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INTEGRATING THE QUR'ANIC PERSPECTIVE ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION: A STUDY OF NAHDLATUL ULAMA *DA'WAH* PRACTICES IN SALATIGA

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Abstract : *This study examines how the Qur'anic principle of religious freedom is integrated into Islamic education and the da'wah practices of the Nahdlatul Ulama community in Salatiga. This research departs from the still-limited studies linking the value of religious freedom in the Qur'an with the practice of community-based Islamic education and da'wah. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected through thematic analysis of Qur'anic interpretations and semi-structured interviews with religious leaders and Islamic education practitioners. The results show three main patterns. First, the principle of lā ikrāh fī al-dīn is internalized in da'wah through persuasive, dialogical, humanistic, and ethical communication without coercion. Second, this value is pedagogically transformed in inclusive and participatory learning to foster tolerance and respect for socio-religious diversity. Third, religious freedom is socially constructed through processes of externalization, objectivation, and internalization until it becomes a shared cultural norm. This study contributes to broadening the study of multicultural Islamic education by demonstrating that religious freedom is not only a normative concept but also a lived social and pedagogical process in Muslim communities.*

Keywords : *Religious Freedom; Islamic Education; Da'wah, Social Construction.*

Abstrak : *Studi ini meneliti bagaimana prinsip Al-Qur'an tentang kebebasan beragama diintegrasikan dalam pendidikan Islam dan praktik dakwah komunitas Nahdlatul Ulama di Salatiga. Penelitian ini berangkat dari masih terbatasnya kajian yang menghubungkan nilai kebebasan beragama dalam Al-Qur'an dengan praktik pendidikan dan dakwah Islam berbasis komunitas. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus, data diperoleh melalui analisis tematik tafsir Al-Qur'an dan wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan tokoh agama serta praktisi pendidikan Islam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan tiga pola utama. Pertama, prinsip lā ikrāh fī al-dīn diinternalisasi dalam dakwah melalui komunikasi persuasif, dialogis, humanis, dan etis tanpa paksaan. Kedua, nilai tersebut ditransformasikan secara pedagogis dalam pembelajaran inklusif dan partisipatif untuk menumbuhkan toleransi serta penghargaan terhadap keragaman sosial-keagamaan. Ketiga, kebebasan beragama dikonstruksi secara sosial melalui proses eksternalisasi, objektivasi, dan internalisasi hingga menjadi norma budaya bersama. Studi ini berkontribusi dalam memperluas kajian pendidikan Islam multikultural dengan menunjukkan bahwa kebebasan beragama tidak hanya dipahami sebagai konsep normatif, tetapi juga dipraktikkan sebagai proses sosial dan pedagogis dalam kehidupan komunitas Muslim.*

Kata Kunci : *Kebebasan Beragama; Pendidikan Agama Islam; Dakwah, Konstruksi Sosial.*

INTRODUCTION

Islam, as both a religious doctrine and a civilizational system, is inherently oriented toward education (*tarbiyah*) and *da'wah*, encompassing not only ritual devotion but also the transmission of ethical values, knowledge, and social norms (Mennella et al., 2024; Roy et al., 2020; Voogt et al., 2023). One of the fundamental principles within this framework is the Qur'anic affirmation of religious freedom, as articulated in the verse *lā ikrāh fī al-dīn* (Q. 2:256), which explicitly rejects coercion in matters of belief (Afifah et al., 2025; Anam et al., 2025). The principle reflects an educational paradigm in which faith must be grounded in conscious understanding and voluntary acceptance rather than compulsion (Dias et al., 2024; Siahaan et al., 2023). Consequently, Islamic education and *da'wah* can be understood as dialogical and pedagogical processes that emphasize persuasion, ethical communication, and moral exemplarity (Lutfauziah et al., 2024; Umar et al., 2023). Within this perspective, Islam provides a normative foundation for integrating the values of religious freedom into educational and communicative practices.

However, in contemporary plural societies characterized by increasing religious diversity and socio-cultural complexity, implementing this principle poses significant challenges (Bovey et al., 2025; Torres-Arends, 2023). Although the Qur'an promotes non-coercion and ethical engagement, tensions frequently emerge when *da'wah* practices intersect with issues of religious identity, authority, and interfaith relations (Fikri et al., 2025). These tensions are particularly evident in educational contexts, where the need to maintain religious commitment must be balanced with the imperative to foster respect for diversity and inclusivity (Gawo & Tafesse, 2024). This condition reflects a critical problem, namely the gap between the normative ideals of religious freedom in Islamic teachings and their practical realization in educational and *da'wah* activities within diverse social settings.

