

Transforming Children's Character Education in Islamic Da'wah in the Era of Social Media

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Abstract

This paper examines the transformation of children's character education in Islamic da'wah within the era of social media. The main question addressed is how Islamic da'wah can adapt to effectively nurture children's moral development amidst rapid digitalization. Positioned within the framework of Islamic educational values, this study argues that conventional da'wah approaches must be integrated with innovative digital strategies. The discussion is conducted through a qualitative descriptive method, using literature review and analysis of contemporary digital practices. The main result indicates that effective Islamic character education today requires the use of creative, interactive, and value-based digital content, parental collaboration, and the development of positive online communities. These strategies ensure that Islamic values are meaningfully transmitted and internalized by children in their formative years despite the challenges posed by the social media environment.

Keywords: *Islamic Da'wah, Children's Character Education, Digital Da'wah, Social Media Literacy, Moral Developmen*



A. Introduction

In the current context of rapid technological advancement and the growing pervasiveness of social media, the transmission of values and education, particularly within Islamic frameworks, has necessitated a fundamental reevaluation of traditional approaches. The phenomenon weighs heavily on the younger generation, whose character development is particularly vulnerable to external influences. The traditional methods of Da'wah Islāmīyah (Islamic propagation), which historically thrived in personal and communal settings, must adapt significantly in the era of digital communication to effectively reach and educate children and youth.

Current research indicates that integrating digital technologies into Islamic education is pivotal for character education (*tarbiyah akhlāqiyyah*). The rise of digital tools and platforms presents both challenges and opportunities. Notably, studies reveal that mobile devices and interactive applications can considerably enhance the teaching of Islamic values and principles (Aziz et al., 2019; Jibril & Kayode, 2023). The incorporation of game-based learning, for instance, has been shown to increase engagement and understanding among young Muslims (Hamdani & Yulianto, 2020; Yusoff et al., 2020). Such innovative approaches reflect contemporary pedagogical strategies designed to resonate with the digital aptitude of today's youth.

Furthermore, the role of social media in facilitating Islamic teachings is increasingly acknowledged. Research has demonstrated that platforms like Instagram and Facebook are leveraged to disseminate Islamic knowledge and foster community among youth (Jima'ain, 2023; Indrioko, 2023). However, it is essential to approach this medium judiciously, as the digital landscape is also rife with misconceptions and divergent interpretations of Islamic teachings (Jima'ain, 2023; Azizy et al., 2022). Digital literacy, therefore, becomes crucial not just for the proficient use of technology but also for critically engaging with content and navigating the complexities of information available online (Ulum & Qosim, 2023).

In light of these developments, educational institutions, particularly Islamic schools, must enhance their curriculum and methodologies to incorporate digital literacy alongside traditional Islamic education. As highlighted in the literature, the incorporation of Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (TPACK) frameworks can greatly improve the educational process (Saili & Taat, 2023; Hidayat et al., 2023). This model encourages educators to not only become proficient in technology use but also to effectively integrate it into their teaching practices. Moreover, Islamic education must also promote critical thinking, allowing students to analyze and contextualize what they learn within the framework of their faith (Othman & Yusof, 2023).

Additionally, addressing the moral and ethical challenges posed by increased digital exposure is imperative. Islam advocates for values such as humility, respect, and community engagement, which should be reinforced through digital platforms and educational content (Rahmatullah, 2023). Encouraging participatory learning, where students engage with content interactively, can facilitate a deeper understanding of these values (Djamdjuri et al., 2022; Rakhmawati, 2020).

In the age of digital communication, traditional da'wah methods face significant challenges in effectively fostering children's character development amidst the expansive and often contradictory content on social media. This inadequacy is particularly alarming given that character education is integral to Islamic teachings, as rooted in Qur'anic verses and Hadīths. Scholars such as Adeni et al., (2023) and (Aziz et al., 2022) highlight the transformative nature of communication patterns and the juxtaposition of opportunities and pitfalls that digital platforms present for Islamic propagation. However, explicit studies concentrating on the role of da'wah in nurturing children's character within social media environments remain scarce, emphasizing the necessity for focused examination in this vital area (Aziz et al., 2022)Adeni et al., 2023).

