

Analysis of the Impact of Role Models of Islamic Higher Education Alumni on Changes in the Religious Attitudes and Behaviors of the Community in Practicing Islamic Teachings in Monta District

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Abstract. This research aims to examine in depth the influence of alumni of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTAI) as role models on the transformation of religious attitudes and behaviors of the community in implementing Islamic teachings in Monta District, Bima Regency. PTAI alumni occupy a strategic position as agents of socio-religious change, given their capacity in Islamic scholarship, their internalized moral integrity, and their active involvement in education, da'wah, public service, and community development at the grassroots level. This study employs a qualitative approach with a field study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation, involving PTAI alumni and community members as subjects of socio-religious interaction. The findings indicate that PTAI alumni play a significant role as *uswah hasanah* (good role models) in shaping and guiding the community's religious attitudes and behaviors. This exemplary role is manifested through consistent worship, the application of social morality, and the practice of *muamalah* values in daily life. The impacts identified include increased religious awareness and worship quality, greater community participation in religious activities, stronger internalization of noble moral values, and the development of a more moderate, tolerant, and contextual pattern of religiosity. However, the effectiveness of PTAI alumni's role is strongly influenced by the intensity of social interaction, the continuity of exemplary conduct, and the support of social and institutional structures that sustain the process of religious development within the community. This study emphasises that the exemplary conduct of PTAI alumni constitutes an effective and sustainable cultural strategy for internalising Islamic values amid the dynamics of social life. Theoretically, these findings contribute to the enrichment of the scholarly discourse in Islamic Religious Education and the sociology of religion, particularly in strengthening the understanding of *uswah hasanah* as an instrument of socio-religious transformation. Practically, this study provides strategic implications for strengthening the role of PTAI alumni and for formulating community development policies based on Islamic values oriented toward the principle of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*.

Keywords: Monta Community, PTAI Alumni, Role Model, Religious Attitudes, Religious Behavior

INTRODUCTION

This study is motivated by the pivotal role of graduates of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs) in shaping a generation of Muslims who are not only intellectually competent but also spiritually mature and socially responsible. (Pico-Saltos et al., 2022) These faith-based higher education institutions are designed to produce graduates who possess strong faith, exemplary moral character, and the capacity to serve as agents of change within society. In the Islamic perspective, the success of education is measured not only by academic achievement but also by the extent to which graduates are able to embody and apply Islamic values in their daily lives. Therefore, graduates of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs) are expected to serve as role models within their communities, demonstrating intellectual excellence, moral integrity, and a strong commitment to the values of Islam as rahmatan lil 'alamin (Vallejo-Imbaquingo & Robalino-López, 2025; zuhairin , abubakar, 2020)

Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs) hold a strategic mandate within Indonesia's national education system, as stipulated in Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System and Law No. 12 of 2012 on Higher Education. These regulations position higher education not only as a vehicle for advancing knowledge but also as a means of fostering character development, noble moral values, and social responsibility. In particular, IHEIs are entrusted with the task of producing graduates who possess academic integrity, spiritual depth, and socio-religious awareness, enabling them to make meaningful contributions to society (Zainuddin, 2026).

The function of national education, as stipulated in Law No. 20 of 2003, provides the normative foundation for the development of Islamic education that emphasizes not only cognitive development but also affective and psychomotor domains, Law No. 12 of 2012 on Higher Education further affirms that the primary objective of higher education is to develop students' potential so that they become individuals who possess faith and devotion to Almighty God, demonstrate noble moral character, and uphold a strong sense of social responsibility. The strategic role of higher education graduates, including alumni of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs), as agents of social change constitutes a direct implication of the mandate set forth in Law No. 12 of 2012.

Graduates of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs) are expected to transcend academic achievement and assume the role of role models who are capable of translating Islamic values into social practice. Monta District, with its strong religious character and cohesive social structure, provides a strategic setting for the actualization of IHEI graduates' roles in fostering the religious attitudes and practices of the community, thereby promoting the contextual and sustainable implementation of Islamic teachings (Lutfiyah et al., 2025).

In line with this legal framework, the national development vision articulated in the Asta Cita of the President of the Republic of Indonesia also underscores the importance of developing high-quality human resources who possess strong character and are grounded in moral and religious values. The development of Indonesia's human capital is directed not only toward economic and technological advancement but also toward strengthening spirituality, social ethics, and social harmony. In this context, graduates of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs) play a highly significant role as moral and social agents in society (Saputra et al., 2024).

