

Digital Da'wah and Religious Authority: A Narrative Review of Islamic Preaching in the Social Media Era

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Received : October 07, 2023

Accepted : November 25, 2023

Published : November 30, 2023

Citation: Ulyan, M. (2023). Digital Da'wah and Religious Authority: A Narrative Review of Islamic Preaching in the Social Media Era. Sinergi International Journal of Islamic Studies. 1(3), 100-113.

ABSTRACT: This narrative review examines the transformative role of social media in contemporary Islamic preaching, focusing on Southeast Asia with an emphasis on Indonesia. The study aims to understand how digital platforms reshape da'wah practices, redefine religious authority, and facilitate inclusive discourse. Using a structured literature review method, sources were collected from databases including Scopus, Google Scholar, DOAJ, JSTOR, and ProQuest, employing keywords such as "digital da'wah," "Islamic preaching," and "social media and Islam." Inclusion criteria focused on peer-reviewed works published between 2010 and 2024, emphasizing digital religious practices in Muslim-majority contexts. The results show that social media enables visually engaging and emotionally resonant da'wah, increases interaction between preachers and audiences, and expands space for marginalized voices, including women and minority groups. Digital platforms have democratized Islamic discourse, disrupted traditional religious authority, and catalyzed reinterpretations of Islamic jurisprudence and gender roles. However, these advancements bring ethical and theological challenges, including misinformation, loss of scholarly oversight, and ideological polarization. National and local religious policies play a crucial role in shaping digital da'wah environments, either enabling or constraining its development. This review concludes that responsive religious policy and inclusive educational frameworks are essential to support ethical and effective digital da'wah. It recommends digital literacy integration in Islamic education, training for preachers, and further research into audience reception and global trends. As social media continues to influence Muslim religiosity, balanced approaches are necessary to sustain both innovation and theological integrity.

Keywords: Digital Da'wah, Islamic Preaching, Social Media and Islam, Online Religious Authority, Muslim Identity, Gender in Islam, Islamic Communication.



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INTRODUCTION

The rise of digital technologies has significantly transformed religious practices across the globe, and Islam is no exception (Fairuz, 2020). In Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia, the advent of social media has profoundly influenced the dissemination of Islamic teachings and the structure of Islamic proselytization, or da'wah. Social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook have become central to contemporary Islamic discourse, serving not merely as channels for communication but as dynamic spaces for interaction, identity formation, and religious education (Anoraga & Sakai, 2023; Ubaedillah, 2015). These digital environments provide

unprecedented access to religious content, allowing both traditional and emerging preachers to engage with a diverse audience, especially among youth populations. This paradigm shift has prompted scholars to reassess the modalities of da'wah and its implications for Islamic authority, community formation, and pedagogical strategies (Halverson et al., 2013; Husein & Sláma, 2018).

In recent years, academic interest in digital Islam has grown, with several studies examining how Muslim communities utilize social media to navigate their religious identities. For instance, (Suyadi et al., 2020) observed how digital platforms facilitated the spread of Islamic guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia, revealing how religion intersects with public health and digital communication. Similarly, (Hew, 2018) highlighted how prominent figures like Felix Siauw harness multimedia formats to increase the appeal of their religious messages, particularly among millennials. These developments underscore the strategic use of digital tools in contemporary Islamic outreach and signal a shift toward more visually and narratively engaging content that resonates with the expectations of a digitally native audience (Chagnon, 2018; Godazgar, 2020; Majid et al., 2024).

Furthermore, scholars like Halverson et al. (2013) have argued that new media act as socio-religious arenas where ideological affiliations are formed and reaffirmed. In this context, social media becomes a venue for constructing a modern, dialogical, and often pluralistic Islamic identity. The flexibility and accessibility of digital platforms allow for a multiplicity of voices and interpretations within Islam, thus enabling a more inclusive engagement with religious teachings (Husein & Sláma, 2018). This evolution is especially visible in Indonesia, where the convergence of religious tradition and digital modernity creates a unique environment for da'wah activities that transcend geographic and institutional boundaries (Arifianto, 2019; Millie et al., 2023).

