

Community-Based Da'wah through Children's Religious Education in the Digital Age: A Study of the Rumah Cita Program in Pekanbaru

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Abstract

The pervasive use of digital devices has precipitated moral and ethical challenges among children, necessitating innovative da'wah approaches beyond formal educational institutions. While contemporary scholarship has extensively examined institutionalized Islamic education, the theoretical integration of secular basic literacy and religious instruction as a community-based da'wah medium remains underexplored. This study addresses this gap by investigating how the Rumah Cita program, initiated by the Seribu Satu Cita Foundation in Pekanbaru, reconfigures da'wah pedagogy. Employing a theoretical framework based on the core elements of da'wah (da'i, mad'u, maudu', uslub, and wasilah) synthesized with the concept of tarbiyah (continuous Islamic education), this qualitative case study utilized in-depth interviews and participant observation. Thematic analysis reveals that the program transcends traditional religious knowledge transfer. Specifically, it conceptualizes basic literacy (reading and writing) as a fundamental wasilah (medium) of da'wah, empowering the mad'u (children) to access Islamic teachings. Furthermore, the instruction of theology and morality (akidah akhlak) and prophetic storytelling (kisah nabi) are deployed as a strategic uslub (method) grounded in uswatun hasanah (exemplary character) to counteract the degradation of manners (adab) caused by technological exposure. This article contributes to contemporary da'wah studies by providing a theoretical justification that basic literacy instruction, when integrated with a moral curriculum, operates as a transformative act of da'wah.

Keywords

Da'wah, Religious Education, Rumah Cita Program, Seribu Satu Cita Foundation

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1. INTRODUCTION

Discussions regarding da'wah have become remarkably extensive and diverse in the contemporary era. As both a vocation and a social activity, da'wah should remain attuned to the specific needs of its target audience, primarily aiming to foster improved social conditions within a community, encompassing both material and spiritual dimensions (Lukman et al., 2019). Fundamentally, da'wah represents a conscious impetus toward communal virtue, manifested through verbal expressions, literature, and deliberate actions. Its objective is to influence individuals and groups to develop an internal awareness, appreciation, and voluntary understanding of Islamic teachings as a communicated message, free from coercion.



The discourse surrounding da'wah (Islamic propagation) in the contemporary era has expanded significantly, moving away from traditional, pulpit-centric approaches toward community-based and socially embedded methodologies. In modern Indonesian society, the pervasive integration of digital devices into daily life has generated unprecedented sociological and psychological impacts, particularly concerning the moral development of children. Excessive and unmonitored exposure to gadgets has been widely observed to trigger a degradation of *adab* (Islamic manners, ethics, and respect) among the younger generation. In this highly digitized context, da'wah is challenged to adapt and provide transformative, grassroots solutions that directly address these emerging socio-moral deficits. The current moral crisis among Generation Z, characterized by declining social empathy and rising individualism, necessitates a transformative framework that integrates Islamic values with digital pedagogy to foster morally-grounded youth (Hasanah et al., 2025). Furthermore, excessive use of digital technology in early childhood has been linked to a decrease in the ability to empathize and understand the emotions of others, which can severely hinder long-term moral development (Uhls et al., 2014).

Existing scholarly literature on children's religious education in Indonesia has predominantly concentrated on formal Islamic educational institutions, such as *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) and *madrasah* (state-sponsored Islamic schools). These studies often emphasize institutionalized *tarbiyah*—the structured process of Islamic education and upbringing. However, there is a notable gap in the current academic scholarship regarding non-formal, community-led initiatives. Specifically, few studies have critically investigated how volunteer-driven social communities reconfigure da'wah pedagogy by integrating secular basic literacy (such as reading, writing, and basic arithmetic) with traditional religious curricula to combat modern moral decay. Community-based initiatives, such as collaborative religious programs and student-led da'wah activities, are essential to strengthen the educational impact and address contemporary ethical challenges at the grassroots level (Syamsu & Rizal, 2025). This intersection between secular empowerment and religious instruction in informal settings requires rigorous theoretical exploration.

