

The Bil Lisan Da'wah Strategy of Islamic Religious Counselors at the KUA of Medan Perjuangan District in Fostering Religious Life in the Community

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study is grounded in the significant role played by Islamic religious extension officers in fostering the religious life of the heterogeneous, multicultural, and busy urban community in Medan Perjuangan District. The study aims to analyze the *dakwah bil lisan* (oral preaching) strategies employed by these officers at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in Medan Perjuangan District.

Method – This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and the examination of official documents. Data analysis utilizes the Miles and Huberman interactive model comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing while data validity is verified through source and technique triangulation.

Findings – Research findings indicate that the *dakwah bil lisan* (oral preaching) strategy operates effectively through tactical functions embedded in structured work programs. These programs include mobile outreach (*Suling*) to mediate internal mosque conflicts, scheduled guidance for 16 religious study groups, and Friday sermons. Furthermore, preachers have adopted a hybrid approach by transforming oral communication into micro-video content for digital media, thereby aligning with the psychology of a busy urban population. Sociological barriers specifically group exclusivism were successfully overcome through fluid, informal communication patterns and the method of leading by example. The study recommends enhancing the information technology competencies of Islamic religious preachers to optimize the quality of digital *dakwah* content in the future.

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INTRODUCTION

The sociological dynamics of modern society require a paradigm shift in da'wah from a spontaneous religious movement to a professional activity grounded in management science. The integration of theological values with modern administrative principles has given rise to the discipline of da'wah management, encompassing the functions of Takhthith (planning), Tanzhim

(organizing), Tawjih (directing), and Riqabah (supervising) (Munir & Ilaihi, 2021). The implementation of da'wah management transforms religious messages into measurable programs through systematic da'wah mapping. Without structured operational governance, religious guidance is vulnerable to failure. Rakhma (2022) demonstrated that weak implementation of da'wah management during the execution and evaluation stages can hinder the achievement of religious program objectives within the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) (Fahrudin & Saputra, 2024). A similar pattern has been identified in smaller-scale religious institutions such as majelis taklim, where incomplete application of management functions creates obstacles to effective da'wah implementation (Rusmini, 2021). These findings indicate that governance issues in da'wah transcend institutional scales. Therefore, institutions such as the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) are expected to adopt this managerial framework to enhance the efficiency of grassroots religious development (Matsum & Rubino, 2023).

This phenomenon is reflected in the religious guidance practices carried out by Islamic Religious Counselors at the KUA Medan Perjuangan District. Based on preliminary interviews with the Head of KUA conducted in April 2026, religious development in this district is implemented through various activities, including annual program planning, mosque development initiatives, assistance with the legal registration of majelis taklim, monthly district-level religious gatherings, and coordination through WhatsApp groups. However, the diversity of these activities does not necessarily indicate the comprehensive implementation of da'wah management functions. The extent to which Takhthith (planning), Tanzhim (organizing), Tawjih (directing), and Riqabah (supervising) are systematically applied within the Bil Lisan da'wah strategy of Islamic Religious Counselors remains insufficiently examined. Moreover, the religious heterogeneity of urban communities presents additional challenges to the systematic implementation of da'wah (Khasanah & Jamil, 2021; Fauzan et al., 2025). This gap between the ideal model of professional da'wah management and the actual practice of grassroots religious guidance provides the primary rationale for this study, particularly in examining the Bil Lisan da'wah strategy employed by Islamic Religious Counselors in fostering community religiosity at the KUA Medan Perjuangan District.

The religious landscape of Medan Perjuangan District demonstrates a substantial level of religious activity, consisting of 56 mosques distributed across nine urban villages and 17 active majelis taklim. Interview findings further reveal that the religious guidance of the Muslim community is managed by only eight Islamic Religious Counselors, alongside one Christian Religious Counselor serving the non-Muslim community. With only eight counselors responsible for 56 mosques and 17 majelis taklim across nine urban villages, the scope of religious guidance is exceptionally broad, requiring a well-planned and systematic Bil Lisan da'wah strategy to ensure equitable outreach to all religious institutions. This empirical condition underscores the necessity of a structured and measurable verbal da'wah strategy, enabling Islamic teachings to be effectively communicated through direct verbal interaction between counselors and congregations without relying on spontaneous or unplanned approaches. Within this context, Bil Lisan da'wah remains the principal method employed by Islamic Religious Counselors at the KUA Medan Perjuangan District, grounded in the theological foundation of Qur'an Surah An-Nahl (16):125.