Empirical evidence shows that the shift to digital da'wah is not merely a trend but a reflection of deeper transformations within Muslim societies. As digital platforms democratize religious discourse, they also redefine how authority is constructed and maintained. (Asmendri et al., 2024) emphasize the empowering potential of social media for grassroots religious movements, enabling them to mobilize support and disseminate their messages beyond conventional religious venues. In turn, this facilitates the emergence of new religious leaders whose legitimacy is based on digital visibility and audience engagement rather than formal religious credentials (Amilahaq et al., 2020; Mulyanto, 2022; Munabari, 2017).

These transformations bring both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, the digital sphere enhances participation in religious life, provides access to diverse interpretations, and fosters global connectivity among Muslims (Nisa, 2018; Tambar, 2012; Witro, 2020). On the other hand, it raises concerns about theological integrity, content reliability, and the proliferation of misinformation. Husein and Sláma (2018) note that despite its benefits, digital da'wah often suffers from a lack of scholarly rigor, leading to ambivalence and confusion among audiences. (Harizan & Mydin, 2024) propose a "tabayyun" approach, advocating for critical media literacy among Muslim consumers to navigate the complex digital religious landscape responsibly.

A significant challenge for digital preachers is balancing theological authenticity with the demands of digital engagement. (Subchi et al., 2022) argue that traditional preaching methods must be adapted to contemporary realities to maintain relevance without compromising core Islamic values. The prevalence of viral content on social media, which may prioritize entertainment over substance, complicates this effort. (Simamora & Farid, 2024) warn that the interactive nature of social media, while fostering dialogue, also opens the door to sensationalism and ideological polarization. Thus, preachers must navigate a complex media ecology that rewards visibility but demands credibility.

In this evolving landscape, the gap in scholarly literature becomes evident. While much has been written about the use of digital platforms for religious purposes, few studies have rigorously analyzed their impact on millennial audiences, who are the primary consumers of digital content. (Hasanah et al., 2024) emphasize the need for research that delves into the motivations, behaviors, and reception patterns of this demographic. Furthermore, (Bowe & Makki, 2015) note the lack of longitudinal data that would allow for an assessment of the long-term effects of digital da'wah on religious knowledge, practice, and identity formation among youth.

These gaps highlight the need for a systematic review of current research to understand how digital platforms affect Islamic preaching in urban Muslim communities. This review seeks to identify the main themes, patterns, and implications of digital da'wah practices, with a particular focus on audience engagement, the construction of religious authority, and the negotiation of religious identity in digital spaces. It also aims to examine how digital content is produced, disseminated, and received, as well as the role of visual and narrative strategies in shaping religious communication online.

The scope of this review is geographically focused on Indonesia and Southeast Asia, where the intersection of Islam and digital technology is particularly salient. This region provides a rich context for examining how Muslim communities adapt religious practices to contemporary challenges, including globalization, urbanization, and technological change. The focus on urban Muslim populations allows for an exploration of how social media mediates the experiences of individuals who are embedded in both traditional religious networks and modern digital cultures. This includes analyzing how Islamic messages are tailored to resonate with urban sensibilities and how digital spaces facilitate or hinder religious expression.

In sum, this paper aims to contribute to the growing body of literature on digital religion by providing an in-depth examination of contemporary Islamic preaching in the age of social media. It draws on a diverse range of studies to map the contours of digital da'wah and identify areas for further research. By highlighting both the potential and the pitfalls of social media as a medium for religious engagement, the review underscores the importance of developing nuanced and context-sensitive approaches to Islamic communication in the digital age. The findings will inform scholars, practitioners, and policymakers seeking to understand and support ethical, inclusive, and impactful religious discourse in contemporary Muslim societies.

METHOD

This study employs a structured literature review approach to examine the interaction between Islamic preaching (da'wah) and social media within the contemporary digital landscape, with a specific focus on Southeast Asia and the Indonesian context. Given the vast and evolving body of literature on this subject, an organized and systematic methodology was essential to ensure the selection of relevant, credible, and comprehensive academic sources that reflect the breadth and depth of the discourse on digital da'wah.

To collect the literature, the study relied on a range of reputable academic databases including Scopus, Google Scholar, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), JSTOR, and ProQuest. These databases were chosen for their extensive coverage of interdisciplinary research in fields such as religious studies, communication studies, media studies, and Islamic studies. Each database offers access to peer-reviewed journals, conference proceedings, and scholarly articles that contribute substantively to the analysis of how Islamic messages are communicated in the age of social media. The searches were conducted iteratively over several months to capture the most recent publications and to ensure that no major study was overlooked. The time span of the literature considered ranged from 2010 to 2024 to reflect the emergence and maturation of social media platforms as relevant to Islamic da'wah.

