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Communication of Da'wah in Religious Moderation at Islamic Boarding Schools

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Abstract: *Da'wah communication plays a strategic role in instilling moderate religious values in Islamic boarding schools to prevent the penetration of extremist ideologies that contradict the principle of rahmatan lil'alamin. However, there are still limitations in studies describing how moderate da'wah messages are constructed and conveyed systematically in traditional Islamic educational environments. This study aims to analyze da'wah communication practices at the Al-Ishlah Bobos Cirebon Islamic boarding school through David K. Berlo's communication model (SMCR), covering the source of the message (da'i), the content of the message, the media, and the reception of the mad'u. The research uses a qualitative descriptive method with an interpretive constructivist paradigm. The results show that da'wah communication is carried out through the approaches of da'wah bil-lisan, bil-qalam, and bil-hal, with messages emphasizing the values of tawassut (middle way), tawazun (balance), and tasamuh (tolerance). The media of da'wah included formal education, halaqah bahtsul masail, and digital platforms. Practically, this study reinforced persuasive da'wah strategies in Islamic boarding schools, while theoretically contributing to the development of studies on moderate da'wah communication based on communication models.*

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INTRODUCTION

Social complexity, fueled by differences in religion, culture, language, and social background, triggers social conflicts ranging from intolerance, social polarisation, and even radicalism to extremism [1,2]. This is exacerbated by the amplification of online media in providing an unlimited and uncontrolled flow of information. Based on survey data from the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) at (2020) [3], 85 per cent of Generation Z and millennials are vulnerable to radicalism. This is largely influenced by free and uncontrolled access to information on the internet, exacerbated by terrorist networks that intensively use internet-based platforms to spread radical and intolerant narratives [4,5].

The dichotomy of the concept of cultural identity is that, on the one hand, it gives rise to a sense of belonging, but on the other hand, it encourages ideas and feelings of hatred towards differences in cultural identity or groups based on stereotypes, prejudice, and ethnocentrism. This can create social distance that can lead to social conflict [2]. Religious moderation emerges as an important guideline in maintaining a balance between religious freedom and social responsibility [6,7].

Based on a survey by the Wahid Institute at (2020) [8], the level of intolerance in Indonesia has increased from 46% to 54%. This increase was influenced by several factors, including political contestation dynamics, hate speech, and the spread of intolerant content through social media. The National Counterterrorism Agency (BPNPT) has taken strategic preventive measures to prevent the spread of radicalism and terrorism through social media by blocking 180,000 pieces of content containing terrorism [9].

The rise in intolerance has the potential to damage the harmony of Indonesian society. The phenomena of extremism, radicalism, intolerance, and other hardline movements that are occurring and amplifying in Indonesia are contrary to religious principles that teach love and compassion for others, in line with the concept of a person's connection to God (*hablumminallah*), and the concept of, which states that the application of virtue can be implemented by doing good to others. (*hablumminannas*) [10,11]. The rise of intolerance, radicalism, and social polarisation requires da'wah that promotes the values of tolerance, balance, and humanity. Moderate da'wah is not merely the delivery of religious material, but also a social process that can shape the behaviour, character, and outlook of society, especially the younger generation who are undergoing the process of internalising religious values, with messages that do not conflict with religious principles and social values [12,13].

Islamic boarding schools, as institutions of Islamic education, play a strategic role in shaping the religious views and attitudes of students in facing the heterogeneity of Indonesian society so that acts of intolerance and radicalism do not occur [14,15]. Boarding schools not only function as formal educational institutions, but also as social spaces that instill values, ethics, and life skills [16]. The Al- Ishlah Bobos Cirebon Islamic boarding school is one example of a boarding schools that instils values of religious moderation through character building, teaching classical Islamic texts, social activities, and the exemplary behaviour of the kiai and ustaz. The communication of da'wah is not only through lectures, but also through daily interactions, providing real examples, and guiding students to internalise the principles of *wasathiyah* (moderation), *tasamuh* (tolerance), and *tawazun* (balance). This communication model is crucial given the challenges of globalisation, digitalisation, and the flow of information that is not always in line with the values of moderation [17].