Existing scholarship has widely explored the concept of religious freedom in Islam, primarily from theological, philosophical, and legal perspectives (Naseef & Santhosh, 2022). Historical analyses further demonstrate that the spread of Islam was largely facilitated through peaceful mechanisms such as trade, cultural interaction, and gradual social integration rather than coercion (Anglani et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2024). In addition, contemporary studies in the sociology of religion emphasize that religious freedom should not be viewed solely as a doctrinal principle but also as a socially constructed practice shaped by institutional frameworks, power relations, and communal interactions (Heinke et al., 2024; Mujiburrahman et al., 2024). These perspectives underscore the importance of examining how religious values are translated into lived experiences within specific socio-cultural contexts.

Despite these scholarly contributions, there remains a notable limitation in the literature. Few studies explicitly bridge the gap between Qur'anic principles of religious freedom and their pedagogical implementation in Islamic education and *da'wah*,

particularly through an empirical and sociological approach (Nasrulloh et al., 2022). Most previous research tends to separate normative theological discourse from practical educational dynamics, resulting in a fragmented understanding of how such principles are operationalized in real-life contexts (Keller et al., 2025; Sadirbekova et al., 2024). Furthermore, the role of local religious organizations, such as Nahdlatul Ulama, in mediating and translating these values into concrete educational practices has not been sufficiently examined, especially within pluralistic urban environments like Salatiga.

Addressing this gap, the present study offers a novel contribution by integrating Qur'anic perspectives on religious freedom with pedagogical analysis through the theoretical lens of the social construction of reality proposed by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann. Rather than conceptualizing religious freedom merely as a normative doctrine, this research positions it as a lived and socially constructed reality that is continuously shaped, negotiated, and reproduced through educational and *da'wah* practices. By situating the analysis within the socio-religious context of Salatiga widely recognized for its interreligious harmony this study explores how the principles of non-coercion, dialogue, and inclusivity are internalized, institutionalized, and enacted within the educational and *da'wah* activities of the Nahdlatul Ulama community.

Therefore, the objective of this study is to analyze how Qur'anic principles of religious freedom are pedagogically integrated into Islamic education and *da'wah* practices, and how these processes contribute to fostering inclusive attitudes and social harmony in a plural society. Specifically, this research aims to; 1) examine the forms of pedagogical practices that reflect the principle of non-coercion, 2) explore the mechanisms through which these values are socially constructed and transmitted within the community, and 3) assess their implications for developing a more inclusive and dialogical model of Islamic education.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the integration of Qur'anic perspectives on religious freedom within Islamic education and *da'wah* practices. A case study is particularly appropriate for this research as it enables an in-depth investigation of a bounded system within its real-life context. The case under examination is the *da'wah* practices of Nahdlatul Ulama in Salatiga, which represents a socio-religious setting characterized by pluralism and interreligious interaction.

Data collection was conducted through two main sources: textual analysis and fieldwork. *First*, textual data were derived from classical and contemporary Qur'anic commentaries addressing verses related to religious freedom. These texts were analyzed using a thematic (*mawḍū'ī*) exegetical approach, which allows for the synthesis of dispersed

Qur'anic verses into a coherent conceptual framework. This step provides the normative foundation for understanding the principle of *lā ikrāh fī al-dīn* within Islamic thought. *Second*, field data were collected through semi-structured interviews with four key figures of Nahdlatul Ulama in Salatiga. The participants were selected purposively based on their roles in *da'wah* and community engagement. The interviews focused on their interpretations of religious freedom, their pedagogical approaches in *da'wah*, and their experiences in navigating religious diversity. Semi-structured interviews were chosen to allow flexibility in exploring participants' perspectives while maintaining thematic consistency. Engaging with religious elites is essential for understanding how Islamic authority and values are articulated and negotiated within local contexts.

