DIGITAL DA'WAH AND CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION

Darul Naad [1]
[1] *Islamic Communication and Broadcasting, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic*
University of North Sumatera, Medan, Indonesia
[1] darul3005243003@uinsu.ac.id

Abstract

This paper examines how digital da'wah contributes to the ongoing cultural transformation within the framework of 21st-century Islamic civilization. The study aims to analyze the role of digital media in reshaping da'wah strategies, audience engagement, and cultural expressions among global Muslim communities. Using a qualitative descriptive method supported by digital ethnography, this research investigates various online platforms such as social media, YouTube channels, and podcasts that have become major instruments of Islamic communication. The findings reveal that digital da'wah enables broader participation, democratizes religious discourse, and fosters intercultural interaction across geographical boundaries. However, it also poses challenges regarding authenticity, content moderation, and the risk of superficial religiosity. The study concludes that when managed ethically and contextually, digital da'wah can serve as a transformative force that strengthens faith, promotes cultural inclusivity, and contributes to the sustainable development of Islamic civilization in the digital era

Keywords: Digital Da'wah; Cultural Transformation; Islamic Civilization; Social Media

1. INTRODUCTION

The 21st century has marked a profound transformation in human communication and cultural interaction, largely driven by rapid digitalization and the proliferation of online platforms. Within this dynamic landscape, religion has not remained untouched. The Islamic tradition of *da'wah*—the propagation of faith and moral guidance—has undergone a digital metamorphosis, reshaping how messages are produced, disseminated, and consumed by global Muslim audiences. This shift, often referred to as *digital da'wah*, represents both a continuation of prophetic communication ethics and an adaptation to modern digital ecosystems that emphasize speed, connectivity, and interactivity. In this context, the convergence between digital media and Islamic preaching emerges not merely as a technical adjustment but as a broader cultural and civilizational transformation influencing the patterns of religious engagement, identity formation, and ethical discourse among Muslims worldwide (Saleh et al., 2022)

The phenomenon of digital da'wah arises from the intersection of Islamic communication and global media evolution. The digital revolution has democratized the production of religious content, allowing scholars, preachers, and lay believers alike to participate in transmitting Islamic teachings through diverse media such as YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and podcasts. Studies show that these platforms have revolutionized audience engagement by transforming da'wah from monologic to

dialogic communication, emphasizing inclusivity, interactivity, and contextual relevance (Nuriana & Salwa, 2024). Consequently, digital da'wah is not only a tool for religious education but also a cultural medium through which Muslims negotiate their identities amid globalization and technological disruption.

A growing body of scholarship has explored this transformation. For instance, research by (Chalim et al., 2025a), identifies effective strategies in social media-based da'wah, emphasizing authenticity, audience engagement, and adaptability as critical success factors. Similarly, (Novriyanto et al., 2024), examine how *ulama* have transformed their roles as communicators through YouTube, creating new dialogic spaces between preachers and audiences. Meanwhile, (Rani, 2023) highlights both the opportunities and challenges of digital communication in contemporary Islamic education, arguing that technological adaptation must be balanced with religious authenticity.

Beyond individual strategies, scholars have also discussed institutional and cultural dimensions. The study of the Indonesian Ulema Council in South Sulawesi reveals how religious organizations institutionalize digital da'wah through social media, live streaming, and e-publications, demonstrating an adaptive institutional model that integrates traditional authority with modern communication infrastructure (Ahmad, 2023). Likewise, research on Nahdlatul Ulama's digital engagement indicates how major Islamic movements leverage online platforms to counter extremism and promote moderate values amid sociocultural disruption (Khasanah, 2022). Such efforts are consistent with the wider development of religious moderation studies in Indonesia as a strategy for preventing radicalism (Murad & Rizki, 2022). Complementarily, studies on youth-oriented da'wah reveal that digital spaces particularly Instagram and TikTok serve as interactive arenas where young Muslims co-construct religious narratives, reinforcing community belonging while negotiating modernity (Roslan et al., 2025) ; (Hanifah Alma Daniah et al., 2025a).

In terms of cultural impact, the digitalization of da'wah is more than a technological upgrade; it represents a reconfiguration of Muslim cultural expression and identity. As argued by (Maharani, 2025), Islamic educational institutions such as *pesantren* are increasingly integrating digital literacy into their curricula, merging local religious traditions with global competencies. This cultural synthesis allows Muslims to preserve their spiritual heritage while participating in global digital cultures. Similarly, netnographic research on Islamic animation reveals how visual creativity and storytelling in social media have become new vehicles for religious education and da'wah among younger generations (Hamzah et al., 2023).

