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From *Mimbar* to Smartphone: Da'wah's Evolution for Generation Z in the Digital Era

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Abstract

This article examines the evolution of Da'wah practices among Generation Z in the digital era, focusing on how social media platforms shape religious engagement and outreach. Traditional Da'wah, previously conducted in physical spaces like mosques and public gatherings, has increasingly moved to digital spaces such as TikTok and Instagram, making religious teachings more accessible and appealing to younger audiences. Utilizing a qualitative literature review approach and an integrative literature review, this study synthesizes recent research to analyze existing research on digital Da'wah. The findings suggest that digital Da'wah significantly enhances youth engagement, broadens reach, and fosters community building, primarily through humanistic, creative, and contextually relevant content. However, the study also reveals challenges, such as the potential for misinformation and oversimplification of religious content in these new media. This article contributes to scholarly discourse by offering insights into the strategic use of digital platforms for Da'wah, highlighting how religious leaders can effectively engage Generation Z while promoting a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings in a digital context. These findings underscore the need for responsible content curation and digital literacy to maintain the integrity of religious messages and address the unique needs of Generation Z.

Keywords: *Digital Da'wah, Digital Era, Generation Z*

Abstrak

Artikel ini meneliti evolusi praktik Da'wah di kalangan Generasi Z di era digital, dengan fokus pada bagaimana platform media sosial membentuk keterlibatan dan penyebaran ajaran agama. Da'wah tradisional, yang sebelumnya dilakukan di ruang fisik seperti masjid dan pertemuan publik, kini semakin beralih ke ruang digital seperti TikTok dan Instagram, sehingga ajaran agama menjadi lebih mudah diakses dan menarik bagi generasi muda. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan tinjauan literatur kualitatif melalui tinjauan literatur integratif, studi ini mensintesis penelitian terbaru untuk menganalisis kajian yang ada mengenai Da'wah digital. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Da'wah digital secara signifikan meningkatkan keterlibatan pemuda, memperluas jangkauan, dan membangun komunitas, terutama melalui konten yang bersifat humanis, kreatif, dan relevan dengan konteks mereka. Namun, studi ini juga mengungkap beberapa tantangan, seperti potensi misinformasi dan penyederhanaan berlebihan terhadap konten keagamaan dalam media digital. Artikel ini berkontribusi pada diskursus akademik dengan memberikan wawasan tentang strategi pemanfaatan platform digital untuk Da'wah, menyoroti bagaimana pemimpin agama dapat secara efektif menjangkau Generasi Z sambil memastikan pemahaman ajaran Islam yang lebih mendalam dan komprehensif dalam konteks digital. Temuan ini menekankan pentingnya penyaringan konten yang bertanggung jawab dan literasi digital untuk menjaga keaslian pesan-pesan keagamaan serta memenuhi kebutuhan unik Generasi Z.

Kata Kunci: *Dakwah Digital, Era Digital, Generasi Z*

A. Introduction

Throughout the past two decades, the use of digital technology, especially social media, has grown massively. In 2019, the global population was 7.7 billion, with around 3.5 billion online. This indicates that about one-third of the world's population and over two-thirds of Internet users were active on social media platforms (Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2024). The internet and social media have significantly transformed global interaction and communication practices (Puspita, 2024). This shift has particularly impacted Generation Z, a group that has grown up immersed in digital culture. For Gen Z, digital technology becomes a necessity in their daily lives. Their social interactions, consumption of information, and even their religious practices are heavily influenced by these technologies.

As digital technology touches every part of our lives, it has also changed how people practice their religion. The shift in the use of digital technology has not only changed everyday communication but has also greatly influenced many areas of society, including how religious practices are carried out (Campbell, 2012). For instance, Da'wah, traditionally conducted in settings like "Mimbar" during sermons, in mosques, auditoriums, and religious schools, has increasingly shifted to digital platforms, mainly social media sites like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. These platforms let religious leaders connect with their followers in ways that were not possible before. This transformation allows religious messages to be disseminated and engaged with right at one's fingertips, reflecting a significant shift in how religious guidance and community are experienced in the digital era (Ronaldi et al., 2023).