Data analysis was conducted using an interactive model involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. To interpret the findings, this study employs the social construction of reality framework developed by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann. This theoretical lens conceptualizes religious norms as socially constructed through the processes of externalization, objectivation, and internalization. Through this framework, the study examines how Qur'anic principles of religious freedom are not only understood normatively but also constructed, institutionalized, and reproduced in everyday *da'wah* and educational practices. By integrating textual and empirical data within a case study design, this research seeks to provide a holistic understanding of how religious freedom is translated from scriptural teachings into lived social reality within a specific community context.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Results

This study examines how Qur'anic principles of religious freedom are constructed and practiced within the culture of Islamic education and *da'wah* among the Nahdlatul Ulama Muslim community in Salatiga. Situated in a pluralistic social context, the findings indicate that religious freedom is not merely understood as a theological doctrine but has been internalized as a lived cultural value manifested in non-coercive, dialogical, and ethically grounded *da'wah* practices. This study further reveals that these values are pedagogically transmitted through inclusive educational approaches that emphasize respect for diversity and experiential learning. In addition, religious freedom is shown to be socially constructed and sustained through institutional roles, community interactions, and the authority of religious leaders, making it an integral part of collective identity. Based on these findings, the following section elaborates on three key dimensions: the internalization of non-coercive values in *da'wah*, the pedagogical transformation of religious freedom in Islamic education, and the social construction of these values within the NU community.

a) Internalization of Non-Coercive Religious Values in *Da'wah* Practices

The internalization of Qur'anic principles of religious freedom within *da'wah* practices among the Nahdlatul Ulama community in Salatiga does not occur spontaneously, but is shaped through structured communicative patterns and ethical engagement strategies. These practices emphasize persuasion, dialogue, and moral exemplarity as the primary modes of conveying religious teachings. Field data indicate that *da'wah* actors consistently avoid coercive approaches and instead prioritize respectful interaction, particularly within a pluralistic social environment. The following data from interviews and observations illustrate how non-coercive values are internalized and practiced:

Table 1. Internalization of Non-Coercive Values in Da'wah Practices

Interview / Observation Data	Description	Code
Informant 1: *"In preaching, we do not force others, but invite them through good ways and wisdom."*	Emphasis on persuasive and ethical communication	Persuasive Da'wah
Informant 2: *"We respect differences, because each person has their own beliefs that cannot be forced."*	Recognition of religious diversity and non-coercion	Respect for Diversity
Informant 3: *"Dialogue is important so that people understand Islam without feeling pressured."*	Use of dialogue as a communicative approach	Dialogical Engagement
Informant 4: *"We prefer to give examples through behavior rather than just words."*	Emphasis on moral exemplarity in da'wah	Moral Exemplarity
Observation: Da'wah activities are conducted through community discussions, social gatherings, and informal conversations.	Contextual and relational forms of da'wah practice	Contextual Interaction

Table 1 shows that the internalization of non-coercive values in *da'wah* is reflected through consistent communicative patterns and social interactions. These findings point to several key forms of practice that shape how religious freedom is enacted in everyday life. Beyond merely identifying recurring behaviors, the data also indicate that such communicative patterns are systematically cultivated and socially reinforced within the Nahdlatul Ulama community in Salatiga. The alignment between individual narratives and observed practices suggests a shared normative framework that guides how *da'wah* should be conducted in a pluralistic context. This framework not only regulates interaction but also functions as a moral compass that shapes attitudes toward others. Furthermore, the consistency of these patterns across different informants highlights the existence of a collective consciousness in which

religious freedom is not treated as an abstract ideal, but as a practical and lived value embedded in daily communication and social engagement as below:

First, persuasive *da'wah*. The data indicate that *da'wah* is framed as an دعوت (invitation) rather than an imposition. Religious messages are delivered through wisdom (*hikmah*) and gentle communication, allowing individuals to engage with Islamic teachings voluntarily. This approach reinforces the idea that faith must emerge from awareness and understanding, not coercion. More importantly, persuasive *da'wah* reflects a conscious effort to align religious communication with ethical sensitivity, particularly in diverse social environments. Informants demonstrate an awareness that coercive approaches may not only be ineffective but can also damage social harmony. Therefore, persuasion becomes both a strategic and ethical choice, enabling preachers to communicate religious values in ways that are accessible, respectful, and contextually appropriate. This approach also allows for gradual internalization, where individuals are given the space to reflect, question, and ultimately accept religious teachings based on personal conviction.

Second, respect for diversity. Informants consistently highlight the importance of acknowledging and respecting religious differences. This respect is not merely rhetorical but is embedded in everyday interactions, where individuals consciously avoid imposing beliefs on others. Such practices demonstrate an applied understanding of religious freedom within a pluralistic society. Furthermore, respect for diversity is reinforced through social norms that encourage tolerance and discourage exclusivist attitudes. Informants emphasize that recognizing differences does not weaken religious identity, but rather strengthens it by fostering humility and openness. In this sense, diversity is perceived not as a challenge but as an opportunity for mutual learning and coexistence. The ability to maintain one's beliefs while respecting others reflects a mature form of religiosity that is both principled and inclusive, contributing to the stability of interreligious relations within the community.

