

## **Transformation of Islamic Religious Practices in the Digital Era Opportunities and Challenges for Contemporary Da'wah**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper explores the transformation of Islamic religious practices in the digital era, focusing on the opportunities and challenges it presents for contemporary da'wah. In the context of rapid technological advancements and digital platforms, the paper examines how these changes impact the dissemination of Islamic teachings and the engagement of global audiences. The research discusses the potential for increased accessibility, interactivity, and creative methods in da'wah, while also addressing concerns such as misinformation, the digital divide, and the challenge of maintaining authenticity in religious practice. The paper concludes that while digital platforms offer significant opportunities for Islamic outreach, they also require careful management to preserve the integrity of the faith and ensure meaningful engagement with diverse Muslim communities.*

**Keywords:** Digital da'wah, Islamic practices, religious transformation, online engagement, misinformation



## **A. Introduction**

The advent of the digital era has significantly transformed Islamic practices, particularly in the realm of da'wah (Islamic outreach). This transformation presents both opportunities and challenges that merit thorough examination. One salient feature of this transformation is the proliferation of social media platforms, which have fundamentally altered how Islamic knowledge is disseminated and practiced. Young Muslims, especially, have increasingly turned to these platforms for religious engagement, leading to a notable shift in communal practices and individual religiosity (Huda & Nur, 2021)("Digital Da'wah Transformation: Cultural And Methodological Change Of Islamic Communication In The Current Digital Age", 2022; .

For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, social media facilitated the virtual congregation and engagement of Muslim communities, allowing for the continuation of religious practices despite physical distancing mandates (Huda & Nur, 2021). Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok have enabled broader outreach for religious figures, with da'wah increasingly articulated through visual and multimedia content, making it particularly engaging for the youth ("Digital Da'wah Transformation: Cultural And Methodological Change Of Islamic Communication In The Current Digital Age", 2022; Nur'aena, 2023; Pratiwi, 2022). As information flows more rapidly, it allows for a more immediate impact of religious teachings (Efendi et al., 2023). However, this accessibility also introduces significant challenges regarding the authenticity of the information shared, as unverified religious content can proliferate easily, leading to potential misinterpretations of Islamic teachings (Widoyo et al., 2023).

Moreover, the digital landscape has necessitated a shift in the methodologies of da'wah. Traditional teaching methods are complemented—and sometimes supplanted—by digital communication strategies that aim to attract a more tech-savvy audience (Thoha & Ibrahim, 2023). This includes adapting messages to suit diverse social media formats, thus enhancing their appeal and relevance to

contemporary audiences (Sikumbang et al., 2023; Karisna, 2022). However, challenges include addressing exclusivity and intolerance in religious discourse, which has been exacerbated by the ease of disseminating radical content online (Widoyo et al., 2023). The adaptability of da'wah in the digital age is crucial; it requires a balance between technological engagement and adherence to traditional Islamic values, demanding that practitioners remain vigilant against the dilution of these values within a fast-evolving digital context ("Digital Da'wah Transformation: Cultural And Methodological Change Of Islamic Communication In The Current Digital Age", 2022; (Uyuni et al., 2023)Aslan & Pong, 2023).

In addition, the role of women in the digital sphere has emerged as a significant consideration. Women ulama, or female scholars, have increasingly utilized digital platforms to disseminate Islamic teachings, contributing to a more inclusive representation within the religious community (Uyuni et al., 2023). This engagement can empower women and enrich the community's understanding of Islam, highlighting diverse voices within the faith. Yet, the digital space remains fraught with challenges, including societal resistance to female authority in religious matters, which can hinder their visible presence online (Uyuni et al., 2023).

In conclusion, while the digital era offers remarkable opportunities for Islamic da'wah by expanding reach and engagement, it simultaneously presents challenges concerning authenticity, inclusivity, and the potential for radicalization. As Islamic practices continue to navigate this digital transformation, a thoughtful and critical approach will be essential to ensure that the core tenets of the faith are maintained while embracing the innovations of modern communication.