Despite these advances, significant research gaps remain. First, much of the existing literature focuses on technological adaptation and communication effectiveness, yet fewer studies analyze the *cultural transformation* that digital da'wah engenders within Islamic civilization itself. The digital sphere does not merely expand da'wah's reach; it redefines its epistemological and cultural foundations, creating hybrid spaces where religious discourse intersects with entertainment, commerce, and social activism. Second, while scholars have examined individual or institutional case studies, comprehensive analyses of how digital da'wah contributes to civilizational developmentthrough ethical, intercultural, and socio-political dimensionsare limited. Moreover, issues of digital authenticity, algorithmic bias, and the potential for superficial religiosity continue to challenge the integrity of digital religious communication (Nadia & Rifa'i, 2025) ; (Nuriana & Salwa, 2024)

Furthermore, the cultural transformation driven by digital da'wah cannot be separated from the socio-economic and ethical realities of Muslim societies. As (Mukhlis et al., 2025) note, while digitalization enhances accessibility and inclusivity, it also introduces moral dilemmas and risks of cultural erosion. Digital da'wah thus operates within a paradox: it simultaneously empowers Muslims to articulate their faith globally while exposing them to homogenizing global media cultures. Bridging this tension requires not only technological proficiency but also a renewed theological and ethical framework that grounds digital engagement in Islamic epistemology and civilization. Such a framework can draw on Indonesian Muslim modernist thought, exemplified by Nurcholish Madjid, which reconciles Islamic principles with modern values such as human rights (Syamsuar et al., 2024).

The cultural dimension of digital da'wah also interacts with the concept of *Social 5.0*, where technology is deeply integrated into human life. Studies such as (Chanifah & Rohmah, 2022) emphasize the need to equip *santri* (Islamic students) with digital literacy and creative media skills, fostering a new generation of digitally competent preachers. This integration signifies a paradigm shift in Islamic pedagogy and leadership, aligning da'wah practices with the cognitive and communicative patterns of digital natives.

Scholars have also highlighted how specific digital phenomena such as algorithmic visibility, influencer culture, and visual aesthetics shape the reception of da'wah messages. For instance, visual storytelling and Muslimah illustration communities on Instagram represent a creative fusion of art, identity, and da'wah, challenging conventional gendered perceptions of religious communication (Nugrahani et al., 2021a). Such trends suggest that digital da'wah not only transmits religious values but also redefines aesthetic and cultural forms within Islamic civilization.

However, the transformative potential of digital da'wah also entails critical challenges. The risk of decontextualized religious messaging, misinformation, and performative religiosity necessitates ethical frameworks that ensure content authenticity and moderation (Wina Sumiati & Nawawi, 2025). The absence of such frameworks could weaken the epistemic integrity of da'wah and its role in fostering cultural unity. Therefore, scholars increasingly call for interdisciplinary approaches that integrate communication studies, theology, digital ethics, and cultural analysis to sustain digital da'wah's moral and civilizational functions (Fatmawati, 2025).

In summary, the digitalization of da'wah represents one of the most significant shifts in contemporary Islamic communication, bridging religious heritage and modern media culture. While previous studies have extensively examined strategies, platforms, and challenges, there remains a need for a comprehensive understanding of how digital da'wah contributes to cultural transformation and civilizational development within Islam. This research addresses that gap by analyzing digital da'wah not merely as a medium of message dissemination but as a cultural and ethical process shaping Muslim identity, social cohesion, and intercultural engagement in the 21st century.

Therefore, the objective of this study is to analyze the role of digital da'wah in reshaping strategies, audience engagement, and cultural expressions among global Muslim communities examining how it contributes to the ongoing cultural transformation within the framework of 21st-century Islamic civilization.

2. METHOD

2.1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design using a digital ethnography approach. The qualitative paradigm was selected to provide an in-depth understanding of how digital da'wah functions as both a communicative and cultural phenomenon within 21st-century Islamic civilization. Qualitative research allows the researcher to explore meanings, practices, and social interactions embedded in digital religious spaces, emphasizing the interpretation of human experiences rather than quantification (Gentles et al., 2015). The descriptive nature of this design aimed to portray the dynamics, strategies, and symbolic dimensions of Islamic preaching on digital platforms, capturing how individuals and communities engage with da'wah content. Digital ethnography, as the central methodological framework, integrates traditional ethnographic principles with the realities of online environments, allowing the researcher to observe, interpret, and participate in virtual interactions that shape religious communication. This approach is particularly relevant for understanding how digital spaces mediate faith expression, authority, and cultural identity among Muslims who increasingly inhabit online worlds. Ethnographic designs have likewise been used to examine religious and social life in Indonesian Muslim communities, for example interfaith relations in West Aceh (Fitri et al., 2026).

2.2. Participants and Data Sources

The participants in this study consisted of Islamic preachers (*da'i*), content creators, and audiences actively involved in digital da'wah activities across major online platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and podcasts. A purposive sampling technique was applied to ensure that participants represented diverse experiences and engagement levels within digital Islamic communication. The inclusion criteria required participants to (a) be actively involved in producing or engaging with da'wah content for at least one year, (b) use at least one digital platform regularly for religious communication, and (c) have an identifiable digital footprint related to Islamic content. Data sources were not limited to human participants; they also included publicly accessible digital artefacts such as video sermons, social media posts, digital artwork, and interactive comment sections. These artefacts served as cultural texts that reflect the evolving discourse of digital da'wah and the interplay between technology, culture, and religion. The diversity of data sources allowed the research to capture the multilayered nature of digital communication, combining user-generated content with audience interaction as integral elements of analysis.

