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National Defense as an Instrument for Developing the Nationalist Mentality of Indonesian Navy Soldiers

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Abstract - This study examines the declining spirit of nationalism among Indonesian Navy (TNI AL) personnel in the context of globalization, which has gradually eroded national values. The purpose of this research is to analyze the role of National Defense (patriotic religious advocacy) as an instrument for fostering soldiers' nationalist mentality. Using a library research method, data were collected from scholarly literature, books, journals, and relevant documents discussing *da'wah*, national defense, and nationalism within the military context. The findings indicate that *da'wah*, when framed within the concept of national defense, can effectively internalize nationalist values through an integrated religious and ideological approach. This study contributes theoretically to the development of value internalization studies within military institutions and emphasizes the importance of integrating *da'wah* programs into soldiers' mental and character development systems. The study concludes that National Defense is not merely a spiritual activity but also a strategic effort to shape character and ideological loyalty among military personnel toward the nation and the state.

Keywords: *Da'wah*; State Defense; Nationalism; Indonesian Navy; Mental Development; Value Internalization; Military

Introduction

Amid the increasingly massive dynamics of globalization, the spirit of nationalism among Indonesia's younger generation including within the military shows significant signs of decline. This phenomenon is marked by decreasing sensitivity to national issues, the fading of national identity in daily expression, and the growing influence of foreign cultures that tend to erode patriotic values. This situation poses a serious challenge for the Indonesian Navy (TNI AL), which functionally bears the responsibility of defending the nation's maritime sovereignty and serving as the frontline in safeguarding national integrity.

Several incidents of indiscipline, weakened ideological resilience, and the emergence of soldier behavior that fails to reflect patriotic values serve as alarming indicators of the urgent need for a more systematic approach to mental development. In this context, efforts to build national character cannot rely solely on structural approaches and military command; rather, they require instruments that deeply touch the spiritual and moral dimensions of soldiers.

A *da'wah*-based approach that integrates religious values with nationalism offers a strategic and promising path to shaping soldiers' mental resilience in a holistic and sustainable manner (Fuadi et al., 2024). Various scholarly literatures indicate that religious nationalism has a strong integrative power in shaping the collective identity of Indonesian society. This idea is reflected in the thoughts of figures such as KH Wahid Hasyim, who viewed the relationship between religion and the state as a form of mutualistic symbiosis that reinforces one another rather than being contradictory (Rohmad, 2021).

Within the military context, religious values combined with the spirit of defending the nation are believed to strengthen soldiers' loyalty and integrity toward the state. However, conventional theories of mental development in the military sphere tend to emphasize psychological approaches and structural discipline, without comprehensively exploring the potential of *da'wah* as a method of cultivating nationalist character. This theoretical gap reveals an underexplored area: how *da'wah*, as a spiritual and educational instrument, can play a strategic role in the internalization of national values among Indonesian Navy personnel. Studies examining this approach remain limited in terms of implementation, effectiveness, and mechanism, especially within the unique cultural and institutional system of the military (Rohmad, 2021).

This study aims to analyze and explain the role of National Defense (patriotic religious advocacy) as an effective instrument of mental development in fostering nationalism among Indonesian Navy personnel. Furthermore, this research seeks to identify how the internalization process of national defense values can be carried out integratively through a *da'wah* approach that combines religiosity and patriotism. This objective stems from the belief that a moderate understanding of religion grounded in national values can strengthen soldiers' ideological resilience, particularly amidst current ideological and cultural challenges driven by global influences that threaten national unity. Therefore, this study specifically examines the working mechanism of National Defense and relates it to Milton Rokeach's theory of value internalization to assess the extent to which nationalist values can become part of a soldier's personality system through this approach (Yani et al., 2023).

To clarify its connection to communication studies, this research positions *da'wah* as a strategic communication process that delivers persuasive, value-oriented messages aimed at shaping soldiers' cognition, attitudes, and behavioral commitment toward national values. The declining spirit of nationalism is essentially a communication problem, emerging from the weakened transmission, internalization, and reinforcement of national identity within military communication channels. Through structured communication strategies—such as persuasive messaging, religious-nationalistic framing, interpersonal counseling, and organizational communication practices—nationalist attitudes can be reconstructed. In this perspective, acts as a form of strategic communication capable of re-energizing soldiers' ideological awareness, enabling the recovery and strengthening of their nationalist spirit through systematic message design, controlled dissemination, and continuous value internalization (Simhanath & Nepal, 2020).