A crucial component of this methodology was the development and refinement of search terms to identify relevant literature. A combination of keyword strings and Boolean operators was utilized to expand and narrow the search results appropriately. The following search terms were regularly employed: "Islamic preaching" AND "social media," "Digital da'wah" AND "millennials," "Islam" AND "social media" AND "impact," "Dakwah" AND "online platforms" AND "youth," "Digital religious engagement" AND "Muslim communities," "Social media" AND "Islamic authority" OR "new media," "Religious communication" AND "Islam" AND "technology," and "Virtual da'wah" OR "online dakwah" AND "practices." The Boolean operators "AND" and "OR" were used strategically to combine related concepts and ensure a balance between specificity and comprehensiveness.

In order to determine the inclusion and exclusion of studies for this review, specific criteria were established. Studies were included if they met the following parameters: (1) published in peer-reviewed journals or reputable academic platforms; (2) focused on Islamic preaching or religious communication within digital media environments; (3) conducted in or provided relevant data on Southeast Asian contexts, particularly Indonesia; (4) examined the interaction between religious actors and audiences on social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, or Facebook; and (5) published between 2010 and 2024. These criteria were set to ensure the review reflected both geographical and thematic relevance, as well as academic rigor.

Conversely, studies were excluded if they did not provide empirical or theoretical insights into digital da'wah practices or if they were primarily descriptive accounts without critical analysis. Articles that focused exclusively on non-Islamic religious traditions, or those that discussed technology and religion in highly generalized terms without any specific reference to da'wah or

Islamic communication, were also excluded. Furthermore, non-English and non-Indonesian language sources were not included, as the scope of this review focused on materials accessible and relevant to an international academic readership.

The types of research incorporated into this review span both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, including case studies, ethnographies, content analyses, discourse analyses, and mixed-method research. For instance, case studies on specific preachers such as Felix Siauw (Hew, 2018; Mulyanto, 2022) provide micro-level insights into how individuals use social media to disseminate Islamic teachings. Ethnographic studies capture the lived experiences and interactions of Muslim communities within digital spaces (Halverson et al., 2013), while content and discourse analyses of digital content (Atabik et al., 2024) reveal broader thematic patterns and communication strategies.

The literature selection process was carried out in several phases. Initially, keyword-based searches yielded a pool of approximately 450 articles. Titles and abstracts were reviewed to determine alignment with the study's objectives. From this initial pool, around 180 articles were shortlisted for full-text review. During the second phase, full-text analysis was performed to assess methodological quality, thematic relevance, and contribution to the research questions. This evaluation included an appraisal of the research design, data collection methods, and theoretical frameworks employed by the authors. After critical appraisal, a final corpus of approximately 90 high-quality sources was selected for in-depth analysis and synthesis.

To maintain consistency and transparency, the entire selection process was documented, including records of search terms, date of access, and reasons for inclusion or exclusion. A bibliographic software tool was employed to manage citations and avoid duplication, allowing for efficient categorization of articles based on themes such as audience engagement, Islamic authority, religious identity, digital activism, and technological adaptation in da'wah practices.

Throughout the review process, efforts were made to update the search queries in response to evolving academic discourse. This adaptive approach ensured that emerging trends, such as the use of TikTok or podcasting in da'wah, were adequately captured. It also allowed for the inclusion of the most recent studies, particularly those published during or after the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly accelerated digital religious engagement across Muslim societies (Suyadi et al., 2020).

The final body of literature represents a balanced mix of theoretical, conceptual, and empirical studies that collectively offer a comprehensive overview of how Islamic da'wah is adapting to the realities of digital communication. This methodological approach not only enhances the reliability and validity of the review but also ensures that it is grounded in current, contextually relevant, and academically rigorous sources. As digital technologies continue to evolve, it remains essential for scholars to revisit and refine methodological strategies to keep pace with changes in the digital religious landscape.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The emergence of digital da'wah strategies through social media has undergone substantial transformations, driven by the imperative to reach broader and more diverse audiences. One of the most notable communication strategies is the increasing use of visually engaging audiovisual content. Islamic preachers, particularly celebrity figures, are leveraging platforms like Instagram and YouTube to disseminate religious messages via short videos, infographics, and other forms of visual media. Subchi et al. (2022) demonstrated that audiovisual-based content significantly appeals to millennials due to its ease of consumption and memorability. By packaging complex theological concepts into aesthetically pleasing and relatable content, digital preachers can engage audiences more effectively.

