

Digital Da'wah And The Future Of Islamic Media: Navigating Cultural And Technological Challenges

Rismayanti¹, Mailin², Sultan Haramain³, Raja Alfiansyah⁴
Universitas Tjut Nyak Dhien¹, State Islamic University of North Sumatra^{2&3}
University of North Sumatra⁴

- Correspondence email: mailin@uinsu.ac.id

Abstract

This article examines the transformation of Islamic da'wah in the digital era and its implications for the sustainability of Islamic media. There are changes in the patterns of da'wah delivery and religious interaction caused by the development of digital platforms. This research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach through literature review to analyze the integration of Islamic values with technology and challenges such as information overload, content commercialization, and the influence of digital algorithms. The results of the study indicate that the sustainability of Islamic media is determined by digital literacy, media ethics, and creative and contextual da'wah strategies. Digital da'wah needs to adapt to cultural changes without neglecting moral values and the authenticity of Islamic teachings.

Keywords: digital da'wah; Islamic media; digital culture; media ethics

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology over the past two decades has significantly reshaped the global communications landscape, including the practice of Islamic da'wah. There has been a shift in the way Islamic messages are produced, disseminated, and consumed, shifting from conventional media to internet-based platforms such as social media, podcasts, mobile apps, and video streaming services. Da'wah activities are no longer confined to physical spaces like mosques and religious assemblies, but have expanded into a dynamic, interactive, and cross-cultural digital environment (Campbell, 2013; Hjarvard, 2018).

The digitalization of Islamic preaching creates a strategic opportunity to increase religious literacy, especially among the younger generation, who are deeply involved in digital culture. Algorithm-based platforms enable Islamic preaching messages to be delivered in a more personalized, creative, and accessible format. This situation has encouraged the emergence of new religious actors, including digital preachers, Islamic influencers, and online

content creators, whose religious authority is often constructed through visibility, engagement, and audience reach. As a result, religious authority has shifted from traditional institutional and scholarly structures toward more decentralized and fluid forms within digital spaces (Eickelman & Anderson, 2003; Nurdin, 2021).

The transformation of digital da'wah also poses serious challenges to the sustainability of Islamic media. The proliferation of religious content has triggered information overload, commodification of da'wah messages, algorithmic polarization, and the formation of digital echo chambers that increasingly blur the lines between scientific authority and popularity-based legitimacy (Sunstein, 2017). Furthermore, the intersection of local Islamic values and global digital culture, characterized by instant consumption, visual dominance, and individualism, raises issues related to ethical integrity, cultural sensitivity, and the authenticity of Islamic teachings (Hjarvard, 2018; Hoover, 2020).

Analyzing the transformation of Islamic da'wah in the digital era and its implications for the future of Islamic media amidst cultural and technological changes is the purpose of writing this article (Srigita and Rifa'i, 2025). This research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach through literature studies and contextual analysis to examine how digital da'wah can integrate Islamic values with technological innovation in an ethical, moderate, and inclusive manner. It can contribute to the conceptual development of sustainable digital da'wah strategies and provide insights for academics, da'wah practitioners, and Islamic institutions in building a responsible and civilized Islamic media ecosystem in the digital space. It is the hope of this writing.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Digital Da'wah and Islamic Communication

Digital da'wah refers to the use of digital media and communication technology to convey Islamic teachings, values, and moral guidance within the contemporary media landscape. Conceptually, digital da'wah is the development of Islamic communication principles that focus on wisdom (*ḥikmah*), good advice (*maw'izah ḥasanah*), and persuasive dialogue, aligned with the characteristics of new media platforms. The integration of digital technology allows da'wah messages to be disseminated more quickly, interactively, and across vast geographical boundaries, thereby transforming traditional modes of religious communication. (Campbell, 2013; Nurdin, 2021).

Unlike conventional da'wah, which is essentially one-way and institution-centered, digital da'wah encourages participatory, networked, and audience-oriented interactions. Digital platforms create space for users not

only to consume religious content but also to respond to, reinterpret, and redistribute it, thus forming a multidirectional network of religious communication (Rekjong and Price-Wallace, 2024). This shift emphasizes the shift in da'wah authority while also demanding the strengthening of media literacy, ethical awareness, and contextual sensitivity in Islamic communication practices in the digital space.

