

OBSTACLES OF RELIGIOUS EXTENSION WORKERS IN THE FAKFAK COMMUNITY, WEST PAPUA

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ABSTRACT

Religious counseling plays a strategic role in strengthening the religious understanding, moral development, and social harmony of communities, particularly in geographically remote and socioculturally diverse areas. This study aims to analyze the obstacles faced by religious extension workers in Fakfak Regency, West Papua, based on the six dimensions of da'wah: da'i, mad'u, maddah, wasilah, thariqah, and atsar. This study employed a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation involving religious extension workers, community constituents, and officials of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Fakfak Regency. The findings reveal that religious counseling is constrained by the limited number and capacity of extension workers, extreme geographical conditions, inadequate transportation and communication facilities, sociocultural heterogeneity among mad'u, and limited contextualization of counseling materials, interactive methods, and program evaluation. These interconnected barriers have limited the equitable distribution and continuity of religious counseling, particularly in peripheral areas. The study concludes that improving religious counseling in Fakfak requires a systemic strategy encompassing professional capacity strengthening, improved operational infrastructure, contextualized and participatory counseling methods, and integrated evaluation mechanisms. Such efforts should be grounded in local wisdom, particularly the *One Furnace Three Stones* philosophy, to strengthen Islamic understanding and practice while maintaining social cohesion and interfaith harmony.

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INTRODUCTION

Religious counseling is an important instrument of public service in the religious field that functions to strengthen religious understanding, appreciation, and behavior based on spiritual values (Anggraini et al., 2026). The role of religious extension workers extends beyond disseminating religious messages; they also contribute to strengthening social cohesion, reducing potential conflict, and providing communities with opportunities to discuss religious and social problems (Nabilah & Darmaningrum, 2023). In this context, the effectiveness of inclusive religious services is closely related to the accessibility

of counseling programs. Communities living in remote areas often face difficulties in accessing religious services because of their distance from administrative centers and limitations in transportation and communication infrastructure (Khalil & Syah, 2024). Such conditions can create disparities in religious guidance and weaken the continuity of religious development at the community level.

The issue of equitable religious services becomes more complex in regions characterized by geographical and social diversity. Fakfak Regency, West Papua, consists of coastal areas, islands, and hilly terrain, resulting in a population that is unevenly distributed across districts and villages (Sulaeman & Bur, 2023). These geographical characteristics create different levels of accessibility between communities and require religious service providers to consider not only institutional arrangements but also the sociological and geographical conditions of service recipients (Arsini et al., 2023). The community of Fakfak also demonstrates sustained social, cultural, and religious heterogeneity, making diversity an important consideration in the formulation and implementation of religious service policies (Hasan et al., 2025). Therefore, approaches to religious counseling developed primarily from the experiences of accessible or urban communities may not fully reflect the realities of peripheral communities such as Fakfak.

This situation is particularly important because Fakfak has a distinctive sociocultural foundation through the local philosophy of One Three-Stone Furnace, which represents peaceful coexistence among Muslims, Protestant Christians, and Catholics (Kasim et al., 2024). This philosophy is not merely a symbolic representation of interreligious harmony but is also embedded in kinship relations and everyday social practices (Anisa et al., 2025). Consequently, religious counseling in Fakfak operates within a social environment that differs substantially from relatively homogeneous or urban settings. This difference exposes an important limitation of the prevailing urban-oriented perspective in religious counseling research: approaches developed in contexts with relatively strong accessibility, established institutions, and homogeneous social environments may overlook the geographical, cultural, and interreligious conditions that shape counseling practices in peripheral areas. Religious messages therefore need to be articulated through context-sensitive approaches that connect religious teachings with established values of togetherness, kinship, and respect for differences (Ibnu Kasir & Awali, 2024).