The way of Da'wah itself has undergone significant changes over different times. During the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) era, Da'wah began secretly as he first preached to his close family and friends to avoid opposition. Once the message started to spread, it was revealed to preach openly. As Islam gained followers, it shifted to organized efforts, including the establishment of the Masjid An-Nabawi in Medina (Nasution, 2019). During the time of the Wali Songo, traditional Da'wah methods involved using cultural and artistic approaches. This included performing arts like *wayang* (puppet shows), *gamelan* (traditional music), *tembang* (songs), and events like *grebeg* and *sekaten* to support the spread of Islam (Lestari & Mariska, 2023). These preachers showed that the success of Da'wah depends on how well it fits its audience's cultural context, a principle still important in today's digital world.

Before the digital era, Da'wah was done through several traditional ways. People preached in mosques, held public events, and talked to individuals personally to share Islamic teachings on the radio or TV (Istiqomah & Hamzanwadi, 2024). These methods were effective for the time, but were limited in their reach and accessibility. However, the rise of digital platforms has changed how Da'wah is practiced.

Nowadays, Preachers like Gus Iqdam, Gus Kautsar, and Neng Umi Laila use approachable and relatable methods like the use of social media platforms like TikTok, using short, engaging videos to share Islamic teachings with a broader, more tech-savvy audience (Muvid et al., 2024). Their content, often characterized by humor and relatability, resonates with the younger generation, particularly Gen Z,

who prefer quick, easily digestible information. Ning Sheila Hasina, in another approach, utilizes her Instagram account @sheilahasina to share her Da'wah content through Instagram highlights, offering various messages and advice directed explicitly toward women (Firdausiyah, 2023). It shows that millennial preachers today increasingly adopt digital platforms like TikTok and Instagram to spread their Da'wah, making religious teachings more accessible and relatable to younger generations, particularly Generation Z.

The adoption of social media for Da'wah purposes has been a subject of much academic interest in recent years. Recent studies have explored how digital technology affects religious practices, especially how Da'wah has shifted to social media platforms. Scholars like Firdausiyah (2023) highlighted the urgency for Islamic millennial preachers to adapt to the modern world by utilizing social media platforms like Instagram, Tiktok, and podcasts that offer unique opportunities to engage with younger audiences. Research has shown that social media platforms are particularly effective for reaching Generation Z, whose religious engagement is increasingly mediated by digital technology. (Aini et al., 2023) argue that platforms like TikTok provide affordable, creative, and engaging ways to spread Da'wah messages to Gen Z. These platforms let preachers interact with their audience in real-time, creating a sense of community and belonging similar to a traditional mosque, but with much greater reach and speed. This is especially important for Gen Z, who are used to quick, interactive communication and prefer to consume content in visually appealing, short formats (Effendy et al., 2024).

Despite the many benefits of digital Da'wah, there are several challenges. One primary concern is the risk of misinformation (Dauda, 2023; Mubarak, 2022). Because social media is open to everyone, anyone can share content, no matter their level of religious knowledge or authority. This can result in the spread of incorrect or incomplete interpretations of Islamic teachings, which could confuse followers, especially younger audiences who may not have the critical thinking skills to judge what information is reliable (Resyadi, 2022). Additionally, social media tends to promote short, eye-catching content, which can oversimplify complex religious teachings (Beta, 2024). This risk weakens the deeper understanding that traditional Da'wah methods aimed to develop, as the digital format values quickness and brevity over depth and reflection.

Another challenge is the commercialization of Da'wah (Haq, 2024). With the rise of influencer culture, there is a risk that religious preachers may focus more on popularity than on the accuracy and integrity of their messages. Chasing followers, likes, and engagement can sometimes overshadow the primary goal of Da'wah, which is to help people better understand Islam. This commercialization can also turn religious practices into a product, where spiritual teachings are consumed passively instead of being internalized and practiced (Jubba et al., 2022).

This article will explore how digital Da'wah affects the spiritual growth, religious commitment, and understanding of Islamic teachings among Gen Z. It examines the benefits and challenges of using social media as a medium for Da'wah, particularly in engaging younger audiences who are accustomed to fast and visually driven content. Additionally, this study investigates how religious leaders can

maintain the depth and authenticity of Islamic teachings while adapting to the demands of digital platforms. Combining existing studies and highlighting areas that need more research, this article will provide insights into how religious leaders can effectively connect with Generation Z in the digital age. By exploring these aspects, this article aims to provide insights into the evolving landscape of Da'wah in the digital age and its impact on the religious experiences of Generation Z, ensuring that the core values of Islam are maintained even in fast-paced digital environments.