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ١٢٥

Meaning: "Invite (all people) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in the best manner. Indeed, your Lord knows best who has strayed from His way, and He knows best who is rightly guided." (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019).

This verse contains three principal methods of da'wah: hikmah (wise speech), mau'idzah hasanah (good counsel), and mujadalah (argumentative dialogue), the delivery of which must be adapted to the capacity of the mad'u so that the message of da'wah can be understood effectively (Suri, 2022).

The classical manifestations of these methods include Friday sermons, public religious lectures, regular Islamic study circles, premarital guidance for prospective couples, and face-to-face religious counseling services (Hasanah, 2023). Their primary strength lies in direct interaction and moral persuasion (ta'lif al-qulub). However, technological disruption and the high mobility of urban communities have encouraged the redefinition of bil lisan da'wah into a hybrid form that integrates physical and digital spaces (Syarifuddin, 2023). Religious messages are now packaged audiovisually through new media (TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook) to expand their reach without diminishing their theological substance (Wibowo et al., 2025).

The sociological dynamics of the Medan Perjuangan area have become increasingly complex due to its proximity to higher education institutions, creating intensive student mobility and shaping a pattern of social interaction characterized by individualism and demanding work routines. A similar phenomenon has also been identified in the urban community of Medan Tembung District, where urbanization, occupational busyness, and virtual interaction have eroded traditional social relationships and replaced them with more transactional forms of interaction (Josua Gea et al., 2026). Therefore, an adaptive and systematic da'wah approach is required to reach urban communities with their unique characteristics.

Although the urgency of the counselors' role is extremely high, successful religious development in urban areas can no longer be achieved solely through monotonous conventional da'wah methods. The success of da'wah is largely determined by how its strategy is managed, planned, and systematically implemented through well-established da'wah management (Munir & Ilaihi, 2021). Many da'wah programs fail not because the religious content is inadequate, but because of weak implementation and the inability to adapt to the psychological changes of the mad'u. Previous studies indicate that da'wah in the modern era requires tactical program organization and the utilization of interactive communication media so that religious messages can be received by communities with limited time (Syarifuddin, 2023). Therefore, examining how da'wah strategies are implemented in practice constitutes a fundamental area of research.

Looking at the existing research landscape, most studies on Islamic Religious Counselors have focused either on general performance evaluation or on the conceptual discourse of religious moderation. Several related studies have separately discussed how the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) adapts to serving plural urban communities (Pratama & Nisa, 2023), the effectiveness of

short-video utilization for cyber da'wah by counselors (Raharjo, 2024), and the role of counselors as communicators in resolving internal conflicts within mosque institutions (Hidayat, 2022). From the perspective of personal communication media, Muchlis (2020) also highlighted the role of WhatsApp as a medium of da'wah for Islamic Religious Counselors, particularly in maintaining the continuity of religious guidance during periods of limited face-to-face interaction.

Mesiono and colleagues (2022) emphasized that the effectiveness of improving community religious practice depends greatly on the systematic mapping of da'wah strategies developed by religious counselors. This argument is reinforced by the study of Matsum and Rubino (2023), which highlighted the importance of counselors' managerial leadership in addressing the complex sociological problems of urban communities in Medan City. Similarly, Rakhma's (2022) research at the Office of Religious Affairs of Pacet District, Cianjur Regency, demonstrated that the implementation of the four functions of da'wah management plays a significant role in the success of premarital guidance programs within KUA, although the study also noted that the implementation of the directing and supervising functions still encountered several technical obstacles.

At a smaller institutional scale, Rusmini's (2021) study of the At-Ta'qwa Mosque Majelis Taklim in Banjarmasin confirmed that the integrated implementation of da'wah management functions contributes to the growth and sustainability of da'wah activities. Nevertheless, the study also identified various internal and external inhibiting factors affecting the effectiveness of da'wah management. These findings demonstrate that the framework of da'wah management is both relevant and adaptable across different scales of religious institutions, ranging from community-based majelis taklim to formal governmental institutions such as KUA.