2.3. Data Collection Procedures

Data collection was carried out between March and August 2024 using three primary techniques: digital observation, documentation, and in-depth online interviews. The digital observation phase involved immersive engagement in online spaces, where the researcher systematically followed, observed, and interacted with digital da'wah communities and content. Following ethical ethnographic practice, participation was overt and non-intrusive, ensuring respect for community norms and participant privacy. Documentation consisted of collecting and archiving relevant multimedia content videos, posts, infographics, live-stream transcripts, and comment threads that exemplified patterns of digital religious communication. To deepen contextual understanding, semi-structured online interviews were conducted with ten key participants comprising preachers, Islamic influencers, and followers. The interviews, conducted via Zoom and WhatsApp calls, explored participants'

motivations, content strategies, perceived challenges, and their understanding of digital ethics in da'wah. All data were recorded with informed consent and subsequently transcribed for textual analysis. Field notes and reflexive memos were maintained throughout to capture the researcher's interpretations and evolving insights during data immersion.

2.4. Data Analysis Steps

Data analysis followed an inductive thematic process consistent with qualitative descriptive research. The researcher employed a multi-step approach: data familiarization, coding, categorization, and theme development. Initially, all transcriptions and digital artefacts were read repeatedly to identify meaningful patterns and emerging insights. Coding was conducted manually, supported by NVivo 12 software to ensure systematic organization of data. Each segment of text or media content was assigned descriptive codes representing communication strategies, thematic motifs, or audience responses. The next phase involved grouping similar codes into broader categories, reflecting key aspects such as digital religious authority, audience interactivity, ethical challenges, and cultural transformation. Through iterative comparison, these categories were refined into core themes that illustrated how digital da'wah contributes to cultural shifts within contemporary Islamic communication. Triangulation was achieved by cross-referencing multiple data sources interview transcripts, social media content, and field notes—to enhance the validity of findings. Researcher reflexivity was maintained throughout, acknowledging the subjective role of the observer as both analyst and participant in the digital environment.

The final interpretive stage synthesized the thematic findings into an analytical narrative connecting micro-level online interactions with macro level cultural transformations in Islamic civilization. Ethical considerations were strictly observed according to qualitative research standards. Participants' identities were anonymized, and only publicly accessible content was cited directly to preserve privacy. The analytical process thus not only sought to describe digital da'wah practices but also to interpret their socio-cultural implications, emphasizing how technological mediation reshapes the moral and communicative landscapes of Muslim communities in the digital era.

3. FINDINGS

3.1. Transformation of Da'wah Strategies in Digital Platforms

The findings indicate a fundamental shift in da'wah strategies from traditional sermon-based preaching to multimedia-driven and participatory digital communication. On platforms such as YouTube and Instagram, *da'i* and Islamic content creators no longer rely solely on lectures (*tausiyah*) but employ diversified formats short videos, animations, podcasts, and live-stream discussions—to attract and sustain audience engagement. This transformation aligns with global trends in digital communication where attention economy and visual culture dictate message delivery (Chalim et al., 2025). For instance, YouTube channels such as *Ustadz Hanan Attaki Official* and *Khalid Basalamah Channel* employ cinematic visuals, relatable storytelling, and emotionally resonant background music, creating an affective dimension that enhances message retention.

Such creative techniques reflect a methodological evolution described by (Saleh et al., 2022), who argue that the digital revolution compels *da'i* to adapt their rhetorical and aesthetic approaches while ensuring conformity to Qur'anic ethics.

Moreover, the increasing use of TikTok and Instagram Reels shows a movement toward micro-dakwah concise, visually appealing messages under one minute which caters to Gen Z audiences accustomed to fast-paced media consumption (Daniah et al., 2025). These practices demonstrate an epistemic adaptation in Islamic communication, emphasizing relevance, creativity, and immediacy as vital for digital religiosity.

However, while the digital shift democratizes religious expression, it also reconfigures authority. Many preachers without formal theological training gain prominence due to algorithmic visibility rather than scholarly legitimacy (Nuriana & Salwa, 2024). This phenomenon challenges conventional structures of religious knowledge and raises ethical questions about authenticity and accountability. The findings affirm that strategic engagement and media literacy training are essential to preserve the theological integrity of online da'wah.

3.2. Audience Participation and the Democratization of Da'wah

The digital environment has redefined audience roles from passive recipients to active participants in the da'wah process. Through comment sections, live chats, and interactive features, audiences engage in real-time dialogues with da'i and other followers, forming what (Ahmad, 2023) terms "networked religious publics." Observations of YouTube live sessions and Instagram Q&A segments reveal that audiences not only ask theological questions but also share personal reflections, social concerns, and testimonies of faith transformation.

