



## Media Convergence Study: The Influence of Social Media as a Da'wah Media on the Lack of Religious Knowledge Expertise of Its Users

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### Abstract

Advances in information and communication technology have a significant influence on religious life. On the one hand, technology has had many positive impacts, especially in the dissemination of religious teachings. Through digital media, access to da'wah, sermons, and various religious information becomes easier, faster, and broader. Religious communities can also expand the range of interactions, connecting pilgrims from various regions and even across countries. This opens up great opportunities in strengthening ukhuwah and enriching religious experiences. This study uses a descriptive quantitative method with a literature review approach. Relevant articles were searched through Google Scholar with a time span of 2019 to 2025. The selection of the range aims to obtain up-to-date data related to the development of digital technology and its implications for religious practices. The results of the study show that behind the convenience offered by technology, there are serious challenges that need to be anticipated. The unlimited flow of information and the lack of content verification make the spread of religious teachings vulnerable to distortion. The amount of religious information on social media is not always guaranteed to be true or quality. This has the potential to erode the values of comprehensive da'wah and change the substance of religious teachings according to the flow of public opinion. Therefore, strong religious digital literacy is needed, so that people can sort out valid information, develop critical attitudes, and maintain the authenticity of religious teachings in the midst of rapid technological developments.

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### 1. Introduction

In this rapidly growing digital era, technology has penetrated every aspect of human life, including in the realm of religion. Technological developments have had a significant impact on the way people interact with religious teachings and fellow religious people. While technology brings benefits in facilitating access to religious information, on the contrary, the impact can also be two challenging blades in maintaining the integrity of religious knowledge (Halimah *et al.*, 2024; Siregar, 2021) <sup>[7, 23]</sup>. Da'wah is basically a communication process in order to develop Islamic religious teachings. Da'wah comes from the word *da'aa-yad'uu-da'watan* which means to invite. The term invite contains the meaning of influencing others in order to be able to change attitudes, opinions, and behaviors according to the wishes of the person inviting (Fahmi, 2020; Purbajati, 2021) <sup>[4, 16]</sup>. Media is one of the most important elements in da'wah activities (Efendi *et al.*, 2023; Purnamasari & Thoriq, 2021) <sup>[3, 17]</sup>. Media itself comes from the Latin word *medius* which means middle, intermediary or introduction. Meanwhile, in Arabic, media is interpreted as an intermediary or delivery of messages from the sender to the recipient of the message (Hasanah, 2020) <sup>[8]</sup>. It can be said that the media is a tool or intermediary to convey messages from communicators to communicators (Indartiwi *et al.*, 2020) <sup>[10]</sup>. Meanwhile, da'wah media or can be called *wasilah* is a tool used to convey da'wah material in accordance with the

situation and conditions of mad'u as the target of da'wah (Maulana *et al.*, 2020; Rosmalina & Khaerunnisa, 2021) <sup>[13, 21]</sup>. Da'wah that was previously carried out by giving lectures in prayer rooms, Friday sermons, mosques, Islamic boarding schools, now da'wah can be done on social media (Husna, 2021; Trisakti, 2021) <sup>[9, 25]</sup>.

The sophistication of information and communication technology can be used to optimize da'wah activities (Rizqy *et al.*, 2023) <sup>[20]</sup>. Currently, da'wah and technology are inseparable (Tawaqal & Meltareza, 2022) <sup>[24]</sup>. The delivery of da'wah must be carried out optimally, including using social media. Social media as a da'wah media is a product of mass communication theory that tends to be one-way (Faldiansyah & Musa, 2020) <sup>[5]</sup>. Social media has limitations in providing a forum for face-to-face discussions without obstacles (Dewi *et al.*, 2024) <sup>[1]</sup>. On social media, there is a comment column for the public as mad'u to express reciprocity on the content of the message, convey rebuttals, questions, and open discussions (Wahyuni, 2022) <sup>[26]</sup>. However, this comment column is indirect so that questions and discussions cannot be responded to directly by the account owner as a preacher. So that it is also limited to tabayyun clearly from the preacher that should be obtained while in the assembly of knowledge. Some da'wah practices on social media are also filled with things that are mere entertainment so that many people like them, so that they bring great benefits such as popularity and many followers (Yolandasari, 2021) <sup>[28]</sup>. In addition to displaying more entertainment, some da'wah content on social media is also often inadequate in providing explanations about Islamic teachings, is not in-depth, and is classified as instant (Efendi & Ridwan, 2022) <sup>[2]</sup>. Meanwhile, Islamic teachings that are very broad and complex require the right method in conveying them. Islamic teachings are also not a product of entertainment.