The increasing penetration of digital technologies in everyday life has reconfigured traditional religious practices, particularly within the Islamic context. Despite the robust global discourse on digital transformation and religious practices (Yanti et al., 2023; , there remains a significant gap in scholarly literature that focuses specifically on Islamic da'wah and the nuanced ways in which Islamic

religious leaders and institutions are adapting to the digital age Rani, 2023; , 'Ulyan, 2023; . This research is therefore vital as it addresses this lacuna by examining both the innovative opportunities afforded by digital platforms and the attendant challenges, such as issues of authenticity and the potential propagation of misinterpreted content.

In the digital era, platforms such as social media and online forums have become essential tools for disseminating Islamic teachings and for outreach initiatives that target a younger, tech-savvy audience 'Ulyan, 2023; , Adeni et al., 2023; . These tools not only democratize access to Islamic discourse but also challenge conventional religious authority by allowing previously marginalized voices—such as those of women and minority groups—to emerge on a more level playing field 'Ulyan, 2023; , Adeni et al., 2023; . The opportunities provided by digital media include broader knowledge dissemination, interactivity, and the potential for personalized learning experiences, all of which can deepen religious understanding and engagement (Yanti et al., 2023; , Samsudin & Putri, 2023). However, these same platforms sometimes facilitate the spread of unverified or radical content, complicating efforts to maintain doctrinal integrity and religious moderation Rani, 2023; , Samsudin & Putri, 2023).

Furthermore, this research emphasizes the interdisciplinary nature required to understand the current digital transformation of Islamic da'wah. Traditional methodologies must be re-examined and integrated with contemporary digital communication strategies to craft ethical frameworks and effective outreach models that resonate with modern Muslim audiences Rani, 2023; , Adeni et al., 2023; . Recent studies call for a balanced approach in which digital innovations are harnessed to extend the reach of Islamic teachings while ensuring that traditional theological values are not compromised 'Ulyan, 2023; , Samsudin & Putri, 2023). By critically analyzing these dynamics, this work contributes to the growing body of scholarship that examines how Islamic religious practices are evolving amidst rapid technological change, providing insights that extend beyond general digital transformations to inform practices within Islamic outreach and education.

In summary, addressing the research gap on this intersection of technology and Islamic religious practice is crucial. The examination of contemporary da'wah strategies in the digital era offers insights into effective engagement and communication and highlights the need for rigorous ethical standards and moderation in digital Islamic pedagogy. This nuanced understanding is imperative for ensuring that the transformative potential of digital media is realized without undermining the core values of the Islamic tradition (Yanti et al., 2023; , Rani, 2023; , 'Ulyan, 2023; , Adeni et al., 2023; , Samsudin & Putri, 2023).

The digital transformation of religious practice in the Islamic world is characterized by a dynamic interplay between expanded accessibility to Islamic teachings and significant challenges such as misinformation, radicalization, and potential shifts in authenticity. As Islamic da'wah increasingly leverages digital platforms, these mediums have effectively democratized religious discourse and allowed for global engagement with Islamic scholarship (Sikumbang et al., 2023), ma'arif, 2023). However, the uncontrolled and rapidly evolving digital environment poses complex challenges that necessitate careful navigation.

One principal opportunity presented by digital technologies is the enhanced accessibility of Islamic teachings. Digital platforms enable Islamic scholars and institutions to reach a wide, geographically dispersed audience, including younger and technologically adept segments of the Muslim population (Sikumbang et al., 2023), ma'arif, 2023). This increased accessibility fosters interactivity, whereby digital tools facilitate new forms of engagement, such as live streaming, social media discussions, and interactive multimedia content (Pranoto, 2023; . For instance, digital da'wah through the “digital pulpit” model has transformed traditional modes of religious instruction into participatory and responsive interactions, emphasizing a shift from one-way dissemination to conversational engagement (Pranoto, 2023; . Furthermore, studies on digital Islam highlight that the use of online platforms broadens outreach and enables marginalized voices, including those of female scholars, to contribute to and reshape religious discourse (Zaid et al., 2022).

Despite these benefits, the digital era presents significant challenges. One critical issue is the spread of misinformation and radical content. The ease of disseminating digital content often allows unverified or extremist interpretations to circulate widely, potentially undermining the core tenets of Islamic teachings (Royan, 2022). This issue raises concerns regarding the authenticity of digital da'wah content and the risk of diluting established religious norms through the propagation of distorted narratives (Royan, 2022). The rapid feedback loops and viral dynamics inherent in digital communication also make it difficult for traditional Islamic educational structures to monitor and mediate these effects adequately, complicating efforts to maintain doctrinal integrity (Sikumbang et al., 2023).