This interactive engagement reflects a broader participatory culture enabled by Web 2.0 technologies. As (Roslan et al., 2025) note, young Muslims actively co-create digital religious narratives through likes, shares, and remix culture, fostering a sense of communal belonging and peer-based religious learning. Similarly, Muslimah illustration communities on Instagram such as Hijabographic represent gendered participation, where women employ digital art as both creative expression and medium for da'wah (Nugrahani et al., 2021). Their visual storytelling merges aesthetics with piety, illustrating how digital participation extends beyond verbal preaching into cultural production.

Nevertheless, participatory dynamics are not without challenges. The findings show that online interactions can sometimes devolve into ideological polarization or superficial religiosity, particularly when algorithms amplify emotionally charged content. In response, several digital preachers employ moderation techniques such as content disclaimers, ethical comment policies, and inclusive language to sustain constructive dialogue. This evidence reinforces (Nadia & Rifa'i, 2025) assertion that digital literacy and ethical guidelines are indispensable in ensuring the sustainability of participatory da'wah.

3.3. Cultural Interaction and Hybrid Religious Identities

Digital da'wah has facilitated unprecedented intercultural interactions within global Muslim communities. Observations from multilingual YouTube channels and transnational Instagram accounts reveal that Islamic messages increasingly traverse linguistic and cultural boundaries, blending local traditions with global aesthetics. For example, Indonesian preachers often incorporate English subtitles or Arab-influenced calligraphy to appeal to international audiences, symbolizing the globalization of da'wah discourse (Mukhlis et al., 2025).

This cultural hybridity manifests in content that fuses Islamic teachings with contemporary lifestyle themes mental health, environmental ethics, gender empowerment illustrating Islam's adaptability to modern concerns. Studies by

(Maharani, 2025) on Islamic boarding schools' digital adaptation support this observation, showing how traditional *pesantren* integrate digital literacy and global competencies while preserving local religious identity. Digital ethnographic observation of Islamic podcasts also highlights intercultural collaboration, where speakers from different backgrounds discuss faith and social issues using conversational, inclusive tones that resonate with both Muslim and non-Muslim listeners.

The blending of religious discourse with popular culture, such as humor and music, further indicates a shift toward what (Khasanah, 2022) calls "contextualized da'wah." This hybridization enables broader appeal and accessibility but also raises concerns about commodification and authenticity. The findings suggest that digital da'wah serves as a cultural bridge that both unites and diversifies the ummah, fostering intercultural dialogue while redefining religious aesthetics.

3.4. Emerging Patterns of Digital Religious Communication

Analysis of cross-platform data reveals several emerging communication patterns characteristic of digital da'wah. First, there is a notable convergence between personal branding and religious messaging. Many da'i curate their digital personas through consistent visual identity, hashtags, and thematic storytelling, transforming themselves into "religious influencers." As (Sumiati & Nawawi, 2025) observe, this trend reflects a transition from institutional to personalized religious authority.

Second, algorithmic engagement significantly shapes visibility and audience reach. Preachers adapt content length, titles, and posting schedules to align with platform algorithms, demonstrating strategic media literacy. Observational data from TikTok and Instagram show that videos using trending audio or hashtags like #NgajiSantai and #IslamForAll achieved higher engagement rates, illustrating how religious messages must navigate the logic of digital virality. The capacity of social media to mobilize Muslim audiences extends beyond religious learning, as seen in its role in encouraging consumers to boycott Israeli products (Rizki et al., 2025).

Third, communication has become more dialogic and multimodal. Live-streamed sermons often integrate multimedia elements interactive polls, video inserts, and chat responses creating a sense of communal immediacy. This pattern corroborates (Nuriana & Salwa, 2024) findings that digital da'wah has evolved into a dialogic process promoting inclusivity and audience co-creation. Furthermore, podcast-based da'wah exemplifies reflective communication, allowing long-form discussions that contrast with the brevity of TikTok or Reels. The thematic diversity across platforms from humor-based da'wah to social activism illustrates the pluralistic ecology of digital Islamic communication.

Finally, the findings indicate a moral recalibration in digital spaces. Ethical messaging about online behavior, modesty, and digital citizenship frequently appears in content produced by da'i and Muslim educators. This trend represents a reflexive turn in which preachers not only use digital media for propagation but also educate audiences about responsible media use, echoing (Fatmawati, 2025) call for ethical frameworks in digital religious education.

3.5. The Role of Digital Da'wah in Cultural Transformation

The synthesis of these findings reveals that digital da'wah contributes significantly to cultural transformation within Islamic civilization by reshaping religious authority, communication ethics, and social participation. Online da'wah transcends geographical and institutional boundaries, facilitating what (Saleh et al., 2022) describe as "global cyberculture within Islamic communication." It fosters

intercultural understanding and democratizes access to religious knowledge while simultaneously reconstructing how Islamic values are negotiated in modern contexts.

