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# SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE JAMA'AH TABLIGH IN WEST JAVA THROUGH RITUAL-BASED RELIGIOUS COUNSELING PRACTICES

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***Abstract***

***Purpose*** *– This study analyzes how ritual-based religious counseling operates within the Jama'ah Tabligh as a da'wah (Islamic propagation) management strategy, read through the Islamic Guidance and Counseling (IGC) approach, and identifies the forms of spiritual transformation that its members experience.* ***Design/methodology/approach*** *– A qualitative phenomenological design was applied. Data were gathered through participatory observation, in-depth interviews and documentary study involving karkun, mutakallim and ta'lim participants at five markaz (centers) in Bandung City, Bandung Regency, Garut, Sukabumi and Cirebon, and were analyzed thematically with source and method triangulation and member checking.* ***Findings*** *– Religious counseling is managed informally yet systematically through planning, organizing, actuating and controlling embedded in the rituals of bayan, muzakarah, ta'lim and khuruj fi sabilillah. It rests on faith (iman), righteous deeds (amal saleh) and moral character (akhlak) and is directed toward tashfiyah al-iman, tahliyah al-amal and tarbiyah al-akhlaq. Members' transformation unfolds cyclically: from an egocentric to a transcendental mindset, from a consumptive to an ascetic (zuhud) lifestyle, toward deeper worship and social responsibility, and finally toward an identity as da'i and servant of the ummah.* ***Research limitations/implications*** *– The study covers one da'wah community in one province, so findings are transferable only with caution, and retrospective accounts may carry recall bias.* ***Practical implications*** *– Managers of da'wah institutions can embed counseling competencies and a staged curriculum in congregational development programs and build referral links with professional counselors.* ***Originality/value*** *– The article positions community-based religious counseling as an integral function of da'wah management and offers an integrative model linking managerial functions with counseling principles and objectives.*
***Keywords:*** *da'wah management, Islamic guidance and counseling, religious counseling, spiritual transformation, Jama'ah Tabligh*

## PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

This article reveals how a da'wah community can carry out the function of religious counseling without a formal clinical structure, through religious rituals that are organizationally managed. This study of the Jama'ah Tabligh is important for managers of da'wah institutions, counselors, and academics in Islamic Guidance and Counseling, as it offers a model of integration between da'wah management and community-based spiritual counseling, while also complementing previous studies that have tended to treat da'wah and counseling as two separate, standalone fields.

## INTRODUCTION

Contemporary societies face a persistent crisis of meaning, existential anxiety and social alienation that accompanies accelerating modernization, digitalization and value change. A growing body of research indicates that religiosity and spirituality are associated with lower



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levels of depression and anxiety among young people (Aggarwal et al., 2023), and systematic reviews connect religion and spirituality to well-being in ways that vary across cultural settings (Cucchi & Qoronfleh, 2025; Koburtay et al., 2023). Research on the developing person similarly shows that spirituality and religiosity are formative resources across the life course (Louca, 2023), and studies from Muslim-majority contexts caution that well-being constructs developed in the West need to be rethought through Islamic conceptions of the person (Al-Thani, 2025; Koburtay et al., 2022). In Indonesia, these dynamics surface in the rising participation in community-based da'wah movements, in the digital reconfiguration of religious authority (Khamis, 2024), and in shifting patterns of religious and community life (Schafer & Upenieks, 2026). One such movement is the Jama'ah Tabligh, a transnational lay revival movement (Ali, 2010) that offers intensive religious formation through collective rituals such as *khuruj fi sabilillah*, *ta'lim* and *muzakarah*, and that sustains voluntary and continuous engagement across diverse socioeconomic backgrounds without formal membership structures or material incentives.

Scholarship on da'wah management has largely examined the functions of planning, organizing, actuating and controlling at the level of formal institutions (Munir & Ilaihi, 2009), including studies of the management thought of classical Islamic figures (Nurul Fadilah & Ardiansyah, 2024) and of the organizational adaptation of da'wah bodies under limited formal structure (Baikuni et al., 2026; Muadz et al., 2024). Work on Indonesian religious organizations has likewise concentrated on political consciousness, leadership and religious authority (Alhamdi, 2022; Kim, 2023), pluralism and extremism (A. Z. Hamdi, 2021; Subchi et al., 2022), and cultural strategies of religious harmony (Lestari et al., 2026; Qomariyah et al., 2026). These contributions rarely treat the psycho-spiritual formation of the *mad'u* (da'wah recipients) as a managerial problem. In the parallel field of Islamic Guidance and Counseling (IGC), the literature has concentrated on the foundations of Islamic counseling (Bastomi, 2017), the critique of modern psychology from Sufi perspectives (Achmad, 2013), existential-humanistic approaches (Chavatel, 2022; Idati, 2024), cognitive and self-control techniques (Mujahidah et al., 2025; Setiawan et al., 2026; Tobing, 2022), and the emergence of Islamic psychology as a discipline (Rassool & Luqman, 2022; Rothman et al., 2022). A bibliometric mapping of Islamic counseling from 1981 to 2023 confirms the dominance of mental-health, ethics and institution-based topics (Ifdil et al., 2023). Studies that approach the Jama'ah Tabligh itself have examined its history and ideology (Ali & Minxing, 2021; Ali et al., 2024), public reactions (Hasanah, 2014), emotion work in its texts (Sahib, 2022), its sub-cultural settlements (Badriza, 2022), its responses to the COVID-19 pandemic (Abrar, 2021; S. Hamdi, 2022; Santoso & Syarifudin, 2021), its Southeast Asian expansion and digital adaptation (S. Hamdi, 2021; Hasanah et al., 2025), its theology of work and fate (Surya, 2024), and the personal and communal effects of *khuruj* (Nilhakim, 2021; Razak & Asrori, 2024).