The fulfillment of the community's right to religious guidance and counseling is not limited to urban areas but also extends to isolated and geographically challenging communities. In Fakfak Regency, equitable access to religious services is a strategic issue because geographical barriers can limit the frequency and intensity of interaction between extension workers and target communities. Such conditions require service facilities, mobility arrangements, and service strategies that are adaptive to local geographical characteristics (Mahayani, 2024). Fakfak Regency has a population of 107,194 people distributed across 17 districts (Sinaga, 2024), while data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Fakfak Regency in 2024 indicate the availability of 24 functional religious extension workers and 97 non-ASN extension workers. The disparity between the geographical coverage of 17 districts, the dispersed population, and the available extension workforce illustrates a potential structural constraint that is less visible in urban-centered studies, where transportation, institutional access, and population concentration generally facilitate service delivery. Examining the relationship between service coverage, population distribution, and the availability of extension workers is therefore essential because the effectiveness of religious counseling depends substantially on the capacity of extension workers to establish direct and sustained interaction with target communities (Novy Olyvia et al., 2025).

The urgency of examining this issue becomes increasingly evident when the experiences of target communities and religious extension workers are considered simultaneously. Academic research on religious counseling should not focus exclusively on urban areas but should also address the empirical experiences of communities in peripheral areas and the operational obstacles faced by extension workers in the field (Irdiana et al., 2024). The urban bias in existing religious counseling research is reflected in the tendency to examine religious service effectiveness and da'wah practices in urban or relatively accessible settings, while geographical isolation and the operational realities of service delivery in remote communities receive comparatively less attention (Alfiyatul et al., 2025). This tendency creates a contextual limitation because findings derived from urban environments cannot automatically explain the constraints experienced by extension workers operating across islands, coastal settlements, hilly areas, and dispersed villages. In peripheral settings, barriers may emerge simultaneously from geographical accessibility, limited human resources, sociocultural diversity, institutional conditions, communication infrastructure, and the characteristics of recipient communities. Therefore, examining counseling

barriers should not merely identify deviations in program implementation but should explain how geographical, sociocultural, institutional, and community factors interact in the delivery of religious services (Suryana & Ismail, 2023).

In academic discourse, the study of religious counseling needs to be positioned within the context of pluralistic societies with isolated demographic and geographical characteristics. A review of previous literature indicates a tendency toward urban bias, in which academic attention is predominantly directed toward the effectiveness of da'wah and religious counseling in urban areas or regions with adequate accessibility (Alfiyatul et al., 2025). As a result, comprehensive studies that articulate the empirical experiences of religious extension workers in peripheral areas such as Fakfak Regency remain limited (Wika, 2025). This limitation represents an important research gap because the existing literature has not sufficiently explained how geographical isolation, population dispersion, religious plurality, institutional limitations, and local sociocultural conditions interact to shape the implementation of religious counseling. Furthermore, previous studies have rarely integrated the perspectives of extension workers and recipient communities to examine these barriers as an interconnected service-delivery problem. Therefore, the research gap is not merely the limited number of studies conducted in Fakfak, but the lack of an integrated empirical explanation of how the characteristics of a peripheral, geographically dispersed, and religiously pluralistic region influence the barriers experienced by religious extension workers across different elements of da'wah. Addressing this gap is important for developing a more context-sensitive understanding of religious service delivery beyond the assumptions derived from urban settings. An empirical approach focusing on lived experiences can therefore provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complexity of religious service governance and its implementation within the local context.

Based on this research gap, this study aims to identify and analyze the operational barriers experienced by religious extension workers in delivering religious counseling services to communities in Fakfak Regency, West Papua. Specifically, the study explores how geographical conditions, community characteristics, institutional factors, and service practices shape the implementation of religious counseling from the perspectives of extension workers and the communities they serve. These barriers are further analyzed through the framework of da'wah elements, encompassing da'i (communicator), mad'u (message recipient), maddah (message or material), wasilah (media), thariqah (method), and atsar (effects produced). By focusing on a peripheral and religiously pluralistic setting, this study seeks to extend the existing literature beyond its urban bias and provide empirical evidence for developing more adaptive, equitable, and context-sensitive approaches to religious counseling.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design to explore the lived experiences and perceptions of religious extension workers and community members regarding the implementation of Islamic Guidance and Counseling (Bimbingan dan Penyuluhan Islam/BPI) in Fakfak Regency (Abdul Nasir et al., 2023). The study was conducted at the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Fakfak Regency and in selected service areas, namely Teluk Patipi, Fakfak Timur, and Furwagi Districts. These locations were selected because of their geographical accessibility, service conditions, and sociocultural characteristics relevant to the implementation of BPI.