In enhancing religious comprehension, da'wah serves a critical role in transforming human perspectives. It seeks to realign deviant internal dispositions and behaviors back toward a righteous path. Furthermore, it fosters an awareness of divine accountability, reminding individuals that they will be held responsible for all their actions. The presence of Islam, as brought by the Prophet Muhammad SAW, is believed to guarantee a prosperous life, both outwardly and inwardly. Within its teachings lie various instructions on how humans should approach life and existence with profound meaning in its broadest sense.

The presence of da'wah in social life is vital for fostering interpersonal interactions rooted in mutual respect and noble ethics. In this context, Islamic education plays a strategic role in strengthening spirituality and shaping noble character, acting as a solid foundation to guide society in harmony with universal human principles amidst rapid social changes (Hoktaviandri et al., 2025). There is a growing public perception that da'wah initiatives have now been integrated with digitalization and practical action (Azizah et al., 2024; Pramana, 2023a, 2023b; Pramana & Ariadi, 2023). Innovation in da'wah is not limited to these areas; some have pioneered da'wah through film (Irham et al., 2023), while others convey messages of virtue and education through Korean dramas (Pramana & Masduki, 2024). Moreover, the widespread practice of online sharing and the active engagement of netizens on platforms such as YouTube further illustrate how deeply digital media consumption shapes the cognitive and behavioral patterns of modern society, necessitating a robust educational response (Pramana & Triantoro, 2025). Furthermore, this digital da'wah paradigm acts as a strategic medium to

increase the understanding of religious values and moderation among the youth, provided that it is delivered with proper digital etiquette (Iqbal & Asman, 2021).

The Seribu Satu Cita Foundation in Pekanbaru is an example of an Islamic-based social institution operating in the fields of social education and religion. This study focuses on the Foundation as an innovative case study where da'wah and religious education are inextricably linked (Pramana, 2023b). The Foundation serves as a platform for youth to increase their participation as facilitators of sustainable education, influencing the quality of education in Indonesia. The utilization of youth-driven communities as platforms for positive social impact has become increasingly relevant, as contemporary youth culture is deeply intertwined with globalization and popular entertainment, necessitating adaptive and culturally resonant approaches to civic engagement (Pramana & Triantoro, 2024). It focuses on education through a social approach, frequently conducting activities such as community service. It focuses on education through a social approach, frequently conducting activities such as community service, scholarship distribution, social welfare programs, and self-capacity building workshops.

Based in Pekanbaru City with a presence in various regions across Indonesia, the organization began as a community in 2019 before formalizing as a foundation in 2023 under the motto "1 Action, 1,000 Kindnesses". As a structured social institution, its Islamic activities are organized into several programs, including Ruang Asa, Ramadhan Cita, Bantuan Beasiswa, and Rumah Cita. This study focuses specifically on the Rumah Cita program, as it addresses the development of children in Pekanbaru who often prioritize gadget usage over learning—a phenomenon that has led to negative social consequences. Such trends have resulted in a lack of courtesy toward teachers, parents, and peers, compounded by insufficient parental supervision and religious guidance. Consequently, the Rumah Cita program provides instruction in Aqidah Akhlak (morals and theology), Quranic recitation, basic literacy, and Prophetic history. This aligns with Pramana's observation that modern da'wah has evolved toward more diverse and innovative frameworks (Pramana & Masduki, 2024). There is a growing public perception that contemporary da'wah initiatives have heavily integrated with digitalization. Recent scholarship has extensively documented this shift, highlighting innovations such as da'wah through cinematic films (Irham et al., 2023) and the extraction of virtuous messages from Korean dramas (Pramana & Masduki, 2024). However, this heavy academic focus on digital propagation has created a notable research gap regarding non-digital, grassroots interventions. As unmonitored digital consumption increasingly degrades children's adab (manners), there is an urgent need to examine how community-led initiatives combat this technological fallout through foundational, offline education. This study addresses this gap by positioning the integration of basic secular literacy (calistung) and religious instruction not as a step backward, but as a necessary, transformative socio-moral intervention in the digital age.