Previous studies have shown that Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) make a significant contribution to strengthening religious moderation. Husain (2020) [18] highlights the role of boarding schools' education in preventing extremist ideology through strengthening the character and morals of students. Syamsudin (2021) [19] discusses the importance of moderate thinking in religious interpretation and its application in daily life. Meanwhile, Syafi'i (2018) [20] emphasises the importance of kiai communication in shaping *santri* character and influencing their social behaviour. Hibrizi, et al. (2025) [21] examine the role of moderate Islamic preaching in responding to the challenges of political identity in Indonesia and the role of social media as a medium for preaching in the digital era to present inclusive Islamic teachings to the younger generation.

This study will fill the gap regarding the role of communication based on the da'wah communication model in instilling the value of religious moderation in Islamic boarding schools. Thus, this study offers new insights into the dynamics of da'wah communication in a heterogeneous *pesantren* environment that is adaptive to the times,

using David K. Berlo's linear SMCR (Source, Message, Channel, Receiver) communication model [22]. Berlo's linear communication model SMCR (Source, Message, Channel, Receiver) in the process of internalising values of moderation in Islamic boarding schools contributes to an understanding of the application of communication models in the field of Islamic education to achieve better social goals or change.

With the increasing trend of intolerance, extremism, and radicalism that has the potential to become acts of terrorism in Indonesia from time to time, as well as reviewing the minimal role of the state, represented by the BNPT, in resolving various cases of religious- based violence through acts of intolerance and terrorism [23]. Therefore, the role of Islamic educational institutions such as Islamic boarding schools is crucial in shaping and internalising an understanding and values of moderation based on humanity and peace [24].

In the process of internalising these values of moderation, communication plays a decisive role in the effectiveness of conveying messages of moderation to *santri*. Using the SMCR communication model theory proposed by David K. Berlo (1960) [22] as a guideline in identifying various specific factors, this study will attempt to explore the effectiveness of delivering da'wah messages, *santri* acceptance, and behavioural transformation as the impact of internalising moderate values. This study aims to analyse the form and strategy of da'wah communication using David K. Berlo's SMCR communication model as applied at the Al-Ishlah Bobos Islamic Boarding School in Cirebon in internalising messages of moderation and shaping moderate *santri*.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Da'wah Communication

Etymologically, the term da'wah communication consists of two words: *communication* and *da'wah*. The word *communication* originates from the Latin *communicatio* and the root word *communis*, meaning common or shared. This sense of commonness refers to the existence of shared understanding among the parties involved in the communication process. The term *communis* is considered the primary source of the word *communication* and also serves as the root of several other Latin terms with similar meanings. In this sense, communication indicates that thoughts, meanings, or messages can be shared and mutually understood [25,26].

Etymologically, da'wah comes from the Arabic language and means to call, invite, summon, encourage, appeal, or request. In another sense, it also refers to *tabligh*, meaning to convey, and bayan, meaning explanation or clarification [27].

Da'wah communication is a specific form of communication in which a *da'i* (communicator) conveys messages derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah with the aim of encouraging others to perform righteous deeds. Da'wah communication is understood as an effort to disseminate Islamic values and religious information in order to invite people to the path of Allah SWT. The term, initially known simply as *da'wah*, later developed into *da'wah communication* along with the increasing involvement of various communication media in the process of delivering religious messages [28,29,30].

David K. Berlo's Communication Model

The classic and popular communication model that has served as the foundation for the development of more complex communication models is the SMCR model (Source, Message, Channel, and Receiver), proposed in 1960 by David K. Berlo [22].

Berlo's communication model is viewed as a linear model and became a dominant paradigm in communication research because it conceptualizes communication as a one-way flow from the sender of the message as the encoder, through a particular channel, to the receiver as the decoder, who then provides feedback. This model is widely used as a basis for mediated communication and emphasizes that the meaning of a message lies in the receiver's interpretation rather than in the words themselves. In addition to its relevance for mass communication, Berlo's model also applies to intrapersonal communication and various other forms of communication, and it is considered heuristic because it stimulates research through its constituent elements of communication. However, this model has been criticized for placing excessive emphasis on linear and static processes, for inadequately accommodating the dynamics of feedback, and for tending to overlook the role of nonverbal communication [31,26].