The research was conducted from September 2025 to August 2026. Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation. Interviews explored informants' experiences and perceptions concerning the availability of extension workers, geographical and transportation barriers, community needs, counseling materials, communication media, counseling methods, and service continuity (Sari et al., 2025). Observations were used to examine field conditions, while documentation provided supporting institutional and administrative information.

Data were analyzed qualitatively through data reduction, thematic organization, data presentation, phenomenological interpretation, and conclusion drawing (Cresswell, 2018). The findings were interpreted by identifying recurring patterns in the informants' experiences and were subsequently mapped onto the six elements of da'wah (arkan ad-da'wah): da'i, mad'u, maddah, wasilah, thariqah, and atsar. Data credibility was strengthened through triangulation of interview, observation, and documentation data to develop an integrated understanding of the barriers to BPI implementation in Fakfak Regency.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

Conditions of Religious Counseling Services in Fakfak Regency

The documentation data from the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Fakfak Regency indicate that Fakfak has 17 districts served by 24 functional religious extension workers and 97 non-ASN extension workers. The distribution of personnel is uneven, with the largest concentration in Fakfak City, while several peripheral areas have fewer extension workers despite wider geographical coverage.

Table 1. Distribution of Religious Extension Workers and Districts Served in Fakfak Regency

No.	Area	Functional Extension Workers	Non-ASN Extension Workers	Districts Served
1	Fakfak City	18	42	3
2	Kokas	2	18	4
3	Bomberay	2	15	5
4	Other remote districts	2	22	5
	Total	24	97	17

Source: Researcher's Processed Data (2026)

The interview data show that geographical conditions are an important constraint in delivering religious counseling services. According to Fithrah, S.H., a staff member of the Community Guidance Division of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Fakfak Regency, interviewed on 30 September 2025, the main obstacles include the limited number of extension workers, difficult geographical access, dependence on sea transportation, changing weather conditions, and conflicts between counseling schedules and residents' socioeconomic activities. She also explained that extension workers face limitations in transportation, counseling materials, and professional development.

The interview also revealed differences in access to religious information. Communities with internet access can obtain religious information through social media and digital platforms, whereas communities with limited internet and electricity remain highly dependent on direct services. Fithrah further reported that some children and adults still require assistance in Baca Tulis Al-Qur'an (BTA). Extension workers themselves sometimes use YouTube for self-learning to prepare counseling materials.

Community Experience of Religious Counseling Services

Interview data from Teluk Patipi District show that direct religious counseling services have not reached all communities. Kak Itak, a resident of Teluk Patipi interviewed on 10 November 2025, stated that residents of Kampung Bisa and Kampung Patipi Pasir had not experienced direct religious counseling from the KUA or Ministry of Religious Affairs from childhood to adulthood. Although a KUA office exists in the district, the informant reported that its service was often limited to one penghulu, while other personnel were more frequently based at the district Ministry of Religious Affairs office (Widyaningrum, Sakinah & Fatomah, 2025).

The informant also expressed a need for extension workers to visit the villages directly, particularly to provide religious guidance to children and adults. Face-to-face counseling was considered important because residents could ask questions and receive direct explanations concerning religious matters.

A different condition was identified in Fakfak Timur District. Ramaldy Sudak, interviewed on 12 August 2026, explained that although the area is relatively accessible geographically, religious guidance from the KUA and Ministry of Religious Affairs has not been implemented continuously (Dharmajaya, 2025; Umro'atin et al., 2023). According to the informant, the problem is also related to institutional management, continuity of counseling programs, and the distribution of religious extension workers.

Community Needs and Counseling Content

A second interview with Ramaldy Sudak on 9 September 2026 identified different counseling needs according to age groups. Children need basic Islamic knowledge, moral education, honesty, responsibility, and an understanding of right and wrong. Adolescents need guidance concerning social relationships, alcohol, drugs, juvenile delinquency, and social media. Adults require guidance on family harmony, children's religious education, parental responsibility, household economic management, debt, and conflict resolution.