Their presence across various sectors as educators, mosque imams, Islamic preachers, Qur'anic learning center (TPQ) administrators, officials of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), and socio-religious leaders positions graduates of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs) as strategic actors in promoting the internalization of moderate, tolerant, and civilized Islamic values.

This role has become increasingly important amid social transformation, globalization, and the evolving dynamics of religious life, all of which require exemplary figures who not only possess a sound normative understanding of Islamic teachings but also are capable of applying them effectively within contemporary social realities (Qwaider, 2021).

The novelty of the presence of Islamic Higher Education Institution (IHEI) graduates in Monta District lies in the increasingly diverse roles and approaches they employ to influence the community's religious attitudes and behaviors. These graduates are no longer confined to traditional roles as preachers or formal religious leaders; rather, they also serve as professional educators, public servants, social activists, and facilitators of community-based religious development programs tailored to local needs. The impact of these roles is reflected in increased community participation in religious activities, strengthened religious commitment, improved social morality, and the emergence of more inclusive and substantive religious practices. Nevertheless, the extent to which these impacts are genuinely effective and sustainable remains the subject of rigorous scholarly investigation. Therefore, research on the Impact of the Role Model of Islamic Higher Education Institution (IHEI) Graduates on Changes in the Religious Attitudes and Behaviors of the Community in practising Islamic Teachings in Monta District is essential to reveal the tangible contributions of IHEI graduates while providing both a conceptual and empirical foundation for strengthening their role in the development of the community's religious life (Warta et al., 2023).

The presence of graduates of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs) within the community's socio-religious life is of considerable significance, as they can serve as sources of inspiration and role models in worship, moral conduct, and social interactions (*muamalah*). In an increasingly complex and dynamic society, exemplary figures who practice Islam in a moderate, tolerant, and civilised manner are becoming increasingly essential. (Pico-saltos et al., 2022). IHEI graduates who serve as Islamic education teachers, preachers (*da'i*), community leaders, or government officials can act as agents of reform, fostering a contextual and solution-oriented understanding of Islam that responds effectively to contemporary challenges. Through their roles, Islamic values can be internalised within the community's social life, thereby fostering positive changes in people's ways of thinking, attitudes, and behaviours. (Alimni et al., 2022).

In the current era of modernisation and globalisation, society is confronted with various forms of moral crisis, value degradation, and the emergence of narrow and radical interpretations of Islam. Within this context, the role of graduates of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs) as role models has become increasingly significant and urgent. They are expected not only to serve as sources of Islamic knowledge but also to exemplify the comprehensive implementation of Islamic teachings in ritual worship, social ethics, and professional life. The major challenge facing these graduates is presenting Islam as a religion that is peaceful, inclusive, and responsive to social change while remaining firmly grounded in its fundamental principles (Wedi, 2025).

Monta District is one of the regions in Bima Regency that is well known for its vibrant and deeply rooted religious life. In this district, graduates of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs) are engaged in a wide range of professional and community services, including formal education, Islamic missionary institutions, *da'wah* organisations, government agencies, and socio-religious organisations. They constitute an integral part of the community's social structure and are frequently regarded as authoritative references on religious and social matters. Nevertheless, the extent to which IHEI graduates influence changes in the community's religious attitudes and behaviours has received limited scholarly attention. Whether their presence has genuinely contributed to a meaningful transformation in the community's practice of Islamic teachings or merely represents a symbolic religious presence remains an important question that warrants further investigation (Byon et al., 2020).

Islamic values are nurtured and developed through various religious activities within the community, both in formal and informal settings. Within this context, graduates of Islamic Higher

Education Institutions (IHEIs) occupy a strategic position, as they are actively engaged across various sectors of community life, including education, Islamic outreach (*da'wah*), government institutions, and socio-religious organizations. They are regarded not only as academically qualified individuals but also as trusted sources of moral and religious guidance within their communities. Formal and informal religious activities serve as the primary means of internalising Islamic values into community life, thereby shaping religious attitudes, behaviours, and practices. Accordingly, the presence of IHEI graduates in Monta District is expected to make a meaningful contribution to fostering, guiding, and strengthening the community's practice of Islamic teachings.

