



Islamic Religious Extension Methods In Counseling Residents In Medan City Social Protection Houses

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the methods employed by Islamic religious Counselors in guiding inmates of the Medan City Social Protection House and to explore how these methods shape changes in religious understanding, behavior, worship discipline, and life motivation among the residents. The study adopts a descriptive qualitative design with data collection techniques including observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The research informants consist of Islamic religious Counselors, employees of the Medan City Social Protection House, and selected inmates recruited through purposive sampling in accordance with the research focus. Data analysis was carried out through iterative processes of data reduction, thematic data presentation, and interpretive verification, while data validity was examined using source triangulation across different participant groups and data collection techniques. The findings indicate that Islamic religious Counselors predominantly employ interactive lectures, questions and answers, individual guidance, exemplary conduct, and habituation with materials on faith, worship, morals, and exemplary stories. These methods are in line with the Islamic da'wah approaches articulated in the Qur'an, namely bil hikmah, mau'izhah hasanah, and mujaadalah billati hiya ahsan, and are operationalized in a humanistic and persuasive counseling context within the institution. The guidance activities contribute to strengthening residents' religious understanding and fostering tendencies toward more disciplined worship and more constructive social behavior; however, these changes are gradual, vary across individuals, and remain contingent upon the residents' own readiness and awareness to transform, as emphasized in the Qur'an. This study offers a contextualized conceptual account of Islamic religious counseling in social protection institutions by synthesizing da'wah methods, counseling practices, and social rehabilitation objectives, thereby providing an analytical framework that can inform future multisite or comparative studies on Islamic religious counseling for vulnerable social groups.

Keyword: Methods, Islamic Religious Extension, Guidance, Social Protection Houses.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui metode yang digunakan penyuluh agama Islam dalam melakukan pembinaan terhadap warga binaan serta mengetahui dampak dari pembinaan tersebut. Metode penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Informan penelitian terdiri dari penyuluh agama Islam, pegawai Rumah Perlindungan Sosial Kota Medan, dan warga binaan yang dipilih menggunakan teknik purposive sampling. Teknik analisis data dilakukan melalui reduksi data, penyajian data, dan verifikasi data dengan pengecekan keabsahan data menggunakan triangulasi sumber. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa metode yang digunakan penyuluh agama Islam

meliputi metode ceramah, tanya jawab, bimbingan individual, keteladanan, dan pembiasaan dengan materi akidah, ibadah, akhlak, dan kisah teladan. Metode tersebut telah sesuai dengan metode dakwah Islam dalam Al-Qur'an, yaitu bil hikmah, mau'izhah hasanah, dan mujadalah billati hiya ahsan. Pembinaan yang dilakukan memberikan dampak positif terhadap peningkatan pemahaman agama, perubahan perilaku, kedisiplinan ibadah, dan motivasi hidup warga binaan. Namun demikian, keberhasilan pembinaan juga dipengaruhi oleh kesadaran individu untuk berubah sebagaimana dijelaskan dalam Al-Qur'an.

Kata kunci: Metode, Penyuluh Agama Islam, Pembinaan, Rumah Perlindungan Sosial.

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Introduction

The development of modern society brings various impacts on the social, moral, and spiritual conditions of the community (Ainiyah et al., 2026; Hasan et al., 2024). A range of social problems such as poverty, neglect, domestic violence, drug abuse, and family conflict continue to grow within society. These conditions not only affect economic and social aspects but also have an impact on individuals' mental and spiritual well-being. In social reality, not all individuals can live ideally in accordance with religious guidance. Issues of poverty and social inequality, for instance, can affect the quality of community life and trigger the emergence of various social deviations (Naharin, 2023; Sutiyo & Fadhilah, 2024). Furthermore, drug abuse and family conflict are also factors that can erode individuals' moral resilience and hinder the formation of religious character within society (Muslimin, Sumarna, 2022).