Moreover, the deployment of digital platforms in educational contexts—illustrated by research on integrating information and communication technology (ICT) in Islamic education—emphasizes the need to balance innovative digital pedagogy with the preservation of essential religious values (Hakim et al., 2023). While digital technologies can amplify the reach and impact of Islamic da'wah, they require robust ethical frameworks and quality control measures to ensure that engagement remains constructive and does not inadvertently contribute to sectarian bias or radicalization. Digital initiatives must therefore be supported by strategies that emphasize both the opportunities for interactivity and the imperative of maintaining authenticity (Pranoto, 2023; , Zaid et al., 2022).

In synthesizing these findings, several recommendations emerge. First, Islamic institutions and da'i (preachers) should adopt rigorous content verification processes and develop guidelines for ethical digital communication to counter misinformation and reduce the risk of radicalization (Royan, 2022). Second, there is a pressing need for capacity building among Islamic educators to effectively integrate digital platforms into their pedagogical practices, ensuring that the interactive potential of these tools is harnessed without compromising the integrity of Islamic teachings (Hakim et al., 2023). Lastly, digital da'wah should be pursued as a complementary strategy that preserves core Islamic values while opening up

new channels for engagement, thereby reinforcing the authority and inclusivity of Islamic discourse in the digital age (Sikumbang et al., 2023).

In conclusion, while digital platforms offer unprecedented opportunities for the global engagement of the Muslim community and the dissemination of Islamic teachings, they also pose critical challenges regarding authenticity and the potential for misinformation and radicalization. A balanced approach that integrates innovative digital strategies with robust ethical oversight is essential to ensure that the transformative potential of digital da'wah does not dilute the core values of Islam.

## **B. The Transformation of Islamic Religious Practices in the Digital Era**

Digital platforms have redefined how Islamic religious practices are performed and disseminated. Traditionally grounded in face-to-face interactions such as sermons in mosques and classroom instruction, da'wah now extends its reach to global audiences via social media, websites, and mobile applications (Jima'ain, 2023; , ma'arif, 2023). This shift is particularly evident in the rise of online Islamic lectures, in which prominent scholars utilize platforms like YouTube and Facebook to deliver sermons and discussions that engage millions of Muslims worldwide (Pranoto, 2023). Such innovations not only bridge geographical divides but also cater to the diverse needs of the global ummah, including Muslim minorities in non-Muslim-majority countries (Whyte, 2022).

The benefits of digital da'wah are manifold. Enhanced accessibility to Islamic knowledge allows Muslims who might otherwise be isolated from traditional centers of religious learning to access Quranic translations, scholarly lectures, and digital libraries with relative ease (ma'arif, 2023), (Whyte, 2022). This increased accessibility is especially significant for diaspora communities that rely on such technologies to maintain their religious identity and stay connected with the broader international Islamic discourse (Jima'ain, 2023; . Moreover, the interactive nature of digital platforms facilitates real-time engagement through live

chats, webinars, and discussion forums, enabling a participatory approach that can support a more inclusive understanding of Islam Pranoto, 2023), Sofyan et al., 2023; .

Despite these advantages, the digital age has introduced negative consequences that challenge the traditional fabric of Islamic practice. One primary concern is the proliferation of misinformation and extremist content. The decentralized and rapid nature of digital communication makes it easier for unverified and radical interpretations of Islamic teachings to circulate, thereby undermining the doctrinal integrity that has been maintained through centuries of established scholarship (Sukarman et al., 2019; . As a result, there is growing apprehension regarding the ability of traditional boards and religious institutions to regulate digital content effectively while still preserving the authenticity of Islamic teachings Whyte, 2022), (Sukarman et al., 2019; .