B. Methods

This study employs a qualitative research approach, utilizing an integrative literature review to examine the impact of digital Da'wah on Generation Z. By applying this method, the study aims to critically evaluate and synthesize existing research to generate a comprehensive understanding of how digital platforms shape religious engagement among youth, as well as to identify both opportunities and challenges in delivering Islamic teachings online (Snyder, 2019).

1. Approach

The qualitative approach was selected for its strength in analyzing complex social phenomena and generating in-depth insights. This method aligns with the study's objective to explore subjective experiences and perspectives regarding digital Da'wah among Generation Z. The integrative literature review integrates findings across various studies, enabling a holistic view of the topic.

2. Data Collection Procedures

Data collection was conducted through Open Knowledge Maps (<https://openknowledgemaps.org/>) using the keyword "Da'wah and Generation Z." The search produced 100 of the most relevant articles, from which only five were selected based on relevance and alignment with the research objective. The selection criteria included the publication's focus on digital Da'wah and its significance to Generation Z, ensuring a representative sample of literature for the study.

3. Data Analysis

The data analysis involved reviewing and synthesizing themes within the selected articles. This process included recognizing patterns related to digital Da'wah's effects on Generation Z, identifying different perspectives, and synthesizing findings to enhance understanding of how digital platforms facilitate religious engagement. Analysis methods included thematic analysis, where key themes were identified and compared across studies. Contrasting viewpoints were also examined to highlight differing interpretations and insights.

C. Results and Discussion

Through searches using Open Knowledge Maps, five relevant articles were identified that align with the research topic on the transformation of Da'wah practices in the digital era, particularly regarding their impact on Generation Z. The selected articles, all published within the last five years, provide valuable insights into how religious communication has evolved. These sources illustrate the shift from traditional Da'wah methods, which were primarily conducted from the

“Mimbar” in physical settings, to adapting these practices on contemporary digital platforms. Here is the breakdown of the articles:

Table 1. Summary of Recent Studies on Digital Da’wah Methods and Impact on Generation Z

Author	Title	Method	Research Results
(Muvid et al., 2024)	TikTok Social Media: A Breakthrough to Moderation in Da’wah Education	Literature Study	Moderation in Da’wah education on TikTok has significantly broadened its public reach and increased community interest in learning about Islam, or "ngaji." Preachers like Gus Iqdam, Gus Kautsar, and Neng Umi Laila exemplify this approach using a humanist, contextual, and dialectical model of Da’wah.
(Sumarwan et al., 2024)	“New Media (Instagram) As A Medium for Da’wah in The Postmodern Era,” written by	Literature Review	In the postmodern era, Instagram can serve as an effective medium for Da’wah by delivering religious messages in a relevant and engaging way. From a media sociology perspective, Instagram is used as a Da’wah channel that adapts religious content to fit the interests of its users, particularly the younger generation.
(Firdausiyah, 2023)	Instagram as a Da’wah Media (Analysis of the Contents of Ning Sheila Hasina's Da’wah Messages)	Literature Study	The Da’wah messages shared by Ning Sheila Hasina on her Instagram account @sheilahasina include advice and information for women. Her content connects with Islamic teachings and emphasizes the importance of understanding special practices.
(Aini et al., 2023)	Benefits of Da’wah Content TikTok for Generation Z	Literary Analysis	Da’wah content on TikTok offers benefits such as affordability, relevance, creativity, high interaction, and promoting inclusive and tolerant messages. These advantages highlight the importance of using social media to engage Generation Z with compelling Da’wah content, helping to strengthen their understanding and identity in the growing digital age.
(Lestari & Mariska, 2023)	Transformasi Gaya Dakwah Tradisional ke Era Digitalisasi	Library Research	Traditional da'wah reflects the societal context of its time, mainly targeting uneducated communities with ancient beliefs known as Kejawen. This approach involved cultural elements and various art forms. In contrast, the digital age has changed how da'wah is practiced, with modern preachers being more creative and focused on message quality. Many now use the internet to connect with their audiences, increasing their visibility and appeal.