In confronting these various social problems, religion plays an important role as a guide for life as well as a means of moral and spiritual development within the community. Islam places da'wah (Islamic propagation) as a collective obligation upon Muslims in conveying religious teachings to society (Aziz, 2024). Da'wah aims to invite people toward goodness, forbid wrongdoing, and guide the community to live in accordance with Islamic teachings. This is explained in the Qur'an, Surah Ali-Imran, verse 104, which reads:

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۚ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

Meaning:

"And let there be among you a group of people who invite to goodness, enjoin what is right, and forbid what is wrong; it is they who are the successful." (QS. Ali-Imran: 104).

Da'wah is not only conducted from the pulpit or in mosques, but can also be carried out in various social spaces, including social institutions that deal with humanitarian issues. Thus, da'wah holds a strategic role in the process of community development, particularly for vulnerable groups in need of spiritual and moral guidance (Hatma & Dkk, 2023). Da'wah is no longer understood merely as religious preaching, but also as a process of social guidance, education, and moral transformation within society (Sarbini, 2024).

As a form of response to these social problems, the Social Protection House (Rumah Perlindungan Sosial/RPS) exists as an institution that functions to provide protection,

rehabilitation, and guidance for individuals experiencing social problems such as GEPENG (vagrants and beggars) (Rachmawati & Wijayanti, 2023). This is because the destitute and abandoned children are the responsibility of the state, as affirmed in Article 34, paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution of Indonesia, which states that "the destitute and abandoned children shall be cared for by the state.". Therefore, the Social Protection House, which is a unit under the auspices of the Social Affairs Agency, is not only responsible for fulfilling the basic needs of its residents but also for restoring their psychological, social, and spiritual conditions so that they are able to function normally once again within society (Rahayu & others, 2025). Social rehabilitation programs are carried out through various stages such as social guidance, mental development, skills training, and resocialization to enhance the social functioning of the residents. Furthermore, religious guidance is one of the important aspects of the rehabilitation process because religious values are believed to be capable of providing inner peace, life motivation, and moral encouragement for residents to improve themselves and return to social life in a better manner.

Religious guidance at the Social Protection House is part of an applied and contextual Islamic da'wah activity. Da'wah is no longer understood as merely the verbal delivery of religious material, but also as a process of accompaniment, mentoring, and community empowerment. Effective da'wah must take into account the condition of the mad'u (the recipients of da'wah), both psychologically, socially, and culturally, so that the message of da'wah can be received and practiced in daily life. Moreover, modern da'wah approaches emphasize the importance of humanistic and persuasive methods in the process of community development, especially toward social groups experiencing social and spiritual problems. Therefore, the implementation of da'wah within the Social Protection House requires a special approach that is tailored to the conditions and needs of the residents in order for the guidance process to run effectively and sustainably.

Islamic Religious Counselors (Penyuluh Agama Islam) are one of the important elements in community development based on religious values. The role of religious counselors is not limited to conveying Islamic teachings theoretically, but also encompasses continuous mental, spiritual, and social development of the community. In the context of modern life full of moral and social challenges, the presence of religious counselors has become increasingly strategic, particularly in guiding vulnerable segments of society that require special assistance (R. A. Rahman, 2022). Islamic Religious Counselors play an important role as practitioners of da'wah and religious guidance at the Social Protection House (Farah, 2021). Religious counselors are tasked with providing guidance, counseling, and religious development to the community, including special groups such as social rehabilitation residents. According to the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2018), Islamic Religious Counselors function as informants, educators, motivators, and facilitators in the religious life of the community (L. Rahman, 2024). This role demands that religious counselors possess adequate scholarly competence, personal integrity, and methodological capability (Asmawiyah, 2022).