This research explores the Rumah Cita program's efforts to advance da'wah through the lens of religious education. This analysis aims to contribute new perspectives to existing academic literature on da'wah and religion. The article addresses the primary question: How is da'wah practiced through religious education at the Seribu Satu Cita Foundation in Pekanbaru, and what are the unique aspects of the Rumah Cita program?. To address these inquiries, the author has divided the discussion into four sections. The first section provides an introduction to the research topic. The second section describes the practice of da'wah. The third section explores the practices of the Seribu Satu Cita Foundation, particularly the Rumah Cita program as a model for children's religious education in Pekanbaru. Finally, the article concludes with a summary of its findings.

2. METHODS

This research employs a qualitative method with a descriptive approach to investigate contemporary da'wah practices that are currently undergoing significant diversification, particularly within the realm of religious education. Creswell defines qualitative methodology as a research approach aimed at exploring and comprehending social realities, which, in the context of this study, encompasses digital space realities. The primary objective is to achieve a profound and comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation. By utilizing a qualitative approach, the researcher can meticulously trace facts, realities, problems, and symptoms beyond a superficial perspective. This enables the capture of complexities and nuances that might not be accommodated by quantitative research methods. Consequently, this study facilitates the exploration of deeper and more intricate meanings from the observed research objects (Cresswell, 2013).

This research employs a qualitative instrumental case study design to investigate the contemporary da'wah practices operationalized within the Rumah Cita program in Pekanbaru. Rather than providing a broad overview of digital realities, this approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the complex, socially constructed realities of non-formal religious education within a specific community context. Data collection involved extended participant observation and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, including the foundation's founder, coordinators, and student participants. To ensure analytical rigor, the acquired data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman. This process involved rigorous data reduction to filter relevant pedagogical strategies, data display for thematic categorization, and careful conclusion drawing to address the core research questions regarding community-based da'wah (Cresswell, 2013). The acquired data are subsequently analyzed using content analysis. The analytical stages adopt the concept of Miles and Huberman as follows. First, data reduction. At this stage, the author collects and selects data relevant to this research. Second, data display. At this stage, the author presents the data in the form of statements, images, and other formats. Third, conclusion drawing. At this stage, the author concludes the research findings to address the research questions (Cresswell, 2013).

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Akidah Akhlak as a Response to Digital Disruption

However, along with the development of digitalization, da'wah has also been infiltrated by new media such as da'wah through films (Irham et al., 2023). Da'wah through Instagram media (Pramana, 2023c). Messages of goodness interpreted from Korean dramas (Pramana & Masduki, 2024). This indicates that with the development of the times, the initiation of da'wah also makes adjustments to the existing preferences of the society. The primary *maudu'* (content or message) delivered within the Rumah Cita program is heavily centered on *akidah akhlak* (Islamic theology and morality). Thematic analysis of the interview data reveals a strong, recurrent consensus among the volunteer educators (da'is) regarding the urgent necessity of this specific *maudu'*. Rather than viewing the children merely as empty vessels requiring general religious knowledge, the volunteers collectively diagnose a specific contemporary crisis: the unmonitored, excessive consumption of digital media has systematically eroded the children's *adab* (Islamic etiquette, respect, and ethical conduct). Multiple informants corroborated that phenomena such as gadget addiction have directly correlated with a decline in respectful communication toward parents, teachers, and peers. This diagnosis is highly relevant given that Generation Z's religious activities are increasingly digitized and heavily reliant on visual-centric

social media platforms, which often prioritize fleeting aesthetics over deep theological understanding (Virga et al., 2025).