Third, dialogical engagement. Dialogue emerges as a central mechanism in *da'wah* practices. Through open conversations and mutual exchange, individuals are given space to express, question, and understand religious perspectives without fear of judgment. This creates an environment conducive to learning and mutual respect. In addition, dialogical engagement functions as a bridge that connects different perspectives, enabling individuals to negotiate meaning in a constructive manner. Informants describe dialogue not only as a method of communication but also as a process of relationship-building, where trust and understanding are gradually developed. This approach allows *da'wah* to move beyond one-way transmission of knowledge toward a more interactive and participatory model. As a result, dialogue

becomes an essential tool for reducing misunderstandings, addressing misconceptions, and fostering a more inclusive religious discourse within a diverse social setting.

Fourth, moral exemplarity. The findings reveal that *da'wah* is often carried out through action rather than verbal instruction alone. Informants emphasize the importance of embodying Islamic values in daily behavior, making moral conduct a persuasive tool in itself. This form of *da'wah* strengthens credibility and fosters trust within the community. Moreover, moral exemplarity serves as a form of silent communication that can be more impactful than verbal preaching. When individuals consistently demonstrate honesty, kindness, and fairness, these behaviors become tangible representations of Islamic teachings. Informants suggest that such practices create a positive image of Islam that resonates with people from different backgrounds. In this way, *da'wah* becomes a lived experience rather than a purely discursive activity, where values are not only taught but also demonstrated in real-life situations.

Fifth, contextual interaction. Observational data show that *da'wah* is embedded in social and cultural activities such as community gatherings and informal discussions. This indicates that religious communication is not isolated but integrated into everyday social life, making it more accessible and relevant. Furthermore, contextual interaction allows *da'wah* to adapt to the needs and dynamics of the community. Informants highlight that informal settings often create a more relaxed atmosphere, enabling more open and meaningful conversations. This integration of *da'wah* into daily life also reflects a flexible approach that prioritizes relevance over rigidity. By situating religious messages within familiar social contexts, *da'wah* becomes more relatable and easier to internalize, thereby enhancing its effectiveness in promoting values of religious freedom.

Thus, these findings suggest that the internalization of Qur'anic principles of religious freedom within *da'wah* practices is realized through structured yet flexible communicative strategies. These practices not only reflect theological commitments but also function as social mechanisms that sustain harmonious interreligious relations in the NU community of Salatiga. Additionally, the interplay between persuasion, respect, dialogue, exemplarity, and contextualization demonstrates that *da'wah* operates as a holistic process that integrates ethical, social, and pedagogical dimensions. This integration enables the continuous reproduction of non-coercive values within the community, ensuring that religious freedom is maintained not only as a principle but also as a lived and shared reality.

b) Pedagogical Transformation of Religious Freedom into Educational Practices

The transformation of Qur'anic principles of religious freedom into pedagogical practices within Islamic education among the Nahdlatul Ulama community in Salatiga is not merely conceptual but is systematically embedded in teaching and learning processes. Islamic education, in this context, functions not only as the transmission of religious knowledge but also as a medium for cultivating inclusive attitudes and ethical awareness. The findings indicate that educators and *da'wah* actors consciously integrate values of non-coercion, respect, and dialogue into their pedagogical approaches. These practices are reflected in both formal and informal learning settings, where students and community members are encouraged to engage critically, reflectively, and respectfully with religious diversity. The following data from interviews and observations illustrate how religious freedom is pedagogically transformed into educational practices:

Table 2: Pedagogical Transformation of Religious Freedom in Islamic Education

Interview / Observation Data	Description	Code
Informant 1: *"We teach students to respect other religions, not just in theory but in how they behave daily."*	Integration of tolerance into daily learning practices	Value Integration
Informant 2: *"Learning is not about forcing students to accept, but guiding them to understand."*	Non-coercive pedagogical approach	Non-Coercive Learning
Informant 3: *"Students are encouraged to discuss and express their views openly."*	Encouragement of critical and open dialogue	Open Discussion
Informant 4: *"We give examples through social activities involving different communities."*	Experiential learning through social interaction	Experiential Learning
Observation: Educational activities include discussions, community service, and intergroup interactions.	Contextual and participatory learning practices	Contextual Pedagogy

Table 2 shows that the pedagogical transformation of religious freedom is reflected through structured learning strategies and interactive educational practices. These findings indicate that the values of non-coercion, inclusivity, and respect are not only taught as abstract concepts but are actively embedded within the learning process. Furthermore, the consistency of responses among informants suggests that these pedagogical approaches are collectively understood and practiced within the educational culture of the Nahdlatul Ulama community in Salatiga. This alignment between values and practices demonstrates that Islamic education serves as a strategic medium for translating theological principles into lived experiences.

