.

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## INTRODUCTION

Islam places moderation as an important principle in understanding and practicing religious teachings, both in the aspects of worship and social interactions. The concept of religious moderation has become increasingly relevant in the context of modern society, which is characterized by religious, cultural, and social diversity. Religious moderation is understood as a religious attitude that rejects extremism, whether excessively rigid or overly liberal, and promotes tolerant, fair, and balanced attitudes in religious life (Habibie et al., 2021). In the Islamic perspective, the values of moderation are reflected in the principles of *tawasuth* (moderation), *tawazun* (balance), *i'tidal* (justice), and *tasamuh* (tolerance), which serve as the foundation for building a harmonious social life (Ayyubi et al., 2024).

Amid the dynamics of globalization and the increasingly rapid development of information technology, various challenges have emerged in religious life, such as radicalism, extremism, hate speech, and the growing potential for conflicts among social groups. These phenomena indicate that non-moderate religious understanding can trigger intolerant attitudes that have the potential to threaten social stability and national unity (Nurdin, 2021). Therefore, religious moderation has become a strategic necessity for maintaining social harmony in a pluralistic society. Moreover, the Indonesian

government has made religious moderation one of the priority agendas in national development to strengthen social cohesion and preserve national unity (Luthfi, 2025).

Efforts to strengthen religious moderation are not only the responsibility of educational institutions and civil society but are also important within state institutions, including military institutions. The Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), as the front line in safeguarding the sovereignty and integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, requires strong mental development so that soldiers possess integrity, nationalism, and a moderate understanding of religion. Mental development for soldiers is a systematic process aimed at shaping resilient military personnel through the integration of values of faith, nationalism, fighting spirit, and psychological well-being (Ilyas, 2016). In this context, mental development becomes an important instrument in maintaining the purity of soldiers' service and fostering moral attitudes that are aligned with the values of Pancasila and religious teachings (Yahdi, 2020).

One approach that can be used in the mental development of soldiers is through da'wah communication. Da'wah communication not only functions as a means of conveying religious messages but also as a process of value transformation aimed at developing religious and moral awareness in both individual and social life (Miskan et al., 2025). In the context of religious moderation, da'wah communication plays a strategic role in instilling the values of tolerance, balance, and inclusive attitudes toward differences. Through a persuasive, rational, and humanistic communication approach, da'wah messages can be delivered effectively, thereby strengthening a moderate understanding of religion and preventing the spread of radical ideologies within society (Miskan et al., 2025).

Previous studies have examined various aspects of religious moderation, religious communication, and character development within multicultural societies. The study by Anandari and Afriyanto (2022) highlights the concepts of brotherhood and tolerance in fostering religious moderation through the perspective of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's thought, which places the values of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) and respect for differences as the foundation of harmonious social life (Anandari & Afriyanto, 2022). The study by Muthowah (2025) demonstrates that da'wah communication conducted through sermons, religious gatherings, and religious dialogues contributes to shaping moderate attitudes within society and strengthening social relations across different groups (Muthowah, 2025). Furthermore, Nasoha (2025) found that religious moderation can serve as a bridge between Islamic da'wah and citizenship education in reinforcing the values of nationalism, tolerance, and social participation within society (Nasoha, 2025). Meanwhile, Munib and Muryanto (2023) emphasized that spiritual and mental development within the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) plays a strategic role in

shaping soldiers who are religious, possess integrity, and demonstrate commitment to their service duties toward the nation and the state (Munib & Muryanto, 2023).

At the international level, studies on religious communication and the development of social cohesion have also expanded considerably. Research by Putnam and Campbell (2010) indicates that interfaith interactions built through inclusive communication can enhance tolerance and strengthen social capital within pluralistic societies (Putnam & Campbell, 2010). Furthermore, Abu-Nimer's study (2018) asserts that communication approaches grounded in religious values can serve as effective instruments for peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and the strengthening of moderate attitudes within diverse communities (Abu-Nimer, 2013). These findings are reinforced by Banchoff's study (2020), which demonstrates that interfaith dialogue and communication based on humanitarian values contribute to the formation of inclusive civic identities and social cohesion across various public institutions (Banchoff, 2007). In addition, Siddiqui (2020) revealed that communication based on moral and spiritual values within hierarchical organizations can enhance the internalization of shared values, group solidarity, and commitment to institutional goals (Siddiqui, 2020).