Studies on the integration of da'wah management with digital media adaptation have been widely conducted, as illustrated by Fauzan et al. (2025), who examined the organization of da'wah within plural societies, including the challenges and opportunities faced by da'wah institutions in adapting to heterogeneous socio-religious dynamics. However, these studies generally focus on digital media-based da'wah or on plural societies in a broader context. In contrast, discussions regarding how bil lisan da'wah, as a form of face-to-face communication that remains the primary approach of Islamic Religious Counselors, is systematically implemented through the functions of da'wah management (takhthith, tanzhim, tawjih, and riqabah) within the Office of Religious Affairs in densely populated urban districts such as Medan Perjuangan remain very limited. This research gap lies in the absence of empirical mapping of how counselors combine the bil lisan approach with the demands for efficiency and the time constraints of urban communities while simultaneously managing the sociological tensions arising from community heterogeneity. Based on this background, the fundamental question and objective of this study are to analyze the bil lisan da'wah strategy of Islamic Religious Counselors at the Office of Religious Affairs of Medan Perjuangan in fostering community religiosity.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a field research design aimed at examining and describing in depth the implementation of the bil lisan da'wah strategy of Islamic Religious Counselors within its natural context (Sugiyono, 2021). A field research design was chosen

because the focus of this study is to understand the socio-religious practices and interactions that occur directly between counselors and the community. Consequently, primary data were collected through direct observation and interviews at the locations where counseling programs were conducted rather than relying solely on documents or secondary data (Creswell, 2023). The researcher served as the primary instrument throughout the processes of data collection and analysis.

The research was conducted at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) of Medan Perjuangan District, Medan City. This location was academically selected as a representative case because it has a significant counselor-to-service-area ratio, with only eight Islamic Religious Counselors serving 56 mosques and 17 majelis taklim distributed across nine urban villages within a heterogeneous urban area adjacent to higher education institutions. Furthermore, the district has implemented a structured mobile counseling program (Suling), making it a representative case of bil lisan da'wah based on da'wah management.

Key informants were determined using purposive sampling with the following inclusion criteria: actively serving within the organizational structure of the Office of Religious Affairs of Medan Perjuangan District and being directly involved in the implementation of the Mobile Counseling (Suling) program as well as the supervision of majelis taklim. Based on these criteria, the study involved three key informants: the Head of the Office of Religious Affairs of Medan Perjuangan District (Ramlan) and two functional Islamic Religious Counselors, Abdullah Amin Hasibuan and M. Affan Sihite. These informants were selected because they are the principal stakeholders responsible for designing and implementing the bil lisan da'wah strategy at the research site. Data were considered to have reached data saturation when information obtained from the three key informants, who constituted the entire core personnel of the counseling program, became consistent and produced no new findings. This was subsequently strengthened through triangulation with observational data and official documents (Creswell, 2023).

Data collection combined three instruments. First, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted during April–May 2026 using an interview guide while allowing informants the freedom to elaborate on their responses. The interview themes included verbal counseling strategies, the utilization of digital media, and implementation challenges in the field. Second, non-participant observation was carried out by directly observing the implementation of the Mobile Counseling (Suling) program and majelis taklim activities without participating in them. The observations focused on interactions between counselors and congregants, the religious materials delivered, and community responses to the guidance provided. Third, documentation studies were conducted using official archives selected for their relevance to the counseling program, including the Majelis Taklim syllabus, the Medan City Counseling Schedule, and data from the Mosque Information System (SIMAS). These documents were used to verify and complement findings from interviews and observations (Moleong, 2024).

All collected data were analyzed manually using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2024), which consists of three stages. First, data reduction involved manually coding interview transcripts and observation notes to identify data relevant to the research focus. Second, data display involved organizing these codes into thematic categories, such as conventional verbal

da'wah strategies, digital media adaptation, and implementation challenges. Third, conclusion drawing involved interpreting these themes by relating them to the framework of da'wah management functions (takhtith, tanzhim, tawjih, and riqabah).

To ensure the validity and objectivity of the findings, data trustworthiness was established through source triangulation, by comparing statements from the Head of KUA with those of the two counselors regarding the same practices to ensure consistency, and method triangulation, by matching interview findings with field observations and official documents (Suling schedules and SIMAS). To further strengthen the credibility of the findings, member checking was also conducted by reconfirming interview summaries with each informant to ensure that the researcher's interpretations accurately reflected the intended meanings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of a Structured Dakwah Bil Lisan Work Program

Based on administrative data and official documents obtained from the KUA of Medan Perjuangan District, the implementation of the dakwah bil lisan strategy by Islamic Religious Counselors (PAI) is realized through a series of planned work programs. The first flagship program is the "Suling" Movement (Mobile Religious Counseling). Based on the Religious Counseling Schedule Document for Majelis Taklim, Suling is consistently carried out every Monday to Thursday after the Zuhur prayer at mosques in the Medan Perjuangan area. Mobile Religious Counseling aims to enliven mosques, convey religious messages, and ensure that activities at the mosques run properly. In addition, this program also functions to reactivate the "Magrib Mengaji" movement at mosques and serves as a medium of two-way oral communication to mediate internal conflicts within the management of the Mosque Prosperity Board (BKM).