Da'wah today is faced with the challenges of a society that is pragmatic, instantaneous, does not have deep thinking, and only wants to be treated to entertainment. Therefore, it is necessary to think about methods or ways of preaching in the context of a society that is heavily influenced by popular culture (Istiqomalia, 2022) <sup>[12]</sup>. The behavior of today's people, which in general in solving religious problems, has also changed (Setia, 2021) <sup>[22]</sup>. If previously to consult they came to religious leaders who were clearly educated and competent, so that the knowledge obtained was clearly verified, while now they prefer the instant way, namely directly accessing information through Google or other media. Consequently, this access will only lead them to content provided by the online algorithm. Its validity is questioned because everyone can provide the content without competence and good motivation. The formulation of the problems of this study is: 1. How does social media shape the pattern of community interaction in da'wah activities and invitations to religious teachings? and 2. How does social media affect the erosion of religious teachings?

## Research Methods

This research method is descriptive quantitative by collecting data through literature review. Regarding this method, literature review is a review of references, reviewing literature that has been published by previous researchers related to the theme to be studied. Compiling a literature review is the same as displaying various results of previous research that have similar problems to be studied (Hadi & Afandi, 2021) <sup>[6]</sup>. The researcher conducted a literature search

using the Google Scholar search engine. A search through Google Scholar by filtering articles released in the range of 2019 to 2025 using the keywords "the influence of social media as a medium of da'wah", "the influence of new media on the weakness of scientific expertise", "public interest in popular da'wah", and "the influence of social media on religious teachings"

## Results and Discussion

Da'wah is an implementation of communication activities between individuals, so that the development of the use of social media also has an impact on da'wah activities and the dissemination of religious teachings. This is a convenience for preachers in expanding the reach of their da'wah targets and also makes it easier for social media users to get the religious materials they need. But along with this, the role of technology as a means of spreading religious teachings and strengthening religious identity has presented new challenges. As on social media that is easily accessible to anyone, anyone can become a preacher (Istiqomalia, 2022) <sup>[12]</sup>.

However, in reality, there are also many other phenomena that show a different side. Ordinary people can also become impromptu "dai". Information obtained from social media is often fragmented and unsystematic, making it difficult to form a comprehensive and structured understanding of religion. Cyberspace encourages people to generate more information than passively consume information. Information moves faster in larger quantities in cyberspace. Ideas are embodied in the form of content that can be produced and the speed at which others can access it simultaneously. Information is largely freed from its material form in cyberspace. This constant increase in the amount and speed of information leads to an excessive information experience. While the idea of having too much information may seem paradoxical, it is also the case that only a certain amount of information can be handled at a time. Too much information or information that is not well-organized leads to excessive information (Musdalifah & Salisah, 2022) <sup>[15]</sup>. The presence of several young preachers can be considered as one of the proofs of renewal in the implementation of da'wah.

Furthermore, the use of social media in da'wah has shown quite positive results. According to Mauludi *et al.* (2022) <sup>[14]</sup>, it was found that the Ta'lim Darul Futuh Council was able to utilize YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and *websites* systematically through the formulation, implementation, and evaluation stages of da'wah. In line with that, Zabar & Permana (2024) <sup>[29]</sup> also shows that Islamic boarding schools in Sukabumi have succeeded in optimizing digital platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok to support bil-hasanah da'wah strategies while producing Nahdlatul Ulama cadres. These two studies confirm that the effectiveness of social media in da'wah is highly determined by the scientific authorities and the management of the institutions that manage it.

On the other hand, the use of social media as a communication space for Islamic da'wah is closely related to various negative possibilities in the process of delivering Islamic teachings because often what is worried is the provocation of Islamic messages that are uncontrolled and do not pay attention to the qualifications of values, as well as the verification of Islamic information from certain sources to convey their da'wah through social media (Ridwanullah, 2023) <sup>[19]</sup>. With social media, false or erroneous religious

information can spread quickly and widely without a strong verification mechanism. So it cannot be said that true religious knowledge can be learned through social media, without delving into the books of previous scholars. Musdalifah and Salisah (2022) <sup>[15]</sup> argue that the disadvantage of social media is that it has an open nature, which records various information randomly so that messages in the name of Islam with certain unclear and arbitrary goals will be easily spread to the public mixed with the correct da'wah messages without any difference between the two.