Although various studies have discussed religious moderation, religious communication, interfaith dialogue, and mental development in different social contexts, most of the existing research has focused on educational institutions, religious communities, civil society, and social organizations. Studies that specifically examine da'wah communication strategies in the mental development of soldiers to strengthen religious moderation within military environments remain very limited. In addition, most previous studies have viewed da'wah communication within the context of Muslim communities, whereas the military environment constitutes a multireligious and multicultural social space. Therefore, in this study, da'wah communication is not understood as an effort to disseminate religious doctrines to followers of other religions, but rather as a process of communicating universal Islamic values, such as tolerance, justice, respect for differences, nonviolence, humanity, and national commitment. These values are communicated through persuasive, educational, and humanistic approaches so that they can be accepted by all soldiers regardless of their religious backgrounds.

Based on these conditions, the novelty of this study lies in the analysis of da'wah communication strategies as a model of value communication that integrates the dimensions of religiosity, nationalism, and military professionalism within the mental development of soldiers. Unlike previous studies that have predominantly positioned da'wah as a medium for conveying religious messages within civil society, this study positions da'wah communication as an instrument for character formation and the strengthening of religious moderation within military institutions that possess

distinctive organizational structures, work cultures, and development systems. Thus, this study offers an interdisciplinary perspective that bridges Islamic communication, religious moderation studies, and military mental development, an area that remains relatively underexplored in the academic literature.

Based on the foregoing discussion, the objective of this study is to analyze da'wah communication strategies in the mental development of soldiers and to explain their contribution to strengthening religious moderation within the military environment. This study is expected to provide a theoretical contribution to the development of Islamic communication studies, particularly regarding da'wah communication within multireligious formal organizations, while also offering a practical contribution to the development of soldier mental development models oriented toward strengthening religious moderation, national integration, and social cohesion.

## **METHODS**

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The case study design was selected because this research focuses on an in-depth examination of da'wah communication strategies in the mental development of soldiers within a specific context, namely the Mental Development and History Unit (Bintaljarah) of the XIV/Hasanuddin Regional Military Command (Kodam) in Makassar. This approach enables researchers to understand the phenomenon comprehensively within its natural setting and to uncover the meanings constructed by the actors involved in the process of soldier mental development. Through the case study design, the research not only describes the phenomena that occur but also explains the processes, interaction patterns, and communication strategies employed in strengthening religious moderation within the military environment.

The study was conducted at the Bintaljarah Unit of Kodam XIV/Hasanuddin Makassar. The selection of the research site was based on the consideration that Bintaljarah plays a strategic role in implementing ideological mental development, spiritual mental development, fighting spirit development, and historical development for soldiers of the Indonesian Army (TNI AD). In addition, this unit actively develops development programs oriented toward strengthening character, nationalism, and religious moderation within the military environment.

This study employs the da'wah communication approach as its analytical perspective. Da'wah communication is understood as the process of conveying Islamic values through persuasive, educational, dialogical, and humanistic communication with the aim of shaping understanding, attitudes, and behaviors that are aligned with Islamic teachings and humanitarian values. In the context of a military environment consisting of

soldiers from diverse religious backgrounds, da'wah communication is not only interpreted as the dissemination of religious teachings to Muslims but also as a communication strategy that internalizes universal values such as tolerance, respect for differences, nonviolence, national commitment, and harmonious coexistence. Thus, da'wah communication is analyzed through the elements of communicator, message, media, communicant, and the communication effects that emerge within the process of soldier mental development.

The selection of informants was conducted using a purposive sampling technique, whereby informants were intentionally chosen based on the consideration that they possessed knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in soldier mental development activities. The research informants consisted of the Head of Binteljarah of Kodam XIV/Hasanuddin, personnel serving as mental and spiritual development officers, religious counselors within Kodam XIV/Hasanuddin, and soldiers participating in mental development programs. The selection of these informants was based on their strategic positions and involvement in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of mental development activities that constitute the focus of this study.

Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation (Ratnaningtyas et al., 2023). Observation was used to directly examine the implementation of mental development activities and the process of conveying da'wah messages to soldiers. In-depth interviews were conducted to obtain information regarding da'wah communication strategies, patterns of message delivery, and their impact on strengthening religious moderation. Documentation was used to complement the research data through various official documents, activity reports, development guidelines, activity photographs, and other relevant archives.

Data analysis was conducted interactively through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification (Bungin, 2015). The analytical process was carried out continuously from the beginning of data collection until the completion of the study. To ensure data validity, this study applied source triangulation and technique triangulation by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation. Through these procedures, an in-depth understanding was obtained regarding da'wah communication strategies in the mental development of soldiers to strengthen religious moderation within the military environment.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Da'wah strategies in soldiers' mental development**

The findings of this study indicate that the da'wah communication strategy implemented by the Mental Development and History Unit (Binteljarah) of Kodam

XIV/Hasanuddin constitutes an integral part of shaping soldiers who are religious, moderate, and possess a strong commitment to nationalism. Based on the results of field observations, da'wah communication is not only carried out through the formal delivery of religious materials but also through various development activities that integrate religious values, national values, and the values of struggle within a unified mental development program.

The observational findings reveal that development activities are conducted through several structured forms of activities, including routine religious lectures, spiritual guidance, religious discussions and question-and-answer sessions, ideological mental development, national insight counseling, screenings of national struggle films, commemorations of religious and national holidays, as well as interfaith dialogues involving soldiers from different religious backgrounds. In each of these activities, mental development officers consistently connect religious values with the duties and responsibilities of soldiers as guardians of national sovereignty.

According to the Head of Binaljarah of Kodam XIV/Hasanuddin, the da'wah communication strategy employed is not merely oriented toward the delivery of religious materials but is more directed toward the development of moral awareness and national responsibility.

*"We do not only teach soldiers how to be religiously observant, but also how to understand that maintaining national unity, respecting differences, and avoiding extremist attitudes are part of the practice of religious values themselves" (Interview Result with Informant 1).*

This statement indicates that the da'wah communication developed by Binaljarah has an integrative orientation, namely connecting the spiritual dimension with the national dimension. This approach is reflected in the development materials, which consistently emphasize the importance of commitment to Pancasila, the *Sapta Marga*, the Soldier's Oath (*Sumpah Prajurit*), and the values of religious moderation.

Based on an interview with one of the spiritual mental development officers, the da'wah communication strategy is designed by considering the characteristics of soldiers who come from diverse cultural, educational, and religious backgrounds. Therefore, the communication methods employed tend to be persuasive and dialogical rather than instructive.

*"If communication is limited to one-way lectures, the message often does not last long. Therefore, we create space for dialogue so that soldiers can share*

*their experiences, questions, and the problems they face. In this way, communication becomes more effective” (Interview Result with Informant 2).*

Observational findings indicate that dialogue and question-and-answer sessions constitute one of the most active components of the development activities. Soldiers are given the opportunity to discuss various contemporary issues, including matters related to tolerance, the use of social media, challenges in family life, as well as the phenomena of radicalism and intolerance that are developing within society. Through this process, da'wah communication takes place in a two-way manner, thereby enabling a deeper internalization of values.

From the perspective of message substance, the study found that the da'wah communication implemented by Binaljarah focuses on four main categories, namely messages of *aqidah* (faith), messages of worship, moral messages, and messages of nationalism. Messages of *aqidah* are directed toward strengthening a moderate and non-exclusive faith. Messages of worship emphasize the importance of maintaining a balance between ritual observance and social responsibility. Moral messages are oriented toward the development of disciplined, honest, and responsible character. Meanwhile, messages of nationalism emphasize that love for the homeland and safeguarding national unity constitute part of the implementation of religious values.

According to one of the ideological mental development officers, all development materials are designed to build a balance between religious identity and national identity.

*“We always emphasize that being a good soldier must go hand in hand with being a good citizen and a good religious adherent. These three aspects must not be separated” (Interview Result with Informant 3).*

The findings of the study also indicate that the da'wah communication strategy has a positive impact on the religious understanding of soldiers. This is evident from interviews with several participants in the development program, who acknowledged gaining new perspectives regarding the relationship between religion and national life.