The interview further indicated that adolescents prefer a counseling approach based on equal and informal communication. Ramaldy described the preferred approach as starting with casual conversation, avoiding a preaching or lecturing style, and respecting adolescents' opinions. The informant also suggested that counseling should be conducted directly within communities through collaboration with imams, religious leaders, schools, youth groups, and community organizations.

Findings Based on the Six Elements of Da'wah

The interview and documentation data were subsequently organized according to the six elements of da'wah: da'i, mad'u, maddah, wasilah, thariqah, and atsar.

First, the da'i dimension shows limitations in the number and distribution of religious extension workers. The documentation indicates a concentration of personnel in Fakfak City, while remote areas have fewer personnel. Interview data further show that extension workers face transportation, material, and professional development limitations.

Second, the mad'u dimension shows that community needs differ according to location and age. Communities in Teluk Patipi reported limited direct access to counseling, while Ramaldy identified children and adolescents as priority groups requiring continuous religious guidance.

Third, the maddah dimension indicates that counseling materials need to correspond to community needs. The identified topics range from basic Islamic knowledge and moral education for children to social problems among adolescents and family and economic issues among adults. The availability of counseling materials for extension workers was also reported to be limited.

Fourth, the wasilah dimension is characterized by limitations in transportation, communication facilities, internet access, and electricity. Sea transportation, including ketinting and Johnson boats, is important for reaching remote communities, while digital access differs substantially between locations.

Fifth, the thariqah dimension indicates the need for methods adapted to the characteristics of the community. In particular, adolescents require informal, equal, and dialogical communication rather than a one-way preaching approach. Community-based outreach and cooperation with local leaders were also identified as important elements of service delivery. Sixth, the atsar dimension indicates that limited and discontinuous counseling reduces opportunities for sustained religious guidance. The findings from Teluk Patipi and Fakfak Timur show that the continuity of counseling remains an important issue, particularly for children and adolescents who require ongoing religious education and social guidance.

Local Context of Religious Counseling

The findings also indicate that religious counseling in Fakfak takes place within a pluralistic sociocultural environment characterized by the local philosophy of Satu Tungku Tiga Batu. Existing literature describes this philosophy as a local basis for social harmony among Muslim, Protestant, and Catholic communities (Nur, 2022). Previous studies also emphasize the importance of inclusive communication, cultural sensitivity, and respect for religious differences in maintaining harmony in plural communities (Wahyudi Kasim et al., 2025).

In the context of religious counseling, the existing literature identifies the potential role of this local philosophy in supporting culturally sensitive and inclusive religious communication. (Arzewiniga & Zulkarnain, 2025; Iqbal et al., 2024) similarly emphasize the role of religious actors in strengthening social harmony and facilitating communication across community groups.

Discussion

Geographical Accessibility and Institutional Distribution of Religious Counseling

The findings indicate that geographical conditions are an important factor affecting the implementation of Islamic Guidance and Counseling (BPI) in Fakfak Regency. The combination of a wide service area, dispersed settlements, dependence on sea transportation, weather conditions, and limited transportation facilities makes direct counseling difficult to conduct regularly. However, the findings also demonstrate that geographical distance alone does not fully explain the unevenness of religious counseling services. The case of Fakfak Timur shows that relatively accessible areas may still experience discontinuity in religious counseling. This indicates that geographical barriers interact with institutional factors, particularly the distribution of extension workers and the continuity of counseling programs.

This finding is consistent with the argument of (Nabilah & Darmaningrum, 2023; Risakotta Rizky Nelson, 2025) who found that religious extension services for marginal communities involve not only religious guidance but also responses to the social and accessibility limitations experienced by communities. However, the present study extends this perspective by showing that in a geographically peripheral area, accessibility must be understood as a combination of physical distance, personnel distribution, transportation facilities, and institutional continuity. Similarly, the study of (Pagesa & Sari, 2023) in Fakfak demonstrates the importance of local sociocultural conditions in shaping community-based interventions. In the present study, these conditions are directly connected to the operational capacity of religious counseling.