According to Rahmawati and Zaini (2021) <sup>[18]</sup>, in his writing, he said that the emergence of media today makes it easier to reach more audiences when communicating and carrying out the da'wah process, the da'wah process through social media will also be faster, simpler, shorter and more flexible. However, the nature of social media, which tends to prioritize information that is short, dense, and easy to digest, this can encourage "instant culture" in understanding religion, ignoring the importance of deepening, research, and references from qualified scholars, so that understanding religion only on its skin, is not comprehensive. Social media has an algorithm that runs based on popularity, discussions that are being discussed, to the number of followers and audiences who see the content we create, so that there is a tendency to stigmatize people that those who have a lot of followers or whose content is viral are considered to be true or referred to as "*influencers*". In fact, the dai who is popular on social media is not necessarily the most knowledgeable dais. Sadly, the number of followers or "*likes*" is often a benchmark, not seen from the depth of knowledge, scientific sanad, or recommendations from recognized scholars.

Social media with an open character, sometimes prioritizes *self-branding* rather than the message conveyed and social media is random. There is a tendency to prioritize the delivery of da'wah that is entertaining or sensational in order to attract attention, rather than the delivery of deep and systematic knowledge. This is based on the phenomenon of people's habits that are always presented with things that are entertaining, light, and entertainment that makes people's interest evolve only to things that are light (Purbajati, 2021) <sup>[16]</sup>. Interactions on social media are often limited to brief comments, emojis, or insubstantial coachman debates, far from in-depth scientific discussions. According to Wahyuni (2021) <sup>[27]</sup>, the limited space for in-depth interaction makes social media not a solution to be used as a reference in seeking religious knowledge. In addition, differences of opinion in religious matters are also often addressed with emotions and mutual criticism, not with polite scientific arguments. With the limited space for tabayyun on social media, this can be a barrier to the spread of religious teachings in a kaffah and deep manner.

The Qur'an provides a similar picture so that Muslims can tabayyun or confirm the information obtained. In addition, ignorance of a problem must encourage people to explore the expertise of someone who is an expert in their field. In addition, if we look at the character of the society formed in the digital era like today, people do not necessarily fully read according to what the messenger (preacher) wants, or in other words people actively interpret the meaning contained in the text. Audiences actively absorb meaning from media and texts according to their socio-cultural position. Therefore, it is very necessary to have a space to tabayyun or reconfirm the messages conveyed and received by the community which they do not get on social media. The younger

generation who was born and raised in the midst of the digital age may be more likely to seek answers to religious questions through search engines or video platforms rather than directly learning from scholars or attending scientific assemblies in person.

The art of seeking knowledge that has always been inherited by previous scholars is increasingly eroding, so that the teachings of morals and manners in seeking knowledge are minimally obtained in today's society. To the priorities of the community that have shifted from studying knowledge to being defended, until now looking for schools that are cheap and easy to reach, without prioritizing the quality of teaching methods and teachers. Because they think that currently knowledge can be achieved by asking "mbah google" without having to attach importance to the basis of the thought patterns built in the environment and schools. Today's society feels the erosion of educational values and religious morality, and is replaced by new moral values created by society itself based on what they process from their virtual world (Rahmawati & Zaini, 2021) <sup>[18]</sup>. The direct assembly with experts of science makes the community more civilized, respects the preachers, and strengthens the spirit as a listener of da'wah. From this, it will be proven how this knowledge can be said to be useful because the knowledge they get can be directly applied in front of their teachers. A person's morals, manners, speech, and temperament can describe how useful the knowledge they get and apply.

## Conclusion

Social media is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it opens up great opportunities for the spread of da'wah. However, on the other hand, if it is not balanced with literacy and awareness of the importance of religious science expertise, it has the potential to weaken the depth and authority of religious science itself. A balance between the use of technology and maintaining scientific traditions is key to meeting these challenges. The researcher recommends several points such as: encouraging the public to continue to seek religious knowledge from reliable sources, such as scholars who have clear scientific sanad and religious educational institutions that are recognized for the quality of their knowledge; educate the public on how to filter religious information on social media, recognize credible sources, and be careful of hoaxes; Developing interesting and easy-to-understand da'wah content, without sacrificing the depth of knowledge, through collaboration between scholars and digital media experts, developing a platform that provides da'wah content from trusted sources and equipped with verification features, as well as promoting the importance of learning directly from teachers and scholars as the best method in exploring religious knowledge.

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