



The Management of Da'wah Activities in Strengthening Inclusive Religious Education and Ethno-Social Pedagogy for Social Cohesion

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study aims to explore three main aspects, namely the forms of da'wah management implemented, the challenges faced, and the strategies adopted to create inclusive religious programs that are accessible to all congregations.

Methodology: The research employed a descriptive qualitative design with purposive site selection. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with mosque administrators, preachers, active congregants, and community leaders. Secondary data were gathered from administrative records and program documentation. Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

Main Findings: The findings indicate that da'wah activities function not only as religious gatherings but also as social learning arenas where congregants collectively negotiate values, identities, and intergroup relations. These activities are managed through systematic planning, congregation segmentation, diverse program implementation, and participatory evaluation. They also serve as a medium for interethnic interaction and cultural exchange that directly contribute to ethno-social pedagogy. Within this pedagogical space, local cultural wisdom and community-based religious understanding are integrated to strengthen inclusive learning processes. Ultimately, the management of da'wah in this context strengthens da'wah's role as a dynamic social learning arena that not only promotes inclusive religious education but also enriches ethno-social pedagogical practices that are essential for maintaining long-term social cohesion.

Novelty/Originality of this study: This study provides evidence that Masjid Muslimin serves as a model of inclusive da'wah management in an urban context and demonstrates the potential of mosque-based religious governance to strengthen communal relations in multicultural settings. Its contribution lies in illustrating the socio-pedagogical value of structured da'wah management for enhancing inclusive participation among diverse Muslim congregants.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Mosques function as central institutions of religious life for Muslims and hold an important role [1], not only in the implementation of mahdhah worship [2], but also in performing educational, social, and da'wah functions that extend across all segments of society [3]. In an urban setting such as Medan, where Muslim

communities exhibit diversity in social, economic, and cultural backgrounds, the design of inclusive religious activities becomes a significant challenge for mosque administrators seeking to accommodate all congregants without discrimination.

This diversity necessitates a da'wah approach grounded in inclusive communication [4]. Communication in da'wah is not solely a medium for transmitting Islamic teachings but also a tool for cultivating social harmony in multicultural environments [5]. Inclusive da'wah prioritizes cultural empathy [6], and acknowledges the complexity of dual identities found within contemporary societies [7]. Through this approach, the universal message of Islam as rahmatan lil alamin can be conveyed in a contextual, relevant [8], and widely acceptable manner for varied community groups [9].

Within the broader framework of da'wah management, a structured approach provides the necessary foundation [10] for preachers to design communication strategies that are effective, targeted, and responsive to congregational needs [11]. Data-driven planning and contextual analysis help ensure that da'wah activities correspond to the characteristics of the target community [12]. Alongside this, the integration of digital technology, particularly through social media, expands the outreach of da'wah efforts to remain adaptive and relevant [13], while upholding the inclusive principles of Islam [14].

Previous studies have emphasized that da'wah in multicultural societies must incorporate cultural empathy [15], linguistic adaptation, and open dialogue to prevent potential cultural or religious tensions [16], [17]. Historically, mosques have served as multifunctional institutions since the era of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The Nabawi Mosque, for example, functioned not only as a center of worship but also as a space for education, consultation, conflict resolution, and community support [18], [19]. This historical precedent demonstrates that mosques have long possessed the potential to act as social-educational institutions rooted in local culture, which aligns with Vygotsky's concept of social learning that highlights the centrality of communal interaction in shaping knowledge [20], construction as well as Bandura's theory of observational learning in community settings [21]. Similarly, the ideas of Banks on community-centered education and Tilaar's insights on ethno-pedagogy reinforce that religious spaces often serve as culturally responsive learning environments that integrate local values into educational practice [22].

In the Indonesian context, where multiculturalism is embedded in everyday social interactions, mosques increasingly serve as centers of social learning that facilitate intergroup engagement and strengthen local cultural values. They function as communal spaces where diverse ethnic groups collaborate in religious, educational, and social activities that embody the nation's inclusive identity. Through da'wah activities, mosques contribute to the reconstruction of inclusive religious values by encouraging respect for diversity, mutual understanding, and social solidarity. As Indonesia's urban populations grow more heterogeneous, these social learning processes become increasingly essential for maintaining cohesion and preventing fragmentation within religious communities.

