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The Transformation of Islamic Preaching Strategies Through Social Media in The Digital Era

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Abstract

Digital transformation has significantly reshaped the delivery of religious messages in Islamic preaching, particularly through the utilization of social media, which has emerged as a primary platform for reaching younger audiences. In this context, conventional preaching strategies must adapt to align with the characteristics of digital communication that emphasize visualization, interactivity, and audience segmentation. This study aims to systematically examine the forms of strategic transformation in Islamic preaching via social media and assess their effectiveness in shaping religious awareness among contemporary communities. Employing a systematic literature review approach, this article analyzes 36 relevant open-access scholarly articles selected through the PRISMA protocol and stringent inclusion criteria. The findings reveal that the most effective digital preaching strategies include the use of visual narratives, context-based short videos, and responsive two-way communication on socio-religious issues. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube dominate the practice of da'wah, while major challenges involve low digital literacy among preachers, audience fragmentation, and the risk of disseminating non-moderate content. These results contribute theoretically by expanding the concept of *uslub da'wah* within a participatory digital communication framework and offer practical implications for capacity-building among preachers and policy formulation for adaptive preaching in the technological disruption era. This article also recommends a collaborative model to foster an inclusive, effective, and sustainable digital preaching ecosystem.

Keywords: Digital Da'wah, Social Media, Da'wah Transformation, Islamic Communication, Disruption Era

A. Introduction

The rapid advancement of information and communication technology has brought about profound changes in various aspects of human life, including the practice of disseminating religious teachings. One of the most significant transformations is the shift in Islamic preaching strategies from conventional methods to the use of digital platforms such as social media. In Indonesia—the country with the largest Muslim population in the world—platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have become primary tools for da'i (Islamic preachers) to reach younger audiences with religious messages delivered through visual and interactive formats (Roslan et al., 2025). This reality signifies a paradigm shift in da'wah, wherein the effectiveness of message delivery now relies heavily on the preacher's ability to adapt to the digital communication culture of contemporary society (Saragih et al., 2022).

However, digital da'wah does not merely replace traditional preaching but emerges as a complementary method with its own challenges and opportunities. On one hand, social media enables broader dissemination of Islamic values with greater flexibility in time and space. On the other hand, it presents challenges such as limited digital literacy among da'i, the spread of religious misinformation, and the risk of diluting the depth of Islamic spirituality (Akbar et al., 2025). Additionally, the trend of individualized media consumption demands that preachers craft communication strategies that are more personalized, relevant, and aligned with the preferences of digital audiences (Nasution, 2024). The absence of structured digital da'wah curricula within Islamic educational institutions further hampers the preparedness of da'i to face the dynamics of the disruption era (Chanifah & Rohmah, 2022).

From a theoretical standpoint, the phenomenon of digital da'wah can be analyzed through the lens of Islamic communication theory and *uslub* (preaching approach), which includes methods such as *bil lisan* (verbal), *bil hal* (behavioral), and *bil hikmah* (wisdom). Digital transformation has broadened the scope of *uslub*, incorporating elements of visual storytelling, short-form audiovisual content, and the use of social media algorithms to increase outreach (Hilmi, 2021). Furthermore, new media communication theory highlights the importance of interactivity between da'i and *mad'u* (audience), which now operates in a multidirectional rather than unidirectional framework (Novriyanto et al., 2024). This

approach underscores the need for strategic and contextual media use that upholds Islamic values while meeting the expectations of the digital public (Billah & Romadlany, 2024). This study aims to systematically investigate the transformation of Islamic preaching strategies through social media in the digital era and to evaluate the effectiveness of such approaches in shaping religious understanding and behavior. The research addresses two main questions: (1) What are the emerging forms of Islamic preaching strategies on social media? and (2) To what extent is social media effective in enhancing the religious awareness of contemporary Muslim communities? These questions are answered using a systematic literature review of relevant open-access academic articles published within the last five years.

This article offers a scholarly contribution by presenting a new conceptual framework for understanding Islamic digital preaching, both in practical and theoretical dimensions. By integrating classical da'wah perspectives with digital communication approaches, this study provides insight into how preaching strategies can be effectively adapted to contemporary media cultures. The novelty of this work lies in its synthesis of recent literature identifying best practices in digital da'wah, the challenges faced by modern da'i, and evidence-based recommendations for strengthening digital preaching capacity moving forward (Chalim et al., 2025).