Religious Moderation

Etymologically, the term *moderation* derives from the word *moderate* or the Latin *moderatio*, which means being in the middle or not excessive. This concept emphasizes the ability to exercise self-restraint and to avoid extreme attitudes, whether in the form of deficiency or excess. Muslim scholars have provided similar conceptual foundations; for example, Ibn Ashur explains the term *wasath* as a middle position that has two balanced sides, or as justice that affirms Islam's mission to eliminate extremism [32].

Wasath or *sawa'un* refers to a standard condition that lies between two limits. The concept of *wasathiyah* is thus understood as a way of thinking, behaving, and acting that is grounded in the principle of balance (*tawazun*) when dealing with two comparable conditions, thereby producing decisions that are appropriate, moderate, and harmonious with religious values and societal traditions [33].

Religious moderation refers to a religious attitude that lies between firm commitment to one's own religion (exclusive) and openness in relations with followers of other religions (inclusive). This meaning emphasizes the importance of maintaining balance as a fundamental principle in forming attitudes and determining courses of action. From this concept emerges the idea of *wasathiyah*, namely a pattern of thought and action based on balance (*tawazun*). By proportionally considering two opposing conditions, *wasathiyah* encourages individuals to arrive at decisions that are moderate, appropriate, and aligned with religious teachings and the social values upheld within society [34,35,36].

METHOD

The type of research used was qualitative research with a descriptive approach, which aimed to understand the phenomenon of da'wah communication in *pesantren* life in depth based on David K. Berlo's SMCR communication model framework. The focus of the research was directed at the practice of da'wah communication that took place at the Al-Ishlah Bobos Cirebon Islamic Boarding School. The research subjects included the *pesantren* leaders and caregivers, *ustaz*, *santri*, and the community around the *pesantren* who actively participated in religious and social activities in the *pesantren* environment.

The research was conducted over three months, starting from initial observation through field introduction to intensive data collection.

Informants were selected using purposive sampling, which is a deliberate selection based on their knowledge, experience, and involvement in da'wah communication practices at Islamic boarding schools [37]. The main instrument was the researcher himself as a human instrument, supported by in-depth interview guidelines, observation sheets, and documentation notes. The researcher's presence in the field was limited participatory, enabling them to understand patterns of verbal and non-verbal communication in daily interactions.

Data was collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations focused on the communication behaviour of students in religious lectures, deliberations, discussion forums, and daily social interactions. In-depth interviews were used to explore the informants' understanding, experiences, and interpretations of the process of internalising the value of moderation. Documentation included *pesantren* archives, activity records, teaching guidelines, and da'wah content produced by students or *ustaz* through print and digital media.

Data analysis was conducted interactively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing in accordance with the Miles and Huberman framework. Data reduction was carried out by sorting, re-sorting, and grouping information according to the research focus. Data presentation was conducted in narrative form to facilitate interpretation and critical reflection. Conclusions were drawn continuously and verified through triangulation of sources and methods to ensure the validity of the findings [38].

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Communication of *Da'i* Preaching (Source)

The communication of da'wah carried out by *da'i* (*ustadz/asatidz*) at the Al- Ishlah Islamic Boarding School in instilling the values of religious moderation in students and the community is carried out through three main methods: *da'wah bil-lisan* (da'wah through words), *da'wah bil-qalam* (preaching through writing), and *da'wah bil-hal* (preaching through actions) [39].

The process of da'wah involves a variety of methods. In the context of implementing da'wah in Islamic boarding schools, particularly in delivering material on religious moderation, the approaches used fall into several categories. These methods include *da'wah bil-lisan* (delivery through religious lectures to students and the community), *da'wah bil-qalam* (learning through the study of written texts), and *da'wah bil-hal* or *da'wah bil- qudwah* (delivery through actions, setting an example, and providing real examples for both students and the general public) (Siti Hajar, Interview, 15 April 2023).

First, *Da'wah Bil-Lisan* (Da'wah through Words). *Da'wah bil-lisan* is carried out through religious lectures, sermons, speeches, discussions, recitations, *majelis taklim*, and *bahtsul masail*—discussion forums to discuss current issues in society.