Previous research has discussed the role of mosques in worship and social services, including economic empowerment, support for the poor [23], welfare for orphans, and strengthening the role of women [24]. Studies on mosque management also explore planning [25], organizing, implementing, and controlling activities [26]. However, existing research still lacks a comprehensive analysis of how da'wah management at the mosque level is intentionally structured to be inclusive, particularly in urban contexts where congregants differ widely in age, gender, social class, and educational background. Research addressing how mosques can manage inclusive da'wah programs that effectively reach youth, women, marginalized communities, and diverse socioeconomic groups remains scarce. The limited literature on this topic indicates the need for studies that examine the methodological, communicative, and managerial dimensions of inclusive da'wah practices.

This study addresses this gap by examining how da'wah activities are managed to foster inclusive religious education and ethno-social pedagogy as a foundation for social cohesion. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on inclusive da'wah management in an urban mosque context, an area that remains understudied despite its growing relevance in multicultural societies. The urgency of this study stems from the increasing demand for inclusive religious spaces capable of accommodating diverse congregations and countering social polarization. Therefore, this research aims to contribute to both theoretical development and practical strategies for strengthening inclusivity and social cohesion through effective da'wah management in urban Muslim communities.

Responding to this gap, the present study examines the management of da'wah activities at Masjid Muslimin in Medan. It aims to explore three key aspects, namely the forms of da'wah management that are implemented, the challenges that are encountered, and the strategies that are adopted to shape inclusive religious programs that are accessible to all congregants.

This study offers both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it enriches the discourse on inclusive da'wah management within urban community settings. Practically, its findings can serve as a model for developing mosque-based da'wah initiatives that are more responsive, participatory, and adaptive to congregational diversity. In this regard, mosques emerge not only as centers of worship but also as institutions of social education and community empowerment that reinforce the overarching principle of rahmatan lil alamin.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design to examine the management of da'wah activities in strengthening inclusive religious programs, a design chosen because it enables researchers to portray social processes and managerial practices within their natural contexts in accordance with the characteristics of qualitative inquiry. The research site was selected purposively based on the mosque's active religious programs and its strategic location in an urban environment marked by diversity in the social, economic, and cultural backgrounds of congregants. The research subjects consisted of mosque administrators, religious teachers, active congregants, youth representatives, women's groups, and local community leaders, all selected through purposive and snowball sampling to ensure the representation of varied perspectives on da'wah management, following established methodological recommendations for selecting information-rich participants. Data sources included both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and field notes, while secondary data were gathered from administrative archives, da'wah program documents, and mosque records, a combination that aligns with best practices in qualitative research for generating comprehensive and contextualized data.

Data collection instruments consisted of a semi-structured interview guide, an observation sheet, and a documentation checklist, each designed to explore indicators related to the planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating of da'wah programs. The instrument grid included planning strategies, activity flow, participation patterns, inclusivity practices, and documentation of written program materials, allowing for the systematic capture of managerial and pedagogical aspects of da'wah activities. Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive mode [27], which involves data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was conducted by categorizing information based on major research themes, while data display involved organizing findings in narrative and matrix forms to facilitate interpretation. Conclusions were generated through iterative reflection and verified by continuously comparing emerging insights with field data, informant cross-checking, and multiple data sources, an approach considered suitable for qualitative studies with complex sociocultural data.

The research procedures consisted of five integrated stages, namely conducting a preliminary study and literature review, determining the research site and subjects, collecting field data, organizing and analyzing data, and validating findings. To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, methodological triangulation, source triangulation, and member validation were applied consistently throughout the research process, reflecting widely recognized techniques for strengthening rigor and minimizing researcher bias in qualitative inquiry.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Inclusive Da'wah Management at the Muslimin in Medan

The implementation of inclusive da'wah management at the Muslimin Mosque on STM street Medan demonstrates systematic planning based on measurable and data-driven approaches. Administrators identify congregational characteristics such as age, gender, occupation, educational level, and socio-economic background to ensure that program development corresponds to real community needs rather than assumptions. This approach aligns with the educational principle of social learning, where learning begins from the lived experiences and contexts of the community, as emphasized by Bandura [28]. Such mapping prevents the homogenization of religious programs and ensures that inclusivity is realized through equitable access to da'wah benefits.