One of the soldiers stated:

*“Before participating in the development program, I understood religion primarily from the perspective of personal worship. After participating in these activities, I realized that respecting friends of different religions and maintaining unity are also part of religious teachings” (Interview Result with Informant 4).*

Another soldier explained:

*"The materials presented did not judge or blame any particular group. Instead, we were encouraged to understand that differences are something that must be respected because we live in a diverse nation" (Interview Result with Informant 5).*

Meanwhile, another informant emphasized that interfaith dialogue activities provided a different experience compared to the religious development programs he had previously attended.

*"Through interfaith dialogue, we are able to understand the perspectives of colleagues who hold different beliefs. Activities such as these make relationships among unit members more harmonious" (Interview Result with Informant 6).*

Observational findings also indicate that interfaith dialogue constitutes one of the important instruments within Binaljarah's da'wah communication strategy. These activities are conducted in an open atmosphere and emphasize the principle of mutual respect. Through this forum, soldiers are given the opportunity to understand diversity as a social reality that must be managed positively rather than as a source of division.

The findings of the study demonstrate that the da'wah communication strategy implemented by Binaljarah of Kodam XIV/Hasanuddin functions not only as a medium for spiritual development but also as an instrument for character formation, the strengthening of religious moderation, the prevention of radicalism, and the reinforcement of national integration. This strategy is implemented through a combination of educational, persuasive, dialogical, and humanistic approaches that enable religious and national values to be effectively internalized within the lives of soldiers. Thus, da'wah communication within the military environment not only results in enhanced religious understanding but also strengthens soldiers' commitment to unity, tolerance, and the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

### **Patterns of da'wah message delivery in the internalization of religious moderation values among soldiers**

The findings of this study indicate that the pattern of da'wah message delivery implemented by the Mental Development and History Unit (Binaljarah) of Kodam

XIV/Hasanuddin is not only oriented toward the formal dissemination of religious materials but is also designed as a continuous process of value internalization. The communication pattern developed integrates religious values, national values, and the values of struggle, thereby enabling messages of religious moderation to be received contextually by soldiers.

**Table 1. Patterns of da'wah message delivery in soldier mental development**

Activity Type	Pattern of message delivery	Religious moderation values instilled	Objective
Religious lectures	Persuasive and educational	Tolerance, nonviolence, religious balance	Strengthening the understanding of moderate religion
Interfaith dialogue	Dialogical and participatory	Mutual respect, harmony, appreciation of differences	Strengthening interreligious tolerance
National awareness counselling	Integrative	National commitment, love for the homeland	Strengthening soldiers' nationalism
Historical development of national struggle	Reflective and inspirational	Unity, sacrifice, solidarity	Strengthening national identity
Spiritual guidance	Interpersonal and consultative	Exemplary conduct, spiritual strengthening	Developing religious and moderate character.

Source: Compiled by the researchers

Based on the observational findings, the delivery of da'wah messages is carried out through various integrated development activities. Religious lectures constitute one of the primary methods used in the mental development of soldiers. However, these activities are not conducted in a one-way manner. Mental development officers actively connect religious materials with the real-life experiences faced by soldiers in the execution of their duties, family life, and social interactions within society.

The Head of Binaljarah explained that the delivery of da'wah messages must be adapted to the characteristics of military organizations, which require both discipline and exemplary conduct.

*“The da'wah messages that we deliver do not only address ritual worship but also how a soldier maintains national unity, respects differences, and carries out state duties as part of his moral and religious responsibilities” (Interview Result with Informant 1).*

This finding indicates that the pattern of da'wah message delivery employed is integrative in nature, linking religious values with national values simultaneously. In practice, religious materials are consistently associated with Pancasila, the *Sapta Marga*, the Soldier's Oath (*Sumpah Prajurit*), and the realities of Indonesia's diversity.

From the perspective of message substance, the study found that the values of religious moderation constitute the central theme across all mental development activities. These values include national commitment, interreligious tolerance, nonviolence, respect for local cultures, and exemplary conduct in daily life. These values are not taught separately but are conveyed in an integrated manner throughout every development activity.