The finding therefore suggests that improving BPI in peripheral areas cannot rely solely on increasing the number of extension workers. Personnel distribution needs to be accompanied by a service strategy that considers geographical coverage, mobility, transportation availability, and continuity of programs. The problem is consequently not merely a shortage of personnel but a mismatch between institutional capacity and the geographical characteristics of the service area.

Da'i and the Unequal Distribution of Religious Extension Workers

The da'i dimension demonstrates that the availability of religious extension workers is a central determinant of service accessibility. The concentration of extension workers in more accessible areas leaves remote communities with fewer opportunities to receive direct counseling. The findings further indicate that the role of da'i is constrained not only by the number of personnel but also by operational facilities, counseling materials, and opportunities for professional development. This finding strengthens previous research on religious extension workers in marginal communities, particularly (Purnamayanti et al., 2025; Riyadi & Karim, 2023), which emphasizes the social role of counselors in assisting communities experiencing limited access. Nevertheless, the Fakfak case reveals a more complex problem because the extension worker must operate across geographically dispersed communities with substantial transportation constraints. Thus, professional competence alone is insufficient when it is not supported by an adequate institutional and logistical system.

The problem also concerns the changing role of the religious extension worker. (Khusairi et al., 2025), in their study of state religious counselors in West Sumatra, show that counselors increasingly need digital literacy because religious communication is no longer limited to conventional face-to-face spaces. Their study found that counselors still face limitations in digital competence, institutional support, and technical training, although digital media can potentially expand religious outreach. The Fakfak findings indicate a complementary condition: digital media can help overcome geographical barriers, but its effectiveness depends on electricity, internet connectivity, and the capacity of counselors to use digital media. Therefore, strengthening the da'i dimension in peripheral areas requires both equitable personnel distribution and the development of adaptive professional competencies.

Mad'u and the Diversity of Community Religious Needs

The findings show that the problem in the mad'u dimension is not a lack of religious interest but unequal access to religious guidance. Communities in Kampung Bisa and Kampung Patipi Pasir expressed a desire for direct religious counseling, while the needs identified in Fakfak Timur differed according to age and social circumstances. This indicates that communities in peripheral areas should not be treated as homogeneous recipients of religious messages.

The differences between children, adolescents, and adults demonstrate the importance of needs-based religious counseling. Children require basic Islamic knowledge and character formation, adolescents require guidance related to social relationships, alcohol, drugs, juvenile delinquency, and social media, while adults require guidance concerning family relationships, children's religious education, household economic management, debt, and conflict resolution. These differences indicate that BPI needs to move from a uniform service model toward a differentiated model based on community characteristics.

This finding also reinforces the argument of (Pagesa & Sari, 2023) that social and cultural characteristics in Fakfak need to be considered in designing community interventions. The present study adds that sociocultural sensitivity must be accompanied by age-based identification of religious needs. Consequently, the mad'u dimension should become the starting point for determining both counseling materials and methods rather than merely the recipient category at the end of the communication process.

Maddah and the Need for Contextual Religious Materials

The findings concerning maddah indicate that the effectiveness of religious counseling is influenced by the relevance of the material to the actual problems experienced by the community. The different needs of children, adolescents, and adults show that religious counseling materials cannot be limited to general religious knowledge. Instead, religious messages need to address concrete social and family problems while remaining consistent with Islamic principles.

This finding is important because the availability of materials for extension workers was also reported to be limited. Consequently, counselors sometimes undertake independent learning through digital platforms to prepare counseling materials. This condition shows that the problem of maddah is connected to the professional capacity of the da'i and the availability of supporting resources. The three elements therefore cannot be treated independently.

The finding is also relevant to the transformation of religious communication in the digital era. (Khusairi et al., 2025) demonstrate that state religious counselors increasingly use digital platforms but often rely on informal learning because structured institutional support remains limited. In Fakfak, digital platforms can function as a source of learning for counselors, but the use of digital materials needs to remain connected to the specific needs and sociocultural context of the community. Thus, contextualization of maddah requires both needs assessment at the community level and capacity building for counselors.