Theoretical Framework

National Defense is a synthesis between religious principles and national awareness that seeks to convey Islamic values which foster patriotism and readiness to confront threats against the state. Within this framework, da'wah is no longer limited to individual spiritual or moral aspects, but extends to the public sphere to build collective awareness of the importance of preserving the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. National Defense is grounded in the paradigm that Islam teaches its followers to uphold humanitarian values, justice, and socio-political responsibility in the context of nationality.

Therefore, this approach positions religious scholars *(ulama)*, religious leaders, and religious institutions as strategic actors in strengthening the spirit of nationalism within society, including military personnel. As emphasized by Putri, state defense in the contemporary context should not merely be interpreted as armed struggle but also includes non-military roles that are educational and transformative in nature, including nationalism-based da'wah which responds to current socio-political challenges. Thus, National Defense serves as an essential medium for the internalization of nationalist values among both military personnel and civilian society simultaneously (Putri, 2020).

The implementation of National Defense *Da'wah* within the military environment is carried out through spiritual development programs, national awareness lectures, and integrative training that aligns religious values with patriotism. Over time, da'wah has evolved from conventional ritual activities into a form of collective awareness-building regarding the importance of safeguarding national sovereignty and integrity. Importantly, da'wah serves as one of the military's strategic communication tools, functioning to deliver persuasive, value-oriented messages, construct religious-nationalistic framing, and reinforce the internalization of patriotic attitudes among soldiers.

This communication-based approach is reflected in *da'wah* initiatives that address contemporary strategic issues, including transnational ideological threats, radicalization risks, and the declining patriotic spirit among younger personnel. Within the Indonesian Navy, National Defense *Da'wah* is embedded into personnel development programs in collaboration with internal military religious counselors, enabling da'wah to operate as an instrument of character development that bridges religious commitment with military professionalism. As Chairul Anwar notes, nationalist values can be internalized through habituation-based educational approaches, which align closely with religious-based military training. Thus, National Defense *Da'wah* represents not only a spiritual effort but also a structured communication agenda that strengthens national stability (Anwar, 2015) .

Mental development is a systematic process designed to shape, strengthen, and stabilize an individual's psychological, moral, and spiritual aspects, particularly among military personnel who bear heavy responsibility for defending national sovereignty. Within the military context, mental development is a vital element in building psychological resilience and reinforcing soldiers' integrity so they are not easily swayed by external or internal pressures. This concept involves cultivating values of discipline, responsibility, honesty, and commitment to national duty.

According to Satyastuti, mental development within military institutions cannot be separated from legal processes, professional ethics, and the enforcement of institutional norms that form the foundation of organizational solidity and soldier loyalty. This is essential to ensure that soldiers are not only physically and tactically trained but also possess strong mental endurance in facing temptations of desertion, abuse of authority, and violations of military law. Therefore, mental development programs must be designed integratively, involving military psychology, spiritual development, and professional ethics training (Satyastuti, 2015).

The implementation of mental development in the military environment is carried out through routine and structured activities such as ideological reinforcement training, personality development, spiritual education, and military ethics guidance. These activities are aimed at strengthening the personality of soldiers so they are not only physically tough but also possess strong integrity in facing the complexity of operational duties. The real manifestation of mental development is reflected in the ability of soldiers to endure psychological pressure during duty assignments in conflict zones and in their commitment to upholding the institution's reputation.

This is closely related to the formation of a disciplined, solid, and loyal organizational culture. In this regard, the military's approach to mental development has evolved toward greater accountability and professionalism. Mahmudah and Mapuasari reveal that organizational commitment and accountability significantly influence soldiers' work behavior, where mental development becomes a key factor in fostering pro-organizational behavior and loyalty to the institution. This indicates that mental development is not merely a complementary activity but a core component of military performance transformation toward professionalism and nationalism (Mahmudah & Mapuasari, 2017).