According to one of the spiritual mental development officers, the approach employed must be communicative and contextual in order to be readily accepted by soldiers who come from diverse backgrounds.

*"We strive to use simple language that is closely related to the lives of soldiers. The examples provided are also drawn from their everyday experiences so that the messages conveyed are easier to understand and apply" (Interview Result with Informant 2).*

Observational findings indicate that the use of practical examples makes the process of value internalization more effective. Mental development officers frequently raise contemporary cases concerning tolerance, social conflict, the use of social media, and the challenges of soldiers' family lives as discussion materials during development activities.

In addition to religious lectures, the pattern of da'wah message delivery is also carried out through interfaith dialogue. These activities involve soldiers from different religious backgrounds and are conducted in an open atmosphere characterized by mutual respect. The forum provides participants with opportunities to exchange views on religious and national values without any tendency for one group to dominate another.

An ideological mental development officer explained that interfaith dialogue constitutes one of the important instruments for fostering tolerance within the unit environment.

*"Through dialogue, soldiers learn that differences in belief do not pose a threat to unity. On the contrary, diversity becomes a strength that must be preserved collectively as part of the identity of the Indonesian nation" (Interview Result with Informant 3).*

This finding indicates that the communication pattern employed is not merely informative but also transformative, as it encourages changes in soldiers' perspectives toward diversity.

From the perspective of communication media, observational findings indicate that the process of delivering da'wah messages is supported by the use of various media, such as presentation materials, mental development modules, counseling handouts, documentary videos on the history of the nation's struggle, and visual media displayed throughout the unit environment. These media function as reinforcements to the messages delivered verbally, thereby facilitating soldiers' understanding of the development materials.

The study also found that the da'wah messages delivered through mental development activities can be classified into four main categories, namely messages of *aqidah* (faith), messages of worship, moral messages, and messages of nationalism. Messages of *aqidah* are directed toward strengthening moderate and non-extremist beliefs. Messages of worship emphasize the balance between ritual observance and social responsibility. Moral messages focus on the development of disciplined, honest, and responsible character. Meanwhile, messages of nationalism instill the awareness that safeguarding national unity constitutes part of the practice of religious values.

The impact of this pattern of da'wah message delivery is reflected in changes in soldiers' perspectives toward diversity. One soldier stated:

*"Through this development program, we not only learn about religion but also learn how to respect colleagues who hold different beliefs and continue working together in carrying out our duties" (Interview Result with Informant 4).*

A similar statement was also expressed by another soldier.

*"What I have experienced is that this development program does not preach to us. Instead, we are invited to engage in discussions and understand that religious moderation is very important in military life, which consists of people from diverse backgrounds" (Interview Result with Informant 5).*

Another informant added:

*"The development activities have helped us better understand that*

*maintaining unity and respecting differences are part of our service to the nation and the state" (Interview Result with Informant 6).*

The findings of the study indicate that the pattern of da'wah message delivery implemented by Binaljarah of Kodam XIV/Hasanuddin combines persuasive, educational, dialogical, and exemplary approaches. This pattern has proven effective in supporting the internalization of religious moderation values through the integration of religious, national, and struggle-oriented messages. Thus, da'wah communication functions not only as a medium for spiritual development but also as a strategic instrument for fostering tolerance, strengthening national identity, and preventing the spread of extremist ideologies within the military environment.

### **The contribution of da'wah communication to strengthening religious moderation and national integration within the military environment**

The findings of this study indicate that the da'wah communication implemented by the Mental Development and History Unit (Binaljarah) of Kodam XIV/Hasanuddin makes a significant contribution to strengthening religious moderation while simultaneously reinforcing national integration within the military environment. Da'wah communication functions not only as a means of soldiers' spiritual development but also as a strategic instrument for shaping religious attitudes that are inclusive, tolerant, and oriented toward national interests. Through various structured mental development programs, the values of religious moderation are continuously internalized, thereby becoming an integral part of soldiers' character and behavior in carrying out their duties as guardians of national sovereignty.