Another emergent strategy involves the crafting of shareable narratives that can be reproduced and disseminated widely by followers. Influencers with large followings often play a pivotal role in shaping public opinion on religious and social issues. Hew (2018) notes that preachers such as Felix SiauW successfully use rhetorical and visual techniques to deliver da'wah messages. These efforts enable the audience to form emotional connections, thereby amplifying the persuasive impact of the content. The inclusion of personal stories or direct experiences fosters empathy and strengthens message relevance, especially for millennial viewers seeking emotional resonance (Mursalin et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the interactivity enabled by social media is central to building deeper connections with audiences. Digital preachers now engage in two-way communication, inviting participation through comments, shares, and online discussions. This transition from passive information reception to active religious engagement reflects a fundamental change in the role of audiences in digital da'wah (Asmendri et al., 2024). Atabik et al. (2024) emphasize that such levels of interactivity are crucial for cultivating a sense of belonging and deeper religious experiences. Activities such as webinars, panel discussions, and live Q&A sessions further enhance audience involvement, fostering a communal sense of spiritual growth (Husein & Sláma, 2018).

The success of aesthetic and persuasive approaches, however, depends heavily on context and audience preferences. While visually appealing content is effective, the authenticity and values communicated remain central to the credibility of the message. Content perceived as overly commercial or inconsistent with Islamic principles may provoke skepticism. (Khariri, 2019) underscores the importance of grounding digital da'wah in core Islamic ethics, even when adopting contemporary media formats. This balance ensures both outreach effectiveness and theological integrity.

These strategies collectively underscore the transformative role of social media in Islamic preaching. Through effective aesthetic and rhetorical techniques, digital preachers inspire and challenge audiences while expanding the boundaries of religious engagement. The long-term effectiveness of these methods in shaping Islamic discourse and community formation warrants further investigation (Millie et al., 2023).

The impact of social media on religious authority within Muslim communities is particularly significant. Digital platforms allow individuals and groups to redefine authority, which was

traditionally the domain of established ulama. Social media democratizes religious discourse, enabling ordinary preachers and Islamic celebrities to interact directly with audiences, thereby dismantling hierarchical communication barriers and broadening their influence. Subchi et al. (2022) demonstrate how female ulama in Indonesia utilize social media to increase their religious influence, employing more inclusive methods that resonate with younger audiences. This has resulted in a generational shift where authority is increasingly conferred upon preachers who adopt interactive and personalized approaches.

Social media has also redefined how religious identity is expressed, especially among minority groups such as Chinese-Muslim Indonesians. Arifianto (2019) explores how these communities use platforms like Instagram to articulate their religious identities, blending cultural and religious elements to narrate their experiences as minorities within broader Muslim society. By employing visual storytelling, these preachers assert both religious and cultural pride while challenging prevailing stereotypes. Mursalin et al. (2024) further note that digital participation allows these communities to engage in religious discourse and build supportive networks previously inaccessible through conventional channels.

However, the rise of digital platforms poses challenges to traditional religious institutions. Mainstream religious organizations like Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah may struggle to retain influence amidst the growing popularity of digitally savvy preachers who often adopt more conservative or radical tones. Arifianto (2019) warns that the appeal of simplistic and animated content may eclipse nuanced theological discourse, potentially destabilizing long-standing religious authority. These dynamics also reflect broader socio-political contexts where institutional religion faces pressure from decentralization and ideological diversification.

Digital platforms have become arenas for competing interpretations of Islamic teachings. These spaces host identity struggles between traditional and modernist preachers, exposing deep-seated tensions within Muslim societies. Husein and Sláma (2018) argue that the digital reconfiguration of religious authority is a critical area for understanding the future of Islamic discourse in pluralistic settings. The long-term implications of such transformations remain uncertain but necessitate further exploration, particularly concerning intercommunal tolerance and cohesion.