Taken together, this literature leaves a clear gap. Studies of counseling-based da'wah (Yusrain, 2023), da'wah transformation through counseling (Rozikan, 2017) and digital guidance-and-counseling information services (Fanan et al., 2023) tend to treat da'wah and counseling as loosely complementary domains rather than as a single, explicitly managed system. Research on the Jama'ah Tabligh has drawn on the sociology of religion or da'wah studies but has not linked its rituals to a managerial and psycho-spiritual framework in a counseling context. Meanwhile, work on spiritual change in Muslim and other religious populations emphasizes meaning-making after adversity (Chowdhury, 2024; Loewenthal, 2022; Perry, 2024; Trimulyaningsih et al., 2024) and the role of religion in post-traumatic growth (Fayaz, 2023a, 2023b; Mehrabadi et al., 2022), yet largely concerns clinical or crisis populations rather than non-clinical congregational communities that reproduce counseling-like



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functions through ritual. The question of how a lay da'wah community organizes, delivers and monitors spiritual care on a massive, repetitive and structured basis therefore remains unanswered.

Responding to this gap, the study pursues two objectives: (1) to analyze how ritual-based religious counseling internalizes the ritual dimension in the lives of Jama'ah Tabligh members as part of da'wah management, and (2) to reveal the forms of spiritual transformation that members experience after receiving this counseling. Accordingly, the research questions ask which mechanisms of value internalization operate through religious rituals, and which patterns of cognitive, behavioral and identity transformation result. Both questions are examined through the Islamic Guidance and Counseling approach and are guided by three research propositions developed in the literature review.

The novelty of the study lies in positioning ritual-based religious counseling as an instrument of da'wah management analyzed through the IGC framework. Theoretically, it contributes an integrative model that links the managerial functions of planning, organizing, actuating and controlling to the counseling principles of faith, righteous deeds and moral character. Empirically, it enriches field data on spiritual development within a transnational da'wah community across five localities in West Java. Methodologically, it demonstrates the value of a phenomenological design for revealing contextual value internalization. Practically, it offers da'wah institutions—mosque-based, pesantren-based and community-based—a reference for managing congregational development with psychosocial impact, particularly where formal counseling services remain concentrated in schools and clinics and are constrained by distance, cost or the stigma attached to "counseling" and "therapy" (Cantori, 2021; McLaren et al., 2024).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Da'wah Management and Religious Counseling as Actuating (Taujih)

Da'wah management is understood as the process of planning, organizing, actuating and controlling da'wah activities so that their objectives are achieved effectively and efficiently (Munir & Ilaihi, 2009). Planning (*takhthith*) sets programs and schedules, such as weekly *ta'lim* routines and graduated *khuruj*. Organizing (*thanzim*) concerns the division of roles among *karkun*, *mutakallim* and the congregation's *amir*. Actuating (*taujih*) is the core of inner development and motivation, within which religious counseling can be located as one concrete manifestation oriented toward the individual's inner formation through a personal and collective religious approach. Controlling relates to informal monitoring of members' spiritual and behavioral progress over time. Recent research suggests that informal workarounds and shared religious meaning can sustain organizational practice where formal structure is thin (Baikuni et al., 2026), and that authority in religious organizations depends on trusted and distributed leadership (Kim, 2023), both of which are consistent with the lay organization of the Jama'ah Tabligh.

### Islamic Guidance and Counseling and Spiritual Transformation

Islamic Guidance and Counseling is the process of assisting individuals to live in accordance with divine guidance in order to achieve well-being in this world and the hereafter (Ifdil et al., 2023). Unlike secular counseling, which tends to center on resolving psychological problems, IGC places *tauhid* at the center of its orientation so that assistance strengthens both the vertical relationship (*hablum minallah*) and the horizontal relationship (*hablum minannas*). Islamic psychology provides a wider conceptual base for this orientation (Rassool & Luqman, 2022; Rothman et al., 2022), and recent work on Islamic well-being revises eudaimonic constructs through spiritual and moral criteria (Koburtay et al., 2022). Distinctions among faith,



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religion and spirituality, which are often blurred in empirical work, also require conceptual care (Gschwandtner, 2021).

Spiritual transformation is explained here through complementary grand theories. Fowler's (1981) stages describe movement from Synthetic-Conventional to Conjunctive and Universalizing faith. King and Boyatzis (2004) identify existential meaning-making, transcendental awareness, self-development and connectedness as components of spirituality. Wilber's (2000) transpersonal view describes self-actualization beyond the ego, a theme examined in Islamic contexts through transpersonal psychology and Sufism (Achmad, 2016) and in the process of attaining the tranquil soul (*nafs al-muṭmaʾinnah*) (Trimulyaningsih et al., 2024). Narrative studies show that people make sense of religious change by emplotting it in a coherent life story (Gull, 2026), and that meaning-making underlies spiritual growth after adversity (Chowdhury, 2024; Perry, 2024). Life-stage perspectives, such as the notion of established adulthood (Mehta & Arnett, 2023), remind us that the timing of religious commitment interacts with family and work roles, including the negotiation of religious continuity within families (Barrow et al., 2021; Kelley et al., 2022).