Wasilah, the Digital Divide, and the Limits of Technological Solutions

The wasilah dimension reveals that transportation and communication infrastructure constitute interconnected barriers. In a maritime region such as Fakfak, transportation is essential for face-to-face counseling, while internet and electricity determine whether digital alternatives can be used. Consequently, digitalization cannot automatically be regarded as a solution to geographical isolation.

This finding complements (Huda, 2025), who identify digital media as an opportunity to expand the reach of religious counselors while simultaneously highlighting limitations in digital literacy and institutional support. The Fakfak case adds another dimension: the digital divide is not only related to users' digital competence but also to the availability of basic infrastructure. Communities without stable internet and electricity cannot benefit from digital religious communication to the same extent as communities in better-connected areas.

Therefore, an effective BPI strategy in Fakfak requires a hybrid approach. Face-to-face counseling remains important for isolated communities, while digital communication can complement direct services in areas with adequate infrastructure. The appropriate wasilah should consequently be determined by the actual accessibility of each community rather than by the assumption that one communication medium is universally effective.

Thariqah and the Need for Dialogical Counseling

The findings indicate that counseling methods need to be adapted to the characteristics of the mad'u. In particular, adolescents prefer informal, equal, and dialogical communication rather than a one-way preaching model. This preference suggests that counseling effectiveness depends not only on what is communicated but also on how the communication process is constructed.

The finding is consistent with the broader transformation of religious communication in which audiences increasingly interact with religious messages through participatory and digital environments. (Khusairi et al., 2025) demonstrate that religious counselors are required to adapt their communication practices to changing audience behavior and digital platforms. In the Fakfak context, however, adaptation should not be understood solely as digitalization. It also involves developing community-based, face-to-face, and dialogical methods that allow residents to communicate their problems directly.

This is particularly important in a pluralistic region. The use of dialogical methods allows counselors to convey Islamic teachings while maintaining sensitivity toward local social relationships. (Pagesa & Sari, 2023) emphasize the importance of inclusive communication and respect for differences in religious counseling in Fakfak, while (Antony & Ja'far, 2025) highlight the need for religious communication that does not undermine interreligious relations. (Husaini et al., 2025) likewise emphasizes the importance of maintaining local harmony in religious communication. Thus, thariqah in Fakfak needs to combine pedagogical effectiveness with cultural and interreligious sensitivity.

Atsar and the Importance of Service Continuity

The atsar dimension demonstrates that the effects of religious counseling cannot be separated from the continuity of the counseling process. When communities receive counseling only occasionally or not at all, it becomes difficult to expect sustained changes in religious knowledge, character, and social behavior. The experiences reported in Teluk Patipi and Fakfak Timur indicate that service continuity remains a major challenge.

This finding suggests that atsar should not be understood merely as an immediate response after a counseling activity. In the context of community religious guidance, impact is more appropriately understood as a cumulative process resulting from repeated interaction, follow-up, and sustained assistance. This is particularly important for children and adolescents because religious education and character formation require continuous engagement.

The finding therefore connects the atsar dimension with the other five elements of da'wah. Limited da'i availability reduces service frequency; limited wasilah restricts access; inappropriate maddah reduces relevance; and a non-adaptive thariqah can weaken community engagement. Consequently, the limited atsar identified in this study is not an isolated problem but the cumulative outcome of constraints across the entire BPI system.

Religious Counseling and the Local Wisdom of Satu Tungku Tiga Batu

The implementation of BPI in Fakfak must also be understood within the local philosophy of Satu Tungku Tiga Batu. The existing literature identifies this local wisdom as an important foundation for maintaining social harmony and interreligious relations in Fakfak (Pagesa & Sari, 2023). (Ode et al., 2025) similarly emphasize the importance of inclusive communication, cultural sensitivity, and cooperation among religious and community actors.

Recent research further supports the importance of local wisdom in sustaining interreligious communication. (Husaini et al., 2025) found that local wisdom can function as cultural capital that supports harmonious interaction among religious communities, while community leaders play an important role in maintaining social cohesion. This provides a useful comparison for the Fakfak context, where Satu Tungku Tiga Batu can serve not merely as a cultural background but as a resource for designing inclusive religious counseling.