In addition to Suling, the PAI of the Medan Perjuangan KUA manages structured guidance for 16 assisted Majelis Taklim Groups. The counselors, namely Abdullah Amin Hasibuan and Affan Sihite, distribute tasks evenly based on the Mosque Data Collection Form through the Mosque Information System (SIMAS). In addition to routine religious study sessions, dakwah bil lisan is optimized through the Friday Sermon pulpit, which consistently incorporates messages of religious moderation (wasathiyah), including the values of justice, balance, tolerance, and consistency as the four main principles of wasathiyah (Zunairoh & Ghofur, 2026), as well as premarital guidance for prospective brides and grooms concerning the foundations of a sakinah family.

The findings above indicate that the Suling program has been successful in the field because it is able to reverse the logic of traditional dakwah. Whereas urban communities are usually passively asked to come to the KUA office or a large mosque, the counselors instead implement a door-to-door system by visiting residential mosques after the Zuhur prayer, utilizing the midday break of urban communities amid their work routines. Managerially, the effectiveness of this program lies in the counselors' ability to position themselves not as rigid bureaucratic instruments, but rather as third-party mediators. The BKM conflict resolution mechanism is carried out through non-confrontational oral communication after worship, taking advantage of the calm psychological condition of the congregation. As a result, messages of moderation and the institutional organization of mosques can be accepted without being confronted by the sectoral egos of groups (Munir & Ilaihi, 2021).

The successful management of 16 Majelis Taklim and the optimization of the sermon pulpit demonstrate strong synchronization between the planning function (Takhtith) and the organizing function (Tanzhim) of dakwah at the KUA of Medan Perjuangan District. Structured scheduling and congregation mapping based on the Mosque Information System (SIMAS) demonstrate that

community development in urban areas requires accurate geographical and demographic data. This data serves as the main foundation so that the division of counselor tasks and the determination of dakwah materials are not carried out randomly, but rather based on the actual core needs of urban communities.

Theoretically and empirically, these findings are in line with and strengthen the results of the study by Mesiono et al. (2022), which emphasizes that the effectiveness of dakwah bil lisan by Islamic Religious Counselors is strongly determined by the orderly management of work programs designed to adapt to the characteristics of mad'u. This is also consistent with the findings of Fahrudin & Saputra (2024), which show that a well-organized and data-based program structure has proven capable of maintaining the continuity of community moral development amid the intense dynamics of urban social life.

Furthermore, when compared with the previous study by Pratama and Nisa (2023) concerning the adaptation of KUA services in urban areas, the findings of this study provide an important development (novelty). Whereas the study by Pratama and Nisa tends to view the KUA merely as a passive religious administrative service institution, the findings at the KUA of Medan Perjuangan demonstrate the existence of proactive dakwah management. The use of SIMAS as an instrument for organizing dakwah not only organizes administrative aspects, but also optimizes the function of counselors as field managers who are capable of mapping potential conflicts and the heterogeneity of religious understandings before dakwah bil lisan is implemented.

Thus, this synchronization of planning and organizing proves the theory of Munir & Ilaihi (2021), in which the success of dakwah in modern society no longer depends on the individual rhetorical style of a preacher (mubaligh), but rather on the extent to which a dakwah institution is able to professionally manage potential resources and data.

The Pattern of Actuating (*Actuating*) and Community Approach Methods

The results of interviews with the three key informants, the Head of the KUA, Mr. H. Ramlan, as well as two functional Islamic Religious Counselors, Mr. Dr. M. Abdullah Amin Hasibuan and Mr. H. M. Affan Sihite, confirm that the actuating function (tawjih/actuating) is carried out through a combination of direct (face-to-face) and digital dakwah methods. Abdullah Amin Hasibuan explained that the primary method of delivering counseling is conducted directly through face-to-face meetings and lectures to the community, which are then complemented by the use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok to reach people who cannot attend physically, including sharing documentation of activities in the form of online news and videos. The transformation of conventional religious materials into the digital space in this manner is consistent with a digital dakwah model based on religious moderation, in which dakwah messages are repackaged for new media without losing the substance of moderate values and the authenticity of their teachings (Effendi et al., 2022). This explanation is consistent with the statement of the Head of the KUA, Ramlan, who stated that various counseling activities have been published and can be accessed by the public through the internet, indicating that the KUA institution consciously utilizes digital footprints as part of its dakwah actuating strategy, rather than merely as administrative documentation.