Frankl's (1985, 2000) logotherapy holds that suffering can be overcome by discovering transcendent meaning, an idea developed in Islamic logotherapy (Yurika & Pratiwi, 2025). Rogers's (1961) person-centered approach underscores empathy and unconditional positive regard in developmental relationships. Classical *tazkiyatun nafs* (soul purification) in Al-Ghazali (2005) and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (2003) positions deeds and *mujahadah* as means of purifying the heart, in line with contemporary studies on restoring the *fitrah* (Anbiya, 2023), on soul purification as therapy for spiritual ailments (Al Faruqi et al., 2024; Syukur, 2012), on its application in religious counseling (Angraini & Asmita, 2022; Choirin et al., 2026) and in Islamic education (Mutholingah & Zain, 2021), and on spiritual care and religious coping in Islamic practice (Baig, 2023). Religious change is also known to interact with coping and growth after trauma (Fayaz, 2023a; Loewenthal, 2022).

Synthesizing these perspectives, rituals such as *bayan*, *muzakarah*, *ta'lim* and *khuruj fi sabilillah* can be read as both a medium of religious counseling and an instrument of community da'wah management. IGC then need not be narrowly understood as a psychological service wrapped in religious values; it can encompass the entire endeavor of strengthening the individual's relationship with God, with oneself and with others.

## Research Propositions

As a qualitative study, this research does not test hypotheses but develops propositions that guide the exploration of field data, consistent with the phenomenological emphasis on meaning and process rather than causal relations among variables. Table 1 sets out the three propositions and the theoretical lens used to interpret each.

**Table 1**
***Research Propositions and Analytic Lenses***

| Proposition | Statement | Analytic lens |
|---|---|---|
| P1 | Ritual-based religious counseling in the Jama'ah Tabligh functions as an instrument of da'wah management that integrates planning, organizing, actuating and controlling. | Da'wah management functions (Munir & Ilaihi, 2009); informal organization (Baikuni et al., 2026) |



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| Proposition | Statement | Analytic lens |
|---|---|---|
| P2 | Faith, righteous deeds and moral character constitute the value framework that underpins religious counseling and contributes to members' spiritual transformation. | Tazkiyatun nafs (Al-Ghazali, 2005; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, 2003); person-centered relationship (Rogers, 1961) |
| P3 | Spiritual transformation unfolds through interrelated cognitive (mindset), behavioral (lifestyle) and identity (social-religious role of da'i) dimensions. | Stages of faith (Fowler, 1981); spirituality components (King & Boyatzis, 2004); transpersonal consciousness (Wilber, 2000) |

Source: Authors' synthesis of the conceptual framework (2025).