Source: The selected articles analyzed (2024)

On the first article, written by (Muvid et al., 2024)be entitled "TikTok Social Media: A Breakthrough to the Moderation in Da’wah Education,” shows that the evolution of digital da'wah (Islamic preaching) through platforms like TikTok is

explored, with a focus on moderate approaches, particularly targeting Generation Z. Moderate Da'wah means spreading Islam in a balanced way, avoiding extreme or fanatical views, and promoting values like fairness, tolerance, and peace (Baiduri, 2022). Figures such as Gus Iqdam, Gus Kautsar, and Ning Umi Laila exemplify this method by using relatable language, cultural elements, and compassion to connect with younger audiences. Thus, the moderate approach in Da'wah is becoming more effective in building stronger connections with younger generations (Azhimi Qalban et al., 2022), making Islamic teachings easier to understand and more relevant today.

The article criticizes old-fashioned Da'wah methods that use fear and harsh language, which can lead to division and exclusivity (Jubba et al., 2022; Khodafi et al., 2024). Instead, it suggests a more balanced and compassionate approach, highlighting the crucial role of social media, especially TikTok, in making religious messages more accessible and relevant (Idris, 2024). This, in turn, helps to reduce fanaticism and promote unity within the Islamic community.

The article further contributes to the discourse on Da'wah through TikTok by offering insights into how religious education and outreach must evolve to meet the needs of modern audiences. However, the short length of the videos that TikTok offers and the fact that they sometimes only provide clips can lead to varied interpretations (Parhan, 2022). The short duration of videos can also lead to incomplete delivery of the intended message. Nonetheless, the article highlights that the success of these moderate approaches lies in their ability to promote a balanced view of Islam, which resonates well with younger, tech-savvy audiences.

The second article is "New Media (Instagram) As A Medium For Da'wah In The Postmodern Era," written by (Sumarwan et al., 2024). The reviewed research collectively highlights Instagram's effectiveness as a platform for Da'wah by integrating various sociological and cultural strategies. Studies show that Instagram accounts like @qomikin and @Yukngajiid adapt Islamic messages through contemporary and culturally modern visuals (Ridha & Rubino, 2023), such as pop culture symbols and clear design elements, to engage younger audiences. The use of popular culture and effective visual design in accounts like @nuonlinejatim and @agikcah highlights Instagram's role in making Da'wah both accessible and appealing, especially to millennials who find it a trendy platform for religious messages (Efendi et al., 2024). The use of viral themes and creative content in accounts like @nunuzoo shows how humor and trends can boost engagement, demonstrating the benefits of using entertaining comedy to deliver religious messages (Jalia - et al., 2023).

Yet, the article highlights challenges in using Instagram for Da'wah, such as the risk of misinterpreting religious messages when adapting them to popular culture or comedy (Jalia - et al., 2023). While entertaining content can attract viewers, it might not encourage a deep understanding of the teachings, especially on short videos Da'wah (Ula et al., 2024).

The third article highlights how Ning Shaila Hasina, a millennial female preacher, utilizes her Instagram account, @sheilahasina, to represent a significant evolution in Da'wah. By employing visual communication with appealing content

elements, she effectively engages Generation Z, who prefer quick and straightforward information (Kim, 2023). One key strength of Hasina's approach is her focus on topics that matter to her audience, especially women. She meets her followers' needs and builds a strong sense of community by addressing practical issues like menstruation, childbirth, and daily Islamic practices. This reinforces the strength of Muslim women's representation in Islamic digital content (Aziza et al., 2024).

However, while her content is engaging, it is essential to consider the potential limitations. The success of visual communication can differ significantly between various groups of people, and misunderstandings can occur when the audience thinks they have understood or misinterprets the intended message (Resyadi, 2022). Relying too much on social media might oversimplify complex religious ideas, which could lead to misunderstandings among viewers who lack foundational knowledge.

The following article to discuss is written by Aini et al., (2023). It wants to reveal the benefit of Da'wah Content TikTok for Generation Z. This article demonstrates how Religious outreach (Da'wah) has shifted towards social media to appeal to Generation Z, or "digital natives," who are heavily reliant on the internet, smartphones, and social platforms. Traditional methods, like mosque studies, are no longer engaging millennial Muslims as much as online platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and blogs, which offer more easily digestible content. Through this digital platform, Muslim influencers can reach a wider audience and provide the guidance and knowledge needed in everyday life right at their hands (Kasir & Awali, 2024). Religious leaders who are active and popular on digital platforms are also more accepted, as millennials turn to these channels to seek peaceful and tolerant Islamic teachings.