First, value integration. The data indicate that values of religious freedom are systematically incorporated into daily learning activities. Educators do not limit instruction to theoretical explanations but ensure that students practice these values in their interactions. This integration enables students to internalize tolerance and respect as part of their character formation. Moreover, the consistent reinforcement of these values across different learning contexts strengthens their sustainability over time, making them an integral part of students' moral development.

Second, non-coercive learning. Informants emphasize that the learning process is designed to guide rather than impose. Students are encouraged to understand religious teachings through reflection and reasoning, rather than through pressure or authority. This approach aligns with the Qur'anic principle of *lā ikrāh fī al-dīn*, positioning education as a space for intellectual and spiritual growth. By avoiding coercion, educators create a supportive learning environment that fosters autonomy, critical thinking, and genuine engagement with religious values.

Third, open discussion. Dialogue-based learning emerges as a key pedagogical strategy. Students are given opportunities to express their opinions, ask questions, and engage in constructive debates. This process not only enhances their understanding of religious concepts but also develops their ability to appreciate different perspectives. Open discussion encourages mutual respect and reduces the potential for intolerance, as students learn to navigate differences through communication rather than confrontation.

Fourth, experiential learning. The findings show that educational practices extend beyond the classroom through social and community-based activities. By engaging in interactions with diverse groups, students gain direct experience in practicing tolerance and inclusivity. These experiential activities provide concrete contexts in which abstract values can be applied, making learning more meaningful and impactful. This approach also strengthens students' social awareness and empathy, as they encounter real-life situations that require understanding and cooperation.

Fifth, contextual pedagogy. Observational data indicate that learning is closely connected to the social environment in which it takes place. Educational activities are designed to be relevant to the realities of a pluralistic society, allowing students to relate religious teachings to their everyday experiences. This contextualization enhances the effectiveness of learning, as students are able to see the practical implications of religious values in real-life situations. It also demonstrates the flexibility of Islamic education in adapting to diverse social contexts.

Thus, these findings suggest that the pedagogical transformation of religious freedom within Islamic education is achieved through integrative and participatory learning approaches. These practices not only convey religious knowledge but also shape attitudes, behaviors, and social awareness. By embedding values of non-coercion, dialogue, and inclusivity into the educational process, Islamic education within the NU community in Salatiga functions as a powerful mechanism for fostering tolerance and sustaining harmonious social relations in a pluralistic society.

c) Social Construction of Religious Freedom through Institutional and Communal Practices

The construction of religious freedom within the socio-religious life of the Nahdlatul Ulama community in Salatiga is not a static doctrinal process, but a dynamic and continuous social phenomenon shaped through institutional structures and communal interactions. The findings reveal that religious freedom is collectively produced and maintained through recurring practices, symbolic legitimization, and shared meanings. Rather than being merely understood at an individual level, this value is embedded within social systems that regulate behavior, reinforce norms, and sustain interreligious harmony. The process reflects a cyclical pattern in which values are continuously constructed, negotiated, and reproduced within everyday life.



Figure 1: Social Construction of Religious Freedom in NU Community

Figure 1 illustrates that the construction of religious freedom follows a continuous and cyclical process, where Qur'anic values are translated into social reality through stages of externalization, objectivation, and internalization. These stages are not isolated but interconnected, forming a dynamic system that sustains the presence of non-coercive religious values within the community. The findings suggest that this process is deeply embedded within both institutional frameworks and

everyday social interactions, allowing religious freedom to function as a lived and shared reality.

First, externalization. The data indicate that religious leaders and educators actively express Qur'anic values through *da'wah* practices, teaching activities, and public communication. These expressions serve as the initial stage in translating abstract theological principles into observable social actions. Informants highlight that values such as tolerance, respect, and non-coercion are consistently communicated in sermons, discussions, and educational settings. This process reflects a deliberate effort to make religious teachings relevant and applicable within the context of a plural society. Externalization thus functions as a bridge between doctrine and practice, ensuring that religious values are not confined to texts but are actively expressed in social life.