The normative foundation for Islamic religious counseling in conducting outreach can be found in the Qur'an, as stated by Allah SWT in QS. An-Nahl, verse 125, which emphasizes the importance of method in da'wah, namely through the approach of wisdom (hikmah),

good counsel, and courteous dialogue. This verse carries the meaning that the success of conveying Islamic teachings is greatly influenced by the method employed. Furthermore, the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW narrated by Imam Muslim also affirms the obligation of every Muslim to bring about social change through various means, including through da'wah, which in this context can be understood as a form of communication or counseling.

A method is essentially a way or step used to achieve a specific goal effectively and systematically. Terminologically, a method is understood as a way that is used in a regular and directed manner to achieve specific goals effectively and efficiently. In the context of education and da'wah, methods play an important role because they determine the success of the process of delivering material and providing guidance to the targets of da'wah. The right method will facilitate the achievement of learning goals as well as social-religious guidance. Furthermore, a method is also understood as a set of systematic steps used by educators or mentors in the process of transferring values, knowledge, and shaping behavior so that the planned objectives can be achieved optimally

In the concept of da'wah, methods play an important role because they serve as a vehicle in the process of delivering the message to the intended audience. Methods are not only understood as techniques for delivering material, but also as approaches used to facilitate the achievement of learning and guidance objectives. In the process of da'wah and Islamic education, methods are an important component because they relate to the strategy of delivering material so that it can be received, understood, and practiced by the mad'u in accordance with their conditions and needs. In addition, the use of appropriate methods in guidance will help create an effective communication process so that learning objectives and behavioral formation can be achieved optimally. Thus, method is an important element in determining the success of a guidance process because the right method will facilitate the delivery of the message and help participants understand the material provided.

In the study of the science of da'wah, the method of da'wah is understood as the way or strategy used by a da'i (preacher) to convey Islamic teachings to the mad'u with the appropriate approach so that the message of da'wah can be received and practiced in daily life. Furthermore, the method of da'wah also functions as a means to build effective communication between the da'i and mad'u in the process of religious guidance. Thus, the selection of the right method is an important factor in the success of Islamic religious counseling.

From the perspective of Islam, the method of da'wah must be adapted to the psychological and social conditions of the mad'u so that the delivered message can be well received. Da'wah does not only function as a means of delivering religious material but also as a process of moral and spiritual formation through persuasive and humanistic approaches. Such an approach is important to help residents build self-awareness and improve their social behavior. Thus, religious counselors are required to be able to apply methods of da'wah that are appropriate to the conditions and needs of the residents so that the objectives of the guidance can be achieved effectively.

Previous research has documented the importance of Islamic religious counseling in mental and spiritual development for inmates and social rehabilitation residents,

highlighting methods such as motivational lectures, personal approaches, spiritual guidance, worship habituation, and individual counseling that are associated with improved religious awareness and more disciplined behavior. However, these studies largely describe counseling activities and their perceived benefits without critically examining how specific da'wah methods are adapted to the complex psychological and social conditions of residents in social protection institutions, nor how these methods are conceptually integrated into a coherent counseling framework. This research is relevant to the author's study because both examine methods of religious guidance for social groups in need of mental and spiritual rehabilitation.

Furthermore, research by Nur Aini, entitled Religious Guidance for Vagrants and Beggars at Social Welfare Homes, also showed that Islamic religious guidance activities have a positive impact on changes in the behavior of the residents. The study explained that methods of worship habituation, motivational lectures, and individual counseling were able to improve the discipline and sense of optimism among residents for leading a better life. This research is connected to the author's study because both discuss religious guidance for social rehabilitation residents, particularly the vagrant and beggar group.

In addition, research conducted by Muhammad Ridwan, entitled The Effectiveness of Islamic Religious Counseling in Social Rehabilitation, explains that Islamic religious counseling does not only function as a means of delivering religious material but also as a medium for mental rehabilitation and character building. Ridwan noted that the success of guidance is influenced by humanistic communication methods and the counselor's ability to tailor the material to the condition of the mad'u. This study supports the present research by demonstrating that an appropriate da'wah communication approach can assist in the process of social and spiritual rehabilitation of residents.