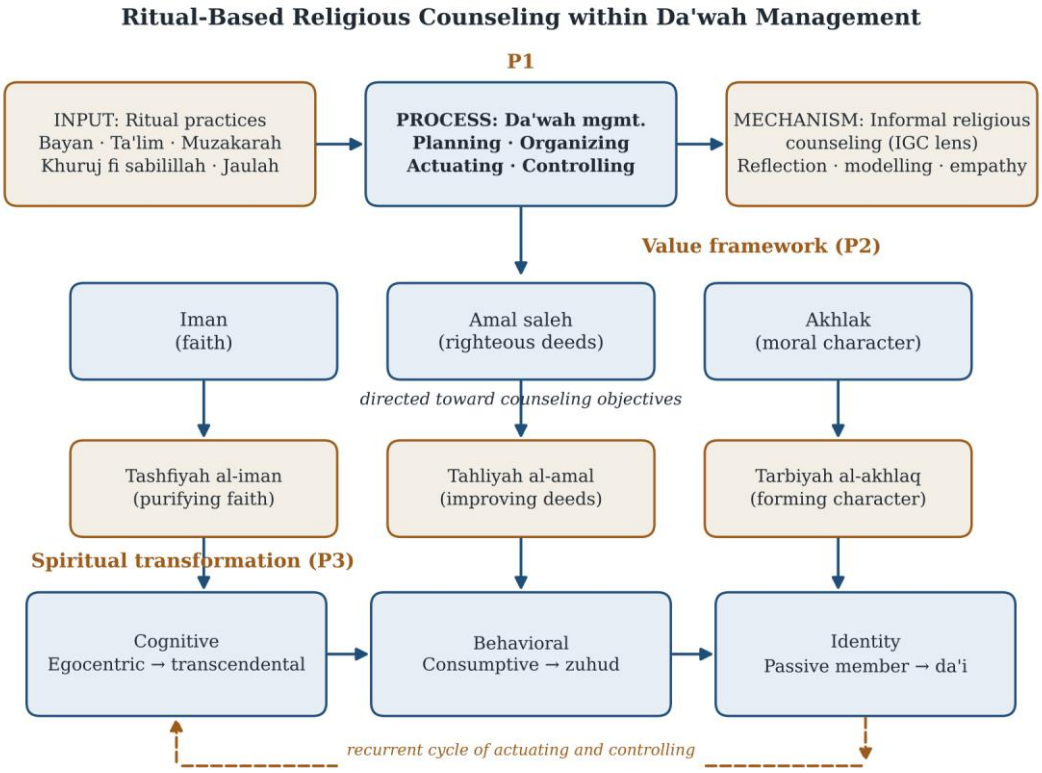
## Conceptual Model

The conceptual model (Figure 1) depicts the following flow. Ritual activities of the Jama'ah Tabligh serve as a medium of religious counseling managed through the functions of da'wah management. The process is grounded in three principles faith, righteous deeds and moral character that are progressively directed toward three counseling objectives: *tashfiyah al-iman*, *tahliyah al-amal* and *tarbiyah al-akhlaq*. These objectives culminate in individual spiritual transformation across a cognitive dimension (from an egocentric to a transcendental mindset), a behavioral dimension (from a consumptive to an ascetic or *zuhud* lifestyle) and an identity dimension (from passive member to *da'i* and servant of the *ummah*). The model thereby links the research objectives, the theoretical framework, the propositions and the empirical analysis, and it locates the study at the intersection of da'wah management and IGC: the success of da'wah depends not only on the accuracy of material and delivery but also on sustained management of the *mad'u*'s inner development (Munir & Ilaihi, 2009), and counseling need not occur in a formal counselor–counselee space but can be collective and grounded in community relations (Ifdil et al., 2023).



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**Figure 1**
***Conceptual Framework of Ritual-Based Religious Counseling in Da'wah Management***




Source: Authors' conceptual synthesis (2025).

## METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design to reveal the meanings and subjective experiences of Jama'ah Tabligh members as they undergo ritual-based religious counseling. Phenomenology is appropriate because the phenomenon a personal, contextual process of value internalization developed through intense socio-religious interaction cannot be captured fully by quantitative approaches (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Figure 2 summarizes the

The research was conducted at five *markaz* (activity centers) of the Jama'ah Tabligh in Bandung City, Bandung Regency, Garut, Sukabumi and Cirebon. Informants were selected through purposive sampling according to the following criteria: active membership serving as *karkun* (da'wah activist), *mutakallim* (spokesperson or material presenter), or a member who regularly participates in *ta'lim*, *muzakarah* and *khuruj*. Variation in role and length of involvement was sought so that the data would represent stages of the counseling process, from members on their first *khuruj* to seniors who mentor newcomers. The number of informants was determined by the principle of saturation: recruitment stopped once the data showed recurring patterns and no new themes emerged. Because saturation depends on the analytic aim and the heterogeneity of the sample (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022), the criterion was assessed iteratively at each locality rather than fixed in advance. Selecting informants across five localities was intended to strengthen the transferability of findings within the context of the Jama'ah Tabligh in West Java.



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Three techniques were used: participatory observation of *bayan*, *ta'lim*, *muzakarah* and *khuruj fi sabilillah*; in-depth interviews with a semi-structured guide involving *karkun*, *mutakallim* and congregation members; and documentary study of field notes and *ta'lim* materials used at the *markaz*. Data were collected in stages at each locality until saturation, with attention to informants' willingness and comfort. The researcher adopted a participant-observer role in several *ta'lim* and *muzakarah* sessions in order to understand the inner atmosphere, nonverbal cues and interaction dynamics that interviews alone cannot capture. Fieldwork period and informant numbers are reported in the Data Availability and Ethics statements.

Given its phenomenological orientation, the study did not use scaled measurement instruments. Quality and depth were instead safeguarded through a thematic interview guide derived from the research propositions and through member checking with several informants to verify that the researcher's interpretation corresponded to their intended meaning.

Data were analyzed thematically following the stages of data condensation, data display and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles et al., 2014). Open coding identified initial categories from transcripts and observation notes, and axial coding linked categories into main themes representing the principles, objectives and dynamics of transformation. The analytic procedure follows contemporary guidance that treats thematic analysis as a reflexive, interpretive practice whose quality depends on transparent decisions rather than mechanical procedures (Ayre & McCaffery, 2022; Braun & Clarke, 2021). Credibility was maintained through source triangulation (karkun, mutakallim and *ta'lim* participants) and method triangulation (interviews, observations and documents). Dependability was strengthened through limited discussions with fellow researchers in da'wah and Islamic counseling, and confirmability through an audit trail from raw transcripts to final themes. Informant identities were anonymized, and quotations were used only to support thematic arguments. Table 2 summarizes these strategies.

**Table 2**
***Trustworthiness Strategies***

| Criterion | Strategy applied | Evidence in this study |
|---|---|---|
| Credibility | Source and method triangulation; member checking | Cross-checking karkun, mutakallim and ta'lim participants; interviews, observations and documents; verification of interpretations with several informants |
| Transferability | Purposive, multi-site sampling; thick description | Five markaz with variation in role, tenure and socioeconomic setting (urban and semi-rural) |
| Dependability | Peer discussion; iterative saturation checks | Limited discussions with fellow researchers in da'wah and Islamic counseling |
| Confirmability | Audit trail; reflexivity | Documented analytic path from raw transcripts to themes; participant-observer reflections |
| Ethics | Anonymity; informed consent; minimal exposure | Identities anonymized; quotations limited to thematic arguments |

Source: Authors' methodological design (2025).