In this digitized context, the Rumah Cita program does not practice da'wah as a unidirectional, momentary sermon (*syiar*). Instead, it operationalizes da'wah as *tarbiyah*—a continuous, holistic, and dialogical process of nurturing and moral rehabilitation. The volunteers transform the non-formal educational space into a critical arena for restoring fundamental behavioral norms. They act as surrogate moral guides, attempting to provide the pedagogical scaffolding that is often missing in the children's primary home environments. This intervention is highly relevant because digital parenting, which includes screen time limitation and appropriate content selection, serves as a crucial reconstruction of the parental role in building children's literacy and character in the digital age, yet it is often neglected in marginalized homes (Abhista et al., 2026). Therefore, innovation in da'wah strategies, including the utilization of digital technology and the strengthening of human resource capacity within communities, is required to engage Generation Z who are currently more active on social media than in traditional religious activities (Syafii, 2025). By systematically instilling Tawhidic (monotheistic) values that govern daily interpersonal behavior, the program attempts to recalibrate the children's moral compass, demonstrating that contemporary community da'wah must function primarily as a social corrective mechanism against the alienating effects of modern technology.

The prioritization of *Akidah Akhlak* is not merely a pedagogical choice but an ontological intervention. It aims to re-establish the child's identity as a *hamba* (servant) of Allah in an increasingly secularized digital landscape. This approach aligns with the classical Islamic principle that knowledge (*'ilm*) is inseparable from character (*adab*), where the latter serves as the container for the former. Applying this framework in the digital era effectively responds to contemporary moral challenges by rooting educational solutions in holistic social thought, emphasizing that true character formation must address both intellectual and spiritual dimensions (Syifa & Ridwan, 2024).

3.2 Uslub of Engagement: Theorizing Basic Literacy as a Fundamental *Wasilah* of Da'wah

Beyond the foundational teaching of Qur'anic recitation (*mengaji*), the instruction of prophetic history (*kisah nabi*) serves as a highly strategic *uslub* (method) of da'wah within the program. Recognizing the cognitive and psychological developmental stages of their *mad'u* (children)—whose attention spans are increasingly fragmented by short-form digital content—the volunteers employ interactive storytelling as their primary pedagogical methodology (Permatasari et al., 2026.).

Theoretically, these prophetic narratives are not transmitted merely as static historical data. Instead, they are deliberately contextualized as *uswatun hasanah* (exemplary character models). By narrating the struggles, patience, and ethical triumphs of the Prophets, the *da'is* provide the children with concrete, relatable, and humanized templates for moral behavior that they can apply in their own daily lives. For instance, interview data from student informants (e.g., Dinda) confirmed a high level of enthusiasm for these narrative sessions. This indicates that a narrative-based *uslub* is significantly more effective in capturing the *mad'u*'s attention than abstract theological lecturing. The stories serve as an alternative, morally grounded narrative to the unregulated content the children consume online. By actively curating and narrating these stories, the program provides a critical counter-narrative against the unregulated and often unmoderated content that continually contests religious and moral values in digital spaces (Albana, 2022).

Speaking of the Rumah Cita Program, Rumah Cita is a program that provides education to elementary school children. The Rumah Cita Program has a Sub-Program named Bina Generasi

(Generation Building). In Bina Generasi, it is divided into several classes, namely the Small Class (Kindergarten) and the Elementary School class. In Bina Generasi, the main target is the Small Class (1st to 2nd grade of Elementary School). In this class, learning is provided regarding Moral Character (Akhlak) and basic reading, writing, and calculating skills (Calistung). With the existence of this program, children in the city of Pekanbaru can receive guidance regarding character building and good religious guidance, and it can improve the character and morals of the children in the city of Pekanbaru.

This program focuses on three aspects, namely Moral Guidance, Quranic Recitation, Reading and Writing, and Prophetic Stories. Theological morals (Akidah akhlak) is the implementation of beliefs and behaviors in daily life; good theological morals mean having a good personality and behavior guided by the Quran and the Sunnah. Based on the results of an interview with Zamri as the person in charge of the Rumah Cita Program on December 5, 2024, he stated, "The guidance of theological morals is carried out on Mondays to Thursdays at night with approximately 20 students. The material delivered is respecting parents, patience, consistency (istiqomah), and saying good greetings, which is directly guided by a volunteer of Seribu Satu Cita named Della. This theological moral is chosen in the material of the Rumah Cita program because of seeing the morals of children today who prefer to play with gadgets and have lacking manners. The moral guidance in the Rumah Cita Program carried out by the Seribu Satu Cita Riau Foundation is expected to provide a good influence on the morals/behavior of children in the city of Pekanbaru."