In this regard, the present study seeks to address the gap by providing an in-depth qualitative analysis of the counseling methods utilized by Islamic Religious Counselors at the Medan City Social Protection House and by exploring how these methods relate to residents' lived experiences of social rehabilitation. Rather than merely cataloguing techniques, the study aims to generate a contextualized conceptual understanding of Islamic religious counseling in social protection settings, thereby contributing to Islamic counseling scholarship and offering analytical insights that can inform the design and evaluation of religious guidance programs for vulnerable social groups

Methods

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, as it focuses on examining how Islamic Religious Counselors apply Islamic da'wah methods in guiding residents at the Social Protection House (Rumah Perlindungan Sosial/RPS) of Medan City within a social and religious communication framework. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study emphasizes an in-depth understanding of the meanings, experiences, and interaction patterns that emerge in counseling activities, so that the data obtained consists mainly of narrative descriptions, reflections, and interpretations from the informants.

Data were collected using three complementary techniques, namely non-participatory observation of guidance activities, semi-structured interviews with key informants, and documentation of institutional records and program materials.

Observations were conducted during weekly counseling sessions in the mosque of the Social Protection House, enabling the researcher to note the sequence of activities, the methods used, and the interaction between counselors and residents. Semi-structured interviews were held with Islamic Religious Counselors, staff members of the Social Protection House, and selected residents in order to obtain diverse perspectives on the implementation, perceived effectiveness, and challenges of religious counseling. Documentation included institutional reports, program schedules, and relevant regulatory documents, which provided contextual information on the organizational setting of guidance activities.

The informants were selected using purposive sampling based on their roles and relevance to the research focus, consisting of 8 Islamic Religious Counselors serving at the Social Protection House of Medan City, 10 residents who had participated in guidance activities, and 5 staff members responsible for implementing social rehabilitation programs. This composition of informants was intended to ensure a rich and varied data set that captures both the counselors' perspectives and the residents' and staff members' experiences.

Data analysis was conducted through several iterative stages. First, data reduction was carried out by organizing and coding the interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentation according to analytically relevant categories such as types of methods, counseling processes, resident responses, and perceived changes. Codes were generated inductively from the data and refined through repeated reading. Second, data presentation was carried out by grouping related codes into broader themes that describe patterns in the application of counseling methods and their perceived impacts on residents' religious understanding and behavior. Third, verification was undertaken by comparing emerging themes across different data sources and informant groups in order to develop consistent interpretations.

To enhance the credibility and dependability of the findings, source triangulation was employed by cross-checking information from counselors, residents, and staff members, as well as by comparing observation results with interview data and institutional documents. The researcher also reflected on potential bias and maintained an audit trail of analytic decisions to ensure that interpretations were grounded in the data. These procedures were intended to strengthen the trustworthiness of the qualitative analysis and to provide a transparent account of how conclusions were derived from the empirical material.

Results And Discussion

Results

Based on the findings of research conducted at the Social Protection House (Rumah Perlindungan Sosial/RPS) of Medan City, located on Jalan Bunga Turi II, Sidomulyo Village, Medan Tuntungan District, Medan City, North Sumatra, it was found that this institution accommodates individuals with a range of social problems, including vagrants and beggars, who come from varied backgrounds such as abandoned children, victims of violence, the elderly, low-income communities, as well as individuals experiencing psychological and social difficulties. The Social Protection House of Medan City was officially designated as a Technical Implementation Unit (Unit Pelaksana Teknis/UPT) on January 2, 2025, by the Mayor of Medan, Bobby Nasution. Prior to this designation, the

institution had operated under the auspices of the Social Affairs Agency but had not yet been established as a dedicated institution. This situation renders spiritual guidance particularly important as an effort to reconstruct the mental, moral, and personal well-being of the residents.