Second, objectivation. The repeated expression of these values leads to their institutionalization within community norms and traditions. Over time, practices such as respectful dialogue, inclusive engagement, and non-coercive communication become standardized and taken for granted. Informants suggest that these norms are reinforced through organizational structures, religious gatherings, and collective activities, creating a shared understanding of acceptable behavior. This stage reflects how individual actions gradually transform into collective realities that guide social interaction. As a result, religious freedom becomes embedded within the cultural fabric of the community, functioning as an implicit rule that shapes how individuals relate to others.

Third, internalization. The findings show that individuals absorb these socially constructed values through continuous participation in community life. Through repeated exposure to inclusive practices and ethical communication, individuals develop personal commitments to religious freedom. Informants emphasize that this process occurs gradually, as individuals observe, experience, and reflect on social interactions. Internalization is evident in attitudes that prioritize respect, empathy, and openness toward others. This stage highlights how external norms become part of individual consciousness, influencing behavior in both public and private contexts.

Fourth, social reproduction. The internalized values are then reproduced through everyday interactions, ensuring their continuity across generations. Individuals who have internalized these norms become agents who reinforce and transmit them within the community. This reproduction occurs through routine activities such as social gatherings, educational programs, and interreligious engagement. As a result, religious freedom is continuously sustained as a collective identity rather than a temporary or situational practice. This cyclical process

demonstrates the resilience of these values, as they are constantly renewed through social participation and institutional support.

Thus, these findings suggest that religious freedom within the NU community in Salatiga is not merely a theological principle but a socially constructed reality that is actively produced and maintained through interconnected processes. The integration of institutional roles, communal practices, and individual experiences creates a stable yet dynamic system in which values of non-coercion, inclusivity, and dialogue are continuously reinforced. This process ensures that religious freedom remains deeply embedded within the social and cultural life of the community, contributing to the sustainability of harmonious interreligious relations.

2. Discussion

The first finding shows that non-coercive values are deeply internalized within da'wah practices through persuasive communication, dialogue, moral exemplarity, and contextual interaction. These patterns indicate that the Qur'anic principle of lā ikrāh fī al-dīn is not merely understood as a theological doctrine but is actively translated into communicative behavior within the Nahdlatul Ulama community in Salatiga. Religious messages are delivered through approaches that prioritize empathy, openness, and respect for individual choice, allowing da'wah activities to function not only as a medium for transmitting Islamic teachings but also as a platform for building mutual understanding within a socially and religiously diverse environment (Jusubaidi et al., 2024). In practice, community leaders tend to avoid confrontational rhetoric and instead emphasize ethical persuasion, cultural accommodation, and everyday interaction as effective instruments for nurturing religious awareness (Nailasariy et al., 2023; Uyuni, 2024). This finding demonstrates that non-coercive *da'wah* is embedded not only in formal religious activities such as sermons and study circles, but also in daily social relations that shape communal attitudes toward tolerance and coexistence.

From an interpretative perspective, this finding reflects a transformation in da'wah orientation from authoritative and normative delivery toward a more dialogical, participatory, and humanistic approach (Fatmawati et al., 2024; Rozi et al., 2025). The emphasis on persuasion rather than imposition suggests that religious communication is increasingly shaped by ethical considerations, social sensitivity, and awareness of plural realities, particularly within multicultural contexts (Khoiroh et al., 2025; Mundiri & Annisa, 2025). This shift indicates that da'wah actors are not only transmitting religious knowledge but also negotiating meaning in ways that maintain social harmony and prevent religious exclusivism (Zamroni et al., 2020). The process of communication becomes more adaptive to the socio-cultural background of audiences, enabling Islamic

teachings to be conveyed without generating tension or resistance (Adeoye et al., 2025). Furthermore, this transformation illustrates how *da'wah* is evolving into a relational practice that values listening, engagement, and reciprocal interaction rather than relying solely on one-directional authority. Such an orientation strengthens the perception of Islam as a religion that promotes compassion, moderation, and peaceful coexistence in contemporary society.