The organizational structure reinforces this approach by establishing specialized working units responsible for programs based on community segmentation, including women's study circles, youth and student learning groups, economic empowerment initiatives, and digital literacy teams. This model reflects participatory pedagogy [29], where knowledge creation involves active participation from community members rather than top-down instruction. In accordance with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory [30], each working unit operates as a collaborative learning space in which knowledge is co-constructed through meaningful social interaction and shared cultural experiences. These collaborative spaces ensure that the mosque operates as a learning community where educational processes are embedded in everyday social relations.

Program implementation demonstrates diversification in methods, formats, and thematic focus to accommodate the heterogeneous nature of Medan's urban population. Contemporary issues such as digital ethics and Islamic finance are presented for younger congregants, while more traditional study circles remain available for older adults. For shift workers or individuals with limited mobility, online and recorded sessions are provided to facilitate flexible participation. This strategy reflects Banks' model of community-based multicultural education [31]. Through various learning channels, the mosque sustains participation across different social groups, strengthening social cohesion.

Monitoring and evaluation processes extend beyond administrative assessments and function as civic education that empowers congregants to contribute to the continuous improvement of mosque programs. Indicators such as attendance, representation, participant satisfaction, and feedback serve as essential components of inclusive governance. These evaluations help ensure that religious programs remain responsive to emerging issues within

the community and prevent the reproduction of exclusivity. The mosque's responsiveness to community input also reflects a democratic learning culture that supports social cohesion in Medan's plural society.

One mosque administrator interviewed in July 2025 emphasized the shift toward evidence-based planning, explaining: *"We no longer create study schedules based solely on annual traditions. We distribute small questionnaires via WhatsApp and during Friday prayers to identify the topics needed by congregants. From there, we learned that many young congregants want to study digital ethics and Islamic finance."* This statement reflects an emerging culture of community-driven learning aligned with contemporary da'wah management theory.

Similarly, an ustaz interviewed in August 2025 explained that inclusivity requires adaptive communication: *"I can no longer just give one-way lectures. Congregants from various backgrounds need space for dialogue. Sometimes I use examples from student life, sometimes from the world of work, or from the experiences of housewives. The religious message remains the same, but it is contextualized to their reality."* His explanation illustrates the application of ethno-pedagogy, where religious instruction is embedded within the cultural and social experiences of the learners.

A female congregant shared in August 2025 that inclusive management has increased women's involvement: *"In the past, activities were mostly for men. Now there are special majelis taklim for young mothers, Islamic parenting classes, and even a child-friendly room during studies. I feel this mosque is more open and we can be actively involved."* This reflects the integration of gender-inclusive pedagogy into mosque governance.

Community leaders interviewed in September 2025 emphasized the mosque's expanding role as a center of social inclusion: *"We see that mosques are not just places of worship. There are MSME training activities for young people, digital literacy programs, and Islamic family counseling services. All of this brings the mosque closer to the complex needs of urban communities."* This indicates that the mosque serves as a civic learning space, reinforcing Tilaar's concept of education as a foundation for multicultural citizenship [22].

Digital technology further strengthens the inclusivity of da'wah. The use of social media, livestreaming, and communication applications enables access for shift workers, migrant students, and elderly congregants with mobility limitations. However, digital literacy gaps remain a challenge, particularly among older adults. In response, the mosque uses hybrid learning models combining face-to-face studies with recorded sessions. This approach avoids the emergence of new digital-based exclusivity and ensures that all congregational segments remain included.

Youth involvement is another indicator of the success of inclusive da'wah management. Themes such as digital ethics, environmental responsibility in Islam, and career guidance create relevance for younger congregants and embody the principles of contemporary civic education. By offering discussion spaces on issues pertinent to youth, the mosque repositions itself as a center of socio-religious dialogue in an urban setting. Inclusivity also extends to marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities, parents with young children, and unregistered migrant workers. The provision of wheelchair access, child-friendly rooms, and accessible study materials symbolizes the mosque's commitment to embodying Islamic values of mercy and social justice.