Since 1920, Islamic boarding schools have been known to initiate *majelis taklim* activities that are carried out in a structured and scheduled manner. These religious study forums are known as *Bahtsul Masail* (Sholahuddin AR, Interview, 15 April 2023).

In delivering his sermons, the *ustaz* uses the principles of *qaulan maisura* (easy to understand speech) and *qaulan baligha* (effective communication), so that the message of

religious moderation is conveyed clearly and can be understood by the students. The aim is for students to be inclusive, tolerant, and able to adapt to society.

Oral da'wah communication delivered by *ustaz* to *santri* in an effort to instil the values of religious moderation in the *pesantren* environment is carried out through the delivery of understanding and education regarding the principles of religious moderation through verbal communication. This explanation was provided by the boarding school supervisor. The boarding school consistently provides understanding and education to the students, regarding religious moderation, with the aim of developing the students into individuals who are inclusive, tolerant, and capable of playing a role in society by bringing the values of Islam that are *rahmatan lil 'alamin*.

Second, Da'wah Bil-Qalam (Dakwah through Writing). *Da'wah bil- qalam* is carried out through writing, whether on websites, Facebook, or Instagram, as well as through literacy activities for *santri*. This aims to address the digital information era, reduce the influence of radicalism, and teach *santri* to write creative and innovative *dakwah* content.

The diverse and intensive flow of information received by students today has the potential to increase their vulnerability to negative influences, including radicalism. Therefore, digital da'wah activities on social media are actively carried out as a strategic means of providing proper religious education and understanding to students and the wider community (Siti Hajar, Interview, 15 April 2023).

Literacy *halaqah* activities are a form of *da'wah bil-qalam* (preaching through writing) that instil the values of religious moderation. These activities serve to hone the writing skills of students so that they are able to produce written content that is published through *pesantren* media, such as websites and social media. The production of such content is aimed at reducing the influence of radical ideology in the digital space and presenting counter-narratives to the various negative information circulating on the internet.

Third, *Da'wah Bil-Hal* (Dakwah through Actions). *Da'wah bil-hal* is carried out through exemplary behaviour and humanitarian social activities, both by *santri* and *asatidz*. Al-Ishlah Islamic Boarding School is widely known for its focus on moral education, which is oriented towards shaping a young generation with excellent character and *akhlakul karimah* (noble morals) (Abdullah Muda, Interview, 15 April 2023).

Another form of *da'wah bil-hal* in the effort to instil values of religious moderation can be seen in the community service programme that is part of the agenda of Islamic boarding schools for final-year students. In practice, students are often placed in heterogeneous communities, in villages with a non-Muslim majority or in highly diverse environments, in terms of religion, culture, ethnicity, language, ethnicity, and religious understanding. This is done to apply *tasamuh* (tolerance) and *qudwatiyah* (exemplary behaviour).

Da'wah Message (Message)

The message of da'wah is the core of communication, containing the values of moderation instilled in *santri*, including *tawassut* (the middle path), *tawazun* (balance), *tasamuh* (tolerance), *qudwatiyah* (exemplary behaviour), *ishlah* (improvement), and *tatawwur wa ibtikar* (dynamic and innovative) [40].

The message is an important aspect in the series of da'wah communication processes [41]. A da'wah message conveyed by a *da'i* to a *mad'u* in internalising the value of moderation can be explained in detail as follows.

(1) *Tawassut* (Middle Path), emphasising moderate religious practices, neither extreme right nor left, providing fair and wise perspectives [42]. The informant explained that since its establishment, Pesantren Al-Islah has not promoted a fanatical or extremist pattern of religiosity, nor has it confined itself to a single school of thought. The diversity of scholarly backgrounds and religious perspectives among its teachers and instructors serves as a foundation for fostering an open (inclusive) attitude among students and for encouraging them to perceive differences as part of *sunnatullah*, thereby preventing the development of exclusive and closed forms of religiosity (Siti Hajar, Interview, 15 April 2023);

(2) *Tawazun*, balancing worldly and spiritual aspects, reason and soul, religious knowledge and general knowledge. Education based on *hablu mina Allah* and *hablu mina al-nas* becomes a medium for actualising balance [43]. Da'wah messages at the pesantren are conveyed through a balanced integration of religious activities and social humanitarian programs, actively involving students in direct engagement with the wider community. The contextualization of religious texts within the educational curriculum serves as a means of instilling values of moderation, particularly the principle of *tawazun* (balance);