Based on the results of field observations, the mental development activities conducted by Binaljarah integrate religious materials with national values through spiritual lectures, ideological mental counseling, group discussions, the development of the tradition of struggle, and reflective activities on the history of the nation's struggle. In each of these activities, mental development officers emphasize that the practice of religious teachings must go hand in hand with commitment to Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, the *Sapta Marga*, and the Soldier's Oath (*Sumpah Prajurit*). Thus, religious values are not positioned separately from national values; rather, they mutually reinforce one another in shaping soldiers who are professional and moderate in character.

Analysis of the lecture materials, mental development modules, counseling presentation materials, and briefing scripts used in development activities indicates that the da'wah messages delivered consistently contain the values of national commitment, interreligious tolerance, respect for cultural diversity, nonviolence, and the importance

of maintaining national unity. These materials not only explain the normative aspects of religious teachings but also provide concrete examples of the implementation of religious moderation values in both military life and social life. This demonstrates that the da'wah communication applied has a broad orientation, namely to cultivate religious awareness while simultaneously fostering national consciousness among soldiers.

One of the Binaljarah Mental Development Officers explained that strengthening religious moderation constitutes an important component of every mental development activity because soldiers come from highly diverse backgrounds. According to him:

*"We always emphasize that differences in religion, ethnicity, and culture are not reasons for division. On the contrary, diversity is a source of strength for the unit. Therefore, development materials always connect religious values with the spirit of unity and service to the nation" (Interview Result with Informant 1).*

This statement indicates that da'wah communication is directed toward building a collective awareness that diversity is a form of social capital that must be preserved collectively within military life.

The findings of the study also indicate that da'wah communication contributes to strengthening national integration through the internalization of the values embedded in the history of the nation's struggle. In various activities related to the development of the tradition of struggle and national awareness counseling, mental development officers connect the stories of national heroes' struggles with religious values such as sincerity, sacrifice, responsibility, and brotherhood. This approach aims to build the understanding that safeguarding the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia constitutes part of the implementation of the moral and spiritual values taught by religion.

This is reinforced by a statement from the Head of the Mental Development Section, who explained:

*"We do not merely deliver religious materials, but also relate them to the history of the nation's struggle. Soldiers must understand that maintaining the unity of Indonesia is part of the practice of the religious values they believe in" (Interview Result with Informant 2).*

This statement demonstrates that da'wah communication within the military environment is not solely oriented toward aspects of religious rituals but is also directed

toward strengthening soldiers' national identity and nationalism.

The contribution of da'wah communication to strengthening religious moderation is also directly experienced by soldiers. Based on the interview findings, the majority of informants stated that mental development activities helped them understand religious teachings in a more open and proportional manner. One soldier stated:

*"Before regularly participating in mental development activities, I understood religion mainly from the perspective of personal worship. After participating in these activities, I came to understand that respecting differences and maintaining unity are also part of religious teachings" (Interview result with informant 5).*

Another soldier added:

*"The materials provided have helped us better understand that, as members of the Indonesian National Armed Forces, we must serve as examples in maintaining harmony. We are taught to respect colleagues of different religions and to work together without discriminating based on background" (Interview result with informant 6).*

These findings indicate that the da'wah communication conducted by Binteljarah not only enhances religious understanding but also fosters inclusive and tolerant social attitudes.

In addition, da'wah communication also serves a preventive function in preventing the spread of extremism and radicalism within the military environment. Analysis of the development materials indicates that mental development officers consistently provide an understanding of the dangers of intolerance, radicalism, and ideologies that are contrary to Pancasila. Through persuasive and dialogical approaches, soldiers are encouraged to understand religion in a moderate manner, respect differences, and reject all forms of violence committed in the name of religion.

According to one of the spiritual development officers:

*"We continuously remind soldiers to be cautious of provocative religious information, especially that which circulates on social media. Soldiers must be able to filter information, understand religion wisely, and avoid being easily influenced by ideologies that contradict national values" (Interview result with informant 3).*

The da'wah communication implemented by Binaljarah performs educational, integrative, preventive, and transformative functions in the mental development of soldiers. Through persuasive, dialogical, and contextual communication approaches, the values of religious moderation are successfully internalized into the lives of soldiers, thereby strengthening national integration, enhancing moral resilience, and shaping soldiers who are religious, tolerant, and possess a strong commitment to nationalism. These findings affirm that da'wah communication plays a role not only in spiritual development but also serves as a strategic instrument for maintaining social stability and national unity within the military environment.