Graduates of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs) in Monta District demonstrate a considerable diversity of roles and forms of community engagement. Many serve as Islamic Religious Education teachers in schools, administrators of Qur'anic Learning Centres (TPQ), mosque imams, Friday prayer preachers khatibs, and da'wah practitioners who actively deliver religious sermons. Others are employed in government institutions, such as the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), as well as in other agencies responsible for providing religious services to the community. Additionally, a substantial number of graduates are actively engaged in socio-religious activities, community organisations, and various initiatives focused on community religious development. This diversity of roles indicates that IHEI graduates have extensive opportunities to influence the community's religious attitudes, behaviours, and practices through exemplary conduct, social interaction, and religious activities.

Despite occupying a strategic position and performing diverse roles within the community, the extent to which graduates of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs) influence changes in the religious attitudes and behaviours of people in Monta District has received limited systematic, in-depth scholarly attention. Critical questions remain regarding the extent to which the presence of IHEI graduates has genuinely contributed to meaningful transformations in the practice of Islamic teachings, including increased religious commitment, strengthened moral character, and positive changes in social behaviour that reflect Islamic values. Conversely, it is also possible that their role is perceived merely as a symbolic religious presence without generating a substantial and sustainable impact on community behaviour. This situation highlights a gap between the ideal role envisioned for IHEI graduates and the actual extent of their influence within the social and religious life of the community (Muhammad Rizal dan Rahmawati Islam, 2025).

Based on these realities, this study is undertaken to analyse the impact of the role model of graduates of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs) on changes in the religious attitudes and behaviours of the community in Monta District. This study is expected to provide empirical evidence regarding the extent to which IHEI graduates inspire and influence community members to practice Islamic teachings more comprehensively and consistently. (Pahmi & Albina, 2023) In addition to contributing to the advancement of Islamic education and the sociology of religion as academic disciplines, this study is expected to serve as an evaluative reference for Islamic higher education institutions in preparing their graduates to act more effectively as agents of socio-religious change in society (Luthfi et al., 2025).

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using a descriptive-analytical research design (Hamilton & Finley, 2019; Julmi, 2020). The study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the role of graduates of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs) as role models in influencing changes in the community's religious attitudes and behaviours. A qualitative approach was chosen because it enables the researcher to explore the meanings, values, and socio-religious dynamics that emerge through the interactions between IHEI graduates and community members. Through this approach, the phenomenon of exemplary conduct is understood not merely as an observable social phenomenon but also as a contextual and continuous process of internalizing Islamic values.

This study was conducted in Monta District, Bima Regency, on the grounds that the area is characterized by a strong socio-religious environment and a substantial presence of graduates of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs), who are actively engaged in various forms of community service, including Islamic education, da'wah, public service, and community religious development. These characteristics make Monta District a relevant and strategic setting for examining the influence of IHEI graduates' exemplary conduct on the community's religious life.

The research data were collected through in-depth interviews with 15 participants, comprising six graduates of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs), four religious leaders (including mosque imams, ustaz, and administrators of religious institutions), and five community members. These participants were purposively selected to ensure adequate representation of the three principal groups central to this study: IHEI graduates as agents of socio-religious change, religious leaders as key figures in guiding the community's religious life, and community members as recipients of the influence of the graduates' da'wah activities and exemplary conduct. This composition was expected to provide comprehensive data on the transformation of the community's religious attitudes and behaviours in Monta District.

Participant observation was employed to directly examine the community's religious practices and the involvement of IHEI graduates in socio-religious activities. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore the experiences, perspectives, and perceptions of both IHEI graduates and community members regarding the role of exemplary conduct in shaping religious attitudes and behaviours. In addition, document analysis was conducted to complement the primary data by examining activity records, institutional documents, photographs, religious reports, and other relevant materials related to the study's focus (S. E. Pritzker & Perrino, 2025; Rapley & Jenkins, 2010)

Data were analysed using the interactive and iterative model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Barrick, 2020; Heath, 2015). Data reduction was carried out by selecting, focusing, and organising the data in accordance with the study's objectives. The data were then presented in a descriptive-analytical narrative to facilitate the identification and interpretation of patterns and meanings emerging from the findings. Subsequently, conclusions were drawn inductively by interpreting the relationship between IHEI graduates' role-modelling and changes in the community's religious attitudes and behaviours. To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, this study employed both source and methodological triangulation by comparing information obtained from different participants and through multiple data collection techniques. This procedure was undertaken to ensure that the research findings achieved a high level of validity, credibility, and objectivity, thereby enhancing their scientific trustworthiness (Wulandari & Pendahuluan, 2011).