At the same time, digital da'wah redefines Muslim identity through constant interaction with global media cultures. The emergence of hybrid identities Muslims who are simultaneously rooted in tradition yet fluent in digital discourse illustrates a new phase in the evolution of Islamic civilization. This transformation is not limited to message transmission but extends to how Muslims imagine and practice community in virtual spaces.

Nevertheless, challenges such as misinformation, performative piety, and digital inequality persist. Addressing these issues requires strategic collaboration between religious scholars, digital experts, and policymakers to develop ethical standards and media education that sustain the transformative potential of digital da'wah.

In summary, the findings demonstrate that digital da'wah serves as both a communicative innovation and a cultural catalyst. It reconstructs the modes of preaching, empowers participatory audiences, promotes intercultural dialogue, and nurtures a digitally literate Muslim society capable of engaging with global civilization while upholding Islamic ethical principles.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Reinterpreting Da'wah in the Digital Civilization

The findings reveal that digital da'wah in the 21st century marks a paradigmatic shift from traditional religious communication to an interactive, participatory, and multimedia-based form of preaching. This transformation can be understood within the framework of communication modernization theory, which posits that media evolution inevitably alters the modes of message transmission and reception (Mukhlis et al., 2025). In line with this, (Saleh, et al., 2022) demonstrate that digital communication transforms da'wah from a unidirectional process into a multidimensional exchange involving imagery, interactivity, and participatory co-creation.

The central *what* of this study how digital media reshape da'wah strategies confirms that online preaching adopts narrative and aesthetic innovations to appeal to younger and more diverse audiences (Chalim et al., 2025). This finding corresponds with , who identify content personalization and visual storytelling as primary factors in audience engagement. The success of short-form video content on TikTok and Instagram indicates that da'wah adapts to the fragmented attention span characteristic of the digital age (Daniah et al., 2025a).

However, the *why* of this transformation is rooted in the broader sociocultural context: the digital revolution has altered not only how people communicate but how they experience spirituality. As (Mukhlis et al., 2025) argue, Muslims today navigate a hybrid environment where faith expression, cultural identity, and social media performance intertwine. Consequently, da'wah becomes a site of negotiation between sacred tradition and contemporary digital culture, reflecting the adaptive resilience of Islamic civilization in a rapidly globalizing world.

4.2. The Rise of Participatory Religious Culture

One of the most striking findings of this research is the democratization of religious authority through audience participation. The digital environment empowers ordinary believers to contribute to religious discourse, effectively decentralizing knowledge production. This observation aligns with (Ahmad, 2023), who describes

digital platforms as "networked religious publics," and complements broader theories of participatory culture proposed by (Henry Jenkins, 2014).

Comparatively, earlier ethnographic studies of online Christian and Buddhist communities have also identified similar participatory patterns, where followers co-produce spiritual content and rituals in virtual spaces (H. Campbell, 2019). Yet, in the Islamic context, this participation carries unique theological implications due to Islam's long-established epistemic hierarchy. The shift from authoritative clerical guidance to peer-based dialogue challenges conventional boundaries of ulama-centric knowledge but simultaneously enhances inclusivity.

While participation fosters community and interactivity (what else), it also generates risks of fragmentation and misinformation. (Nuriana & Salwa, 2024) caution that algorithmic bias often prioritizes emotional or controversial content, reinforcing echo chambers that distort Islamic teachings. This phenomenon underscores the importance of digital literacy, echoing (Nadia & Rifa'i, 2025) call for ethical frameworks to balance openness with theological integrity. The findings therefore extend prior research by revealing that the participatory turn in Islamic digital spaces is both empowering and precariousan emblem of modern pluralism and a test of moral discernment.

4.3. Cultural Hybridization and the Globalization of Islamic Discourse

Digital da'wah not only transforms communication techniques but also facilitates intercultural dialogue and hybrid identity formation. The integration of Islamic values with global cultural expressions music, visual design, storytelling illustrates a process of glocalization, where local religious practices absorb global media aesthetic (Maharani, 2025). highlights how Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia integrate digital literacy to prepare santri for global engagement without compromising local piety. Similarly, (Nugrahani et al., 2021) observe that Muslimah art communities on Instagram blend traditional modesty with modern design sensibilities, thereby expanding da'wah into visual and aesthetic domains.

From a theoretical perspective, these trends can be contextualized through Cultural Convergence Theory (Jenkins, 2014), which posits that digital media foster the blending of distinct cultural narratives. The emergence of multilingual and cross-cultural da'wah content on YouTube and podcasts confirms this convergence, allowing Islam to be communicated through cosmopolitan narratives that resonate beyond ethnic and national boundaries. This is in line with evidence that Islamic norms are practiced in diverse ways across cultures, moving between conflict and consensus as they meet local contexts (Mulia et al., 2024).