Overall, inclusive da'wah management at the Muslimin Mosque balances traditional religious practices with contemporary community needs. Classical Quranic recitation practices continue, but are complemented by thematic studies and interactive discussions. This hybrid model supports intergenerational relevance and strengthens the mosque's role as an egalitarian public religious space.

The findings of this study reveal that inclusive da'wah management at the Muslimin Mosque contributes significantly to community-based social education. First, the data-driven planning and participatory involvement of congregants embody the principles of social learning as conceptualized by Bandura, where community members learn through observation, modeling, and reciprocal interaction. Through structured da'wah programs, congregants are exposed to social norms, ethical behavior, and collaborative problem-solving skills [32].

Second, the segment-based organizational structure reflects participatory pedagogy, in which community members are not passive recipients but co-creators of knowledge. This aligns with Vygotsky's sociocultural framework, which emphasizes that learning develops through social interaction and collective cultural tools [33]. The mosque functions as a "learning community" where religious knowledge is constructed together across age groups, genders, and socio-economic backgrounds.

Third, the cultivation of tolerance, openness, and gender inclusion reflects elements of civic education. By facilitating activities that encourage dialogue across diverse backgrounds, the mosque reinforces democratic values within the community. This is consistent with Banks' multicultural education theory, which advocates for educational spaces that nurture social cohesion and mutual respect.

Fourth, the hybrid digital-physical model demonstrates the relevance of ethno-pedagogy, wherein learning processes adapt to local contexts while integrating modern tools. Tilaar's view of education as an instrument of social transformation is visibly practiced [34], as the mosque's programs help address urban issues such as digital literacy, economic resilience, and youth empowerment.

Thus, the Muslimin Mosque serves not only as a religious institution, but also as an informal community learning center that strengthens social cohesion, civic awareness, and inclusive pedagogy. Its model demonstrates

how religious spaces can support the development of democratic social values and foster collective resilience within diverse urban communities.

3.2 Implementation Dynamics: avoiding "pseudo-inclusivity" through quality assurance, risk mitigation, and open dialogue

The implementation of inclusive da'wah management in mosque settings often encounters risks that may result in inclusivity becoming symbolic rather than substantive. Pseudo-inclusivity emerges when mosque programs appear open but remain dominated by certain groups, limiting the participation of women, youth, or marginalized members of the congregation. Such tendencies contradict the principles of social learning, which emphasize that learning occurs through reciprocal interaction among diverse individuals, as highlighted by Bandura. Ensuring equal and meaningful participation thus becomes essential for transforming da'wah activities into authentic community-based educational practices.

One example of pseudo-inclusivity involves superficial representation without substantive involvement. For instance, female congregants may be invited to board meetings but are not given opportunities to influence decisions. Similarly, da'wah content delivered in highly technical or exclusive language risks alienating congregants with lower educational backgrounds. These practices undermine participatory pedagogy, which requires learning processes that are accessible and collaboratively constructed. In Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective, knowledge becomes meaningful only when learners can connect it to their lived experiences; hence, inaccessible language hinders the formation of shared understanding.

Quality assurance therefore plays a critical role in avoiding symbolic inclusivity. It involves establishing clear standards for accessibility, such as flexible activity schedules for workers, child-friendly learning spaces, and facilities for congregants with disabilities. Content standards should encourage comprehensible materials and open discussions, while participation standards must ensure that every segment of the congregation has access to specialized learning activities. These standards allow mosque administrators to monitor whether inclusivity is genuinely practiced or remains rhetorical.

Risk mitigation is equally important. Resistance from conservative groups may arise when innovations are perceived as deviations from tradition. Meanwhile, overlapping program schedules for different congregational groups may lead to competition over facilities or time slots. These risks necessitate the creation of structured dialogue forums that encourage open communication. This aligns with Banks' view of multicultural education, which sees dialogue as a mechanism for building civic responsibility and social harmony.