(3) *Tasamuh* (Tolerance), respecting internal and interfaith differences; fostering inclusiveness and social harmony [12,6]. The teachers at Al-Ishlah Islamic Boarding Schools perceive diversity as an inevitable aspect of human life; therefore, tolerance is understood not as a source of division but as a unifying value in fostering a civil and harmonious society. The *pesantren* promotes social tolerance in response to the multicultural and heterogeneous nature of the wider community, aiming to maintain peace and social cohesion. This value is also reflected in the daily lives of students who come from diverse regional, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, where, under the guidance of the teachers, students are encouraged to actualize a moderate attitude that contributes positively to the advancement of Islam and the *pesantren*;

(4) *Qudwatiyah* (Exemplary), Based on the example of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, *santri* are taught to be exemplary figures through their morals and tangible contributions to society [44,45]. The informant explained that da'wah messages at Pondok Pesantren Al-Ishlah focus on the cultivation of moral values through the study of hadith and classical Islamic texts, particularly during the early stages of students' learning as a foundation for further religious studies. This emphasis reinforces the identity of Pesantren Al-Ishlah as a moral-oriented Islamic boarding school committed to producing Muslim generations with strong character and akhlaq al-karimah, who are expected to serve as role models and future leaders. The informant explained that da'wah messages at Pondok Pesantren Al-Ishlah focus on the cultivation of moral values through the study of hadith and classical Islamic texts, particularly during the early stages of students' learning as a foundation for further religious studies. This emphasis reinforces the identity of Pesantren Al-Ishlah as a moral-oriented Islamic boarding school committed to producing Muslim generations with strong character and akhlaq al-karimah, who are expected to serve as role models and future leaders (Abdullah Muda, Interview, 15 April 2023);

(5*) Ishlah* (Reform), implementing the *Ishlah Tsamaniyah* paradigm (reform in faith, worship, *muamalah*, economy, tradition, law, family, education) to create sustainable

positive change. The implementation of the *Ishlah* principle at *pesantren* has been carried out since its establishment, consistently upholding a reformative and progressive stance toward positive and sustainable change. This commitment to continuous improvement is applied across all aspects of life, encompassing both *duniawi* and *ukhrawi* dimensions;

(6) *Tatawwur wa Ibtikar* (Dynamic and Innovative), demonstrating an adaptive, innovative, and progressive attitude towards the developments of the times, including the integration of technology in da'wah and education [46,36]. Al-Ishlah Cirebon Islamic Boarding Schools promotes a balanced educational approach that integrates religious studies, general knowledge, and technology-based learning in response to modernization and globalization, marking a transition from conventional-traditional Islamic da'wah and education toward a progressive-modern paradigm. This transformation is realized through the implementation of the da'wah principle of *Tatawwur wa Ibtikar* (dynamic and innovative), manifested in technological integration within modern methodologies, adaptation to contemporary developments in harmony with Islamic values, the promotion of student inclusivity, and active engagement in social and community programs that equip students with contextual understanding and adaptive da'wah skills.

Media for Da'wah (Channel)

Al-Ishlah Bobos Cirebon Islamic Boarding School utilises various da'wah media (channels) in the process of instilling the values of religious moderation in students and the wider community. In the context of this study, da'wah media is understood as a means or channel used by Islamic boarding schools to convey da'wah messages related to religious moderation [17,15]. These media can include verbal, written, visual, audio, and exemplary practices.

The results of observations, interviews, and documentation reveal that the media used by Al-Ishlah Islamic Boarding School as a means of conveying messages of religious moderation consist of: (1) Formal and Non-Formal Education: Teaching and learning activities in the classroom, oral and written learning, a moderation-based curriculum, and community service programmes for final-year students. Implementing a learning model that integrates religious knowledge with general knowledge based on science and technology. This integration creates a balance (*tawazun*) between worldly and spiritual aspects, thus reflecting the application of the principle of moderation through educational media.