This aligns with the Vision of the Medan City Social Affairs Agency, which is: Medan City Toward a Prosperous City with Social Justice for All People. Its Mission consists of five points: first, improving the quality and quantity of social protection and social security services; second, improving the quality and quantity of social work services; third, improving the quality and quantity of community empowerment for poverty alleviation; fourth, developing an IT-based information system for handling persons with social welfare problems; and fifth, building human resource competencies for potential sources of social welfare (Potensi Sumber Kesejahteraan Sosial/PSKS). In realizing this vision and mission, the Social Protection House was formally established as a Technical Implementation Unit, with its own vision of becoming an Inclusive, Supportive, and Rehabilitative Center for Social Protection for those in need of Social Welfare Services (Pemerlu Pelayanan Kesejahteraan Sosial/PPKS). Its mission is to provide basic needs services and a safe and humane temporary shelter, along with physical and spiritual guidance for residents in need of social welfare services.

The data collection process through direct and semi-structured interviews took place over approximately one month, from April 16 to May 11, 2025, at the Social Protection House of Medan City, which operates under the Medan City Social Affairs Agency. The research period was determined in accordance with the research permit letter issued by the Regional Research and Innovation Agency (Badan Riset dan Inovasi Daerah) of Medan City for a period of two months, from April to June.

The Islamic Religious Counselors who operate under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Medan City consist of eight individuals assigned to carry out guidance duties at the Social Protection House six male and two female counselors. All assigned Islamic Religious Counselors hold the status of State Civil Apparatus (Aparatur Sipil Negara/ASN) as Government Employees under Work Agreements (Pegawai Pemerintah dengan Perjanjian Kerja/PPPK), and they bear the responsibility of providing religious guidance, spiritual mentoring, and spiritual accompaniment to residents of the Social Protection House of Medan City. The implementation of this activity is grounded in Law Number 13 of 1998 on the Welfare of the Elderly, the Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs Number 79 of 1985 on the Main Duties of Religious Counselors, and the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs Number 51 of 2017 on Non-Civil Servant Islamic Religious Counselors. The expected outcome of these activities is the creation of holistic guidance encompassing social, mental, and spiritual dimensions. The presence of Islamic Religious Counselors constitutes an important component in supporting the mental and spiritual rehabilitation process of residents through a persuasive, educative, and humanistic religious approach.

In this research, not only were religious counselors studied and interviewed, but also the staff of the Social Protection House of Medan City, who are responsible for social services, guidance, administration, and resident accompaniment. Five staff members served

as informants in this research, playing a role in implementing social rehabilitation programs and ensuring that all guidance activities run smoothly. The staff were considered important informants in assessing the extent to which the methods of the Islamic Religious Counselors were effective in guiding the residents.

In addition, residents also participated as research informants. A total of 7 Muslim residents were interviewed out of a total of 50 residents at the Social Protection House. Of these, approximately 27 are Muslim, 21 are Christian, 1 is Hindu, and 1 is Buddhist. The residents span all age groups, including children, teenagers, adults, and the elderly. This data was obtained through an interview with Mr. Tengku Muhammad Rafly, a staff member of the Social Protection House of Medan City. However, the religious affiliations of all residents cannot be confirmed with certainty, as many of them could not be identified due to severe psychological conditions. Furthermore, only 10 residents were ultimately interviewed in this research, as not all Muslim residents participated in the guidance activities some were too elderly, some had psychological conditions that prevented their participation, and some adult women who were in good health did not attend due to not having appropriate modest clothing for entering the mosque, as explained by Mrs. Yuliana, a staff member of the Social Protection House of Medan City.