Soldier nationalism is a form of collective consciousness and state defense attitude embedded within every member of the military as an integral part of their identity and responsibility to the nation. This concept goes beyond mere loyalty to state symbols; it encompasses sacrifice, selfless service, and commitment to preserving national sovereignty and unity. Nationalism among soldiers is instilled from basic military education and is continuously reinforced throughout their career through doctrine, training, and ongoing development programs.

As explained by Hassan and Ahmedy, nationalism in Indonesia has undergone transformation over time, where the state's failure to meet the aspirations of certain groups can weaken national spirit and trigger the rise of ethnonationalism. Therefore, cultivating contextual and reflective nationalism is crucial to prevent soldiers from falling into ceremonial formalism and instead internalize the spirit of

unity in diversity. This is vital in maintaining cohesion amidst threats of national disintegration (Hassan & Ahmedy, 2015).

The manifestation of nationalism among Indonesian Navy personnel can be observed through their dedication to defending Indonesia's maritime sovereignty, adherence to the principles of *Sapta Marga*, and active involvement in coastal community development programs. Soldier nationalism is also reflected in their willingness to serve in remote areas without diminishing their spirit of dedication, as well as in their contributions to humanitarian and disaster relief operations. In the socio-political context, TNI AL personnel uphold active neutrality and adhere to civilian supremacy as part of military reform.

According to Triantoro, strong nationalism can suppress disintegration threats and build social cohesion, especially when supported by exemplary conduct and consistent behavior of state apparatus such as military personnel. Therefore, fostering soldier nationalism is not only a personal duty but also an institutional responsibility that requires supportive policies and continuous development programs to ensure that military militancy aligns with democratic values and national unity (Triantoro, 2017).

Material and Methodology

The phenomenon examined in this study is the decline in the spirit of nationalism among Indonesian Navy personnel amid the strong currents of globalization, secularization, and the penetration of transnational ideologies that threaten national integrity. This decline is reflected in reduced participation in national activities, apathy toward state symbols, and the erosion of ideological loyalty, as evidenced in several cases of disciplinary and ethical violations within the military. This situation is concerning, as the Indonesian Navy, as a principal component of national defense, plays a vital role in safeguarding maritime sovereignty.

Therefore, it is crucial to explore alternative approaches to fostering the mental resilience and national character of military personnel. National Defense (patriotic religious advocacy), which integrates religiosity and patriotism, emerges as a strategic alternative that must be scientifically examined, particularly within the framework of soldiers' mental development. This study seeks to examine how National Defense functions as an instrument for cultivating nationalism through a literature-based analysis of the phenomenon. According to Nurdin and Golkariansyah, in their study on the role of the Indonesian National Armed Forces in building state-defense awareness among millennials, there exists a gap between ideological understanding and national practice, which should be addressed by various institutions, including religious organizations (Nurdin et al., 2024).

This research falls under the category of qualitative library research, which methodologically relies on the review of relevant literature to answer the research problems. The types of data used in this study are divided into primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from scholarly sources such as national and international journals, theoretical books, prior research findings, and scientific articles that directly discuss National Defense in relation to nationalism and the mental development of soldiers.

Meanwhile, secondary data consist of supporting references related to the main research keywords—*da'wah bela negara*, mental development, and soldier nationalism—derived from academic papers, military organizational reports, Islamic magazines, and public policy documents. This technique enables the researcher to re-examine various existing perspectives while constructing a conceptual synthesis of the issues under investigation. A similar library research method was used by Kumala, who stated that a literature-based approach allows the exploration of ideological perspectives of *da'wah* figures in fostering national and state awareness (Kumala, 2019).

As a theoretical foundation, this study employs Émile Durkheim's theory of social integration within the context of nationalism through the concepts of mechanical and organic solidarity (Durkheim, 1973, pp. 25–58). Durkheim explains that social cohesion is formed through shared values implanted from an early age, including through education and religion. In this context, *da'wah*, as a form of religious expression, can serve as a medium for the internalization of nationalist values. Durkheim's theory is applied in this study to understand how *da'wah* approaches can influence citizens' attitudes toward state defense, taking into account institutional contexts such as the role of the military and religious organizations. A similar theoretical approach was applied by Rofiah in her

conceptual study of the role of religious leaders in building nationalism based on religious values (Rofiah, 2022).