This finding aligns with the concept of communicative action, where interaction is oriented toward mutual understanding rather than domination or coercive influence. It also reflects the process of externalization in the framework of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, where religious values are expressed through observable social practices and gradually become part of collective social reality (Awaliah S et al., 2025; Vieira & Joia, 2024). The study shows that Qur'anic principles concerning freedom of belief are not confined to abstract theological discourse but are reproduced through patterns of interaction that shape social norms and communal ethics. However, this research extends the theory by demonstrating that such externalization is not value-neutral, because it is consciously guided by ethical principles derived from Islamic teachings, especially those emphasizing mercy, tolerance, and human dignity. In this sense, da'wah functions not only as a religious obligation but also as a cultural mechanism through which communities negotiate moral values and social cohesion. The findings therefore contribute to broader discussions on the relationship between religion, communication, and the social construction of pluralistic coexistence.

The novelty of this finding lies in its empirical demonstration of how non-coercion operates as a practical communication strategy within *da'wah* rather than remaining a purely doctrinal or normative concept. Previous discussions on religious freedom in Islam have often focused on theological interpretation or legal debates, while this study highlights how such values are implemented concretely in community-based religious interaction. This provides a more grounded understanding of religious freedom as a lived social practice that shapes everyday relationships among individuals with different backgrounds. In terms of implications, this approach offers a relevant model for developing inclusive *da'wah* strategies that are responsive to social diversity, especially in multicultural societies facing challenges of intolerance and polarization. Globally, the findings contribute to reframing Islamic *da'wah* as a force for dialogue, social integration, and peacebuilding rather than conflict or exclusion. The study also opens opportunities for future research exploring how non-coercive religious communication can strengthen

interfaith relations, civic harmony, and democratic culture in broader educational and societal contexts.

The second finding highlights that religious freedom is pedagogically transformed into inclusive and participatory learning practices within Islamic education. Values such as tolerance, openness, mutual respect, and non-coercion are systematically integrated into teaching strategies, including dialogue-based learning, collaborative discussion, experiential activities, and contextual pedagogy (Ali et al., 2024). In practice, teachers encourage students to express opinions, engage in critical reflection, and appreciate differences in perspectives without fear of judgment or exclusion (Nazilah et al., 2024; Townley & Koop, 2024). Learning activities are designed not merely to transfer religious knowledge, but also to cultivate social awareness and ethical sensitivity toward diversity within society (Park & Cho, 2022). This finding indicates that educational spaces within the Nahdlatul Ulama community in Salatiga function as environments where inclusive Islamic values are continuously practiced and reinforced through interaction, communication, and shared learning experiences among students and educators.

Interpretatively, this finding suggests that Islamic education functions not only as a site of knowledge transmission but also as a transformative social space where values are internalized through experience, dialogue, and interaction. The shift toward non-coercive and student-centered learning reflects an awareness that meaningful religious understanding cannot be imposed through rigid authority but must be constructed gradually through engagement and reflection. Teachers are positioned not solely as authoritative transmitters of doctrine, but also as facilitators who guide students in interpreting religious values within contemporary social realities (Hafferty et al., 2024). This transformation illustrates a broader movement in Islamic pedagogy toward approaches that emphasize empathy, participation, and critical understanding(Chinchay et al., 2024). As a result, students are encouraged to develop inclusive attitudes and emotional awareness, enabling them to interact constructively with people from different social, cultural, and religious backgrounds in everyday life.

From a theoretical standpoint, this finding reinforces constructivist learning theory, where knowledge is actively built through social interaction, dialogue, and lived experience rather than passively received from authority figures. It also corresponds to the process of internalization in the framework of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, where socially constructed values gradually become part of individual consciousness and shape patterns of behavior (Farooq et al., 2020; Lickona, 1991). The study demonstrates that inclusive religious values are not automatically accepted by students, but are cultivated through repeated pedagogical experiences that connect theological

concepts with real social situations (Zuhaili et al., 2025). This research further extends the theory by showing that pedagogical processes play a central role in facilitating the internalization of religious freedom, tolerance, and coexistence. In this context, Islamic education becomes an important mechanism for reproducing inclusive social values and strengthening harmonious communal relations within plural societies.

The novelty of this finding lies in bridging Islamic educational practice with sociological theory, demonstrating that pedagogy serves as a key mechanism in translating theological principles into lived social values. Previous studies on religious freedom in Islamic education have largely emphasized curriculum content or normative discourse, whereas this study highlights the importance of classroom interaction, participatory learning, and experiential engagement in shaping students' perspectives. Practically, this finding implies that Islamic education should prioritize dialogical, reflective, and experiential approaches to foster inclusive attitudes and reduce tendencies toward intolerance or exclusivism. On a broader level, the study offers a contextual model for integrating religious values into educational practice in ways that support diversity, democratic interaction, and peaceful coexistence. Globally, these findings contribute to contemporary discussions on how faith-based education can function as a constructive force for social harmony in multicultural societies.