It is important to note that there is no compulsion for RPS residents to attend spiritual guidance activities. Staff members are only responsible for reminding and encouraging residents to participate; if a resident is unwilling to attend, that is acceptable. Furthermore, given that residents at the Social Protection House typically do not stay for an extended period a maximum of two weeks of guidance once a family member is located, the resident is returned home. If no family is found, elderly residents are transferred to a nursing home, while adults and children are transferred to a social welfare home. This information was obtained from an interview with Mr. Lamo M. Tobing, the manager of the Social Protection House of Medan City.

The selection of informants was based on the psychological condition and communication ability of the residents in order to ensure that the interview process could run smoothly and that the information obtained would be more accurate. Some residents were not selected as informants because they were experiencing severe psychological or mental disturbances that made it difficult for the researcher to gather in-depth information from them. The researcher therefore selected residents who were deemed capable of providing information and answering research questions adequately in accordance with the needs of the study.

In the implementation of guidance, Islamic Religious Counselors fulfill the role of spiritual mentors, motivators, educators, and social companions for the residents. Counselors are not only tasked with delivering religious material but also with providing moral support and motivation to help residents better cope with life's challenges. They strive to build strong emotional connections with residents through a dialogic, persuasive, and humanistic approach, with the aim of making residents feel valued, cared for, and motivated to improve themselves.

The qualitative findings reveal that Islamic Religious Counselors at the Social Protection House of Medan City employ a combination of interactive lectures, question-and-

answer sessions, individual guidance, exemplary conduct, and habituation in their counseling activities. Weekly guidance sessions are held in the mosque, involving residents, counselors, and accompanying staff, and typically follow a structured sequence that includes greetings, communal shalawat, interactive lectures, question-and-answer segments, worship practice, and closing advice. Through this format, counselors seek to create an atmosphere that is both spiritually uplifting and psychologically supportive.

The counseling material covers several core dimensions of Islamic teachings, namely *aqidah* (faith), *ibadah* (worship), *akhlak* (ethics and morals), and life motivation. *Aqidah* sessions emphasize strengthening residents' belief in Allah SWT and cultivating inner resilience, while *ibadah* sessions focus on practical guidance regarding prayer, fasting, ritual purity, and recitation of the Qur'an. *Akhlak*-oriented guidance aims to encourage respectful interaction, self-control, and socially responsible behavior among residents. Motivational content is delivered through exemplary stories and inspirational narratives that invite residents to reflect on their life experiences and to nurture hope for a better future beyond a life of vagrancy and begging.

The question-and-answer method provides residents with opportunities to express doubts, share personal problems, and seek clarification about religious teachings. This interactive component helps counselors assess residents' levels of understanding and tailor explanations to their needs. Individual guidance is conducted for residents who face specific psychological or spiritual difficulties and requires more personalized attention, allowing counselors to employ a more intimate and supportive counseling approach. Exemplary conduct is manifested in counselors' efforts to demonstrate patience, discipline, politeness, and empathy, which residents perceive as concrete examples of Islamic values in daily practice. Habituation is implemented through regular congregational prayers, Qur'anic recitation, supplication, and routine Islamic study sessions, which collectively aim to instill disciplined religious habits and to normalize worship practices in residents' everyday lives.

Residents and staff members generally report that religious guidance contributes to increased familiarity with basic Islamic teachings, improved worship routines, and more constructive interpersonal behavior among residents, such as greater politeness and reduced conflicts. Several residents also describe feeling calmer, more hopeful, and more motivated to leave behind their previous lifestyle. At the same time, counselors and staff acknowledge that such changes are not uniform; they are gradual and dependent on each resident's psychological condition, social background, and personal readiness to accept guidance. Obstacles identified include limited guidance time, fluctuating participation due to short stays at the institution, varying levels of religious literacy, and the presence of residents with severe psychological disturbances who require different types of intervention.