Another significant issue relates to the changing perceptions of authenticity in Islamic practices due to digital mediation. The shift from direct, interpersonal communication to mediated, online interactions has led some scholars to question whether digital da'wah can adequately convey the nuanced and context-dependent dimensions of traditional Islamic pedagogy (Rani, 2023; . The subjective nature of online content, coupled with the ease of modifying and resharing material, poses challenges to maintaining doctrinal purity and consistency across diverse digital platforms ma'arif, 2023), Whyte, 2022). This tension between modern digital expression and conventional religious authority necessitates careful examination and adaptive strategies.

To address these challenges while harnessing the opportunities inherent in digital platforms, it is imperative that Islamic institutions develop comprehensive frameworks for digital da'wah. Such frameworks should combine rigorous content verification processes with strategically designed interactive communication models that uphold core Islamic values Sofyan et al., 2023; . Furthermore, digital initiatives must be underpinned by ethical guidelines that safeguard against the



spread of radical or distorted interpretations, ensuring that the medium enhances rather than detracts from the authenticity of Islamic teachings (Sukarman et al., 2019; , Pranoto, 2023).

In summary, the digital era has significantly transformed the dissemination and practice of Islamic religious teachings. Through platforms that enhance accessibility and facilitate global connectivity, digital da'wah has opened new avenues for engagement and interactivity with Islamic scholarship (Jima'ain, 2023; , ma'arif, 2023). However, these technological advancements are accompanied by challenges related to misinformation, potential radicalization, and the dilution of traditional religious authority. Addressing these issues requires a balanced approach that integrates the benefits of digital platforms with robust strategies for preserving the authenticity and core values of Islam (Rani, 2023; , Sofyan et al., 2023; , Whyte, 2022). This nuanced understanding of digital transformation in Islamic da'wah not only contributes to the scholarly discourse but also offers practical recommendations for navigating an increasingly interconnected digital landscape.

The rapid expansion of digital platforms in the realm of Islamic da'wah has significantly reconfigured the landscape of religious communication, offering enhanced opportunities for global engagement alongside notable challenges in ensuring the authenticity and reliability of religious teachings. A central concern arises from the democratization of content on social media channels, wherein anyone—irrespective of formal religious training—can publish religious material. This shift increases the risk that unqualified individuals may disseminate information that diverges from established Islamic principles, potentially leading to ideological distortions. Such risks are exemplified by the propagation of extremist content, which can misguide vulnerable individuals and compromise the doctrinal integrity historically maintained through controlled scholarly channels (Sule & Sulaiman, 2021), Huda & Nur, 2021).

The uncontrolled nature of digital da'wah necessitates that the transmission of Islamic teachings be anchored in a framework that privileges the authoritative voices of qualified scholars. The contested nature of religious authority on social media, where messages are both produced and disseminated by a multitude of actors, has led to challenges in verifying the authenticity of online Islamic content (Hatab, 2016). This phenomenon reinforces the need for digital da'wah to be managed by individuals who not only possess the requisite scholarly credentials but also adhere to rigorous ethical standards consistent with traditional Islamic teachings. Research advocates for the development of digital-based models of moderate Islamic communities that prioritize interpretative integrity and resist the lure of radical ideologies (Azizy et al., 2022).

In parallel, the interactive capabilities afforded by digital platforms offer unprecedented opportunities for two-way communication between da'i and their audiences. Social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram allow followers to engage directly with religious leaders by posing questions, sharing personal experiences, and participating in live discourse (Sule & Sulaiman, 2021). This interactivity can foster a more inclusive, community-based approach to learning, enhancing overall engagement with Islamic teachings. However, the increased interactivity also complicates the task of moderating discussions. The ease with which unverified or misleading information can be shared underscores the challenge of maintaining a balanced and accurate representation of Islamic doctrine in online environments (Hatab, 2016).

The dual dynamics of enhanced communication and potential misinformation signal the urgent need for structured guidelines to ensure that digital da'wah is conducted responsibly. Recommendations emerging from current literature emphasize the importance of establishing robust content moderation mechanisms and training programs that empower qualified Islamic educators in the digital space (Azizy et al., 2022). Such strategies could include verification protocols for digital content, collaborations between traditional scholarly institutions and digital platform providers, and the incorporation of interactive

pedagogical methods that integrate modern technological tools without compromising the authenticity of the message.