In July 2025, a mosque administrator reflected on the challenges of managing overlapping program schedules: *"We once scheduled women's recitation sessions at the same time as youth activities, and both became less effective because they shared space and facilities. From that, we learned the importance of coordination and non-overlapping schedules."* This illustrates the need for management systems that support inclusive social learning environments.

Language accessibility is another critical concern. A lecturer interviewed in August 2025 shared: *"I once used technical fiqh terms, and the factory workers said they were difficult to understand. So now I use analogies from their daily lives. Dakwah must be accessible to all groups, not only to those with higher education."* His perspective resonates with ethno-pedagogy principles, which emphasize contextualizing knowledge in the cultural realities of learners.

A male congregant interviewed in August 2025 highlighted the persistence of technological gaps in accessing digital da'wah: *"Young people can access studies through the mosque's YouTube channel, but the elderly are left behind because they do not have advanced mobile phones. They still prefer face-to-face studies. So the mosque must balance both methods so that no group feels neglected."* This reflects the need for hybrid pedagogical models that complement digital expansion with accessible in-person activities.

Community leaders interviewed in September 2025 emphasized the mosque's role in facilitating open dialogue: *"When disagreements arise, such as regarding Islamic music in mosques, administrators usually hold a meeting where the congregation can voice their opinions. A middle ground is then sought so that the activities can continue without causing division."* This mechanism illustrates participatory pedagogy, where collective decision-making becomes an educational process that fosters civic values.

The interview findings reveal that while challenges persist, the willingness of administrators, preachers, congregants, and community leaders to adapt and engage in dialogue represents social resilience. Inclusivity is not treated as a slogan but is operationalized through evaluation, quality standards, and conflict resolution. These practices contribute to civic education by modeling constructive engagement within a diverse religious community.

Transparency is an essential strategy to avoid pseudo-inclusivity. Open communication regarding program schedules, budgets, and objectives strengthens congregational trust and encourages active participation. When congregants understand the rationale behind decisions, they are more likely to see themselves as contributors rather than passive recipients.

Substantive participation is another indicator of genuine inclusivity. Congregants are not only invited to attend programs but are also empowered to contribute in roles such as digital administrators, parenting class

facilitators, or accessibility design advisors. Participation that reflects responsibility and agency transforms da'wah activities into collaborative learning processes, consistent with Tilaar's conception of education as a tool for social transformation [35].

Ensuring the sustainability of inclusive programs also requires diversified resources. Relying solely on traditional donations risks program discontinuation. Partnerships with local MSMEs, social organizations, or crowdfunding platforms can provide financial stability and broaden the mosque's educational outreach. Training for preachers and mosque administrators is necessary to strengthen inclusive communication skills. Workshops on intergroup communication, code-switching techniques, and conflict resolution can enhance their ability to engage with multicultural congregational contexts, aligning with the principles of community-based education.

Evaluation instruments should include social indicators such as increased youth participation, the presence of congregants with disabilities, higher involvement of women, and reductions in complaints related to discrimination. These indicators help determine whether inclusivity is substantive. If participant numbers increase but diversity does not, the mosque may still be experiencing pseudo-inclusivity.

When supported by quality assurance, risk mitigation, and open dialogue [36], the Muslimin Mosque in Medan demonstrates the capacity to balance tradition and modern community needs. The dynamic interactions that emerge from this process enrich da'wah practices and transform the mosque into a social space that reinforces multicultural harmony. This role aligns with the broader Islamic principle of rahmatan lil alamin and reflects the transformative essence of community-centered religious education.

The findings demonstrate that inclusive da'wah management at the Muslimin Mosque contributes significantly to community-based social education [37]. Da'wah activities function as a form of social learning in which congregants learn ethical [38], spiritual, and civic values from one another through observation and interaction [39]. Bandura's social learning theory explains that people acquire behavioral norms through modeling, which is evident in how congregants emulate cooperative attitudes, tolerance, and respect demonstrated in mosque programs.