Discussion

In the perspective of Islamic religious counseling, the findings of this study indicate that religious guidance at the Social Protection House of Medan City functions as an integrated process of spiritual mentoring, moral education, and psychosocial support for residents experiencing social vulnerability. Religious guidance is not limited to the transmission of doctrinal content, but encompasses efforts to facilitate residents recovery of

self-worth, moral orientation, and spiritual resilience through humane and persuasive counseling interactions (Hapni, 2024; Syarifuddin, 2023). In this sense, the practice of Islamic Religious Counselors aligns with the broader conceptualization of Islamic counseling as a continuous process of helping individuals understand, internalize, and practice religious teachings as a guide for life (Thohir, 2021), enabling them to achieve spiritual peace and social balance in daily life (Nuriyaratri et al., 2022).

The combination of interactive lectures, question-and-answer sessions, individual guidance, exemplary conduct, and habituation identified in this research reflects an adaptation of Islamic educational and counseling strategies to the institutional context of social rehabilitation. Interactive lectures provide structured opportunities for counselors to present core Islamic teachings (Mardiyah et al., 2025), while question-and-answer sessions encourage active engagement and allow residents to articulate doubts, personal problems, and reflections on their lived experiences. This interactive dimension is consistent with pedagogical views that the question-and-answer method increases learner participation by creating dialogic interaction between the material presenter and the learners. Individual guidance offers space for more intensive accompaniment of residents with specific psychological or spiritual difficulties (Lutfia, 2022), enabling counselors to tailor both content and approach to the needs of each resident. Exemplary conduct, manifested in counselors' efforts to demonstrate patience, discipline, politeness, and empathy, functions as a concrete medium for character building because individuals tend to emulate behaviors they directly observe in their social environment. Habituation through routine worship activities—such as congregational prayer, Qur'anic recitation, supplication, and regular Islamic study sessions—serves to cultivate disciplined religious behavior and internalize spiritual values through repeated practice, in line with Islamic educational perspectives on habituation as a means of shaping behavior and character (Mahfud, 2022).

From the perspective of da'wah science, these counseling practices can be understood as contextual realizations of classical Islamic da'wah methods—*bil hikmah*, *mau'izhah hasanah*, and *mujadalah billati hiya ahsan*—within a social protection institution. *Bil hikmah* is expressed through counselors' efforts to adapt their communicative approach to the psychological and social conditions of residents, especially in individual guidance and personal accompaniment activities. *Mau'izhah hasanah* is embodied in motivational lectures and advice delivered in gentle language that emphasizes hope, repentance, and moral improvement (Laode & Salsabila, 2024). *Mujadalah billati hiya ahsan* appears in question-and-answer sessions and discussions that respect residents dignity and encourage open, non-judgmental dialogue about their problems. These three approaches collectively form a normative-didactic foundation for the counseling methods applied in the Social Protection House and resonate with the Qur'anic directive to invite people to the way of Allah with wisdom, good admonition, and the best form of dialogue as a basic principle of Islamic da'wah (Nafi et al., 2026; Subata et al., 2023).

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجِدْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ
بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

Meaning: "Invite (mankind) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is guided." (QS. An-Nahl: 125)

By situating these methods within the routine practices of social rehabilitation, the present study contributes to Islamic counseling scholarship by articulating a contextualized conceptual synthesis of Islamic religious counseling in social protection institutions (A. Rahman & Fadillah, 2022). The counseling framework that emerges from the findings can be understood as an integrative model that links Qur'anic da'wah methods, educational strategies, and psychosocial support mechanisms to the goals of mental and spiritual rehabilitation for vulnerable residents. This conceptual synthesis extends previous studies on Islamic religious counseling in correctional institutions, social welfare homes, and rehabilitation settings – which have shown the importance of lectures, personal approaches, worship habituation, and humanistic communication in shaping inmates and residents behavior and spiritual condition -by specifying how particular methods function in relation to residents lived experiences of guidance, worship habituation, and behavioral adjustment in the specific context of the Social Protection House of Medan City. In this framework, Islamic Religious Counselors act simultaneously as spiritual mentors, educators, and social companions, whose roles are directed not only toward increasing religious knowledge, but also toward fostering self-awareness, rebuilding moral identity, and supporting the process of social reintegration for residents who have experienced marginalization (Nurhidayah & Santoso, 2023).