The research process in this study was conducted through a systematic approach to library data collection and analysis. Data collection techniques were carried out by tracing, reading, and critically reviewing various written sources such as books on *da'wah* communication theory, scholarly journals discussing the integration of religious values and nationalism, studies on military character development, and academic articles on mental coaching strategies within military institutions. All data were collected through online academic platforms and digital libraries, then classified based on relevance to the three main research keywords.

Subsequently, summaries were compiled, content analysis was conducted, and conceptual narratives were developed to support the theoretical arguments of this study. This process adopts the research model used by Ariana in her study of the role of the Student Regiment and *da'wah* as media for state-defense awareness (Ariana, 2018) as illustrated in Diagram 1.

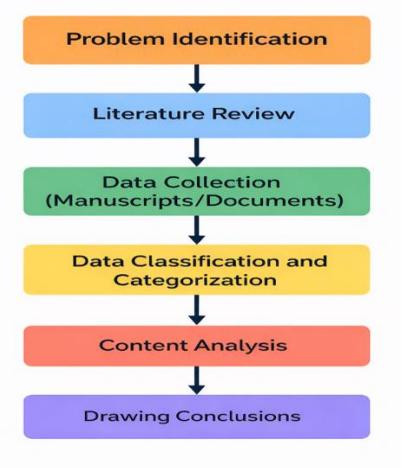


Diagram 1. Research model

The diagram above illustrates the stages of the methodology used in this study, beginning with the identification of the problem found in the social reality of Indonesian Navy personnel, followed by a literature review as the conceptual foundation. The next stage involves data collection from documents and scholarly references, which are classified according to the research focus, then analyzed qualitatively using the content analysis method, and concluded with the formulation of conceptual findings that address the research questions.

In this study, the data analysis technique used is content analysis. This technique was chosen because it allows the researcher to examine meanings, patterns, and relationships between concepts within data derived from the literature. Content analysis does not only focus on explicit content but is also capable of uncovering implicit meanings within the analyzed texts, making it suitable for understanding the process of value internalization in *da'wah bela negara*. Through this technique, data were coded based on themes, analyzed inductively, and synthesized to reveal the relationship between religiosity and nationalism within the context of Indonesian Navy personnel development. The analysis was carried out reflectively and critically to avoid interpretation bias and ensure alignment between data, theory, and research objectives (Syamsuri, 2021).

Result and Discussion

National Defense has become an essential component in strengthening nationalism, particularly within military environments such as the Indonesian Navy. Based on the literature review conducted, the first key concept, *da'wah bela negara*, appears dominantly in various publications that emphasize the importance of Islamic values in shaping national character. Scholarly works, such as those by Amelia, assert that National Defense is a cultural approach that integrates religious values in cultivating patriotic spirit and love for the homeland, especially among military personnel. In this

context, *da'wah* is not merely ceremonial in nature but is implemented systematically through development programs rooted in both religion and nationalism (Amelia, 2025).

An analysis of these findings reveals that National Defense encompasses two main dimensions. First, it serves as a medium for conveying moral and religious messages that shape the ethical character of soldiers. Second, it functions as an ideological instrument that reinforces national awareness and military discipline. In an article by Halim et al., it is explained that *da'wah*-based state defense programs also serve as a means of protecting young military personnel from the influence of foreign ideologies and fostering comprehensive national integrity spiritually, socially, and patriotically (Halim et al., 2024), as illustrated in the bar chart 1 below (Huntington, 1957):