## Discussion

Indonesia is known as a country with a very high level of religious, cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity. This diversity constitutes a social asset that must be managed wisely in order to prevent social conflict and religious polarization. In this context, religious moderation has become an important approach for maintaining social harmony and strengthening national unity. Religious moderation emphasizes a balanced religious attitude, one that avoids extremism and is capable of respecting differences in beliefs and religious practices within social life (Nisa et al., 2025); (Luthfi, 2025). This attitude is highly relevant not only in civil society but also within state institutions such as the military, which plays a strategic role in maintaining national stability.

From the Islamic perspective, the concept of religious moderation is known as *wasathiyah*, which refers to a middle-path approach that distances believers from both extremist and excessively liberal attitudes. This concept emphasizes balance between belief, religious practice, and social relations with fellow human beings. Religious moderation encompasses the values of tolerance, justice, balance, humanity, and harmony, which serve as essential foundations for building peaceful social life (Nurdin, 2021; Wiguna & Andari, 2023). Thus, religious moderation is understood not only as a theological concept but also as a social strategy for preventing radicalism and religion-based conflicts within multicultural societies (Habibie et al., 2021).

In the context of Indonesia's pluralistic society, religious moderation has also become a strategic agenda of the government for maintaining national stability. Programs aimed at strengthening religious moderation, developed through various educational, social, and religious policies, seek to foster an inclusive understanding of religion while promoting appreciation for national values (Mursalat & M, 2024). Education serves as one of the most important means of instilling the values of religious moderation in a systematic and sustainable manner, as values of tolerance and diversity can be cultivated

from an early age through educational processes (Lestiani et al., 2025). This approach is also relevant for implementation within the military environment through soldier mental development activities.

Mental development constitutes an important component of the human resource development system within the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI). These activities aim to shape soldiers who possess high levels of morality, spirituality, and professionalism in carrying out their duties to the state. Mental development functions not only to strengthen the psychological aspects of soldiers but also to instill ideological, struggle-oriented, and spiritual values that serve as the foundation of soldiers' behavior in their daily lives (Ilyas, 2016; Yahdi, 2020). Therefore, mental development serves as a strategic instrument in shaping soldiers who are not only physically strong but also possess moral and spiritual integrity.

In its implementation, mental development within the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) is carried out through several main components, namely ideological mental development, spiritual mental development, the development of the tradition of struggle, and psychological mental development. These four components complement one another in shaping soldiers who are nationalistic, religious, and professional in character (Munib & Muryanto, 2023). Spiritual mental development, for example, is conducted through religious activities such as lectures, religious study sessions, worship development programs, and spiritual guidance aimed at enhancing the mental and moral resilience of soldiers. These activities also serve to strengthen ethical and humanitarian values in the execution of military duties.

However, the success of mental development is determined not only by the development materials but also by the communication strategies employed in the process of conveying messages to soldiers. In this context, da'wah communication constitutes an important approach that can be utilized to communicate religious values effectively and humanely. Da'wah communication is the process of conveying the messages of Islamic teachings to individuals or groups with the objective of shaping understanding, attitudes, and behaviors that are aligned with Islamic values (Faridah et al., 2023). This process involves several important elements, including the communicator (*da'i*), da'wah messages, communication media, methods of delivery, and the audience or target of da'wah (*mad'u*).

An effective da'wah communication strategy requires the preacher's ability to understand the characteristics of the audience as well as the social context in which da'wah is conducted. Within the military environment, da'wah communication approaches need to be adapted to the characteristics of discipline, organizational hierarchy, and the professional demands placed upon soldiers. Therefore, da'wah

communication strategies should emphasize persuasive, dialogical, and educational approaches so that the messages conveyed can be positively received by soldiers (Muchith, 2015; Sari et al., 2024). Humanistic interpersonal communication approaches have also been proven to build stronger emotional relationships between mental development officers and soldiers, thereby making da'wah messages easier to understand and internalize (Gandhi, 2020).