## RESULTS

### Informant Characteristics

The informants were *karkun*, *mutakallim* and congregation members who actively participate in *ta'lim*, *muzakarah* and *khuruj* at the five *markaz*. Their length of involvement



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ranged from first-time *khuruj* participants to members active for more than eight years, and their backgrounds varied in age, education and occupation, from students and university students to informal workers, entrepreneurs and retirees. This diversity mattered analytically: newly joined informants tended to describe early emotional moments, whereas long-standing members reflected on value internalization over years. It also allowed the study to capture the counseling process from initial internalization to identity formation as a *da'i*, and to identify patterns that were relatively consistent across localities alongside contextual variation, such as differences in the intensity of *khuruj* between *markaz* and in socioeconomic background between urban Bandung City and semi-rural Garut and Sukabumi.

**Ritual-Based Counseling as Da'wah Management**

The findings show that religious counseling in the Jama'ah Tabligh is not a stand-alone devotional activity but is managed informally yet systematically through the four da'wah management functions (Table 3; Figure 3). Planning appears in the regular scheduling of *bayan*, *ta'lim* and *khuruj*, which follow relatively fixed patterns and cycles at each *markaz*. Organizing appears in the division of roles between *karkun* and *mutakallim*, which is non-hierarchical yet shows clear responsibility. Actuating is the internalization of faith, deeds and moral character through repeated collective rituals. Controlling is exercised through personal approaches and exemplary conduct without formal sanctions; senior members act as informal controllers who monitor progress through everyday interaction.

**Table 3**
***Mapping of Da'wah Management Functions to Ritual-Based Counseling Practices***

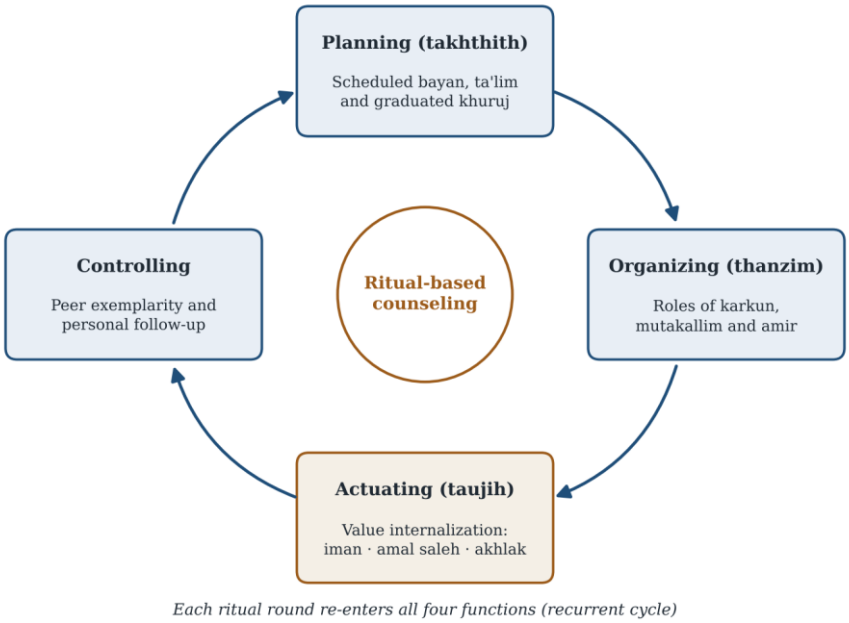
| Function | Practice observed | Counseling significance |
|---|---|---|
| Planning (takhthith) | Regular scheduling of bayan, ta'lim and graduated khuruj at each markaz | Predictable cycles that make spiritual formation habitual |
| Organizing (thanzim) | Division of roles among karkun, mutakallim and the amir; non-hierarchical yet clear responsibility | Distributed accompaniment by peers and seniors |
| Actuating (taujih) | Repeated internalization of iman, amal saleh and akhlak through bayan, muzakarah, ta'lim and khuruj | Core counseling process: awakening motivation and change |
| Controlling | Personal approach and exemplary conduct; seniors monitor progress in daily interaction; no formal sanctions | Informal evaluation of spiritual and behavioral progress |

Source: Primary data processed from observations and interviews, 2025.



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**Figure 2**
***Recurring Cycle of Da'wah Management Functions in Ritual-Based Counseling***




Source: Primary data processed from observations and interviews, 2025.

## Basic Principles of Religious Counseling

Counseling is delivered through *taujih* grounded in three principles: faith (*iman*), righteous deeds (*amal saleh*) and moral character (*akhlak*). Faith is understood as transcendental awareness and the starting point of spiritual change. A senior member likened faith to the driving force of all deeds: without a "living" faith, a person is not moved to join the path of da'wah. Every *ta'lim* session begins with a spiritual affirmation of faith as the foundation of deeds, which serves as a group counseling mechanism that awakens awareness and motivation.