Islamic Media in the Digital Era

Islamic media encompasses a wide range of platforms, content, and media institutions aimed at disseminating Islamic knowledge, values, and understanding to the public. In the digital age, Islamic media operates as an attention-based, algorithm-driven ecosystem, where religious messages must compete with entertainment content, political narratives, and commercial interests to elicit audience response. This demands innovation in content formats, storytelling techniques, and visual presentation, while maintaining theological accuracy and ethical responsibility. (Hjarvard, 2018; Hoover, 2020).

The process of mediatization of religion increasingly positions media not only as a means of conveying religious teachings but also as an active pioneer shaping religious meaning, authority, and practice (Wei, 2024). Therefore, Islamic media are required to balance technological adaptation with moral and educational functions. Failure to maintain this balance has the potential to encourage the commodification of da'wah content, the shallowing of religious substance, and the prioritization of popularity over credibility. Therefore, ethical media practices and values-based communication are the primary foundation for maintaining the sustainability and integrity of Islamic media in the digital era.

Cultural and Technological Challenges in Digital Da'wah

Cultural conditions and technological developments that shape how religious messages are disseminated and understood are heavily influenced by digital da'wah practices. From a cultural perspective, the strong influence of global digital culture often encourages a uniform presentation of da'wah, tending to ignore the distinctiveness of local Islam, local wisdom, and forms of religiosity that thrive within the community's culture. This situation presents a challenge in itself, as da'wah risks losing its relevance if it fails to adapt its religious message to the social realities and cultural diversity that exist within society (Eickelman & Anderson, 2003).

The existence of digital algorithms, the spread of misinformation, the emergence of closed discussion spaces (echo chambers), and unequal access to technology significantly influence the extent to which da'wah content can be seen, accepted, and interpreted by society from a technological perspective.

Digital platforms that operate based on algorithms tend to promote emotional or sensational content, thereby risking strengthening polarization and reducing critical attitudes in understanding religious teachings (Sunstein, 2017). This condition indicates that digital da'wah requires an approach that is not only technologically proficient, but also sensitive to cultural values and based on ethics. Therefore, increasing digital literacy, strengthening religious moderation, and adapting da'wah messages to local cultural contexts are important factors for digital da'wah to be able to support social harmony and maintain the sustainability of Islamic media.

METHODOLOGY

This study applies a descriptive qualitative approach to examine changes in Islamic preaching in the digital era and its impact on the future development of Islamic media. A qualitative approach is deemed appropriate because it allows researchers to explore the meaning, trends, and dynamics of religious communication in the digital space in depth, emphasizing interpretive understanding over numerical measurements. (Creswell, 2014).

Research data was collected through a systematic literature review of various relevant scientific sources, such as accredited journal articles, academic books, conference proceedings, and highly credible online publications related to digital da'wah, Islamic media, and the study of religion and technology. This method helped identify key concepts and theoretical frameworks that explain the relationship between religion, media, and technological development. (Campbell, 2013; Hjarvard, 2018).

The data analysis process was conducted using thematic analysis techniques to identify recurring patterns, key challenges, and emerging strategies in digital da'wah practices. The analysis phase included in-depth data reading, coding, and grouping themes to ensure consistency and clarity of interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Central themes identified included digital literacy, media ethics, cultural adaptation, and the influence of digital algorithms..

To strengthen the validity of the findings, this study employed triangulation techniques by comparing various data sources and scholarly perspectives, such as Islamic communication, media studies, and cultural studies (Denzin, 2012). This methodological framework allows for a more comprehensive and contextual understanding of digital da'wah and provides a conceptual contribution to the sustainable development of Islamic media in the digital era.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section includes and discusses the main research findings related to the transformation of Islamic da'wah in the digital era and its implications for the future of Islamic media. The discussion integrates the results of the thematic analysis with various relevant theoretical perspectives in digital religious studies, Islamic communication, and media studies. Several key themes reflecting changes in da'wah practices, ethical and cultural challenges, and strategic implications for the sustainability of Islamic media in the digital environment are compiled in the research findings.

Transformation Of Da'wah Practices In Digital Media Criticize And Belittle

Research shows that the presence of digital media has brought about significant changes in the practice of Islamic da'wah, moving from face-to-face communication patterns to more visual, interactive, and connected forms of delivery within digital networks (Nadia and Rifa'i, 2025). The use of platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and podcasts allows da'wah messages to be packaged concisely, engagingly, and easily disseminated. This change means da'wah is no longer tied to specific spaces and institutions, allowing Islamic messages to reach a wider and more diverse audience in a relatively short time.