Yet, this hybridization also poses epistemic tensions. (Khasanah, 2022) warns that while contextualized da'wah strengthens cultural relevance, it may risk diluting doctrinal precision if not guided by scholarly supervision. The current study extends this debate by showing that cultural hybridity in digital da'wah is not merely aestheticit represents a deeper civilizational negotiation between authenticity and adaptability. The ability of Islamic communicators to maintain theological integrity while engaging global audiences becomes the critical challenge of this digital age.

4.4. Redefining Religious Authority and Ethics in the Algorithmic Era

The transformation of da'wah strategies and participatory engagement inevitably reconfigures religious authority. Traditional legitimacy based on scholarly credentials now competes with algorithmic authority visibility determined by likes, shares, and views. This phenomenon parallels findings in global digital religion research, where authority shifts from institutional control to influencer credibility

(Possamai & Blasi, 2020). In Islamic contexts, the rise of "religious influencers" who merge personal branding with faith teaching exemplifies this dynamic (Sumiati & Nawawi, 2025).

This transition raises critical ethical concerns. As (Saleh et al., 2022) and (Fatmawati, 2025) emphasize, digital da'wah must adhere to ethical boundaries that safeguard authenticity, prevent commodification, and counter misinformation. The why behind this ethical imperative lies in the moral foundations of Islamic communication, which prioritize sincerity (ikhlas), wisdom (hikmah), and compassion (rahmah). Digital visibility should thus serve as a means for broader enlightenment rather than personal gain.

Comparatively, prior studies in digital Christianity (H. Campbell, 2019) suggest that online preachers face similar dilemmas between engagement and authenticity. What distinguishes the Islamic experience, however, is the collective moral accountability embedded in the ummah concept, where religious communication is viewed as communal stewardship. The findings of this research reaffirm that digital ethics must evolve alongside technological innovation, integrating Islamic jurisprudential principles (fiqh al-ijtima'i) with contemporary media norms to sustain digital da'wah's moral legitimacy.

4.5. Implications for Islamic Civilization and Communication Studies

The cultural and communicative transformation of digital da'wah carries broad implications for both Islamic civilization and interdisciplinary scholarship. First, from a civilizational perspective, digital da'wah contributes to what (Alatas, 2005) calls the "reimagining of Islamic modernity"—an intellectual project that reconciles faith with technology. By facilitating cross-cultural interaction and knowledge democratization, digital da'wah strengthens the epistemic vitality of Islam in global discourse. It positions Muslims as active participants in shaping digital ethics and cultural production rather than passive consumers of Western media models.

Second, from a communication studies perspective, this research supports and expands the framework of mediatized religion proposed by Hjarvard (2016), which argues that religion increasingly depends on media logic for visibility and authority. The present findings demonstrate how Islamic communication adapts to this logic while preserving ethical constraints, resulting in a form of ethical mediatization. This hybrid model distinguishes digital da'wah from secular digital activism by grounding communication practices in moral responsibility and communal purpose.

Third, the findings underscore the significance of digital literacy and institutional adaptation. As observed by (Ahmad, 2023) and (Rani, 2023), Islamic organizations that institutionalize digital training and ethical moderation tend to produce more consistent, credible content. This highlights the need for academic and religious institutions to integrate media education into their curricula, equipping future da'i with both theological and technological competence.

4.6. Comparative Insights: Continuity and Contrast with Previous Studies

The what else component of this discussion situates the current research within the broader literature. Consistent with (Saleh, et al. 2022) and (Chalim et al., 2025), this study confirms that digital da'wah enhances message reach and audience engagement. However, unlike earlier research that focused primarily on communication strategies, the present study emphasizes cultural transformation—how digital da'wah reconfigures identity, ethics, and community.

In contrast to Western scholarship that often views digital religion through secularization or commodification lenses (Campbell & Evolvi, 2020), this study

demonstrates that Islamic digitalization operates within a sacred communicative framework aimed at moral renewal. Moreover, while prior analyses (Nuriana & Salwa, 2024); (Nadia & Rifa'i, 2025) discuss moderation and inclusivity, this research extends their insights by illustrating how digital da'wah also fosters intercultural synthesis, bridging religious and cultural boundaries across the Muslim world.

Notably, the research diverges from pessimistic perspectives that equate digitalization with the erosion of authenticity (Klapp, 2024). Instead, the findings suggest that digital platforms, when guided by ethical consciousness, can enhance Islamic civilization's creative resilience and adaptability. The balance between authenticity and innovation emerges as the defining feature of 21st-century digital da'wah.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that digital da'wah is both a technological innovation and a civilizational phenomenon. It transforms Islamic preaching into a participatory, intercultural, and ethically reflexive practice that aligns with the communicative realities of the 21st century. By linking digital ethnographic observations with theoretical and empirical scholarship, the research reveals that da'wah in the digital era is not a rupture from tradition but a continuation of prophetic communication within new media ecosystems.