Righteous deeds act as a therapeutic mechanism through worship routines such as congregational prayer, *dhikr* as a means of strengthening spiritual awareness (Yusran, 2024) and *khuruj*, which one informant called "medicine" for the heart's illness. People who never recover from inner unease, in this view, are often lacking in deeds, consistent with the view of *tazkiyah al-nafs* as therapy for spiritual ailments (Al Faruqi et al., 2024) and as a method of soul purification in Islamic religious education (Mutholingah & Zain, 2021). Moral character functions as a relational ethic that avoids confrontation: as a *karkun* put it, Tablighi da'wah is a da'wah of character, not merely of knowledge. Members whose enthusiasm declines are approached with gentleness, a personal touch and exemplary conduct rather than harsh reprimand.



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**Table 4**

***Basic Principles of Religious Counseling in Jama'ah Tabligh Da'wah Management***

| Principle | Empirical manifestation | Theoretical interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| Faith (Iman) | Understood as transcendental awareness and the starting point of spiritual change; reinforced through muzakarah and ta'lim. | Faith as connectedness to ultimate meaning (Frankl, 2000) and as the light of the heart guiding moral change (Al-Ghazali, 2005). |
| Righteous Deeds (Amal Saleh) | A therapeutic mechanism through worship routines (prayer, dhikr, khuruj) that foster inner tranquility. | Deeds as a means of tazkiyatun nafs (Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, 2003) and a form of spiritual behavioral therapy. |
| Moral Character (Akhlak) | Courtesy, humility and a pressure-free approach toward new members. | Moral character as a manifestation of empathy and unconditional positive regard (Rogers, 1961). |

Source: Primary data processed from observations and interviews, 2025.

Table 4 shows that the three principles do not stand alone but reinforce one another in one cycle of actuating. Faith is the motivational foundation that moves members to act; righteous deeds are the concrete manifestation of rooted faith; moral character indicates successful internalization of both in everyday social relations. This pattern supports the second proposition (P2). From a da'wah management perspective, the principles also serve as informal evaluation criteria with which senior members assess spiritual progress without formal instruments.

## Objectives of Ritual-Based Religious Counseling

Counseling is directed toward three progressive objectives of actuating: *tashfiyah al-iman* (purification of faith), *tahliyah al-amal* (improvement of deeds) and *tarbiyah al-akhlaq* (formation of moral character). *Tashfiyah al-iman* is pursued through *muzakarah* and *ta'lim* that emphasize *tauhid, tawakal* and belief in divine decree; several young members admitted weeping on hearing stories of faith, a therapeutic emotional experience that touches inner awareness. *Tahliyah al-amal* is realized through *jaulah* and *khuruj* feeding others, helping fellow human beings and inviting people to congregational prayer which informants said brought tranquility and reduced guilt over past wrongdoing; one reported that since taking part regularly in *khuruj* his prayers had become more disciplined, his heart calmer and his family relationships better. *Tarbiyah al-akhlaq* appears in the humility, patience and exemplary conduct of seniors, which makes new members feel "ashamed" of being selfish or harsh; one informant who had been quick-tempered said he gradually changed after seeing his fellow members' patience and courtesy during *ta'lim*.

**Table 5**

***Objectives of Ritual-Based Religious Counseling in Jama'ah Tabligh Da'wah Management***

| Objective | Practice | Theoretical interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| Tashfiyah al-Iman (Purification of Faith) | Muzakarah and ta'lim emphasizing tauhid, tawakal and belief in divine decree. | Frankl (2000): faith provides meaning and overcomes suffering; Al-Ghazali (2005): faith as the light guiding the heart. |
| Tahliyah al-Amal (Improvement of Deeds) | Jaulah and khuruj: helping others and inviting people to congregational prayer. | Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (2003): deeds as soul purification; Rogers (1961): self-actualization through meaningful action. |



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| Objective | Practice | Theoretical interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| Tarbiyah al-Akhlaq (Formation of Moral Character) | Exemplary conduct of seniors, patience and a pressure-free approach at the markaz. | Rogers (1961): empathy and unconditional positive regard; Al-Ghazali (2005): moral character as the fruit of a purified heart. |

Source: Primary data processed from observations and interviews, 2025.

Viewed as da'wah management, the three objectives in Table 5 are output indicators of the actuating function carried out gradually and repeatedly. *Tashfiyah al-iman* is the foundational stage that builds psychological readiness for further development; *tahliyah al-amal* is the applicative stage that tests consistency of values in action; *tarbiyah al-akhlaq* is the evaluative stage that reflects the maturity of members' socio-religious relationships. The stages are neither linear nor completed once; they recur each time members join subsequent *ta'lim*, *muzakarah* or *khuruj*, forming a pattern of continuous formation distinctive to community-based da'wah management.

**Dynamics of Spiritual Transformation**

Ritual-based counseling produced spiritual transformation in four interrelated aspects (Table 6; Figure 4). First, the mindset shifts from an egocentric orientation toward transcendental awareness, with less focus on worldly achievement and more awareness of a life mission beyond personal interest; this shift is largely triggered by contemplative experiences during *khuruj*, when members leave the comforts of home and live simply in a small group. Second, lifestyle changes from consumptive to ascetic (*zuhud*), reflected in simple eating, uniform dress, sleeping together on the mosque floor and reduced dependence on luxury, which informants interpreted not as rejecting the world but as putting it in proportion. Third, awareness of worship and social responsibility increases, in the quality of congregational prayer and *dhikr* and in concern for others that grows from inner appreciation rather than routine. Fourth, a new identity as *da'i* and servant of the *ummah* forms organically through interaction and exemplary conduct in the small community, without structural pressure or formal certification, so that initially passive members become agents of change.