In addition to the digital aspect, both counselors emphasized the importance of an exemplary approach (*uswah hasanah*). Abdullah stated that the exemplary method is also important, namely by providing examples of good attitudes in everyday life, including in terms of religious moderation, tolerance, and social interaction. This approach is consistent with the informal nature of field coordination: the determination of counseling locations is carried out by directly contacting the administrators of the local Majelis Taklim or Mosque Prosperity Board (BKM), and coordination

is generally conducted through direct communication, telephone calls, or flyer distribution, without requiring an official letter because the cooperative relationship has already been established for a considerable period of time. This finding strengthens the argument that dakwah actuating at the KUA of Medan Perjuangan District relies on the relational capital (human relations) that has been established between counselors and community leaders, rather than on formal bureaucratic mechanisms.

The Suling program also serves as a mediative vehicle for actuating. Abdullah explained that the implementation of Suling is not only intended to convey religious teachings, but also to provide guidance regarding the condition of mosques and communities, including helping to resolve conflicts occurring within the mosque environment, such as disputes among administrators, while also encouraging the reactivation of Magrib Mengaji activities. This BKM conflict mediation function is also one form of actuating that requires counselors to act as informal mediators, rather than merely as one-way conveyors of religious messages.

Nevertheless, triangulation with the statement of Affan Sihite reveals another aspect that was not covered in the previous discussion, namely the existence of sociological obstacles in dakwah actuating. Affan stated that one of the obstacles that frequently arises is misunderstanding among the community, for example, the assumption that the presence of counselors is intended to provide material assistance, as well as the existence of certain groups or communities that are difficult to reach due to differences in understanding or religious organizational backgrounds. Nevertheless, Affan emphasized that, in general, the community's response to the presence of counselors is very positive, and the people in the area are already quite familiar with the counselors, which is also influenced by the area's proximity to the campus area and the high population of students around the research location. This finding shows that the effectiveness of dakwah actuating is not solely determined by the counselors' strategies, but also by the level of acceptance and religious literacy of the local community, a dimension that has not been fully reflected in the narrative of program success in the previous section.

Overall, these three data sources mutually reinforce one another (source triangulation) while complementing each other: the Head of the KUA provides an overview of policies and the publication of activities in general, Abdullah explains the technical mechanisms for implementing actuating in the field, while Affan presents the perspective of challenges faced by counselors at the grassroots level. This combination strengthens the interpretation that dakwah bil lisan actuating (tawjih) at the KUA of Medan Perjuangan District is adaptive, combining digital strategies, personal exemplarity, and informal conflict resolution, while still facing structural limitations in the form of misunderstandings and heterogeneity in the religious understandings of urban communities.

Dakwah Management Functions in the Implementation of the Dakwah Bil Lisan Strategy

The implementation of dakwah bil lisan by Islamic Religious Counselors at the KUA of Medan Perjuangan District demonstrates the integration of the four functions of dakwah management, namely takhthith (planning), tanzhim (organizing), tawjih (actuating), and riqabah (supervision), as proposed in the framework of Munir and Ilaihi (2021).

In terms of planning (takhthith), the consistent scheduling of Suling every Monday–Thursday after the Zuhur prayer, as recorded in the Religious Counseling Schedule Document for Majelis Taklim, demonstrates that the implementation of dakwah bil lisan is not carried out spontaneously, but has been planned by considering strategic times to reach congregations amid the routines of urban communities. In terms of organizing (tanzhim), the division of guidance tasks for 16 Majelis Taklim groups between Abdullah Amin Hasibuan and Affan Sihite based on data from

the Mosque Information System (SIMAS) demonstrates that the distribution of counselors' work is arranged based on geographical and demographic data mapping, rather than merely on assumptions.