These changes also impact the depth and structure of religious communication. The tendency toward concise content that follows the logic of digital platform algorithms encourages the simplification of complex theological discussions to align with audience preferences and time constraints. While this approach increases the accessibility of Islamic preaching messages, it risks diminishing the space for critical thinking and a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings. These findings reinforce the views of several previous studies that have emphasized the tension between the demands of effective communication and efforts to maintain the depth of religious content in the digital space. (Hjarvard, 2018; Hoover, 2020).

Ethical Issues And Digital Literacy In Da'wah Practices

Another finding in this study relates to ethical issues in the implementation of da'wah in the digital space. The massive circulation of religious content has given rise to information overload, a tendency to commercialize da'wah messages, and the strengthening of religious legitimacy based on popularity. In practice, metrics such as the number of likes, views, and followers are often used as benchmarks of trust, potentially shifting the position of scientific authority and weakening the moral responsibility of da'wah practitioners (Vaizman, Wood, and Cohn Zentner 2025).

This situation demonstrates that digital literacy is a fundamental need, both for preachers and the public as audiences. Ethical digital preaching requires more than just technical expertise; it also requires a critical approach to how algorithms work, content monetization mechanisms, and the risks of disseminating misleading information. In line with Islamic communication principles, the values of honesty (ṣidq), trustworthiness (amanah), and wisdom (ḥikmah) must be the primary foundations of preaching activities in the digital space. Therefore, strengthening digital literacy is a crucial strategy for maintaining the sustainability of Islamic media with integrity and credibility (Sunstein, 2017; Nurdin, 2021).

Cultural Context and Religious Moderation

Research findings also indicate that cultural background plays a significant role in determining the success of digital da'wah (D. Rosadi et al., 2025). The dominance of global digital culture often results in the presentation of a uniform and less diverse religious message, thus risking the exclusion of local traditions and forms of Islamic expression that emerge from specific social contexts. If digital da'wah fails to consider cultural diversity, the message conveyed has the potential to lose relevance and be less able to address the real experiences of diverse communities.

Conversely, digital da'wah that is sensitive to cultural context, for example by utilizing regional languages, cultural symbols, and social references close to the community's lives, has been proven to increase audience participation while strengthening the value of religious moderation. This approach aligns with the historical character of Islamic da'wah, which is adaptive and contextual, and supports the strengthening of inclusivity, tolerance, and social harmony in a multicultural society. Thus, cultural sensitivity cannot be viewed as an obstacle, but rather as a strategic asset in building sustainable, moderation-oriented digital da'wah practices (Eickelman & Anderson, 2003).

Implications for the Future of Islamic Media

In general, the research findings indicate that the future sustainability of Islamic media relies heavily on its ability to optimize technological advancements with ethical commitment and cultural sensitivity. The use of digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence and data analytics, opens up significant opportunities to expand the reach of Islamic preaching and tailor messages to audience characteristics. However, the application of these technologies must be guided by Islamic ethical values to prevent manipulative practices or the commodification of religious teachings. (Oladoyinbo et al. 2024).

Collaboration between religious scholars, media practitioners, and educational institutions is a crucial factor in producing digital da'wah content that is scientifically sound, educational, and value-oriented. By maintaining a balance between technological innovation, authentic teachings, and the principle of moderation, Islamic media has the potential to play a broader role, not only as a means of disseminating religious teachings, but also as a space for education and constructive dialogue in the digital realm (Li, Chen, and Man 2025).

CONCLUSION

This research also emphasizes that the digitalization of Islamic preaching has fundamentally changed patterns of religious communication, marked by increased reach, interactivity, and shifts in message delivery methods. While digital platforms offer strategic opportunities to engage a more diverse audience, challenges such as content simplification, algorithmic dominance, commercialization of preaching, and ethical issues remain crucial issues that need to be addressed.

The success of Islamic media in the digital era is not solely determined by technological sophistication, but rather by its ability to integrate digital innovation with communication ethics, digital literacy, and sensitivity to cultural context. Effective digital da'wah must maintain the educational harmony and authenticity of Islamic teachings, while also being responsive to the dynamics of global digital culture.

Digital da'wah is expected to function not only as an instrument for conveying religious messages, but also as a means to foster religious moderation, inclusive attitudes, and social harmony. By maximizing technological adaptation, moral integrity, and contextual awareness, Islamic media can contribute to building a civilized, responsible, and sustainable Islamic communication ecosystem in the digital space.