**Table 6**

***The Dynamics of Spiritual Transformation among Jama'ah Tabligh Members***

| Aspect | Description | Theoretical reference | Ritual trigger |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mindset: egocentric → transcendental | Shift from self-orientation toward awareness of a life mission beyond personal interest. | Fowler (1981); King & Boyatzis (2004); Wilber (2000) | Reflection during khuruj, bayan and muzakarah in small groups. |
| Lifestyle: consumptive → zuhud | Orientation shifts from material satisfaction toward simplicity and the hereafter. | Fowler (1981); King & Boyatzis (2004) | Simple eating, uniform dress, distance from worldly luxury. |
| Awareness of worship and social responsibility | Worship quality rooted in awareness rather than routine, with social concern. | Fowler (1981); King & Boyatzis (2004) | Congregational prayer, communal dhikr and da'wah activities that foster empathy. |
| Formation of identity as a da'i | A new identity as a religious person engaged in da'wah and community service. | Wilber (2000); symbolic interactionism | Identity grows from da'wah experience and direct community involvement. |

Source: Primary data processed from observations and interviews, 2025.



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The four aspects in Table 6 move from the cognitive domain toward the behavioral domain, then toward the social-worship domain, and finally crystallize in a new identity. This gradual pattern supports the third proposition (P3): transformation occurs through a continuous sequence of cognitive, behavioral and identity dimensions. It is not instantaneous, linear or partial but unfolds cyclically with the intensity of members' involvement in communal rituals. Ritual-based counseling thus serves a dual function: at the individual level, a process of inner healing and growth; at the organizational level, a mechanism for regenerating *da'i* cadres without formal educational pathways or certification.

## DISCUSSION

### Counseling as an Integrated Function of Da'wah Management

The findings affirm that religious counseling within the Jama'ah Tabligh is an integral part of da'wah management carried out informally yet systematically. Planning is visible in the fixed cycles of *bayan*, *ta'lim* and *khuruj*; organizing in the non-hierarchical yet clear division of roles; actuating in the repeated internalization of faith, deeds and moral character; and controlling in personal approaches and exemplary conduct monitored by senior members. The first proposition (P1) is therefore supported: ritual-based counseling integrates the four managerial functions within one coherent and sustainable ecosystem of congregational development. This reading extends the formal-institution focus of classical da'wah management (Munir & Ilaihi, 2009; Nurul Fadilah & Ardiansyah, 2024) and parallels evidence that religious organizations rely on informal arrangements and shared meaning (Baikuni et al., 2026), distributed authority (Kim, 2023) and culturally embedded practice (Lestari et al., 2026; Qomariyah et al., 2026).

Compared with earlier IGC research, the results extend Ifdil et al. (2023), who documented a bias toward individual and institution-based interventions, by showing that community- and ritual-based counseling can operate effectively without a clinical structure. They agree with Rozikan (2017) on da'wah as a medium of transformation through counseling and reinforce Idati's (2024) argument for the relevance of the existential-humanistic approach, as the Tablighi emphasis on empathy, acceptance and moral exemplarity operates without psychological terminology an observation consistent with existential-humanistic accounts of anxiety and meaning (Chavatel, 2022). The findings also converge with Yusrain's (2023) personal and reflective counseling-based da'wah and with Fanan et al.'s (2023) guidance services, although in this community these occur face to face and through collective ritual rather than digital media. The study differs from these works by situating counseling explicitly within da'wah management functions.

### Value Framework and Pathways of Transformation

The principles of *iman*, *amal saleh* and *akhlak* operate simultaneously as theological values and as a managerial framework that guides actuating and controlling, which supports P2. The therapeutic role assigned to deeds corresponds with the classical and contemporary literature on *tazkiyatun nafs* (Angraini & Asmita, 2022; Choirin et al., 2026; Fauziyah et al., 2024; Rustandi, 2022; Seprianto et al., 2023), and the role of *dhikr* and worship in strengthening spiritual awareness (Yusran, 2024) echoes studies of Islamic spiritual care and religious coping (Baig, 2023; Mehrabadi et al., 2022). The weeping reported during *muzakarah* and the reduction of guilt through service resemble meaning-making processes described in work on religious change and growth (Chowdhury, 2024; Loewenthal, 2022; Trimulyaningsih et al., 2024), although the present informants were not clinical or crisis populations. The improved family relationships reported by one informant link to evidence that religious commitment is



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negotiated within families (Barrow et al., 2021; Kelley et al., 2022), and the pandemic-era literature on *khuruj* and family life (Santoso & Syarifudin, 2021) as well as on religious responses to COVID-19 (Abrar, 2021; Carey et al., 2021; S. Hamdi, 2022) shows that such practices are sensitive to external shocks.