In sum, social media has reshaped both religious identity and authority structures in Muslim communities. While traditional preachers may feel threatened, digital platforms also provide opportunities for innovation, inclusivity, and renewed influence. As digital technologies continue to permeate everyday life, Islamic authorities must adapt to maintain relevance and foster constructive discourse (Simamora & Farid, 2024).

Digital platforms have also influenced contemporary applications of Islamic jurisprudence, or *fiqh muamalah*, particularly in urban contexts. The rapid dissemination of information and greater access to Islamic legal sources have enabled individuals and organizations to explore interpretations and applications of sharia in ways previously constrained by institutional gatekeepers. Husein and Sláma (2018) highlight how platforms like YouTube and Instagram facilitate broader engagement with Islamic law, making jurisprudential knowledge more accessible and participatory.

This accessibility fosters increased awareness and adoption of Islamic economic principles, including halal lifestyles and anti-usury (anti-riba) values. Media accounts dedicated to halal living provide practical advice and personal experiences, allowing users to align consumption choices with religious principles. (Hayati, 2021) emphasizes that such platforms empower consumers to make informed, faith-based decisions in a market increasingly saturated with ethical alternatives.

Khariri (2019) observes that social media accelerates the acceptance of sharia-compliant economic practices among millennials. This demographic actively seeks financial alternatives aligned with Islamic values, prompting greater interest in Islamic finance and ethical investing. Online content frequently reinforces these values, presenting anti-riba narratives through relatable and emotionally resonant formats. The result is a growing demand for sharia-compliant financial products and services.

However, the widespread dissemination of fiqh-related content also introduces risks. Khariri (2019) warns of misinformation and misinterpretation stemming from unverified sources and unqualified individuals. This underscores the need for digital literacy and theological competence among both content creators and consumers. Ensuring accurate understanding and application of Islamic law in the digital sphere requires active engagement from credible religious scholars and institutions.

Despite these challenges, the contribution of digital platforms to promoting Islamic values in urban life remains significant. They facilitate a more inclusive dialogue on fiqh muamalah and support the emergence of religiously conscious lifestyles. Continued efforts to develop accurate and educational content will be essential in preserving the integrity of Islamic teachings amidst rapid technological change (Subchi et al., 2022).

Social media also plays a vital role in supporting gender-responsive interpretations of Islamic jurisprudence. Digital platforms serve as spaces for female scholars, activists, and community leaders to promote gender equity within Islamic frameworks. (Nurjanah & Nur, 2022) document how social media functions as a mobilizing tool for gender-sensitive fiqh movements, offering women the opportunity to share knowledge, experiences, and strategies for navigating religious life in alignment with Islamic principles.

These platforms facilitate reinterpretations of religious texts through progressive lenses. By circulating scholarly opinions and alternative tafsir on women's rights, education, and leadership roles, digital media fosters a more inclusive understanding of Islam. Subchi et al. (2022) note that female ulama's digital engagements expand the discursive space for discussing women's issues, challenging entrenched patriarchal interpretations and reshaping communal perceptions of gender roles.

Social media campaigns and discussion groups on platforms like Twitter and Instagram create solidarity networks among Muslim women. These forums enable sharing of lived experiences and theological insights, enhancing visibility and advocacy for gender justice in Islam. Such initiatives contribute to shifting societal attitudes and encouraging open-mindedness toward progressive interpretations previously marginalized in religious discourse (Nurjanah & Nur, 2022).

Nevertheless, open discussions about gender often face backlash from conservative segments. Resistance to change and criticism of female leadership remain obstacles to broader acceptance of gender-inclusive interpretations. Thus, education and support structures are vital to sustain the momentum of gender-sensitive da'wah movements. Subchi et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of equipping participants with strong theological arguments and fostering community resilience against opposition.

In conclusion, digital media has significantly advanced gender-equitable discourses within Islamic preaching. Through online platforms, women can assert theological agency, foster community, and advocate for inclusive religious interpretations. As digital da'wah continues to evolve, sustaining these gains will require continuous support, scholarly engagement, and community empowerment.