The core theoretical concept underlying this study is Islamic communication theory, particularly the *uslub* approach, which includes methods of religious message delivery through *hikmah* (wisdom), *mau'idhah hasanah* (good advice), and *mujadalah* (constructive dialogue). As articulated in Qur'an Surah An-Nahl:125, these approaches align conceptually with persuasive communication in the digital context. In practice, these concepts have been expanded through new media communication theory, which emphasizes audience participation, message visualization, and interactivity as central elements in digital da'wah efforts (Nasution, 2024). The Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory also plays a key role in this study by explaining how digital da'wah content triggers cognitive and affective responses through media affordances on social platforms.

Numerous prior studies have addressed the dynamics and effectiveness of digital da'wah across various platforms. Roslan et al. (2025) demonstrated that effective Instagram-based da'wah strategies typically involve structured content planning, creative visual



design, and culturally contextualized messaging, which significantly increase user engagement (M. H. Roslan et al., 2025). Similarly, Akbar et al. (2025) emphasized the importance of social media literacy training for da'i, as a way to improve content quality and counter the spread of religious misinformation (Akbar et al., 2025). Saragih et al. (2022) further argued that social media-based preaching—especially via written content—offers more sustainable impact than oral sermons, and enables engagement that transcends spatial and temporal limitations (Saragih et al., 2022).

Nevertheless, several research gaps remain evident. Prior studies often focus on describing communication strategies or evaluating general impacts, but few systematically synthesize digital da'wah approaches through the lenses of communication effectiveness, audience engagement, and relevance to contemporary Islamic discourse. For example, Sitorus & Khatibah (2024) identify technical resource limitations as a major constraint but do not explicitly link these to the effectiveness of da'wah messages (Sitorus & Khatibah, 2024). Furthermore, a unified evaluative framework for assessing the success of digital da'wah remains underdeveloped.

This article addresses those gaps by synthesizing literature that highlights strategic transformations in Islamic preaching, the quality of preacher-audience interaction, and the communication impact of religious messages delivered via social media. Drawing from Chalim et al. (2025), the study identifies best practices including visual storytelling, consistent posting schedules, and responsiveness to contemporary issues as key elements of effective da'wah communication (Chalim et al., 2025). These findings also support a model of moderate and inclusive Islamic da'wah, as proposed by Azmi & Rifai (2025) in their discussion of contemporary Islamic thought (Azmi & Rifai, 2025).

From a methodological perspective, previous studies have adopted a variety of approaches, including phenomenological studies, descriptive qualitative analyses, and mixed-methods research. Nasution (2024) used phenomenology to explore the experience of TikTok users engaging with Islamic content, while Roslan et al. (2025) combined qualitative and quantitative methods in a systematic study. In the context of preacher training, participatory approaches were employed to develop digital literacy modules, as demonstrated by Akbar et al. (2025). Meanwhile, Ikrom & Nugraha (2024) applied a digital literacy framework to examine the effectiveness of Instagram content by @nuonline_id in

reaching audiences with creative Islamic messaging (Ikrom & Nugraha, 2024). This methodological diversity reflects the absence of a standardized approach to evaluate the cross-platform impact of digital da'wah.

Building on this mapping and critical analysis, this article develops a conceptual synthesis that integrates the *uslub da'wah* framework, principles of participatory digital communication, and media literacy as a foundation for evaluating the effectiveness of social media-based Islamic preaching strategies. This synthesis also addresses the growing need for religious narratives that are contextual, aesthetically engaging, and aligned with the values of today's digital society (Wibowo, 2019).

B. Method

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach as its primary research strategy to investigate the transformation of Islamic preaching strategies via social media in the digital era. This methodology was chosen because it allows for a structured process of identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing relevant scholarly findings, thereby offering a comprehensive and evidence-based understanding of the topic under review (M. H. Roslan et al., 2025).

The data used in this study are secondary sources comprising peer-reviewed scholarly literature from reputable open-access journals. The reviewed publications were retrieved from indexed databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). The selection focused on articles published within the past five years that discuss digital da'wah, social media use, Islamic communication strategies, and the effectiveness of religious messaging in digital spaces (Cipta & Zakirman, 2024).

The literature collection protocol was based on the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework, encompassing four key stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. In the identification phase, keywords such as "digital da'wah," "Islamic preaching," "social media," "preaching strategy," and "contemporary Islamic communication" were used. The search was conducted from January to May 2025, resulting in 204 initial articles, which were further filtered using specific inclusion and exclusion criteria (Haughery, 2015).



The inclusion criteria required that the articles (1) were published between 2019 and 2025, (2) were available as open-access peer-reviewed publications indexed in SINTA 2 or higher, and (3) focused on empirical or conceptual studies directly related to digital da'wah and social media. Exclusion criteria comprised (1) articles lacking abstracts or full-text access, (2) non-academic sources such as blogs or opinion pieces, and (3) publications addressing information technology without relevance to religious preaching.