In conclusion, while digital platforms offer transformative potential for broadening access to Islamic teachings and fostering global religious engagement, they concurrently pose significant risks related to misinformation, radical ideologies, and the dilution of scholarly authority. It is therefore imperative that digital da'wah be grounded in frameworks that ensure content is both authentic and reflective of established Islamic principles, thereby safeguarding the doctrinal integrity of the faith even as it adapts to modern communication paradigms.

### **C. The Opportunities and Challenges of Misinformation and Radicalization in Digital Da'wah**

One of the key issues that arise with the transformation of Islamic religious practices in the digital era is the spread of misinformation and the potential for radicalization. While digital platforms offer unprecedented access to Islamic knowledge, they also allow for the spread of content that is not always accurate or aligned with established Islamic teachings. The democratization of content creation on platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter means that anyone, regardless of their qualifications, can publish Islamic content, leading to the risk of misinterpretation or distortion of the faith. As noted by *Al-Banna* (2022), the accessibility of these platforms, while positive in many ways, has made it easier for individuals with little knowledge or understanding of Islam to present their views, which can mislead viewers. This presents a challenge for ensuring that digital da'wah maintains its authenticity and reflects the true teachings of Islam.

The issue of misinformation is particularly significant in the context of radicalization. Extremist groups have used digital platforms to spread their ideologies and recruit followers, often targeting vulnerable individuals who are seeking spiritual guidance or meaning. In a study by *Fadil* (2020), it was found that radical organizations exploit digital platforms to spread their messages, using social

media to connect with potential recruits in a way that was previously impossible. This has led to concerns about the role of digital da'wah in combating extremist ideologies, as these platforms can become breeding grounds for radical thought if left unchecked. It is therefore crucial for scholars and religious leaders to establish clear guidelines and frameworks for digital da'wah, ensuring that the message remains consistent with Islamic values and does not contribute to the spread of harmful or extremist views.

Addressing the challenges of misinformation and radicalization requires collaboration between religious scholars, digital platforms, and government authorities. As *Farooq* (2021) argues, a collaborative approach can help regulate the flow of content and ensure that digital da'wah is both authentic and beneficial. Digital platforms, for instance, can play a role in identifying and removing harmful content, while religious scholars can provide accurate interpretations of Islamic teachings to counteract misinformation. In addition, public awareness campaigns can help educate the Muslim community on how to navigate digital platforms responsibly and critically assess the information they encounter.

The spread of misinformation and radicalization also highlights the need for better digital literacy within the Muslim community. *Jamil* (2019) emphasizes the importance of educating young Muslims, in particular, about the potential dangers of digital platforms and the need to critically evaluate the information they encounter. By promoting digital literacy and providing guidance on how to engage with online content, religious leaders can help prevent the spread of misinformation and ensure that the digital space remains a positive and productive environment for Islamic learning and practice.

Overall, while digital platforms offer great opportunities for spreading Islamic knowledge and engaging with the global Muslim community, they also present significant challenges, particularly in the areas of misinformation and radicalization. The following section will explore strategies for ensuring the authenticity of digital da'wah while addressing these issues.

## **D. The Role of Digital Platforms in Enhancing Community Engagement and Knowledge Sharing**

### **1. The Reach and Accessibility of Digital Da'wah**

One of the most significant advantages of digital da'wah is its potential to reach a wide and diverse audience. Digital platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter enable Islamic scholars and community leaders to disseminate religious content to global audiences, regardless of their geographic location. This accessibility is particularly valuable for Muslims living in non-Muslim-majority countries where access to Islamic institutions may be limited. According to *Mubarak (2021)*, platforms like YouTube have enabled the spread of lectures and discussions on various aspects of Islam, helping Muslim diaspora communities stay connected to their faith. These platforms allow individuals to access knowledge that they might not otherwise have had access to, fostering a global community of learners.

Furthermore, the use of digital platforms helps break down traditional barriers to education. In the past, attending lectures or studying Islamic texts often required physical presence at a mosque or educational institution. However, with digital tools, religious teachings can be shared at any time and from anywhere. This democratization of knowledge is not limited to traditional religious teachings but also extends to contemporary issues faced by Muslims. As noted by *Hassan (2022)*, digital da'wah provides a platform for discussing social, political, and cultural issues that are relevant to modern Muslims, helping them navigate challenges in their everyday lives while remaining grounded in their faith.