FINDINGS

Based On The Findings From In-Depth Interviews, Participant Observation, And Document Analysis, Several Key Findings Emerged Regarding The Role Of Graduates Of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs) As Role Models Influencing Changes In The Religious Attitudes And Behaviors Of The Community In Monta District, Bima Regency.

IHEI Graduates as Exemplary Figures (*Uswah Hasanah*) in the Religious Life of the Community

The findings indicate that IHEI graduates are widely perceived by community members as possessing both moral authority and religious scholarship. The knowledge and competencies they acquired through their education at Islamic Higher Education Institutions have positioned them as trusted references for addressing various religious issues within the community. Their exemplary

conduct is reflected in their consistent observance of religious practices, courteous social interactions, and steadfast commitment to practising Islamic values in their daily lives. As respected figures who maintain close relationships with community members, they embody values that are more readily emulated and internalised by the community. One mosque congregation member stated:

"What makes us respect IHEI graduates is not their academic degree, but their humility, their regular attendance at the mosque, and the fact that they never consider themselves to be the only ones who are right."

A village official remarked:

"THEI graduates are frequently involved in assisting community members, both in religious and social activities. As a result, their presence is genuinely felt and appreciated by the community."

This empirical evidence underscores that the status of IHEI graduates as *uswah hasanah* is not merely derived from their formal academic credentials but is actively earned through continuous social engagement and behavioural consistency. By demonstrating humility (*tawadhu*) and actively participating in both ritual and social spheres, these alumni bridge the gap between abstract Islamic doctrines and the practical realities of the Monta community. Consequently, their exemplary conduct functions as a dynamic cultural catalyst, transforming their scholarly authority into a wellspring of social trust that accelerates the community's internalisation of Islamic values.

The Role of IHEI Graduates in the Religious Guidance and Education of the Community

The findings also reveal that IHEI graduates play an active role in a wide range of community-based religious guidance activities, serving as mosque imams, *khatibs* (Friday sermon preachers), Qur'anic teachers, religious lecturers, and coordinators of *majelis taklim* (Islamic study circles) and other religious learning programs. Through these activities, IHEI graduates not only disseminate religious knowledge in a theoretical manner but also demonstrate its practical application in both religious worship and social life. Their continuous interaction with community members through these religious activities serves as an effective medium for the sustained internalisation of Islamic values. One community leader remarked:

"THEI graduates are approachable and do not discriminate among community members, making people feel comfortable engaging in discussions and learning about Islam with them."

"The presence of IHEI graduates has contributed to creating a more harmonious, religiously committed, and socially caring community."

These statements indicate that the educational involvement of IHEI graduates extends far beyond conventional, classroom-based teaching methodologies. By embedding themselves directly within local religious institutions, these alumni successfully establish a communicative and egalitarian learning environment that dismantles social barriers. This ongoing pedagogical presence not only bridges the gap between normative Islamic theory and daily practice but also fosters a shared sense of collective spirituality and civic responsibility, ultimately reshaping the socio-religious fabric of the Monta community.

Changes in the Community's Religious Attitudes

One of the key findings of this study is the transformation of the community's religious attitudes following the active involvement of IHEI graduates within their communities. Community members demonstrated an increased awareness of the importance of practising Islamic teachings more consistently and comprehensively. This transformation was reflected in the growing participation of community members in religious activities, including congregational prayers at mosques, regular Islamic study sessions, and other religious programs. In addition, the community

exhibited a greater openness toward moderate and tolerant interpretations of Islam. One community member stated:

"The way IHEI graduates convey Islamic teachings is courteous and easy to understand, which makes us feel comfortable learning from them and asking questions".

Another participant remarked:

"IHEI graduates not only encourage us to perform acts of worship but also actively support the community through various social activities. As a result, we feel that Islamic values are truly reflected in our daily lives."

This experiential shift demonstrates that the evolution of the community's religious mindset is heavily dependent on the communication style and social relevance of its religious leaders. The shift from rigid or passive traditionalism toward a more inclusive, moderate, and dynamic understanding of Islam reflects a successful internalisation of the values of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. By demonstrating that ritual worship is inextricably linked to social solidarity, IHEI graduates have successfully converted abstract religious obligations into a deeply felt, daily spiritual consciousness within the Monta community.