Since this is a literature-based study, the unit of analysis is not individuals or communities, but scholarly articles that met the selection criteria. Each article was treated as a data unit and assessed based on its findings, methodological approach, and thematic relevance to the present study (Ibrahim, 2024).

The data analysis was conducted through narrative synthesis and thematic analysis. Narrative synthesis was employed to group the selected articles into major themes, such as preaching strategies, social media effectiveness, and digital da'wah challenges. Thematic analysis involved manually coding findings from each article and categorizing them into sub-themes based on the nature of their insights and empirical contributions (Al-Jayyousi et al., 2022). No statistical software was used, as the analysis was qualitative-descriptive in nature and focused on literature synthesis.

This methodological design was implemented to ensure traceability, transparency, and analytical validity in synthesizing findings and addressing the research questions in a critical and evidence-informed manner (Prabowo et al., 2024).

C. Results and Discussion

1. Results

This study synthesizes findings from 36 scholarly articles that met the inclusion criteria, all published between 2019 and 2025. The reviewed publications came from reputable, peer-reviewed open-access journals, with contributing authors located in Indonesia, Malaysia, Egypt, and various Middle Eastern countries. Most studies adopted qualitative descriptive approaches (61%), followed by mixed methods (22%) and quantitative approaches (17%). The primary thematic focuses included digital da'wah strategies, the effectiveness of social media in Islamic communication, the role of digital preachers, and contemporary challenges in disseminating religious messages online.

In terms of platform usage, Instagram (45%), YouTube (28%), and TikTok (17%) were the most commonly discussed media, particularly in targeting millennial and Gen Z audiences. Roslan et al. reported that effective Instagram-based da'wah strategies typically involve well-planned content, visually engaging designs, and culturally contextual messaging, enhanced by real-time interaction features such as comments and live streams (H. S. Roslan et al., 2023). Similarly, Akbar et al. (2025) highlighted the impact of media training programs for da'i, which significantly improved both content quality and outreach capacity in local da'wah efforts (Akbar et al., 2025).

Three main methodological patterns emerged from the literature: (1) case studies of da'wah institutions or communities (41%), (2) content analysis of digital preaching (33%), and (3) audience perception surveys regarding digital religious content (26%). Chalim et al. (2025), for instance, employed a mixed-methods approach by analyzing over 200 digital da'wah contents across platforms and conducting interviews with 150 digital preachers and followers to evaluate message effectiveness (Chalim et al., 2025).

Thematic synthesis revealed five dominant categories: (1) forms and styles of digital Islamic communication; (2) the role and digital competencies of da'i; (3) the effectiveness of social media in da'wah outreach; (4) the challenges of digital da'wah such as radicalism and misinformation; and (5) the contribution of social media to the promotion of moderate Islam. Saragih et al. (2022) emphasized that social platforms create new spaces for inclusive and peaceful Islamic discourse, yet also pose high risks for the spread of extremist narratives that are difficult to regulate (Saragih et al., 2022).

With regard to strategic trends, the most effective approaches included visual storytelling, short videos tailored to contemporary contexts, and motivational content. Nasution (2024) observed that TikTok's For You Page (FYP) algorithm significantly enhances message dissemination to broader, non-following audiences (Nasution, 2024). Sitorus & Khatibah (2024) highlighted the relevance of using humor, real-life stories, and responses to viral issues as strategic innovations in Islamic preaching content (Sitorus & Khatibah, 2024).

The main challenges identified include limited content production skills among traditional da'i, low digital literacy, and fragmented audiences that hinder effective message reception. Azmi & Rifai (2025) argue that these obstacles can only be addressed through



adaptive, inclusive contemporary Islamic thought integrated with digital media competencies(Azmi & Rifai, 2025).

Cipta & Zakirman noted that da'wah efforts integrated with socio-economic Islamic themes—such as Islamic finance, digital waqf, and halal lifestyles—have shown increased appeal among urban Muslim digital natives(Cipta & Zakirman, 2024).

Despite the richness of these insights, only a small number of articles attempted to develop evaluative models for quantitatively measuring the impact of digital da'wah. However, there is a growing trend toward hybrid frameworks that combine Islamic communication theory with digital media analysis, as seen in Marlina, who applied the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to study e-da'wah adoption among Muslim youth(Marlina & Ulya, 2024).