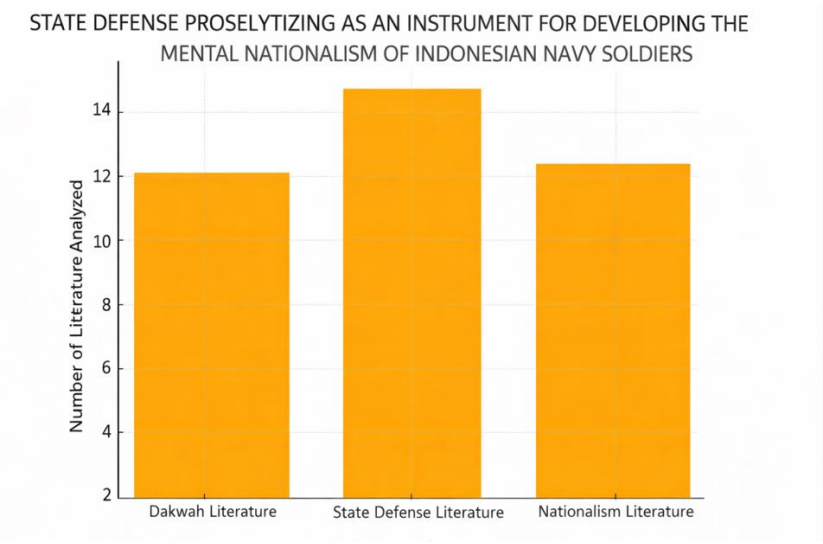


Chart 1. The number of literature studies

The bar chart above illustrates the number of literature studies relevant to *da'wah*, state defense (*bela negara*), and nationalism. The data indicate that studies on state defense occupy the largest portion, reflecting significant scholarly attention toward strategic approaches in shaping nationalism through military education. This finding demonstrates that the synergy between *da'wah* and *bela negara* plays a vital role as the foundation for ideological and mental development among Indonesian Navy personnel.

The relationship between the description and explanation above demonstrates a strong alignment between theory and the reality examined in this study. In the context of the research problem regarding the mental development of nationalism among Indonesian Navy personnel, the *da'wah* approach serves as an effective means of consistently instilling noble values. This is reflected in various development programs implemented within Indonesian Navy, such as state defense training based on religious values organized by campus *da'wah* institutions and other Islamic organizations. These programs practically target the strengthening of *esprit de corps* and nationalism through a moderate form of *da'wah*, as emphasized in the study by Fahrudin, which integrates local interpretation with patriotic value (Fahrudin, 2017).

The second key concept, "nationalism," as discussed in various literature, indicates that this concept continues to undergo revitalization within the framework of state defense. In Listiowaty's study, nationalism is interpreted as a collective spirit that is expressed not only through obedience to state symbols but also through an active awareness of state defense, including educational and character-building efforts carried out by the military (Listiowaty, 2021).

Nationalism in the development of military personnel is not merely an ideological discourse but is manifested in the form of training, social activities, and culturally grounded national programs.

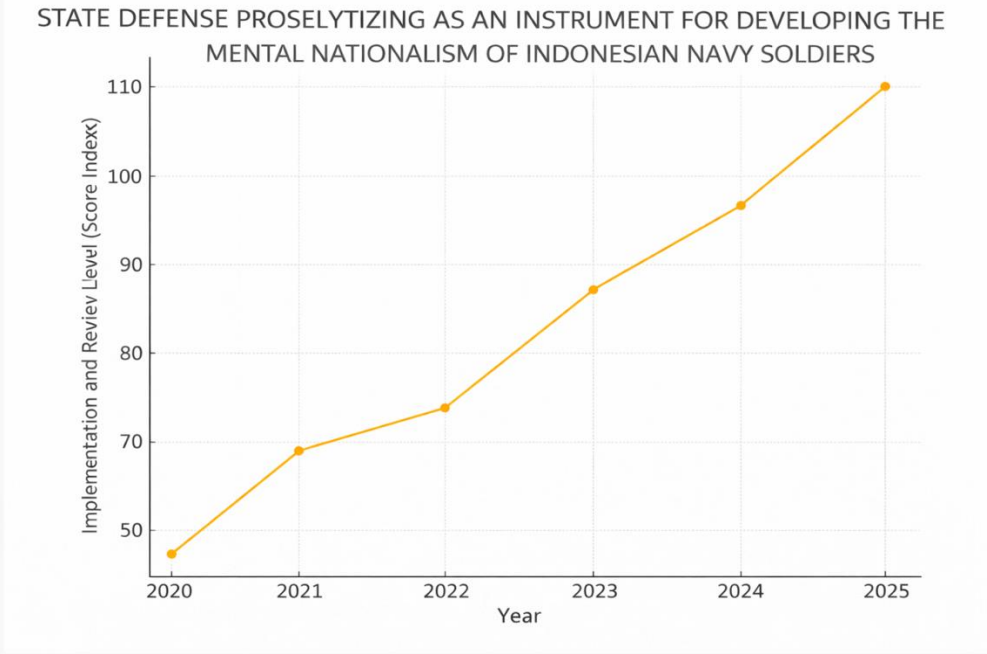
The explanation of the nationalism data reinforces that the nationalism referred to here is not chauvinistic or a form of blind loyalty, but rather a collective identity based on values and integrity. This aligns with the *da'wah*-based approach to state defense, which is educational rather than repressive. Thus, the model of nationalism developed by Indonesian Navy through *da'wah* represents