This is consistent with the word of Allah SWT in the Qur'an, Surah Ar-Ra'd verse 11:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ

Meaning: "Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves." (QS. Ar-Ra'd: 11)

In light of this Qur'anic principle, the findings of this study underscore that counseling methods alone cannot guarantee behavioral transformation. Methods operate as strategic instruments in facilitating the delivery of da'wah messages and educational content, but the success of guidance is mediated by residents' internal motivation, readiness for change, and social environment (Iqbal et al., 2025). Islamic religious counseling at the Social Protection House therefore needs to be understood as a facilitative process that provides opportunities, encouragement, and spiritual resources for residents to transform themselves, while recognizing the limits of institutional guidance in reshaping complex life trajectories. This perspective invites further theoretical reflection on the interplay between method, individual agency, and structural conditions in Islamic counseling practice, and highlights the importance of empowering residents to develop enduring commitment to self-improvement and lawful, socially responsible livelihoods after leaving the institution.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that Islamic Religious Counselors at the Social Protection House of Medan City play a significant role in supporting the mental and spiritual guidance of residents through an integrated set of counseling methods. The methods employed interactive lectures, question-and-answer

sessions, individual guidance, exemplary conduct, and habituation are operationalized in a counseling context that seeks to strengthen residents' religious understanding, foster more disciplined worship practices, and encourage more constructive social behavior in the midst of complex social and psychological vulnerabilities. These methods are rooted in Qur'anic da'wah principles such as bil hikmah, mau'izhah hasanah, and mujadalah billati hiya ahsan, and are adapted to the institutional setting of social protection to provide humane, persuasive, and context-sensitive guidance.

Conceptually, this study contributes to Islamic counseling scholarship by offering a contextualized framework of Islamic religious counseling in social protection institutions. The framework highlights how classical da'wah methods are translated into practical strategies that combine spiritual mentoring, moral education, and psychosocial support and how these strategies are aligned with the goals of social rehabilitation for vulnerable residents. In doing so, the study extends previous research on Islamic religious counseling in correctional institutions and social welfare homes by specifying the functions of particular methods—such as interactive lectures, worship habituation, and humanistic communication—in relation to residents lived experiences at the Social Protection House of Medan City. Islamic Religious Counselors emerge not only as transmitters of religious knowledge, but as spiritual mentors, educators, and social companions who help residents rebuild self-awareness, moral identity, and readiness for reintegration into community life.

At the same time, this study acknowledges several limitations. The research was conducted in a single institutional setting with a relatively small number of informants, which constrains the generalizability of its findings to other social protection or rehabilitation contexts. The descriptive qualitative design does not provide measurable indicators of long-term behavioral change or worship discipline, and the short duration of residents stay at the institution limits the observation of sustained impacts of counseling. Moreover, the diversity of residents psychological conditions requires differentiated forms of intervention that go beyond the scope of this study. These limitations suggest that the conclusions presented here should be understood as context-bound and exploratory rather than definitive.

In light of these limitations, future research is recommended to adopt multisite or comparative designs involving different types of social rehabilitation institutions, such as correctional facilities, social welfare homes, and specialized shelters for various vulnerable groups. Longitudinal studies that follow residents over time after leaving the institution would provide deeper insight into the durability of changes in religious understanding, worship discipline, and social behavior. In addition, the integration of more systematic assessment tools for spiritual and behavioral outcomes could strengthen the evidential basis of Islamic counseling research and facilitate dialogue with broader rehabilitation and social work scholarship. Such studies would further enhance the transferability and academic significance of research on Islamic religious counseling in social protection contexts and offer more robust guidance for policymakers and practitioners seeking to design effective, humanistic, and spiritually grounded rehabilitation programs.

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