In addition, da'wah communication strategies in mental development can also utilize various modern communication media. The development of information technology provides opportunities for the broader and more effective dissemination of da'wah messages through various digital communication platforms. Communication media such as da'wah videos, visual materials, and educational content can be used as learning tools that are engaging and easily understood by soldiers (Khiyaroh, 2024; Zamzami et al., 2023). The utilization of communication technology in da'wah can also enhance the effectiveness of delivering moral messages and prevent the spread of inaccurate religious information (Shamad, 2017).

From a social perspective, da'wah also plays an important role as a means of social transformation. Da'wah functions not only to convey religious teachings but also to shape behavior and societal values toward a better way of life. Through appropriate communication approaches, da'wah can encourage changes in the attitudes of individuals and groups within society, including those within the military environment (Muhsinah, 2024). In this context, da'wah can serve as an important instrument for instilling the values of religious moderation among soldiers so that they are able to practice their religion in a balanced manner and respect differences in beliefs.

Strengthening religious moderation through da'wah communication strategies is also in line with the values of brotherhood and tolerance that serve as the foundation of a multicultural society in Indonesia. The thoughts of Islamic scholars, such as KH. Hasyim Asy'ari emphasizes the importance of brotherhood (*ukhuwah*) and tolerance as fundamental principles for building social harmony amid diversity (Anandari & Afriyanto, 2022). These values are highly relevant for implementation within the military environment, which consists of soldiers from diverse religious, cultural, and regional backgrounds.

Thus, da'wah communication strategies in the mental development of soldiers play a very important role in strengthening religious moderation within the military environment. Unlike da'wah communication practices in civilian settings, which are generally oriented toward enhancing the religious understanding of society, da'wah communication within the military operates within an organizational system characterized by a command hierarchy, strict discipline, task orientation, and

institutional character formation. These conditions influence the form of messages, methods of delivery, duration of development activities, and the objectives of da'wah communication, which are directed not only toward enhancing individual religiosity but also toward strengthening loyalty to the state, unit solidarity, and the moral readiness of soldiers in carrying out their duties. Therefore, the da'wah messages delivered in the mental development of soldiers do not stand alone as religious messages; rather, they are integrated with national values, the *Sapta Marga*, the Soldier's Oath (*Sumpah Prajurit*), and the ethics of the military profession.

The findings of this study indicate that da'wah communication within the military environment has developed as a model of institutional da'wah communication that is contextual, structured, and oriented toward the formation of collective character. Within this model, the effectiveness of da'wah is measured not only by improvements in religious understanding but also by its ability to cultivate moderate attitudes, strengthen social cohesion among members from different religious and cultural backgrounds, and enhance commitment to national integration. Accordingly, this study makes a conceptual contribution to the development of da'wah communication scholarship by demonstrating that the context of military organizations produces characteristics of da'wah communication that differ from those found in civilian social spaces, namely a form of da'wah communication that integrates spiritual, national, and professional dimensions within a systematic framework of mental development.

## **CONCLUSION**

Da'wah communication strategies play an important role in supporting the success of soldiers' mental development in strengthening religious moderation within the military environment. Through persuasive, educational, and humanistic communication approaches, religious messages can be conveyed effectively, thereby fostering a balanced, tolerant, and inclusive religious understanding among soldiers. Mental development that is integrated with da'wah communication not only emphasizes aspects of spirituality but also instills the values of nationalism, discipline, and moral responsibility in carrying out duties as soldiers of the state. With appropriate communication strategies, the da'wah process can serve as a means of shaping soldiers who are religious, professional, and capable of respecting religious and cultural diversity within a plural military environment.

In addition, strengthening religious moderation through da'wah communication strategies also contributes to creating a military environment that is harmonious, cohesive, and oriented toward humanitarian values. The integration of mental development, religious education, and communication approaches that are adaptive to

the characteristics of soldiers can enhance spiritual awareness and social maturity in addressing various dynamics of religious life. Therefore, da'wah communication strategies in mental development need to be continuously developed in a systematic and sustainable manner by utilizing various methods, media, and communication approaches that are relevant. This effort is expected to strengthen religious moderation within the military environment while supporting the formation of soldiers who are not only physically resilient but also possess moral integrity, strong spirituality, and a commitment to national unity and integrity.

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