an integration of spiritual, moral, and national values that is constructive in facing ideological and global challenges.

The alignment between the values of National Defense and the need for mental development of nationalism among Indonesian Navy personnel can also be seen in various practical implementations in the field. The relationship between the explanation of previous literature data and empirical realities reveals a gap in the process of building nationalist character, which can be filled by a religious approach such as *da'wah* that teaches love of the homeland as part of one's faith. In other words, the concept of *da'wah* integrated with state defense not only strengthens ideological foundations but also instills a deeper collective awareness among Indonesian Navy personnel, as supported by previous studies (Januar & Mulyadi, 2021).

Other data from the literature on military discipline show that discipline is not merely a matter of rules and regulations, but part of the process of forming a soldier's identity. In this context, discipline becomes an instrument that internalizes national values. The literature indicates that soldiers with a high level of discipline tend to demonstrate strong loyalty and nationalism toward the nation and the state (Putra Hendra, 2025). Indicators such as punctuality, obedience to command, and responsibility toward duty serve as manifestations of the integration of discipline and nationalism.

The strengthening of disciplinary quality aligns with previous literature, which emphasizes that National Defense is capable of instilling discipline as a form of devotion. As noted by Subagyo, the *da'wah* approach does not merely deliver messages but penetrates the psychological dimension of soldiers through profound symbolic and religious communication. This makes discipline not only a military regulation but also a form of worship and spiritual responsibility. This is illustrated in the trend graph of nationalism enhancement based on the National Defense development model within Indonesian Navy synthesized from the literature studies below (Hartanto, 2021):



Graph 1. The trend graph of nationalism enhancement

The line graph above illustrates the development of attention to and implementation of National Defense as an instrument for fostering nationalism among Indonesian Navy personnel from 2020 to 2025. A consistent increase is observed each year in terms of institutional initiatives, academic research, and practical application in the field. This significant upward trend indicates that *da'wah* is no longer positioned merely as a normative religious activity but has become an integral part of ideological and character development strategies for military personnel. The rising index of implementation and scholarly studies also reinforces the argument that religious values–based approaches are highly relevant in addressing contemporary challenges, particularly in protecting military personnel from soft threats that erode national identity and loyalty.

The relationship between the description and explanation in the discussion of soldier nationalism demonstrates a close connection between ideological development and *da'wah* as a method of value internalization. The research problem, which highlights the weakening of nationalist spirit due to the pressures of globalization, finds its answer in development practices that integrate religiosity with national values. Within the context of the Indonesian Navy, *da'wah* functions as an essential instrument for strengthening the identity of soldiers as the ideological guardians of the nation. This aligns with the study conducted by Putri et al., which asserts that state defense education within the military framework cannot rely solely on tactical and physical reinforcement but also requires a spiritual dimension to ensure that the internalization of values becomes meaningful and sustainable (Putra Hendra, 2025).