Furthermore, the author conducted an interview with Layla Takhfa Lubis as the Secretary of the Seribu Satu Cita Riau Foundation on December 5, 2024, stating, "The Theological Moral Guidance is carried out twice a week for the Kindergarten and 1st-grade Elementary School classes on Mondays and Wednesdays. Then Tuesdays and Thursdays for the 2nd-grade Elementary School class, and the material delivered is how to respect parents, teachers, and also friends. Such as saying thank you, asking for help, and apologizing. In everyday life. The mentor who delivers the material is an elementary school teacher from one of the elementary schools named Della. The reason for choosing the theological moral material in the Rumah Cita program is because children today in general are now clever at using gadgets. That is what causes children to be less respectful towards parents, teachers, and also friends."

The same statement was also delivered by Husnul Fauzan as the coordinator of the Seribu Satu Cita Riau foundation on December 5, 2024, stating, "The theological moral material in the Rumah Cita program is carried out four times a week after the Isha prayer. The purpose of this theological moral material being implemented in the Rumah Cita program is to build the personality of children from an early age, seeing the moral condition of children today and their lack of manners towards parents, teachers, and also friends."

Next, the researcher conducted an interview with Harezia Raihan as the Founder of the Seribu Satu Cita Foundation on December 5, 2024. He stated, "The Theological Moral Guidance is carried out every week with different materials, so that the students do not get bored. The mentor in the theological moral guidance is chosen from one of the volunteers of the Seribu Satu Cita Riau foundation. With the existence of material on manners, respecting parents, teachers, and friends, it is hoped that the students will possess noble morals."

Then, the researcher conducted an interview with a student of the Rumah Cita Program regarding her response to the existence of moral guidance. On December 5, 2024, Dinda said, "I am very happy to be one of the participants joining the Rumah Cita program; I really like the guidance and learning delivered by the mentors. Usually, if there are no Rumah Cita program activities, zia only watches television and plays with gadgets at home."

Theological morals (Aqidah akhlak) are the foundation of religious education that is important for children to possess from an early age. In elementary school, the education of theology and morals has been integrated into the Islamic religious education subjects. This is in line with the purpose of the Rumah Cita Program, which is to make the students individuals who are devoted to God Almighty and have good morals. Theology (Aqidah) refers to the belief and faith in Allah SWT and its application, while morals (akhlak) include habits and behaviors that arise from self-awareness, whether in relation to Allah, fellow humans, or the environment. Character building is defined as a serious effort made to form traits or behaviors that become a child's hallmark from an early age (Sauki, 2018).

The guidance of theological morals is one of the curricula taught in the Rumah Cita Program; this guidance provides a profound influence in shaping the character of children in their daily lives. The children are able to respect parents, teachers, and friends, and are able to act patiently when facing problems. In order for someone to have a strong theology and noble morals, one of the ways is through Moral guidance. This theological moral guidance is highly important, aiming to shape the character to become better from conversation to digitalization (Triantoro & Pramana, 2025). The guidance of theological morals is included in the Rumah Cita program aiming to form the character of children, seeing the moral condition of children today and the lack of manners towards parents, teachers, and also friends, the factor of which is frequently playing with gadgets that is lacking attention from parents.

The author found findings that the implementation of theological moral guidance in the Rumah Cita Program of the Seribu Satu Cita Riau Foundation can assist in shaping character and educating about theological morals to children in the city of Pekanbaru. By positioning *calistung* as a *wasilah*, the foundation effectively removes the cognitive and structural barriers that prevent marginalized children from achieving spiritual autonomy. This empowerment is crucial, as it enables the *mad'u* (audience) to transition from being passive listeners to becoming active readers of sacred texts, thereby fulfilling the first Quranic imperative of *Iqra'* (read) in a literal and spiritual sense.