Transformation of Religious Behaviour in Social Life

In addition to changes in religious attitudes, this study also identified significant transformations in religious behaviour within the community's social life. Moral values such as honesty, mutual respect, social responsibility, and the spirit of mutual cooperation became increasingly evident in the community's social interactions. IHEI graduates played a pivotal role in cultivating these values through religious guidance, educational activities, and exemplary conduct in their daily lives. Consequently, the transformation of religious behaviour was reflected not only in the observance of ritual worship but also in the community's broader social practices. A local religious leader emphasised:

"People are more likely to emulate what they see others do than simply listen to sermons, and IHEI graduates provide a genuine example for the community to follow".

This transition confirms that behaviour modification within the Monta community operates through observational learning, in which visible deeds carry more weight than verbal rhetoric. The shift from individualistic tendencies to collective social actions such as heightened mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) and enhanced civic empathy illustrates that religious practices have transcended mere mosque rituals. Ultimately, by modelling these values in real-world scenarios, IHEI graduates have effectively translated personal piety into a collective social morality, cultivating a more harmonious and supportive social ecosystem.

The findings also identified several factors that influence the effectiveness of IHEI graduates as role models within the community. Supporting factors included the community's trust in IHEI graduates, the close social relationships between graduates and community members, and support from religious institutions, such as mosques and *majelis taklim* (Islamic study circles). Conversely, the constraining factors included the graduates' limited availability due to professional responsibilities, the lack of structured institutional support, and differences in religious understanding among community members.

DISCUSSION

The graduates of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs) in Monta District have made a significant contribution to enhancing the community's awareness and the quality of the implementation of Islamic values. IHEI graduates are perceived not only as individuals possessing religious scholarly authority but also as exemplary figures who embody Islamic values in their everyday lives (Abdillah, 2020). The consistency between their religious knowledge and religious

practice enhances the credibility of IHEI graduates, making them more readily accepted and trusted by the community.

The exemplary conduct of IHEI graduates is evident in various aspects of their lives, including their consistent observance of religious practices, courtesy in social interactions, and attitudes of humility and openness toward the community (Salmin et al., 2025). This structural approach through role modelling based on real behaviour proves to be far more effective than merely delivering religious teachings in a normative, purely verbalistic manner, as the community gains concrete examples for practising Islamic teachings (Megawati et al., 2022).

Beyond aspects of worship and personal morals, IHEI alumni also demonstrate exemplary conduct in social and community dimensions. This is evident in their concern for social issues, their active involvement in religious and community activities, and their willingness to guide and serve society without discrimination based on social background (Abdul Raup et al., 2023; Salmin et al., 2025). This attitude of empathy and social responsibility strengthens the position of IHEI alumni as role models who are not only symbolically respected but also genuinely followed by the community in practice.

The exemplary conduct of IHEI alumni as *uswah hasanah* contributes to the formation of a more reflective and contextual pattern of religiosity within society. The community is not only encouraged to increase the intensity of ritual worship but also begins to instil noble moral values in social relations, such as honesty, tolerance, and mutual respect. Thus, the role of IHEI alumni as role models has an impact not only on aspects of ritual religiosity but also on the sustainable formation of character and social ethics within society (Rosyidah, 2022).

The presence of alumni of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs) in Monta Subdistrict contributes significantly to the formation of a social environment conducive to the growth of religious behaviour in society. IHEI alumni build harmonious, egalitarian, and participatory social interactions, thereby fostering mutual respect and strengthening social cohesion. The community perceives IHEI alumni not as distant or exclusive figures but as integral members of the community who live and interact alongside them (Salenda, 2018). This structural integration allows community members to feel comfortable discussing and learning about religion in a non-threatening pedagogical setting.

The religious social environment that has been formed does not emerge instantly, but rather through a continuous process of interaction between alumni of IHEIs and the community. The alumni are actively involved in various religious and social activities, such as religious study gatherings (*pengajian*), mosque activities, communal voluntary work (*gotong royong*/collective community service), and other social and community-based activities. This involvement strengthens the internalisation of Islamic values such as honesty, cooperation, care, and compassion in the social life of the community (Salmin et al., 2025). Consequently, this collective engagement revitalises the community's spirit of religiosity and communal togetherness.