Participatory structures in the mosque reflect elements of participatory pedagogy, emphasizing collaboration, shared leadership, and collective responsibility [40]. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory highlights that learning is mediated through social interaction and cultural tools. In this context, the mosque acts as a communal learning space where interactions between preachers, administrators, youth, women, and elders facilitate collective meaning-making.

The promotion of tolerance, inclusivity, and open dialogue reflects principles of civic education. Banks conceptualizes multicultural civic education as an approach that builds democratic awareness and cross-cultural understanding. The mosque's mechanisms for resolving differences, hosting dialogue forums, and accommodating diverse congregational needs serve as practical models of civic education within a religious setting.

Ethno-pedagogical elements are evident in the contextualization of da'wah messages, the use of everyday analogies, and the adaptation of learning methods to cultural realities. Tilaar's view of education as a means of strengthening multicultural citizenship is reflected in the mosque's approach to integrating tradition with contemporary social needs. The mosque thus becomes an informal community education center that enhances social cohesion and strengthens local citizenship values.

Overall, the findings show that inclusive da'wah management enhances not only spiritual growth but also social competencies, intercultural communication skills, and civic-mindedness within the community. It demonstrates how religious institutions can function as transformative public learning spaces that promote collective well-being and harmonious coexistence.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that inclusive da'wah management at the Muslimin in Medan operates through a systematic and community-centered process that aligns with the three research objectives. First, regarding the forms of da'wah management that are implemented, the mosque adopts a structured planning framework grounded in data-informed decision-making. Congregational characteristics related to age, gender, educational attainment, occupation, and socio-economic background are mapped through surveys and informal consultations. These data are used to design segment-based programs, diversify learning formats, strengthen organizational structures, and establish participatory evaluation mechanisms. This process ensures that program development is rooted in real community needs rather than assumptions and reflects the principles of inclusive and ethno-social pedagogy practiced in a multicultural urban setting.

Second, with respect to the challenges encountered in implementing inclusive da'wah, the study reveals several obstacles, including the potential for pseudo-inclusivity, limited digital literacy among older congregants, program overlap, and unequal levels of participation across social groups. These challenges highlight the complexities of creating an inclusive religious environment within a diverse urban community such as Medan. To address these issues, the mosque emphasizes quality assurance, transparent governance, participatory decision-making, and communicative openness. These strategies reinforce accountable religious leadership and support the

sustainability of inclusive programs that remain responsive to demographic and cultural changes within the congregation.

Third, in terms of the strategies adopted to shape inclusive religious programs accessible to all congregants, the mosque operationalizes inclusivity through concrete mechanisms that directly strengthen social cohesion and inclusive education. These mechanisms include the provision of diversified learning channels for youth, women, elders, and marginalized groups, the development of hybrid digital and face-to-face learning models, the creation of collaborative learning spaces based on community segmentation, and the integration of local cultural values within religious teaching. Through these practices, the mosque functions not only as a religious institution but also as a community-based learning center that fosters tolerance, cultural understanding, and collective identity. This confirms the mosque's role as both a spiritual space and a civic institution that contributes to social education, multicultural engagement, and urban community resilience.

Overall, inclusive da'wah at the Muslimin Mosque represents a tangible and operational model that balances traditional religious practices with contemporary community needs. The management approach employed by the mosque strengthens social cohesion by promoting equitable participation, encouraging intergroup dialogue, and embedding religious values within the lived experiences of Medan's multiethnic society. The study concludes that inclusive da'wah management can serve as an effective mechanism for building communal solidarity and enhancing civic awareness in urban settings.

In addition to these conclusions, several recommendations are proposed for future research. Comparative studies across different mosques or regions are needed to investigate variations in inclusive da'wah models and to identify contextual factors that influence their effectiveness. Quantitative approaches may be used to measure the impact of inclusive da'wah on variables such as participation levels, shifts in congregational attitudes, or indicators of social cohesion. Longitudinal studies are recommended to examine how digital transformation in religious education affects inclusivity over time, particularly for elderly congregants and low-income communities. Interdisciplinary research that integrates perspectives from sociology, education, and communication studies can also provide a more comprehensive understanding of how inclusive da'wah practices contribute to community empowerment and civic development.

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