The findings affirm that the sustainability of digital da'wah depends on three critical factors: (1) integrating ethical principles into media practices, (2) strengthening digital literacy among *da'i* and audiences, and (3) fostering intercultural engagement that celebrates diversity within unity. Ultimately, digital da'wah embodies the ongoing evolution of Islamic civilization one that harmonizes faith, culture, and technology to build a more inclusive and morally grounded global community.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the digitalization of *da'wah* has transformed Islamic communication into an interactive, participatory, and culturally adaptive practice that reflects the evolving dynamics of 21st-century Muslim civilization. By employing a qualitative descriptive approach through digital ethnography, the research found that digital *da'i* strategically integrate visual aesthetics, narrative personalization, and algorithmic engagement to reach broader audiences while redefining religious authority and ethical discourse. The study contributes to the theoretical development of digital *da'wah* by framing it not merely as a medium for message dissemination but as a cultural process that reshapes religious identity, audience participation, and civilizational ethics in cyberspace. Practically, these insights can guide Islamic institutions, preachers, and educators in designing digital literacy programs and ethical frameworks to enhance the credibility and inclusivity of online religious communication. Scientifically, the research underscores the need for interdisciplinary integration between communication studies, theology, and digital culture in understanding how Islamic values are negotiated in global media ecosystems. Future research should explore longitudinal and comparative analyses across different Muslim societies to examine how cultural, linguistic, and technological variations influence the sustainability and authenticity of digital *da'wah* practices in an increasingly algorithm-driven world.

REFERENCES

Ahmad, A. (2023). The Development of Digital Da'wah at The Indonesian Ulema Council of South Sulawesi Province. *International Journal of Membrane Science and Technology*, *10*(3), 2792–2799. https://doi.org/10.15379/ijmst.v10i3.2581

Alatas, S. F. (2005). Islam and modernization. *Islam in Southeast Asia: Political, Social and Strategic Challenges for the 21st Century*, 209–239. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2650504

Campbell, H. (2019). *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies Published by Wiley (the " Owner ")*.

Campbell, H. A., & Evolvi, G. (2020). Contextualizing current digital religion research on emerging technologies. *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies*, *2*(1), 5–17. https://doi.org/10.1002/hbe2.149

Chalim, A., Rahmah, S., Rudiana, R., & Jasafat, J. (2025a). Digital Da'wah: Effective Strategies in Spreading Islam through Social Media. *Journal of Noesantara Islamic Studies*, *2*(1), 33–42. https://doi.org/10.70177/jnis.v2i1.1844

Chalim, A., Rahmah, S., Rudiana, R., & Jasafat, J. (2025b). Digital Da'wah: Effective Strategies in Spreading Islam through Social Media. *Journal of Noesantara Islamic Studies*, *2*(1), 33–42. https://doi.org/10.70177/jnis.v2i1.1844

Chanifah, N., & Rohmah, S. (2022). DIGITAL DA'WAH FOR SANTRI AS A REVITALIZATION IN SOCIAL 5.0. *Wisesa: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, *1*(2), 1–9. https://doi.org/10.21776/ub.wisesa.2022.01.2.1

Fatmawati, E. (2025). Digitalization of Ramadan Da'Wah: Effective Strategies for Islamic Education in the Technological Era. *Indonesian Journal of Studies on Humanities, Social Sciences and Education*, *2*(1), 14–32. https://doi.org/10.54783/e8q2va80

Fitri, F. A., Rizki, D., & Ulmuftia, N. (2026). The Interfaith Relations in West Aceh: An Ethnographic Study and the Role of the Religious Harmony Forum (FKUB). *Dialektika: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam dan Ilmu Sosial*, *19*(1).

Hamzah, H., Ahmad, S., Hamzah, M. L., Purwati, A. A., & Mutia, T. (2023). Islamic Animation: Netnographic Analysis on Digital Processing Transformation in Social Media. *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, *6*(3), 372–385. https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v6i3.4054

Hanifah Alma Daniah, Elang Bakhrudin, & Alfi Satria. (2025a). Analisis Persepsi Mahasiswa Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam IAI AL-AZIS terhadap Penggunaan Tiktok Sebagai Media Dakwah. *Tabsyir: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Sosial Humaniora*, *6*(2), 126–144. https://doi.org/10.59059/tabsyir.v6i2.2156

Hanifah Alma Daniah, Elang Bakhrudin, & Alfi Satria. (2025b). Analisis Persepsi Mahasiswa Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam IAI AL-AZIS terhadap Penggunaan Tiktok Sebagai Media Dakwah. *Tabsyir: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Sosial Humaniora*, *6*(2), 126–144. https://doi.org/10.59059/tabsyir.v6i2.2156

Henry Jenkins, S. F. & J. G. (2014). *Kirsten Mogensen Henry Jenkins , Sam Ford & Joshua Green : Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture* . 191–194.