Accordingly, religious counseling in Fakfak should maintain a balance between strengthening Islamic religious understanding among Muslim communities and preserving the social relationships that characterize the local community. This does not mean reducing the substance of Islamic teachings, but rather delivering them through approaches that are wise, inclusive, and responsive to the existing social structure. The local philosophy can therefore function as a cultural framework supporting the implementation of da'wah bil-hikmah.

An Integrated Understanding of BPI Barriers in Fakfak

Taken together, the findings indicate that the six elements of da'wah are interconnected rather than independent. The limitations of da'i affect the reach of mad'u; the characteristics of mad'u determine the relevance of maddah; the availability of wasilah determines how the message can be delivered; thariqah determines how communities engage with the message; and the continuity of all these elements influences the resulting atsar.

The main contribution of this study is therefore the identification of BPI barriers as a multidimensional service problem rather than as a purely geographical problem. Although geographical isolation is significant, the Fakfak findings demonstrate that institutional distribution, service continuity, infrastructure, contextual materials, counseling methods, and local sociocultural conditions operate simultaneously. This extends previous studies that tend to discuss religious counseling through the role of counselors, marginal-community assistance, local wisdom, or digital transformation separately.

The Fakfak case also strengthens the argument that approaches developed primarily from accessible or urban settings cannot be directly transferred to peripheral communities without contextual adaptation. In Fakfak, equitable religious counseling requires alignment between personnel distribution, geographical accessibility, community needs, contextual materials, appropriate communication methods, and continuity of service. The six elements of da'wah therefore provide an integrated analytical framework for understanding how these dimensions interact in a peripheral and pluralistic setting.

Overall, the findings suggest that strengthening BPI in Fakfak should not be limited to increasing the number of extension workers. It requires an integrated service model that combines equitable personnel distribution, operational transportation support, contextual counseling materials, appropriate use of digital and face-to-face media, dialogical methods, community participation, and continuous institutional follow-up. Such an approach would allow religious counseling to

function not merely as the delivery of religious messages but as a sustained process of community assistance that is geographically accessible, socially relevant, and culturally sensitive.

CONCLUSION

The complexity of barriers to religious counseling in Fakfak Regency, West Papua, is systemically escalated in the articulation of the six dimensions of da'wah: da'i, mad'u, maddah, wasilah, thariqah, and atsar. The limited quantity and capability of da'i has implications for the suboptimal scope of services, while sociocultural heterogeneity and variations in understanding mad'u demand differentiation of approaches. In the maddah dimension, contextual and applicative material formulation is required; while in the wasilah variable, the limitation of transportation modes, the availability of electricity, and disruption of communication networks are geographical-technological obstacles that limit the accessibility of counseling. Furthermore, the effectiveness of thariqah requires a reorientation towards a dialogical-participatory communication pattern based on local language wisdom, in order to mitigate obstacles in the atsar dimension in the form of discontinuous coaching interactions and the absence of structured impact evaluation instruments. This synthesis emphasizes that the acceleration and equitable distribution of religious services in Fakfak is inadequate if it only relies on the quantitative expansion of extension workers, but requires systemic restructuring which includes strengthening the capacity of Human Resources (HR), providing supporting facilities, contextualizing materials, methodological innovation, and guiding an integrated evaluation system. In the cultural landscape of the Fakfak community which is bound by the philosophy of One Furnace Three Stones, the pillars of religious counseling are required to act contextually to consolidate the understanding and praxis of Islamic sharia substantially while securing the tradition of social cohesion and interfaith harmony that has been institutionalized.

Theoretically, this study reinforces the da'wah framework by demonstrating that the six dimensions of religious counseling da'i, mad'u, maddah, wasilah, thariqah, and atsar should be understood as interconnected elements that require contextual adaptation to geographical and sociocultural conditions. Practically, the findings provide a basis for the Ministry of Religious Affairs and related stakeholders to strengthen the capacity of da'i, improve transportation and communication infrastructure, develop locally contextualized counseling materials, apply dialogical-participatory methods, and establish systematic evaluation mechanisms. Future research is recommended to develop and test culturally responsive religious counseling models and evaluation instruments that can measure their long-term effects on religious understanding, religious practice, social cohesion, and interfaith harmony.

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