The findings presented in this review reveal a broader transformation in contemporary Islamic practices, authority, and identity due to the widespread adoption of digital technologies. These transformations align with global religious trends and demonstrate how Muslim communities are increasingly engaging in digital spaces not only to maintain religious practices but also to actively negotiate and reinterpret their identities and beliefs. As Halverson et al. (2013) observed, social media provides a new arena for ideological alignment and social belonging, highlighting the role of digital platforms in shaping modern religiosity. This reconfiguration becomes especially apparent in the context of Indonesia, where traditional structures of Islamic authority are being challenged and supplemented by younger, media-savvy preachers whose appeal stems from personal narratives and interactivity rather than formal credentials (Arifianto, 2019).

This democratization of religious authority has several implications. On one hand, it empowers lay individuals and non-traditional actors to become participants in shaping Islamic discourse. On the other, it raises concerns about the diffusion of theological content that lacks scholarly rigor. As the review indicated, the rise of independent digital preachers has sometimes come at the cost of marginalizing traditional institutions like Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, which previously dominated religious interpretation. This fragmentation of authority may offer pluralism, but it also contributes to ideological volatility, especially when preachers present polarizing or radical content (Arifianto, 2019; Simamora & Farid, 2024).

Moreover, the intersection of digital technologies and Islamic jurisprudence reflects a paradigm shift in how fiqh is understood and practiced. Khariri (2019) highlights the emergence of a "fiqh of social media" in response to the dynamic nature of public discourse in digital spaces. Digital platforms facilitate the reinterpretation of Islamic legal principles in light of contemporary challenges. They offer opportunities to contextualize Islamic law within current socio-economic conditions, particularly through the dissemination of content on halal lifestyles and anti-riba practices (Hayati, 2021). Yet this accessibility also brings the risk of misinterpretation by unqualified users or preachers. Without oversight and theological education, digital spaces can become sources of misinformation, necessitating stronger media literacy and ethical guidance.

Gender justice movements within Islam, as discussed in this review, also demonstrate how digital spaces can serve as platforms for alternative theological interpretations. Female ulama and activists have utilized social media to advocate for gender-responsive fiqh, opening up discursive spaces

that are often inaccessible in traditional religious forums (Subchi et al., 2022). These movements challenge patriarchal structures and highlight the potential of digital da'wah to promote inclusive religious discourse. However, they are also vulnerable to backlash from conservative audiences, illustrating the ongoing negotiation between innovation and tradition in digital religious engagement.

In terms of identity, studies such as Mulyanto (2022) reveal how social media allows marginalized groups, including Chinese-Muslim Indonesians, to construct and affirm their religious identities. These users leverage digital platforms to share personal experiences and negotiate complex religious and cultural affiliations. The narratives they create contribute to a more diverse and dynamic understanding of Islam, while also challenging homogenized views of the Muslim community. As the digital space fosters such plurality, it simultaneously reshapes religious norms and communal affiliations, thereby influencing both individual and collective religious experiences.

The interaction between national and local religious policies and digital da'wah practices highlights a crucial area of systemic influence. In Indonesia, national religious policies tend to reflect efforts to maintain social harmony, religious pluralism, and ideological alignment with state values such as Pancasila (Subchi et al., 2022). These policies often involve oversight by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which monitors religious content for conformity with national norms. While this framework provides a stabilizing function, it may also impose constraints on creative or alternative forms of da'wah that diverge from mainstream interpretations.

Conversely, local policies in predominantly Muslim regions such as Madura have shown greater flexibility, embracing the participatory nature of digital da'wah (Zahid & Hasan, 2018). Localized interpretations of Islam, often shaped by cultural and socio-political contexts, interact dynamically with digital practices, enabling a richer and more context-sensitive religious discourse. This indicates the importance of acknowledging regional diversity in religious policy formulation and suggests that inclusive governance can better accommodate the evolving nature of digital religiosity.

Nonetheless, the relationship between state policy and online religious discourse is not without tension. While digital platforms provide a space for pluralistic interpretations, they also create environments where conservative ideologies can flourish unchecked, especially in the absence of effective moderation. This dichotomy necessitates a policy response that both protects religious freedom and prevents the spread of harmful or divisive narratives. The rise of digital fatwas and the recognition of female religious authorities via social media indicate an evolving policy landscape that seeks to engage with contemporary challenges rather than suppress them (Subchi et al., 2022).