Furthermore, Quranic Recitation (Mengaji) is one of the points present in the Rumah Cita program. Quranic recitation is a lesson in reading the Quran so that one can read and understand the Quran well. Quranic recitation is chosen by the Rumah Cita program to form discipline and patience. Quranic recitation in the home program is implemented so that students possess values of love for the Quran by reading and understanding the Quran. Based on the results of an interview with Layla Takhfa Lubis as the Secretary of the Seribu Satu Cita Foundation on December 6, 2024, she stated, "This Maghrib recitation is carried out after the Maghrib prayer at the Al-Muhajirin mosque. Alhamdulillah, all the students participating in this recitation activity are Muslims, so as a Muslim from childhood we must be clever at reciting the Quran, and the mentors who teach this recitation come from university students who are clever at reciting the Quran and are hafiz (memorizers) of the Quran, so that these university students also have the experience of being a teacher."

Furthermore, the author conducted an interview regarding the Maghrib Recitation Program with the Person in Charge of the Rumah Cita Riau Program on December 6, 2024, stating Zamri. He said, "This Recitation activity is taught directly by students of UIN Suska Riau, namely Razif and Reti. The purpose of this activity is so that students can fluently read the Quran and become hafiz/hafizhah in the future. In the Rumah Cita program, this recitation lesson also teaches the introduction of hijaiyyah letters, tajwid, and makhroj al huruf. In the creation of the Rumah Cita Program curriculum, Maghrib Recitation becomes a mainstay, because of the lack of interest among children to learn to recite the Quran since childhood; this recitation provides positive energy to students so they are disciplined and

always try to learn until they fluently read the Quran, with the material of introducing hijaiyyah letters and tajwid in the recitation guidance."

In addition, the author also conducted an interview with Harezia Raihan Fadhli as the Founder of the Seribu Satu Cita Foundation on December 6, 2024. He stated, "This recitation activity is divided into 2 classes: the first is the Iqra class which is attended by Kindergarten children, and the second is the Quran reading class attended by 1st and 2nd grade Elementary School children. The recitation material taught is in the form of learning the science of tajwid, the introduction of Hijaiyyah letters, and also the memorization (Tahfiz) of the Quran." Then, the author conducted an interview with a student regarding the student's response to the recitation guidance in the Rumah Cita program. Dinda, as a student of the Rumah Cita program, said, "I am very enthusiastic about the existence of this Rumah Cita program; usually after the Maghrib prayer dea just plays with gadgets and just sleeps at home. Dinda becomes spirited to learn to read the Quran and memorize short surahs every day."

From the interview results that the author presented above, the Rumah Cita program incorporates Quranic Recitation into the Rumah Cita curriculum so that children in Pekanbaru city, since elementary school, are capable of reading the Quran well, thus fostering values of love for the Quran. The importance of reading the Quran from an early age has a significant positive impact, especially in growing children's love for the values contained within the Quran that they have memorized. By introducing the Quran consistently from childhood, without realizing it, we can shape children's behavior. Routinely reading and memorizing the Quran for children not only reduces feelings of fear but also provides tranquility of the soul. On the other hand, this activity can increase children's concentration and intellectual abilities. Moreover, in the aspect of language, children will be more proficient in speaking. Equally important, this learning also contributes to the formation of a character with noble morals within the context of religion and morality (Arwanda & Pramana, 2023).

Recitation guidance is most effectively carried out during childhood. The more frequently they read, the more fluent and deep their understanding becomes. At this age, children tend to more easily remember and absorb the knowledge taught. Learning how to read the Quran is an obligation for every Muslim, because this can fulfill moral and spiritual values (Islam, 2024). However, the reality is that many people still lack attention to the importance of this basic knowledge. Furthermore, there are various obstacles that make children less motivated to follow recitation learning in their environment. Several internal factors from the students, such as spending more time playing with gadgets and a lack of enthusiasm for learning (recitation) due to fatigue, become impediments. On the other hand, the learning methods applied in educational parks can often cause boredom. However, one highly important thing is the responsibility of parents to encourage their children to learn to recite the Quran from an early.