REFERENCES

- Ahmad, M. (2020). *Komunikasi Islam di Era Digital*. Jakarta: Kencana.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Campbell, H. A. (2013). *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds*. New York: Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Denzin, N. K. (2012). Triangulation 2.0. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 6(2), 80–88. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689812437186>

- Eickelman, D. F., & Anderson, J. W. (2003). *New media in the Muslim world: The emerging public sphere*. Indiana University Press.
- Hjarvard, S. (2018). The mediatization of religion: A theory of the media as agents of religious change. *Journal of Media and Religion*, 17(3), 75–86. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348423.2018.1431102>
- Hoffmann, L., & Larsson, G. (2022). Islam on social media: Influencers, authority, and digital publics. *Journal of Religion, Media and Digital Culture*, 11(2), 135–158.
- Moleong, L. J. (2018). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Nisa, E. F. (2018). Social media and the transformation of contemporary Indonesian Islamic authority. *Indonesia and the Malay World*, 46(134), 24–43.
- Nurdin, A. (2021). Digital da'wah and religious moderation in Indonesia. *Journal of Islamic Communication*, 5(2), 101–115.
- Rogers, E. M. (2003). *Diffusion of Innovations* (5th ed.). New York: Free Press.
- Sobur, A. (2015). *Analisis Teks Media: Suatu Pengantar untuk Analisis Wacana, Analisis Semiotik, dan Analisis Framing*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Sunstein, C. R. (2017). *#Republic: Divided democracy in the age of social media*. Princeton University Press.
- Syarifuddin, A. (2021). Dakwah digital dan perubahan otoritas keagamaan di era media baru. *Jurnal Komunikasi Islam*, 11(1), 45–60.
- Tubbs, S. L., & Moss, S. (2017). *Human Communication: Principles and Contexts*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Zainal, M. (2020). Moderasi beragama dalam konten dakwah digital: Tantangan dan peluang. *Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi*, 14(2), 101–118.
- Zubair, M. (2019). Dakwah di ruang virtual: Analisis konten dakwah pada platform YouTube. *Sosial Budaya*, 16(1), 55–67.
- D. Rosadi, Nora Juwita, K.A. Bukhori, Nurseri Hasnah Nasution, and Rahmat Bin Abdullah. 2025. "The Effectiveness of Digital Da'wah Media: A Case Study of Assajidin.Com and the Transformation of Religious Understanding in Palembang." *AT-TURAS: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 12(1). doi:10.33650/at-turas.v12i1.9908.
- Li, Jian, Peng Chen, and Linyan Man. 2025. "Understanding the Influence of Social Media on University Students' Communication Skills in Digital Information Environment." *Profesional de la Informacion* 33(6). doi:10.3145/epi.2024.ene.0603.
- Nadia, Nadia, and Akhmad Rifa'i. 2025. "ISLAMIC THOUGHT AND DA'WAH TRANSFORMATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA." *Al-Ulum Jurnal Pemikiran dan Penelitian ke Islaman* 12(1). doi:10.31102/alulum.12.1.2025.62-72.
- Oladoyinbo, Tunbosun Oyewale, Samuel Oladiipo Olabanji, Oluwaseun Oladeji Olaniyi, Olubukola Omolara Adebisi, Olalekan Jamiu Okunleye, and Adegbenga Ismaila Alao. 2024. "Exploring the Challenges of Artificial

- Intelligence in Data Integrity and Its Influence on Social Dynamics.” *Asian Journal of Advanced Research and Reports* 18(2). doi:10.9734/ajarr/2024/v18i2601.
- Rekjong, Dhondup T., and Darcie M. Price-Wallace. 2024. “Contemporary Tibetan Music: Blazing the Path of Religious, Cultural, and Political Devotion.” *Culture and Religion* 24(3). doi:10.1080/14755610.2025.2475251.
- Srigita, Ferty Deseliyana, and Akhmad Rifa’i. 2025. “CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC THOUGHT: Challenges and Solutions in Da’wah in the Digital Era.” *Al-Ulum Jurnal Pemikiran dan Penelitian ke Islaman* 12(1). doi:10.31102/alulum.12.1.2025.51-61.
- Vaizman, Tal, Abigail Wood, and Naomi Cohn Zentner. 2025. “Religious Jewish Mothers as Music Mentors: Educating a New Generation of Ethical Listeners in the Age of Infinite Availability.” *Religious Education* 120(3). doi:10.1080/00344087.2025.2524198.
- Wei, Mengxue. 2024. “Mediatization of Religion and Its Impact on Youth Identity Formation in Contemporary China.” *Religions* 15(3). doi:10.3390/rel15030268.