These two functions indirectly indicate the operation of the actuating function (*tawjih*) and supervision function (*riqabah*), because the consistency of the scheduled implementation of Suling and the SIMAS-based division of tasks that continues over time could not be realized without direction and monitoring from the KUA toward counselors in the field. The continued optimization of the Friday Sermon pulpit as a means of conveying messages of religious moderation (*wasathiyah*), as well as the consistency of premarital guidance, also indicate that there is a mechanism for directing uniform dakwah objectives among counselors, as well as a form of quality control over the materials delivered so that they remain aligned with the KUA's vision of religious development.

These findings are consistent with research at the KUA of Pacet District, Cianjur Regency, which also shows that the success of institutional dakwah programs within the KUA environment is highly dependent on the integrated implementation of the four functions of dakwah management, from planning to control and evaluation, particularly in routine and sustainable programs such as premarital guidance (Rakhma, 2022). This parallel strengthens the argument that KUA institutions, regardless of their regional context, require solid managerial governance so that dakwah programs do not operate incidentally. A similar finding was also identified in dakwah management practices within Majelis Taklim, where the four management functions are also implemented, although on a smaller institutional scale than KUA (Rusmini, 2021), indicating that the dakwah management framework is adaptive to various scales of religious institutions.

However, these two studies also note that the *riqabah* function is often the weakest point in dakwah management practices, because supervision and evaluation frequently operate without explicitly measurable achievement indicators even though monitoring processes continue to take place (Rakhma, 2022; Rusmini, 2021). This pattern is also reflected in the findings of this study, in which evidence of *riqabah* at the KUA of Medan Perjuangan District is more frequently observed implicitly through the consistency of program implementation rather than through formally documented evaluation mechanisms.

Thus, the practice of dakwah bil lisan at the KUA of Medan Perjuangan District demonstrates that the four functions of dakwah management do not operate separately, but rather intertwine within a single cycle of sustainable program management—from data-based planning and measurable task organization to direction and supervision that are implicitly reflected in the consistency of program implementation in the field.

Based on the research findings, the dakwah bil lisan strategy of Islamic Religious Counselors at the KUA of Medan Perjuangan District operates effectively, adaptively, and structurally through the optimization of the organizing function (*Tanzhim*) and actuating function (*Actuating*) based on Mosque Information System data. This success is realized through concrete programs such as the Mobile Religious Counseling Movement to enliven mosques, routine guidance for 16 Majelis Taklim, as well as the delivery of religious moderation messages through Friday Sermons and premarital guidance. In addition, the counselors have successfully adopted a hybrid approach by reconstructing conventional oral communication into micro-video content on social media to adapt to the busy lifestyles of urban communities. Various sociological obstacles, such as exclusivism in religious understanding and economic misconceptions, have been overcome persuasively through informal communication channels via WhatsApp groups, interactive dialogue based on the core needs of the congregation, as well as direct exemplary methods (*uswah hasanah*). To optimize the quality of religious guidance in the future, this study formulates strategic recommendations in the form of increasing the quota of functional counselors, improving information technology and digital rhetoric skills, and developing a measurable data-based counseling evaluation system.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, the dakwah bil lisan strategy of Islamic Religious Counselors at the KUA of Medan Perjuangan District is implemented in a structured manner through the synergy of the four functions of dakwah management: planning (takhthith), organizing (tanzhim), actuating (tawjih), and supervision (riqabah), which are manifested in concrete work programs such as the Mobile Religious Counseling Movement (Suling), routine guidance for 16 Majelis Taklim groups based on data from the Mosque Information System (SIMAS), the delivery of religious moderation messages through the Friday Sermon pulpit, and premarital guidance for prospective brides and grooms. Dakwah actuating is carried out adaptively through a hybrid approach that combines face-to-face oral communication with the use of social media (TikTok, Instagram, Facebook) and informal communication channels such as telephone and WhatsApp groups, also supported by exemplary methods (uswah hasanah) and the role of counselors as informal mediators in resolving internal conflicts within the management of the Mosque Prosperity Board (BKM). Nevertheless, the implementation of this strategy still faces several sociological obstacles, such as public misunderstanding regarding the function of counselors and limited access to community groups with different backgrounds of religious understanding, while the supervision function (riqabah) appears to operate more implicitly through the consistency of program implementation than through formally documented evaluation mechanisms. Thus, it can be concluded that the success of dakwah bil lisan at the KUA of Medan Perjuangan District does not solely depend on the individual rhetorical abilities of counselors, but rather on the extent to which dakwah program management is implemented systematically, adaptively to the characteristics of urban communities, and supported by sustainable managerial governance.

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