In other words, *da'wah* is not merely a complementary aspect of military development, but a core component that supports the formation of soldiers who are not only structurally loyal but who also possess a deep ideological understanding of Indonesian national values and patriotic duty, as illustrated in the following diagram 2 (Subagyo, 2019):

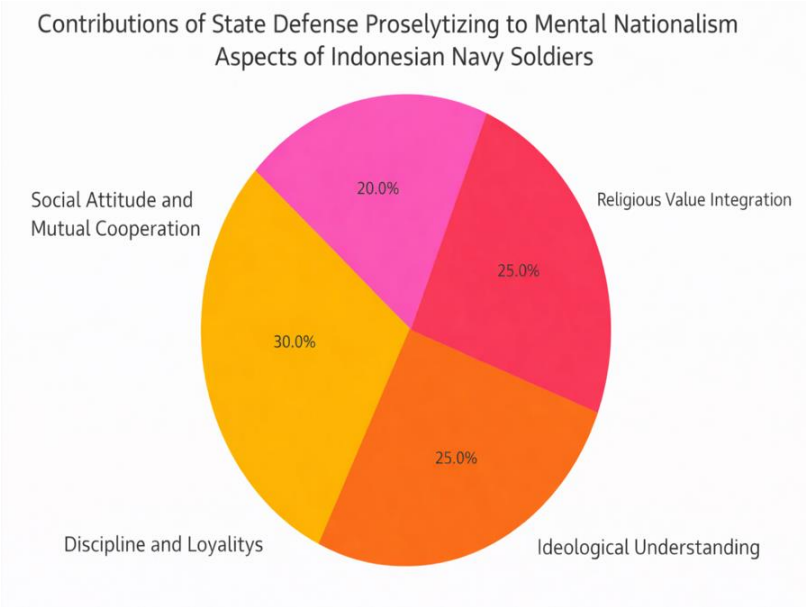


Diagram 2. The distribution of contributions of National Defense

The pie chart above illustrates the distribution of contributions of National Defense to the four main aspects of nationalist mentality among Indonesian Navy personnel. The aspects of discipline and loyalty dominate with a contribution of 30%, followed by ideological understanding and the integration of religious values at 25% each, and social attitude and mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) at 20%. This indicates that the *da'wah* approach plays a relatively balanced yet strong role in shaping the overall nationalist character of military personnel holistically. This approach demonstrates that ideological and spiritual development can go hand in hand within a highly disciplined military context, thereby addressing the challenges of value internalization in the era of globalization.

The findings of this study substantially demonstrate that National Defense *Da'wah* is not merely a medium for conveying religious values but functions as a systemic communication mechanism in shaping the mental development and nationalist orientation of Indonesian Navy personnel. Viewed through the lens of communication studies, *da'wah* operates as a strategic messaging process that integrates three essential components: the formation of ideological discipline through persuasive communication, the internalization of religious–national values through repetitive message exposure, and the strengthening of soldiers' character through identity-based communication framing.

The mental development process embedded in *da'wah* thus reflects an effective communication intervention that bridges religiosity and patriotism by influencing cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of soldiers' attitudes. These findings indicate that *da'wah* has evolved from symbolic

ritual communication into an epistemic communication instrument that constructs the nationalist worldview of soldiers, enabling them to respond more critically and confidently to global and ideological challenges. In this way, the role of *da'wah* is best understood as a purposeful communication strategy that systematically reinforces meaning-making, value internalization, and ideological resilience within the military environment.

A comparative analysis of these findings with other studies highlights the advantages of the National Defense approach. For instance, Siregar's research, which focuses on the religious interpretation of state defense within Nahdlatul Ulama, shows that national values can be transformed through religious narratives to encourage active civic participation in preserving national unity (Siregar, 2024). However, the uniqueness of this study lies in its contextual focus on Indonesian Navy personnel as the subject of investigation, and how military institutions strategically utilize *da'wah* in mental development. Thus, this research contributes to existing discourse by expanding the role of *da'wah* beyond the civilian realm and demonstrating its effectiveness within military settings in cultivating nationalistic values.

Reflection on the findings reveals that the combination of spiritual approaches and national development carries significant transformational potential. This opens the possibility that the internalization of nationalism does not always have to take the form of formal indoctrination, but may instead be fostered through educational approaches that appeal to affective and psychological dimensions. National Defense occupies this space by conveying religious narratives that do not judge, but instead embrace collective awareness and responsibility as a form of devotion to the nation. Therefore, it can be concluded that *da'wah* not only forms theological beliefs but also develops ideological awareness—particularly within military institutions that require the continuity of moral, ethical, and national values.