Addressing the ethical and theological challenges of digital da'wah requires a multidimensional response involving both policy and education. From a policy perspective, there is a pressing need to foster regulatory frameworks that are responsive to the digital age. These frameworks should be developed collaboratively with religious scholars, digital practitioners, and civil society actors to ensure that they encourage responsible innovation without stifling creative engagement. As Subchi et al. (2022) suggest, modern approaches to religious communication are essential for enhancing the reach and relevance of da'wah in the digital era.

Clear guidelines on the ethical use of social media in religious communication are also essential. Such guidelines could incorporate Islamic ethical principles, including *tabayyun* (verification), to promote responsible content production and consumption. They would serve as tools for both preachers and audiences to navigate the digital landscape with integrity, fostering trust and authenticity in religious messaging. Policy measures that support the creation of safe, ethical digital spaces can enhance the impact of da'wah and mitigate the risks associated with misinformation and ideological extremism.

From an educational standpoint, curriculum reform is critical to ensure that future generations are equipped with the skills necessary to engage with digital religion thoughtfully. Integrating digital literacy and ethical reasoning into Islamic education would empower young Muslims to discern, critique, and contribute meaningfully to online religious discourse. Mursalin et al. (2024) stress the need for educational programs that emphasize tolerance and moderation, particularly to counteract the appeal of extremist ideologies.

Equally important is the provision of training for preachers and Islamic educators on effective digital communication. These training programs could encompass technical skills for content creation, pedagogical strategies for online engagement, and theological grounding for maintaining religious authenticity in digital formats (Asmendri et al., 2024). The convergence of religious knowledge, technological fluency, and pedagogical competence is essential for sustaining impactful and credible digital da'wah initiatives.

The reviewed literature also reveals certain limitations. Many studies are descriptive rather than evaluative, lacking rigorous assessment of the long-term effects of digital da'wah on religious knowledge, behavior, or community cohesion. Moreover, there is a scarcity of comparative studies that examine digital Islamic practices across different cultural or national contexts. Expanding the geographical scope of future research would allow for a better understanding of how digital da'wah manifests in various sociopolitical environments.

Additionally, most research has focused on the production of digital religious content, with less attention given to audience reception and interpretation. A deeper exploration of how different demographics perceive and interact with digital da'wah content is crucial for developing more targeted and effective communication strategies. Future research should also investigate the psychological and emotional dimensions of online religious engagement, particularly how digital platforms affect spiritual well-being and identity formation.

Finally, interdisciplinary approaches are needed to capture the complexity of digital religiosity. Collaboration between scholars of religion, communication, media studies, sociology, and political science can yield richer insights into the multifaceted nature of Islamic practice in the digital age. As the boundaries between online and offline religious life continue to blur, research must evolve to reflect this new reality, offering theoretical and practical guidance for navigating the shifting landscape of digital Islam.

CONCLUSION

This narrative review has explored the dynamic role of social media in shaping contemporary Islamic preaching, with particular attention to Southeast Asia and Indonesia. The findings underscore that digital platforms have significantly transformed da'wah strategies, enabling broader audience engagement through visual content, interactive features, and emotionally resonant narratives. These transformations are not merely technological shifts but reflect a fundamental reorientation of religious authority, legal interpretations, and identity construction in digital spaces. The emergence of new preachers, the democratization of Islamic discourse, and the rise of gender-responsive narratives illustrate how digital da'wah fosters inclusivity and ideological plurality.

However, the expansion of digital religious discourse also presents notable challenges. The weakening of traditional religious authority, the risks of misinformation, and ideological polarization underscore the need for structured interventions. There is a critical urgency to develop inclusive religious policies and ethical guidelines that accommodate innovation while preserving theological integrity. Moreover, policy frameworks must encourage moderation, pluralism, and responsible digital engagement, especially in regulating content and protecting marginalized voices.

To address these issues, this study recommends targeted educational reforms that integrate digital literacy, ethical reasoning, and moderate Islamic values into curricula. Training programs for preachers and Islamic educators on digital communication tools are essential to support impactful and authentic da'wah. Future research should explore long-term audience reception, cross-cultural comparisons, and the psychological impact of digital religious engagement. As digital da'wah continues to evolve, ensuring both innovation and doctrinal soundness remains central to sustaining its legitimacy and societal value.

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