The alumni not only emphasise ritual aspects of religious practice but also instil Islamic social values in community life (Salmin et al., 2025). The open, dialogical, and respectful attitude toward differences demonstrated by IHEI alumni encourages the creation of a harmonious and civilised social life. This is in line with the word of Allah in QS. al-Ḥujurāt [49]:13, which affirms that human beings were created in diverse nations and tribes so that they may know one another (*ta'āruf*) and spread goodness. The value of *ta'āruf* is clearly reflected in the social interactions established by IHEI alumni with the community.

Thus, IHEI alumni do not only function as religious individuals, but also as agents in shaping a social environment that supports the collective practice of Islamic values. The religious social environment that forms becomes an important factor in encouraging sustainable changes in the

community's attitudes and religious behaviour. This paradigm shift creates a community atmosphere that is structurally more harmonious, religious, and socially caring.

The social life of the community in Monta Subdistrict also plays a role in building a collective culture that supports the consistent practice of Islamic teachings. The religious social environment is reflected in the growing number of community-based religious activities, such as regular study circles (*pengajian*), congregational prayers, *majlis taklim*, and socio-religious activities that involve various segments of society (Salmin et al., 2024). IHEI alumni serve as drivers and facilitators who connect Islamic values to the community's real needs (Lubis, 2022). This operational bridge ensures that the benefits of religious teachings are profoundly felt within daily life.

The formation of a religious social environment is also evident in the changing patterns of interaction among community members, which are increasingly grounded in Islamic values. Values of togetherness, mutual assistance, and deliberation (*musyawarah*) are strengthening in line with the intensity of social interaction fostered by IHEI alumni. In various community activities, IHEI alumni often act as mediators and calming figures when differences of opinion arise within society, positioning them as balanced intellectual authorities.

The religious social environment that has been formed also encourages the emergence of collective awareness among the community to maintain religious norms in public life. This is reflected in the increasing concern of society for social ethics, such as maintaining proper speech, respecting others, and avoiding behaviours that conflict with religious values. IHEI alumni play an important role in this process through a persuasive approach and exemplary conduct, rather than coercion or social pressure (Diah et al., 2021).

Thus, the role of IHEI alumni in shaping a religious social environment affects not only individuals but also the community's overall social order. A religious, inclusive, and harmonious environment becomes important social capital in sustaining changes in the community's attitudes and religious behaviour. IHEI alumni serve as value-reinforcement agents, ensuring that Islamic teachings do not remain at a symbolic level but are internalised within the social culture of Monta Subdistrict. These findings affirm that sustainable socio-religious transformation requires the presence of exemplary figures who actively build a social environment that collectively supports Islamic values (Nudin, 2020).

Their active involvement in strengthening religious education and community guidance is highly pivotal. The alumni play a direct role in various educational activities, such as Islamic study circles (*majlis taklim*), youth religious gatherings, Qur'an literacy training, and character development programs for children and adolescents. These activities not only function as a means of transferring religious knowledge but also as a medium for the continuous internalisation of Islamic moral and spiritual values. The educational approach carried out by IHEI alumni is highly communicative and applicable because it is systematically adapted to the needs and social conditions of the local community.

Community development activities have directly increased public interest and participation in religious activities. The consistent guidance provided at Qur'an learning centres (TPQ) and youth study circles has successfully stabilised the attendance of children and adolescents, while concurrently raising parental awareness regarding the urgency of structured religious education.

From the perspective of Islamic education, the role of IHEI alumni is in line with the concept of *ta'dib*, namely an educational process that emphasises habituation, the inculcation of proper conduct (*adab*), and the formation of an Islamic personality through concrete practice. IHEI alumni not only serve as teachers who deliver instructional content but also as educators who directly guide and accompany the community. This approach strengthens the effectiveness of religious education because Islamic values are not merely understood theoretically but are also experienced and practised in the daily lives of the community (Wulandari & Juniarsih, 2025).

This view is consistent with Imam Al-Ghazali's thought in *Ihya' 'Ulumiddin*, which emphasises that a true educator is not merely a transmitter of knowledge, but a moral exemplar who serves as a mirror for learners. The exemplary conduct of IHEI alumni in their attitudes, acts of worship, and social interactions (*muamalah*) exerts a strong influence on the process of community-based religious development. Thus, the role of IHEI alumni in religious education and guidance is a strategic factor in shaping a generation of community members who are religious, possess noble character, and maintain sustainable spiritual awareness.