The third finding demonstrates that religious freedom is socially constructed through institutional practices, communal interactions, and the authority of religious leaders (Nailasariy et al., 2023). This process occurs through the interconnected stages of externalization, objectivation, and internalization, resulting in the reproduction of non-coercive values as a collective cultural reality within the Nahdlatul Ulama community in Salatiga. Religious freedom is therefore not understood merely as an individual right or theological principle, but as a socially maintained value reinforced through routines, traditions, educational activities, and communal engagement (Najiburrahman et al., 2025). The interaction between religious leaders, educational institutions, and community members continuously shapes a shared understanding of tolerance and coexistence (Assa'idi et al., 2021). This finding illustrates that inclusive values are preserved through both formal institutional mechanisms and informal social relationships within the community.

From an interpretative perspective, this finding indicates that religious freedom is sustained not only by individual belief but also by social structures that reinforce and legitimize these values within everyday life (Fikri et al., 2025). The role of institutions and community norms is crucial in maintaining consistency and continuity, ensuring that

these values are reproduced across generations through repeated social interaction and collective experience (Fatmawati et al., 2024). Religious leaders function as moral authorities who provide legitimacy to inclusive interpretations of Islam, while educational and communal institutions create spaces where these values can be practiced and normalized (Zamroni et al., 2020). This finding suggests that social harmony is not produced automatically, but requires continuous reinforcement through cultural traditions, ethical communication, and institutional commitment that encourage acceptance of diversity and peaceful coexistence.

The finding directly supports the social construction of reality framework developed by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann. The study demonstrates how religious freedom becomes institutionalized through repeated social interaction and gradually accepted as objective social reality within the community (Amelya et al., 2024). However, this research contributes further by highlighting the interplay between institutional authority and everyday practice, showing that social construction is both structured and dynamic at the same time. Institutional actors provide legitimacy and direction, while ordinary social interaction reinforces and reproduces these values within daily life. The findings therefore expand sociological discussions by illustrating how theological values are transformed into stable cultural norms through ongoing processes of negotiation, interaction, and communal participation.

The novelty of this finding lies in its integration of institutional analysis with lived religious practice, demonstrating how abstract theological values become embedded within social systems and collective behavior. Unlike studies that focus only on doctrinal interpretation, this research reveals how institutions actively shape the reproduction of inclusive values through education, leadership, and community interaction. In terms of implications, this suggests that sustaining religious freedom requires not only individual awareness but also institutional support, social legitimacy, and cultural reinforcement. Educational institutions, religious organizations, and community leaders therefore play strategic roles in maintaining harmonious coexistence within plural societies. Globally, this finding provides insight into how religious communities can preserve peace and social stability through socially constructed norms that encourage moderation, tolerance, and mutual respect.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be considered in interpreting the findings. The research focuses on a specific local context, namely the Nahdlatul Ulama community in Salatiga, which may limit broader generalization to different socio-cultural environments. The number of informants is also relatively limited and centered primarily on key religious figures, potentially

overlooking perspectives from younger generations, ordinary community members, or minority groups within the surrounding society. Additionally, the study captures a relatively static snapshot of social practices without examining their transformation over longer historical periods. Future research could address these limitations by employing comparative, interdisciplinary, or longitudinal approaches to explore how religious freedom and inclusive values continue to evolve across different educational, cultural, and institutional contexts.

CONCLUSION

The research results show that the integration of Qur'anic principles of religious freedom within Islamic education and *da'wah* is realized as a dynamic and lived social process rather than merely a normative doctrine. First, the principle of *lā ikrāh fī al-dīn* is internalized in *da'wah* practices through persuasive, dialogical, and ethically grounded communication, reflecting a non-coercive orientation in engaging religious diversity. Second, these values are pedagogically transformed into inclusive, participatory, and experiential learning processes that shape attitudes of tolerance and critical awareness. Third, religious freedom is socially constructed through the interconnected processes of externalization, objectivation, and internalization, as conceptualized by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, resulting in its institutionalization as a collective cultural norm within the Nahdlatul Ulama community in Salatiga. Ultimately, religious freedom emerges as a socially embedded reality, continuously produced and reproduced through educational practices, communal interactions, and interreligious engagement, thereby contributing to the sustainability of harmonious coexistence in a pluralistic society.

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