2. Discussion

The main findings of this study reaffirm that the transformation of Islamic preaching strategies through social media represents not only a technical shift in communication methods but also a substantive change in message content and the nature of interaction between preachers and their audiences. These findings directly address the research questions and objectives, which sought to understand how da'wah strategies have evolved in digital environments and to what extent social media platforms are effective in fostering religious awareness and engagement. Through a systematic literature review, the study confirms that digital da'wah is more than a technological adaptation—it is a contextual process of aligning Islamic values with the communication norms of the digital age.

Interpreted through the lens of *uslub* and Islamic communication theory, the findings indicate that traditional methods such as *bil hikmah* and *bil hal* gain new dimensions in digital contexts. Effective da'wah content often employs visual storytelling, contextual framing, and algorithm-sensitive distribution strategies(Nasution, 2024). The Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework is particularly relevant in explaining how digital stimuli—such as short videos or interactive posts—generate cognitive and emotional responses in online audiences(Jaza & Makrufi, 2024).

When compared with prior studies, the results of this review are consistent with the findings of Roslan et al, who emphasized the significance of structured visual content and

localized messaging in increasing youth engagement in da'wah activities. Conversely, Sitorus & Khatibah highlighted institutional barriers such as lack of human resources and inadequate training that hinder digital da'wah initiatives within campus-based Islamic preaching organizations (Sitorus & Khatibah, 2024). This article thus contributes a more integrated understanding of both enablers and constraints in the current da'wah ecosystem.

The academic contribution of this study lies in its synthesis of strategic, interactive, and message-based components of digital da'wah, and its integration of those components into a conceptual framework grounded in Islamic communication principles and digital media logic. From a practical standpoint, the review identifies best practices that can inform preacher training programs, digital content development, and engagement strategies. For instance, Chairin et al. proposed guidelines such as consistency in posting schedules, audience-centered content design, and responsiveness to contemporary societal issues, all of which are echoed in the present study (Choirin et al., 2024).

Nonetheless, this study acknowledges several limitations. First, the selection of literature was restricted to open-access sources, potentially excluding relevant but paywalled articles. Second, while the SLR methodology ensures analytical rigor, it lacks the depth of empirical insights that field-based research might offer, especially in examining how da'i personally design and execute digital content. Third, few existing studies have measured behavioral changes among audiences as a direct result of exposure to digital da'wah, a gap also noted by Bolanos et al. in their study of youth in Brunei (Bolanos et al., 2024).

The implications of these findings are multidimensional. For practitioners, they highlight the importance of integrating ethical and theological considerations into digital literacy training for da'i, as demonstrated by Akbar et al. (2025) in their capacity-building initiatives for local religious leaders (Akbar et al., 2025). For policymakers, the findings suggest the need to support standardized, moderate, and inclusive digital da'wah platforms through regulations and funding mechanisms. For future researchers, this study opens pathways for comparative, cross-national analyses on the effectiveness of da'wah strategies across different digital environments. Mokodenseho et al. also emphasized how moderation values can be successfully conveyed to Gen Z through strategic online religious communication (Mokodenseho et al., 2024).



In light of the evolving digital landscape, this study recommends a collaborative framework involving Islamic institutions, Muslim content creators, and academic researchers to co-develop a digital da'wah ecosystem that is adaptive, inclusive, and sustainable.

D. Conclusion

This study concludes that the transformation of Islamic preaching strategies through social media is a dynamic adaptation to the changing patterns of religious communication in the digital age, particularly among younger generations. Effective digital da'wah is characterized by the use of visual narratives, contextualized messaging, and consistent content delivery aligned with algorithmic behaviors of digital platforms. These strategies have proven capable of enhancing religious awareness and engagement within diverse online communities. At the same time, various challenges persist, such as limited digital skills among traditional preachers, fragmented audience reception, and the spread of unverified or non-moderate content. These findings affirm the relevance of systematic adaptation in Islamic preaching practices to sustain their effectiveness in modern communication environments.

Theoretically, this article contributes to the field by extending the classical concept of *uslub* into a digital framework that incorporates participatory and media-driven communication models. Practically, it offers actionable insights for preachers, educators, and Islamic organizations aiming to optimize digital da'wah in ways that are both impactful and ethically grounded. The study also provides a conceptual basis for developing evaluative tools to assess the performance of digital preaching strategies in a more structured and measurable way.

In terms of implications, there is an urgent need to strengthen the digital competence of da'i through structured training programs and curriculum reform in Islamic education. Future studies are encouraged to explore longitudinal impacts of digital da'wah, develop cross-platform performance indicators, and build collaborative networks between religious authorities, content creators, and academic institutions. These efforts will be essential in fostering a resilient and inclusive digital da'wah ecosystem for the future.

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