Significant changes in the religious attitudes of the community in Monta District have been observed following the active involvement of alumni of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs) as exemplary figures within social life (Abubakar, 2022; Ikram, 2025). This transformation indicates that the exemplary conduct of IHEI alumni encourages the community not only to understand Islamic teachings normatively but also to practice them consistently in daily life, as evidenced by increased mosque attendance and collective awareness of *zakat*. In addition to ritual aspects, changes in the community's religious attitudes are also reflected in greater openness toward religious learning processes. The community has become more enthusiastic in participating in study circles (*pengajian*), *majlis taklim*, and various religious development activities initiated by IHEI alumni.

Furthermore, mutual respect for differing religious views has strengthened, creating a more moderate and dialogical religious atmosphere. This condition indicates that the exemplary conduct of IHEI alumni contributes to the formation of a religious attitude that is not exclusive but inclusive and oriented toward the values of brotherhood. This phenomenon of changing religious attitudes reinforces Albert Bandura's social learning theory, which states that individual behaviour is shaped through observation and imitation of figures perceived as having moral and social authority. IHEI alumni, who are regarded as knowledgeable, well-mannered, and consistent in their behaviour, serve as effective models for the community in shaping religious attitudes (Jaya et al., 2023).

The transformation of community social behaviour in Monta District has become an important indicator of the impact of the exemplary role of Islamic Higher Education Institution (IHEI) alumni. The findings show that communities that were previously more inclined toward individualistic social life have begun to shift toward a more collective, participatory, and socially oriented way of life. This change is marked by an increased spirit of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) in community activities, such as communal work, social assistance, and solidarity with residents affected by disasters.

IHEI alumni consistently encourage the internalisation of Islamic values in the social life of the community, particularly the values of *ukhuwah islamiyah* (Islamic brotherhood), *ta'awun* (mutual assistance), and *ihsan* (doing good). These values are not only conveyed in religious forums but are also manifested concretely through real actions in everyday life (Assyakurrohim et al., 2022). This exemplary approach makes Islamic values easier for the community to accept and practice without giving a preachy impression.

In the context of social community activities, IHEI alumni often act as initiators and driving forces of various social programs, such as fundraising for the poor (*dbuafa*), providing assistance for orphans, supporting underprivileged families, as well as offering social assistance through mosques and *majlis taklim*-based community groups (Megawati et al., 2022). These activities not only help ease the burden on the community but also strengthen social bonds and a sense of collective responsibility in the surrounding environment.

This transformation of social behaviour is in line with Islamic teachings as emphasised in the Prophet Muhammad's hadith: "None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself" (narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim). These prophetic values, when embodied through the exemplary conduct of IHEI alumni, shape a pattern of social behaviour in the community that is more religious, humane, and civilised (Madjid, 2022). The empirical shifts confirm

that community transformation relies heavily on practical societal modelling rather than purely textual exposure.

IHEI alumni play a strategic role in instilling the values of religious moderation within the plural social reality of Monta District, both in terms of social background, levels of religious understanding, and variations in religious practice. Through a persuasive, dialogical, and exemplary da'wah approach, IHEI alumni emphasise that Islam is a *rahmatan lil 'alamin* religion that upholds the principles of compassion, justice, and balance.

The community's attitude has increasingly become open and tolerant toward differences in religious schools of thought (*madhhab*) and diverse religious perspectives. Differences are no longer seen as a source of conflict, but rather as a social reality that must be addressed wisely, allowing the community to perceive variations in worship as part of the richness of Islamic tradition (*kebhazanah Islam*). This condition shows that a moderate da'wah approach can reduce the potential for social friction while strengthening internal harmony within the Muslim community. In the context of resolving socio-religious issues, IHEI alumni often act as mediators and intermediaries when differences of opinion arise within the community. They prioritise the principles of *tasāmuḥ* (tolerance), *ta'adul* (justice), and *iṣlāḥ* (peacebuilding) as foundations for building dialogue and finding common ground (Sultan et al., 2018).

This role further reinforces the position of IHEI alumni as moral and social reference figures who are trusted by various groups within society. The strengthening of religious moderation and tolerance aligns with Soerjono Soekanto's view, which emphasises that moral agents in society function not only as educators but also as stabilising forces within social dynamics. IHEI alumni not only transmit religious values in a normative way but also actualise them in constructive and integrative social practices (Nasruddin & Munir, 2024). The de-escalation of potential religious conflicts at the grassroots level proves that their structural presence balances social frictions.