The sequence from mindset to lifestyle, worship and identity supports P3 and matches the socio-religious studies of the movement, which consistently describe *khuruj* as both a means of da'wah and a vehicle of psychosocial development (Badriza, 2022; Hasanah, 2014; Nilhakim, 2021; Razak & Asrori, 2024). The ascetic turn resonates with the movement's theology of work and fate (Surya, 2024) and with analyses of how Tablighi texts organize emotion (Sahib, 2022). The formation of a *da'i* identity without certification accords with the observation that the movement remakes Muslim selves through collective practice (Ali, 2010) and with historical accounts of its expansion (Ali & Minxing, 2021; S. Hamdi, 2021). Studies of other Indonesian communities likewise show that ritual can bridge social boundaries (Qomariyah et al., 2026) and that civic engagement can be framed as a religious duty (Cantori, 2021).

**Theoretical Implications**

Theoretically, the study integrates da'wah management (Munir & Ilaihi, 2009) with psycho-spiritual theories Fowler's (1981) stages of faith, King and Boyatzis's (2004) spirituality, Wilber's (2000) transpersonal consciousness, Frankl's (1985, 2000) logotherapy, Rogers's (1961) person-centered approach and *tazkiyatun nafs* (Al-Ghazali, 2005; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, 2003) into one model of ritual-based counseling in da'wah management. It suggests that Western grand theories of spiritual psychology can be used complementarily, not oppositionally, with classical Islamic psycho-spiritual concepts, which opens dialogue among the psychology of religion, the Sufi tradition and Islamic psychology (Al-Thani, 2025; Koburtay et al., 2022; Rassool & Luqman, 2022; Rothman et al., 2022). This is significant for Indonesian IGC scholarship, which has seldom linked international theories of spiritual development with da'wah management as a unified framework.

**Practical and Policy Implications**

Practically, managers of da'wah institutions can consciously integrate counseling principles into the management of religious activities: training *murabbi* and senior members in active listening and empathy; designing *ta'lim* curricula around the stages of *tashfiyah al-iman*, *tahliyah al-amal* and *tarbiyah al-akhlaq*; and evaluating spiritual progress periodically as part of controlling. The approach is relevant to *pesantren, majelis taklim*, mosque youth groups and Islamic youth organizations facing the contemporary crisis of meaning among young people (Setiawan et al., 2026; Subchi et al., 2022). For policymakers, the findings support capacity-building for *da'i* that goes beyond mastery of material to competence in psychosocial accompaniment, a priority given the reach of community-based approaches to groups underserved by formal services (McLaren et al., 2024).

The findings also invite reflection on the boundary between informal and professional counseling. The Tablighi model produces psycho-spiritual change without formal techniques or clinical evaluation, yet the absence of a standardized evaluation mechanism complicates the measurement of effectiveness and the early detection of members in serious psychological distress. Collaboration is therefore advisable: da'wah institutions can serve as pathways for early detection and preliminary formation, and cases that need deeper intervention can be referred to counselors or psychologists with clinical competence. Training curricula for *da'i* and administrators should add basic counseling competencies such as reflective listening, non-judgmental relationships and recognition of signs that psychological help is needed.



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### Limitations and Future Research

The study is limited to a single da'wah community and region, so findings should be transferred to other communities with caution given differences in structure, values and socio-religious context. Reliance on informants' subjective accounts may introduce retrospective bias, especially for transformations that occurred years earlier. Future research should compare the Jama'ah Tabligh with *majelis taklim*, *pesantren* and digital da'wah movements, adopt mixed-methods designs with validated spiritual well-being or mental-health instruments, and use longitudinal designs to examine the durability of transformation and the risk of spiritual relapse.

## CONCLUSION

This study finds that ritual-based religious counseling in the Jama'ah Tabligh functions as an instrument of da'wah management that integrates planning, organizing, actuating and controlling through *bayan*, *muzakarah*, *ta'lim* and *khuruj fi sabilillah*. The process rests on faith, righteous deeds and moral character and is directed toward *tashfiyah al-iman*, *tahliyah al-amal* and *tarbiyah al-akhlaq*. Through a recurring cycle of actuating and controlling, the ritual dimension is internalized and yields a gradual, comprehensive transformation of mindset, lifestyle, worship awareness and identity as a *da'i*, culminating in a religious identity oriented to service of the *ummah*. Theoretically, the study contributes an integrative model linking da'wah management and IGC; empirically, it draws on five *markaz* in West Java; methodologically, it shows the value of phenomenology for revealing value internalization. Practically, it underscores the need to strengthen counseling capacity among community-level da'wah mentors and to build referral links with professional services.

### Author Contributions

Dede Lukman: conceptualization, methodology, data collection and analysis, writing original draft. Ridwan Rustandi and Dudy Imanuddin Effendi: supervision, validation, writing review and editing. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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### Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all informants involved in this study.

### Data Availability Statement

The data are not publicly available because they contain information that could compromise informants' privacy. Anonymized excerpts are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

### Generative Artificial Intelligence Declaration

In preparing this manuscript, the authors used Claude (Anthropic) to assist in drafting and language editing based on the authors' dissertation data and findings. After using this tool, the authors reviewed and edited the entire content and take full responsibility for the content of this publication.



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**Conflicts of Interest**
The authors declare no conflict of interest.



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