The implementation of the recitation activity is attended by Muslim students; certainly, as Muslims, from an early age they must already learn to read the Quran. At this age, children find it easier to remember and absorb the knowledge taught. The recitation learning in the Rumah Cita program teaches materials on the introduction of hijaiyyah letters, the science of tajwid, and makhrajul huruf. By reciting the Quran, children can shape and deepen their religion from an early age. The implementation of recitation in the Rumah Cita program provides a positive impact in growing children's love for the values contained within the Quran that they have studied. Lastly, there is Reading and Writing. This reading and writing activity is an important activity in developing children's abilities in reading and writing so that elementary school children can follow lessons in school well. The Seribu Satu Cita foundation provides reading and writing materials in the Rumah Cita program so that there are no

longer children who are illiterate. Based on the results of an interview conducted by the author with Harezia Raihan Fadhli as the Founder of the Seribu Satu Cita Foundation on December 6, 2024, he stated, "The importance of being clever at reading and writing for elementary school children, because there are many elementary school children who are not serious about learning in their schools. With the existence of this activity, students are enthusiastic in participating in the reading and writing activity with their mentors, interspersed with playing games so that the students do not get bored."

Perhaps the most theoretically significant and analytically complex finding of this study is the programmatic integration of basic secular literacy—specifically reading, writing, and arithmetic (calistung)—into a religious da'wah curriculum. Within traditional, orthodox da'wah paradigms, general literacy instruction is rarely categorized as a pure act of Islamic propagation. This raises a fundamental theoretical question demanded by contemporary da'wah studies: upon what epistemological basis can secular literacy instruction be understood as an act of da'wah. The integration of da'wah into such foundational education allows for a more inclusive approach, where spiritual principles are embedded into the curriculum to provide students with a broader understanding of Islamic ethics (Syamsu & Rizal, 2025). Furthermore, strengthening literacy through foundational community training encourages the practice of religious moderation and provides a positive impact on the surrounding environment (Machendrawaty et al., 2022).

This study argues that the Rumah Cita program successfully reconstructs basic literacy as an essential *wasilah* (medium, instrument, or prerequisite) of da'wah. The theoretical justification for this integration lies in the Islamic concept of *tamkin* (empowerment). Effective da'wah inherently requires the *mad'u* to possess the basic cognitive capacity to receive, process, and eventually seek out the message independently. Illiteracy acts as a profound, structural barrier to Islamic knowledge; a child who cannot recognize the Latin alphabet will struggle significantly with formal education, and a child who cannot read cannot independently access the Qur'an, Hadith, or other fundamental Islamic texts in the future. Therefore, by dedicating substantial volunteer resources to eradicate basic illiteracy among marginalized children, the Seribu Satu Cita Foundation is engaging in a vital form of cognitive and social empowerment. Teaching a child to read is theoretically inseparable from the effort to facilitate their future religious agency. It aligns profoundly with the very first Qur'anic imperative, *Iqra'* (Read). In this light, basic literacy instruction transcends secular boundaries; it becomes an epistemological prerequisite for successful, long-term *tarbiyah*. By addressing this educational deficit, the program broadens the conceptual scope of da'wah from mere verbal proselytization to holistic intellectual empowerment, breaking the cycle of marginalization that often prevents effective religious comprehension. Then, the author conducted an interview regarding the students' interest in prophetic stories. Zamri, as the Person in Charge of the Rumah Cita Program of the Seribu Satu Cita Riau Foundation, on December 10, 2024, mentioned, "In this activity, the children like listening to Prophetic Stories, because every day the Prophetic Stories narrated are different. As an exemplary role model, the Prophet Muhammad becomes an example for human morals/behavior in everyday life. The purpose of this activity is so that students can possess praiseworthy morals like the Prophet Muhammad SAW."