(2) *Halaqoh Bahtsul Masail*: A two-way discussion forum between clerics, students, and the community. Fostering deliberation, critical thinking, and respect for differences. The practice of deliberation takes place in a healthy and inclusive manner in the *bahtsul masail* forum, which is reflected in an attitude of respect for differences of opinion, the presentation of arguments based on ethics, and equal treatment of all participants so that they feel free to express their opinions. This contributes to the formation of critical thinking on various issues. This entire process is an integral part of efforts to instil the values of religious moderation.

(3) Internet Media and Technology: Utilisation of websites, YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook as contemporary means of preaching, including content production by *santri*. The content produced is aimed at reducing the spread of radicalism in the digital space and serves as an antithesis to various negative content and information circulating on the internet.

Communication of Da'wah *Mad'u* (Receiver)

The reception of religious messages by students and the community (*mad'u*) results in, *first*, a cognitive effect [28,47]. The educational process in Islamic boarding schools provides students with the opportunity to acquire a variety of new knowledge, especially regarding the diversity of teachings in Islam. This understanding contributes to the acceptance of differences (plurality) that exist in society without causing strangeness or resistance (Fikrul Labib, Interview, 15 April 2023).

The cognitive impact is reviewed through the students' increased knowledge and insight into religious moderation, including an understanding of Islamic schools of thought, sects, and contemporary issues in Islam. Islamic boarding schools instil progressive Islamic thinking and encourage peace and safety among fellow human beings, regardless of background. Students are guided to build relationships and interact directly with the community, so that they can apply the knowledge they have learned in a diverse and heterogeneous environment.

Second, behavioural effects [28,47]. Positive behavioural changes are reflected in daily life, such as discipline in worship, good behaviour, and active contribution to society. Active participation in the *pesantren* environment significantly shapes positive habits that are integrated into daily routines. In addition, educational interactions established through intensive learning and discussion activities with fellow students and teachers have increased understanding of morals and the application of good behaviour in social relationships (Auliya Maharani, Interview 15 April 2023).

Based on behavioural aspects, students demonstrate positive behaviour in their daily lives, such as discipline in worship, polite behaviour, and active contribution to society. These results indicate that moderate da'wah communication at Al-Ishlah Islamic Boarding School is effective in shaping students' character and strengthening the holistic internalisation of moderate values.

Challenges and Strategies for Moderate Da'wah Communication

This study reveals the challenges of moderate da'wah communication, such as the influence of negative information on social media, differences in *santri* backgrounds, and limitations in traditional means of communication. However, a combination of verbal and written approaches, practical examples, and the integration of information technology are effective strategies in overcoming these challenges. The role of senior students is also important as mediators and role models for junior students, so that the process of internalising moderate values runs more naturally and sustainably.

The Al-Ishlah Bobos Cirebon Islamic boarding school depicts the daily lives of its students as a social laboratory for the application of religious moderation values. Routine activities such as morning recitations, class discussions, community service, and religious activities at the boarding school are not only a means of formal education, but also a medium for internalising moral values and moderation. For example, during recitation sessions, students not only listen to lectures by *ustaz*, but also actively discuss, ask questions, and express their opinions politely and argumentatively. This interaction teaches tolerance, the ability to find common ground amid differences of opinion, and respect for other perspectives.

The boarding school supervisors and teachers emphasise that religious moderation is not merely a theory, but a practice that must be evident in everyday behaviour. For example, senior students who act as mentors to junior students always exemplify

patience, politeness, and openness to differences of opinion. This exemplary behaviour forms the basis for the internalisation of *qudwatiyah*, so that junior students learn through observation and direct interaction, not just through theory.

Islamic boarding schools are also active in placing students in heterogeneous communities, with the aim of teaching them to adapt and apply moderate values in real social contexts. In interfaith and intercultural interactions, students learn tolerance, respect for local traditions, and cultivate an inclusive attitude. This shapes a balanced character between religious understanding and social life, thereby achieving *tawazun*.

The education of religious moderation applied to the younger generation through formal academic spaces is important to counteract the massive and systematic spread of radicalism [48].

Digital media has become an important channel for expanding the reach of moderate preaching. Al-Ishlah Islamic Boarding School utilises websites, YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook to disseminate preaching content, inspirational stories from students, and religious literacy. Students are taught to create creative and educational content, such as worship tutorial videos, articles on tolerance, and infographics on religious moderation. This strategy not only reduces the risk of radicalism but also trains students to think critically, innovate, and use technology productively.