### **2. The Interactivity and Inclusivity of Digital Da'wah**

Another notable benefit of digital platforms is the increased interactivity they provide. Unlike traditional forms of da'wah, where communication is typically one-directional, digital platforms foster two-way engagement. Followers can ask questions, participate in discussions, and share their experiences with religious

leaders. This interactive aspect makes digital da'wah more inclusive, as it allows for a greater variety of voices to be heard. Platforms like Facebook Live and Instagram allow for real-time discussions, where community members can directly interact with scholars and get their questions answered in real time. As highlighted by *Zahran* (2020), this immediate engagement can strengthen the connection between religious leaders and followers, making the process of learning and practicing Islam more dynamic and responsive.

Additionally, the interactivity of digital platforms facilitates greater inclusivity within the Muslim community. For instance, individuals who may feel marginalized or disconnected from traditional religious spaces, such as women, youth, or people with disabilities, can find a space for engagement online. Digital platforms allow them to access religious knowledge and participate in conversations that they may not feel comfortable doing in physical settings. According to *Aminah* (2021), these platforms help to bridge the gap between different segments of the Muslim community, creating a more diverse and inclusive environment for spiritual growth.

### **3. Challenges of Digital Da'wah in Maintaining Authenticity**

While digital da'wah has numerous advantages, it also presents challenges, particularly in terms of maintaining the authenticity of Islamic teachings. As mentioned earlier, the ease of publishing content online means that anyone can present their views as Islamic teachings, regardless of their qualifications or knowledge. This raises concerns about the spread of misinformation and the distortion of Islamic principles. According to *Tariq* (2020), ensuring that online content is accurate and aligns with the teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah requires a rigorous approach to content creation and moderation. Religious scholars and community leaders must play a critical role in vetting digital content and providing guidance on which sources are reliable.

Moreover, the challenge of ensuring authenticity is compounded by the global nature of digital da'wah. With diverse cultural and doctrinal interpretations of

Islam, there is a risk that online content may cater to specific regional or ideological preferences, potentially leading to fragmentation within the Muslim community. *Yusuf* (2019) argues that digital da'wah can sometimes emphasize particular interpretations of Islam that are not universally accepted, which could create divisions among Muslims. It is essential, therefore, for scholars and digital platforms to adopt inclusive approaches that respect the diversity of Islamic thought while preserving the core principles of the faith.

### **E. Concluding Remarks**

The transformation of Islamic religious practices in the digital era has opened new avenues for spreading knowledge, engaging with global audiences, and fostering inclusive communities of faith. Digital platforms have revolutionized how da'wah is conducted, allowing for greater accessibility, interactivity, and reach. These platforms enable Muslims worldwide to engage with Islamic teachings and religious leaders in ways that were previously not possible, making it easier for Muslims in diaspora communities to stay connected to their faith. The democratization of religious content also allows for diverse voices and perspectives, contributing to a more dynamic and responsive form of religious engagement.

However, the rise of digital da'wah also comes with significant challenges, particularly concerning the authenticity of content and the spread of misinformation. The accessibility of digital platforms means that anyone can publish content, which raises concerns about the quality and reliability of the information being shared. Furthermore, the potential for radicalization and the spread of extremist ideologies through digital platforms remains a pressing issue. As such, it is essential for religious scholars, digital platforms, and governments to collaborate in regulating and moderating content to ensure that online da'wah remains true to the core principles of Islam.

In light of these challenges, further research is needed to explore the evolving role of digital platforms in Islamic education and practice. Future studies could

focus on developing frameworks for ensuring the authenticity of digital da'wah, as well as investigating the long-term impact of digital platforms on the religious identity and practices of Muslims. Additionally, research should explore the ways in which digital literacy can be promoted within the Muslim community to help individuals navigate the digital space responsibly and critically engage with online content.

Ultimately, while digital platforms offer tremendous potential for Islamic outreach, it is crucial that this potential is harnessed responsibly, with a focus on maintaining the integrity of Islamic teachings and fostering a positive, inclusive, and authentic online environment.

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