Aside from that, conducting an interview with Dinda as a Student Participant of the Rumah Cita Program gave a response regarding the motivation of the Rumah Cita program participants on December 10, 2024. She said, "I am very happy with the existence of this Program, because the older brothers and sisters narrate while playing fun games. Dinda can become enthusiastic and gain new knowledge about Prophetic Stories. Hopefully, the older brothers and sisters can continue to be teachers in the Rumah Cita Program." From the interview results that the author presented above, we can see

the great interest of students towards prophetic stories; children today like to listen to things they have never heard before. The Rumah Cita program provides education on prophetic stories to children in the city of Pekanbaru. By engaging in two-way communication, asking and listening, the children can understand the prophetic stories and make the prophet a moral role model in everyday life.

One of the figures who can serve as a role model for us children in shaping character is the Prophet Muhammad SAW. He is a figure whose morals can be emulated. The Messenger of Allah possessed noble morals, such as being religious, always obedient in worship/prayer, and praying, being honest, trustworthy, and patient (Amelia, 2022). The method of instilling character values through Prophetic stories can be done by way of narrating or storytelling, using the stories of the prophets as teaching for good morals for children today. Storytelling is the process of conveying information or messages through a story, thereby making that information easier to understand. Prophetic stories are often used as learning media because they contain many relevant values and lessons. Prophetic stories provide concrete examples regarding morals, perseverance, and obedience to Allah, which can inspire children to apply those values in everyday life. Furthermore, these prophetic stories often serve as a starting point to assist children in interacting and deepening their understanding of character values in everyday life.

The implementation of the prophetic story activity in the Rumah Cita program aims to form good character values through storytelling/narrating prophetic stories to children in the city of Pekanbaru. Because in current times children prefer to listen rather than to read, therefore the Seribu Satu Cita Foundation makes Prophetic Stories a part of the Rumah Cita program. The implementation of the prophetic story activity in the Rumah Cita Program of the Seribu Satu Cita Riau Foundation can assist in shaping children's character values through storytelling/narrating prophetic stories with engaging innovations. The implementation of the prophetic story activity in the Rumah Cita Program of the Seribu Satu Cita Riau Foundation is carried out amidst theological moral guidance. This prophetic story activity is highly liked by the students, because children today prefer listening to stories/storytelling, as well as engaging in two-way communication. With that, the students are capable of understanding what is conveyed by the mentors from the Seribu Satu Cita Riau Foundation. And the students are capable of making the Prophet Muhammad Saw a good exemplary role model who possesses noble morals.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the Rumah Cita program, initiated by the Seribu Satu Cita Foundation in Pekanbaru, represents a significant conceptual innovation in community-based da'wah by systematically blurring the traditional boundaries between Islamic religious education (tarbiyah) and foundational secular learning. Through the theoretical lens of da'wah studies, the analysis reveals that the instruction of akidah akhlak and prophetic storytelling functions as a highly strategic uslub (method) specifically designed to counteract the moral degradation and loss of adab precipitated by unchecked digital technology. Most importantly, this research provides a robust theoretical justification for conceptualizing basic literacy instruction (calistung) not merely as an auxiliary secular activity, but as a crucial wasilah (medium) of da'wah that cognitively empowers the mad'u (children) with the intellectual architecture necessary to independently access and internalize Islamic values in the future. Consequently, this article contributes to contemporary da'wah methodology by arguing that effective modern propagation targeting marginalized communities must encompass holistic cognitive empowerment alongside traditional verbal religious transmission. Despite these theoretical insights, this research acknowledges its methodological limitations as a qualitative, single-site case study relying

on cross-sectional observational and interview data, which inherently restricts its broader generalizability and precludes empirical, quantitative verification of the program's long-term behavioral impacts. To address these constraints and advance the field, future academic inquiry should pursue longitudinal, mixed-methods assessments to quantify educational outcomes over time, conduct comparative case studies across diverse Indonesian demographics, and develop standardized metrics for evaluating the success of the da'wah-tarbiyah intersection in non-formal, digital-era settings. While this study provides a robust snapshot of the 'Rumah Cita' model, it acknowledges that the findings are geographically and contextually constrained to a single site in Pekanbaru. Therefore, this research serves as a foundational step, suggesting that future scholarly efforts should employ longitudinal methodologies to track the long-term ethical and spiritual trajectory of these children as they transition into adulthood.

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