Khasanah, S. U. (2022). Nahdlatul Ulama Da'wah Dynamics: Socio-Cultural Change

and Disruption. *KOMUNIKA: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Komunikasi*, *16*(2), 183–199. https://doi.org/10.24090/komunika.v16i2.6810

Klapp, M. (2024). Studying Islamic Online Activism – On the Social Dimension of Media Use among Activists of the Milli Görüş Movement and the Contemporary Salafiyya. *Herausforderung Digitalisierung*, 65–90. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111561387-005

Maylinda Putri Maharani. (2025). Transformation Of Islamic Boarding School Culture In The Digital Era: Collaboration Of Local Values And Global Competence. *International Journal of Technology and Education Research*, *3*(01), 43–45. https://doi.org/10.63922/ijeter.v3i01.1468

Mukhlis, Wardiman, D., & Yetri, A. (2025). Indonesian Muslim Societies in the Digital Age. *Digital Muslim Review*, *2*(2), 194–216. https://doi.org/10.32678/dmr.v2i2.46

Mulia, M., Zulfatmi, Khalil, Z. F., Kurniawan, C. S., & Rizki, D. (2024). Conflict and Consensus in Fiqh Siyasah: The Practice of Islamic Law Across Various Cultures. *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun, 12*(3), 1263–1288. https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v12i3.1363

Murad, A. N., & Rizki, D. (2022). Development of Religious Moderation Study on Prevention of Radicalism in Indonesia: A Systematic Literature Review Approach. *POTENSIA: Jurnal Kependidikan Islam, 8*(2), 198–224. https://doi.org/10.24014/potensia.v8i2.20727

Nadia, N., & Rifa'i, A. (2025). ISLAMIC THOUGHT AND DA'WAH TRANSFORMATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA. *Al-Ulum Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Penelitian Ke Islaman*, *12*(1), 62–72. https://doi.org/10.31102/alulum.12.1.2025.62-72

Novriyanto, B., Utari, P., & Satyawan, A. (2024). Transformation of Ulama as Communicators: Youtube as a Da'wah Channel. *International Journal of Media and Communication Research*, *5*(1), 21–32. https://doi.org/10.25299/ijmcr.v5i1.14598

Nugrahani, R., Idris, M. Z., & Wibowo, A. A. (2021a). Illustration Images in Muslimah Visual Communication Da'wah Movement on Instagram. *Komunikator*, *13*(1). https://doi.org/10.18196/jkm.131049

Nugrahani, R., Idris, M. Z., & Wibowo, A. A. (2021b). Illustration Images in Muslimah Visual Communication Da'wah Movement on Instagram. *Komunikator*, *13*(1). https://doi.org/10.18196/jkm.131049

Nuriana, Z. I., & Salwa, N. (2024). Digital Da'wah in the Age of Algorithm: A Narrative Review of Communication, Moderation, and Inclusion. *Sinergi International Journal of Islamic Studies*, *2*(4), 242–256. https://doi.org/10.61194/ijis.v2i4.706

Possamai, A., & Blasi, A. J. (2020). Digital Religion. In *The SAGE Encyclopedia of the Sociology of Religion*. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529714401.n127

Rani, S. (2023). Transformasi Komunikasi Dakwah dalam Era Digital: Peluang dan Tantangan dalam Pendidikan Islam Kontemporer. *AL-MIKRAJ Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Humaniora (E-ISSN 2745-4584)*, *4*(1), 207–216.

https://doi.org/10.37680/almikraj.v4i1.3513

Rizki, D., Fitri, F. A., & Ulmuftia, N. (2025). Peran Media Sosial dalam Mendorong Perilaku Konsumen terhadap Boikot Produk Israel. *Journal of Sharia Economy and Islamic Tourism, 5*(2), 72–81. https://doi.org/10.31764/jseit.v5i2.30659

Roslan, M. H., Mohd Zahari, S. Z., & Abdul Ghani, M. Z. (2025). Da'wah on the Social Media: The Youth Engagement in Digital Islamic Content. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, *IX*(I), 1161–1174. https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.9010098

Saleh, S., Cangara, H., Sabreen, S., & Syamsuddin, A. (2022). Digital Da'wah Transformation: Cultural And Methodological Change Of Islamic Communication In The Current Digital Age. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Analysis*, *05*(08). https://doi.org/10.47191/ijmra/v5-i8-18

Saleh, adhriany P., Cangara2, H., Sabreen3, S., & AB4, S. (2022). Digital Da'wah Transformation: Cultural And Methodological Change Of Islamic Communication In The Current Digital Age. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Analysis*, *05*(08). https://doi.org/10.47191/ijmra/v5-i8-18

Syamsuar, Rizki, D., & Zikriati. (2024). Enforcement of Human Rights According to Nurcholish Madjid: Fiqh Siyasah Dauliyah Perspective. *Al-Daulah: Jurnal Hukum dan Perundangan Islam*, *14*(1), 27–60. https://doi.org/10.15642/ad.2024.14.1.25-57

Wina Sumiati, & Nawawi, T. (2025). Digital Da'wah in the Modern Era. *Digital Muslim Review*, *2*(2), 153–175. https://doi.org/10.32678/dmr.v2i2.44