Da'wah conducted by alumni of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs) in Monta Subdistrict is highly effective because it emphasises exemplary conduct and concrete actions rather than relying solely on rhetorical approaches. IHEI alumni implement the method of *da'wah bil ḥāl*, namely da'wah through deeds, which allows the community to directly observe the application of Islamic values in everyday life (Huda, 2019). This structural approach makes da'wah more grounded and relevant to society's social realities. The exemplary conduct of IHEI alumni is reflected in various aspects of life, ranging from the family environment and workplace to social and community activities. Values such as honesty, discipline, patience, and social care are not only conveyed in religious forums but are also consistently practised in everyday interactions (Neliwati et al., 2023). This behavioural compliance strengthens the position of IHEI alumni as figures with moral and social credibility in the community's eyes.

The approach of da'wah through exemplary conduct aligns with the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) method of da'wah, which emphasises the importance of noble character as an entry point for social change. In the history of the Prophet's da'wah, honesty (*ṣidq*), compassion (*rahmah*), and patience (*ṣabr*) became the main foundations in building the trust of the ummah. IHEI alumni emulate this method by presenting Islam as peaceful and reassuring, rather than as something frightening or judgmental (Rahman et al., 2022).

The impact of this exemplary-based da'wah is evident in the increasing voluntary participation of the community in various religious and social activities. The community has begun to actively attend religious study gatherings, engage in socio-religious activities, and show initiative to improve their religious behaviour without external pressure or institutional coercion. The success of Islamic Higher Education Institution (IHEI) alumni in influencing the religious life of the community in Monta Subdistrict is determined not only by their mastery of Islamic knowledge but also by their ability to consistently integrate knowledge, morality, and practice (Oktavia et al., 2023).

This integration builds trust and social legitimacy for alumni within society. The integration of knowledge and morality is reflected in their humility, courteous communication, and ability to uphold ethical standards in social interactions.

The community perceives that IHEI alumni do not position themselves as superior, despite having a higher educational background in religious studies (Julkarnain, 2019). This commendable moral attitude strengthens the influence of IHEI alumni, as the knowledge they convey is not undermined by contradictory personal behavior. Meanwhile, the aspect of practice (*amal*) is manifested through the active involvement of IHEI alumni in various religious and social activities, such as mentoring *majelis taklim*, supporting orphaned children, participating in mosque-based social programs, and participating in resolving community issues. This practice of *amal* affirms that religious knowledge is not understood as an abstract discourse but as a guiding principle of life that must be put into practice.

The integration of knowledge, morality, and practice is in line with the principles of Islamic teachings, which emphasise that knowledge without action loses its substantive meaning, as affirmed in QS. Al-Baqarah verse 44: “Do you enjoin righteousness upon others while you forget yourselves?” The credibility of IHEI alumni in practising their knowledge becomes a key factor that strengthens their influence within society (Yacob et al., 2025). Thus, the integration of knowledge, morality, and practice serves as the primary foundation for the success of IHEI alumni as role models and agents of socio-religious transformation in Monta Subdistrict.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the exemplary conduct of Islamic Higher Education Institution (IHEI) graduates, serving as *uswah hasanah*, exerts a transformative impact on both the religious attitudes and social behaviours of the community in Monta District. Rather than acting merely as normative transmitters of Islamic texts, these alumni successfully bridge the gap between abstract theology and daily practice by integrating intellectual scholarship with moral integrity and active social engagement. This holistic approach has initiated a meaningful shift in the community's mindset, evidenced by a heightened awareness of ritual worship, a greater enthusiasm for inclusive religious learning, and a stronger adherence to moderate, tolerant, and collaborative values (*rahmatan lil ‘alamin*). Furthermore, the visible transformation in the community's social life, marked by enhanced civic empathy, mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), and collective social morality, underlines the high efficacy of *da'wah bil ḥāl* over purely verbal rhetoric. However, the long-term sustainability of this socio-religious development remains heavily reliant on the consistency of individual exemplary behavior, the intensity of grassroots social interactions, and the structural support of local institutions. Consequently, these findings call for a strengthened synergy between higher education institutions, local governments, and community leaders to continuously empower and utilize IHEI graduates as strategic agents of sustainable cultural and spiritual transformation.

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