The article also shows that TikTok, in particular, has become a popular platform for sharing Islamic Da'wah, particularly among Generation Z, who prefer it over other social media platforms (Budiarti et al., 2022). Many young preachers have gained large followings by posting short content, which attracts people to engage in discussions and share the content (Badrudin & Rakhmat, 2023). Da'wah content appearing on TikTok's homepage has gained significant attention, as the platform has evolved from being known primarily for entertainment and creative content into a broader space for various types of material, including da'wah and historical topics (Permana et al., 2023). There is hope that Islamic content creators will continue to expand Muslim knowledge by sharing subjects such as Islamic history, stories, and fiqh.

The final article to investigate is "Transformasi Gaya Dakwah Tradisional ke Era Digitalisasi", written by Lestari & Mariska, (2023). It is stated that traditional Da'wah in Indonesia is essential for both its religious meaning and cultural background. Traditional da'wah is exemplified by the Walisongo, who significantly contributed to spreading Islam in Indonesia (Darmawan & Makbul, 2022). They used various cultural and artistic methods, such as storytelling, music, and performances, to gain acceptance in the community that still sticks to the old beliefs.

The article highlights that the digital era has transformed da'wah in Indonesia, positioning technology as an essential means for delivering Islamic teachings. This shift is particularly significant for Gen Z, who are proficient in digital technology and utilize social media and online resources for learning, including their exploration of Islam (Aini et al., 2023). Key strategies for utilizing social media in Da'wah include producing meaningful content that promotes peace in Islam, creating engaging and relevant presentations, addressing current issues, and fostering collaboration among organizations to ensure quality in Da'wah efforts. Because Da'wah on social media often gets mixed up with false information and hoaxes, it can change the valid message of religion, making it a tool for propaganda and politics (Muhammad, 2020). This leads to the spread of hate and conflict instead of the peace that religion should bring.

TikTok and Instagram are highlighted as the most widely used platforms for Da'wah among Generation Z (Aini et al., 2023; Choirin et al., 2024; Murniasih & Syafuri, 2024). Each platform offers unique advantages that make it effective for engaging younger audiences. With its algorithmic ability to promote short, engaging content, TikTok allows for widespread and rapid reach. Meanwhile, Instagram combines visual appeal with interactive features like Stories and Reels, building closer connections between content creators and their followers.

However, both platforms also present challenges. TikTok's short video format can limit the depth of Da'wah messages (Beta, 2024; Ula et al., 2024) risking incomplete communication of complex religious teachings (Resyadi, 2022). Similarly, Instagram, while effective for community-building, may weaken the focus of Da'wah by including too much popular culture, which could reduce its religious essence (Idris, 2024). These insights highlight the importance of carefully using digital platforms to balance their strengths and weaknesses, ensuring that the core values of peaceful, inclusive, and moderate Islam connect well with younger audiences.

D. Conclusion

In summary, the evolution of Da'wah in the digital era reveals a transformative landscape that significantly impacts Generation Z. This article explores how digital platforms are reshaping Da'wah practices and their implications for younger audiences. The findings indicate that digital Da'wah plays a crucial role in shaping the spiritual growth, religious commitment, and understanding of Islamic teachings among Generation Z. By examining the benefits and challenges of using social media as a medium for Da'wah, this study highlights how these platforms effectively engage younger audiences accustomed to fast and visually driven content.

The shift from traditional Da'wah practices to digital methodologies reflects broader societal changes, empowering young influencers and expanding the scope of religious leadership. However, this study also emphasizes the need to balance accessibility with depth and authenticity, ensuring that religious teachings remain meaningful despite the brevity of digital content. While social media fosters

community and connection, it also presents challenges such as misinformation and oversimplification of complex religious concepts, requiring critical engagement from spiritual leaders and followers.

As social media emerges as a vital platform for religious discourse, this study underlines the importance of adapting and innovating Da'wah strategies to maintain relevance and effectiveness in reaching younger generations. By integrating moderate approaches, visual communication, and cultural relevance, digital Da'wah can reinforce Islamic values while addressing the unique challenges of the digital age. Ultimately, these developments highlight the necessity of promoting understanding, tolerance, and inclusivity within the Islamic community, ensuring that religious teachings remain impactful in an ever-evolving digital landscape.

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