The implications of these findings are strategic for redesigning the mental development system of Indonesian Navy personnel. They encourage broader integration between religious institutions and military education structures to create development curricula that are not solely physical and tactical in orientation, but also value-based. National Defense contributes to enhancing military morality and ideological readiness in facing non-physical threats such as radicalism, proxy wars, and disinformation that undermine soldier loyalty to the state. Thus, these findings not only address theoretical needs but also provide a foundation for policy formulation in military character education.

The effectiveness of National Defense as an instrument for fostering nationalism can be attributed to its ability to reach the affective dimension and intrinsic motivation of soldiers. Religious literacy combined with national narratives forms a belief system that internalizes state defense values into soldiers' identity. As emphasized by Amelia, the concept of *religious moderation centers* implemented in Islamic higher education institutions has proven capable of developing cadres with strong nationalist awareness alongside strengthened faith (Amelia, 2025). This model has been adapted in the context of TNI AL through *da'wah*-based development programs that not only cultivate patriotism but also strengthen spiritual loyalty to the state ideology.

Based on the findings and analysis, concrete action is needed to strengthen collaboration between *da'wah* institutions, academics, and military organizations through the lens of communication studies, particularly in designing integrated National Defense *Da'wah* modules grounded in strategic communication principles. Such collaboration must ensure that message content, communication channels, and audience segmentation are systematically planned to optimize the delivery and reception of religious–nationalistic messages within military education and training. Furthermore, enhancing the capacity of preachers *(da'i)* should be viewed as a communication-competency development effort, equipping them with skills in message framing, narrative construction, and persuasive communication aligned with Pancasila.

This approach is crucial to countering exclusive or radical narratives that could undermine national integration. The institutionalization of National Defense *Da'wah* as a communication-based ideological development strategy can thus safeguard the continuity of contextual and adaptive nationalist values amid the complex dynamics of contemporary information flows and globalized communication environments.

Conclusion

The findings of this study conclude that *da'wah*, which has long been understood as a medium for conveying religious messages in the civilian sphere, has transformed into a strategic communication instrument for ideological and mental development within military settings. Viewed through communication theories, *da'wah* demonstrates several key lessons for military communication practice.

First, *da'wah* exemplifies how persuasive communication and value-laden messages can effectively shape soldiers' cognitive, affective, and behavioral orientations toward discipline, loyalty, and nationalism. Second, it highlights the role of narrative framing—particularly religious-nationalistic framing—in constructing shared identity and strengthening collective commitment within hierarchical organizations such as the military. Third, the integration of religiosity and patriotism through repeated message exposure reflects the principles of social learning and value internalization, showing how communication processes can reinforce long-term ideological resilience. These insights reveal that the study of *da'wah* in the military context provides an important model for understanding how communication strategies can influence identity formation, character development, and organizational cohesion, expanding the discourse of military development beyond traditional physical and command-based approaches.

This study provides significant contributions both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it expands the application of Rokeach's theory of value internalization into a context that has been largely unexplored—namely, the military, specifically Indonesian Navy personnel. The National Defense approach has proven to be an effective mechanism for value internalization through the stages of exposure, identification, and integration of values into the personality of military individuals. Practically, this study creates new policy opportunities for the Indonesian Armed Forces to design mental development curricula based on national *da'wah*, and proposes a collaborative model involving military institutions, academics, and *da'wah* organizations to develop holistic and sustainable national character formation.

Naturally, this study has limitations, particularly due to its use of a literature-based approach, which does not directly engage with empirical dimensions through field observations or interviews with soldiers as primary subjects. However, this limitation is not a weakness but rather a direction for future research. Subsequent studies are recommended to adopt a mixed-method approach by including field studies, narrative analysis of soldiers' experiences, and direct evaluation of the effectiveness of National Defense military units. In doing so, the theoretical dimensions established in this study can be strengthened and expanded into national and sustainable military education policies.

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