Although effective, moderate da'wah communication in Islamic boarding schools also faces challenges. First, the rapid flow of digital information, which is not always accurate, can influence students' perceptions. Second, differences in students' social and cultural backgrounds require a flexible and sensitive communication approach. Third, limited resources in providing modern learning media require innovation and creativity from boarding school leaders.

To overcome these challenges, Al-Ishlah Islamic Boarding School implements a combination of integrated communication strategies. The verbal approach through lectures and discussions builds a foundation of knowledge and understanding of the values of moderation. The written approach through digital media and boarding school literacy trains creativity and skills in writing effective da'wah messages. The exemplary approach through social activities and daily interactions reinforces the internalisation of moderate behaviour. The integration of these three approaches creates a synergistic effect that strengthens the success of moderate da'wah communication.

From a communication theory perspective, this practice reflects an adaptive two-way communication model. *Santri* as message recipients (*mad'u*) are not only passive in receiving information, but also actively respond, discuss, and practise the values of da'wah. This model is in line with interactive and constructivist communication theory, where the meaning of a message is constructed through interaction and real experiences. The success of moderate da'wah in this *pesantren* shows that effective communication requires harmony between the source of the message, the content of the message, the communication channel, and the recipients of the message.

This study also highlights the importance of continuous evaluation in da'wah communication. Evaluation is carried out through observation of *santri* behaviour, group discussions, and monitoring of digital content produced. This ensures that messages of religious moderation are not only conveyed, but also internalised in the real lives of *santri*. Continuous evaluation is key to ensuring that da'wah communication remains relevant, adaptive, and capable of responding to ever-evolving social and technological dynamics.

Overall, the Al-Ishlah Bobos Cirebon Islamic boarding school has successfully combined religious education, da'wah communication, and social interaction in shaping moderate, tolerant, and balanced students. These findings can serve as a model for other Islamic boarding schools, educational institutions, and da'wah practitioners in designing effective and contextual communication strategies. This study confirms that religious moderation is not merely a theoretical concept, but a practical reality that can be implemented through integrated da'wah communication, digital media, role modelling, and meaningful social interaction.

CONCLUSION

Communication of religious teachings in instilling the values of religious moderation at the Al-Ishlah Bobos Islamic Boarding School in Cirebon is carried out in an integrated manner through three main approaches, namely *da'wah bil-lisan* (lectures and discussions), *da'wah bil-qalam* (writing and digital media), and *da'wah bil-hal* (exemplary behaviour and social activities). The *da'i* apply the principles of *qaulan maisura* and *qaulan baligha* so that the message of moderation is conveyed clearly, inclusively, and effectively.

The da'wah message emphasises the main values of moderation, such as *tawassut* (the middle path), *tawazun* (balance), and *tasamuh* (tolerance), as well as supporting values such as *qudwatiyah* (exemplary behaviour), *ishlah* (improvement), and *tatawwur wa ibtikar* (dynamic and innovative), which are conveyed through formal and non- formal education, the *Halaqoh Bahtsul Masail* forum, and various digital platforms to adapt to the times and reduce the influence of radicalism. The reception of the da'wah message by the *mad'u* (students and the community) shows cognitive impacts in the form of increased knowledge about religious moderation and behavioural impacts in the form of positive behavioural changes.

This study reveals that the Al-Ishlah Bobos Cirebon Islamic boarding school has successfully internalised the value of religious moderation through an adaptive integrated da'wah communication strategy. The use of David K. Berlo's SMCR communication model in analysing this practice shows that the success of moderate da'wah requires harmony between the source of the message (*da'i*), the moderate content of the message, diverse communication channels (traditional to digital), and active reception (*mad'u*). This practice strengthens the role of Islamic boarding schools as strategic institutions in preventing extremism and shaping the character of students to be tolerant, balanced, and peaceful.

For further research, it is recommended to conduct comparative studies in various Islamic boarding schools with different approaches and contexts, as well as to assess the long- term impact of moderate da'wah communication on the social behaviour of students and the community.

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