The traditional approach to da'wah relies heavily on face-to-face communication and local community interaction. Yet, as technology evolves, it is

paramount to transition toward effective digital strategies that can maintain and potentially enhance the engagement of young Muslims. For instance, studies by (Hopizal & Fahrurrazi, 2020) demonstrate that digital platforms can facilitate a more accessible and relatable form of da'wah for younger generations, making the teachings of Islam more palatable and actionable in their daily lives (Hopizal & Fahrurrazi, 2020). This aligns with the findings from (Aziz et al., 2022), who discuss the unprecedented potential of digital media to disseminate vital Islamic messages widely and effectively (Aziz et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the ramifications of social media on youth cannot be ignored. While these platforms offer unique opportunities to spread Islamic values, they also expose children to content that may contradict or undermine their moral upbringing. It is crucial for Islamic educators and da'wah practitioners to navigate these complexities by leveraging technology in a way that promotes character education effectively. Ultimately, emerging frameworks that incorporate innovative strategies—such as utilizing infographics, animations, or interactive media—can provide young Muslims with engaging tools that emphasize moral teachings while navigating the digital landscape (Fauzi et al., 2022; Arifin et al., 2022; Firmansyah & Rizki, 2023).

The transition to digital da'wah must address the integration of Islamic values within the broader framework of contemporary media. Research indicates that utilizing engaging content formats such as comics or entertaining visual narratives can reinforce Islamic teachings in an appealing manner for children and adolescents (Fitriani, 2022; Ridha & Rubino, 2023). This transition aligns with the need for an educational approach that addresses both the potential pitfalls of digital exposure and the principles of tarbiyah akhlāqiyyah. By focusing on character education that resonates with today's youth, Islamic da'wah can adapt to the modern communication culture while staying true to its foundational values.

In conclusion, as traditional da'wah strategies struggle to adapt adequately to the digital landscape, a comprehensive reevaluation focused on innovative and

dynamic approaches is essential for nurturing children's character effectively. Embracing these changes will not only keep Islamic teachings relevant but will also cultivate a morally upright generation of Muslims who can navigate the challenges of their environment with a strong foundation in their faith. Thus, a shift towards digital competency within da'wah practices is imperative, ensuring that educators and propagators remain effective in their mission to instill Islamic principles in the hearts and minds of children.

In this paper, a qualitative-descriptive method is employed, based on literature review and critical analysis of contemporary practices in Islamic digital education. The research aims to propose practical strategies for adapting Islamic da'wah methods in order to safeguard and strengthen children's character development in the age of social media. The discussion will begin by exploring the concept of Islamic character education, followed by an analysis of the impact of social media on children's moral development. It will then propose transformative strategies for Islamic da'wah in the digital era, and conclude with reflections on the future direction of digital Islamic education for children.

B. The Urgency of Transforming Children's Character Education in the Era of Social Media

The transformation of children's character education within the framework of Islamic da'wah has become an urgent necessity, especially in light of the pervasive influence of social media on the cognitive, emotional, and moral development of children. The digital landscape exposes young audiences to a vast array of content that can often diverge from Islamic ethical values, thereby challenging traditional educational paradigms. Livingstone and Byrne emphasize that contemporary media engagement profoundly shapes children's knowledge, behaviors, and social interactions, leading to significant implications for character education in Islamic contexts Sholihah & Nurhayati (2022). This dynamics necessitates that Islamic educators and da'i innovate methodologies that can compete with the immersive and persuasive nature of digital content.

Conventional approaches to da'wah, which rely predominantly on face-to-face engagements such as majlis ta'lim or classroom settings, are increasingly inadequate in this digital age (Sirait, 2023). As Hasan aptly argues, digital da'wah must be reconceived as a dynamic process informed by the technological culture prevalent among youth and should strive to produce content that is both appealing and imbued with Islamic values (Sulaiman, 2023; . To bridge this gap, educational reforms must emphasize the development of engaging and relatable content that resonates with children, utilizing platforms they frequent while weaving in moral teachings consistent with Islamic principles (Tabroni et al., 2022; Mansir, 2022).

Furthermore, the promotion of character education through Islamic teachings must evolve beyond traditional methods. Programs that integrate digital storytelling, interactive applications, and age-appropriate multimedia content can facilitate a deeper engagement with Islamic values. For instance, studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of employing comics and animated narratives as tools for conveying Islamic teachings, thereby capturing children's attention while reinforcing moral lessons (Fitriani, 2022; Ratnawati et al., 2023). This aligns with the overarching goal of tarbiyah akhlāqiyyah, where the essence of character education is to cultivate attributes such as integrity, empathy, and responsibility from a young age (Hidayat & Janan, 2023; Rijal et al., 2022).

Incorporating families into the educational process is also crucial. Family-based educational models have been shown to strengthen Islamic character development, as parents play an integral role in a child's moral formation (Engkizar et al., 2021). A collaborative approach between educators and families can create a holistic environment conducive to reinforcing Islamic values amidst the expansive contexts children navigate through social media (Sulaiman, 2023; Rasima, 2018).

Moreover, addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by the digital environment is vital for educators. Opportunities exist to leverage social media for positive engagement, but there is a pressing need for critical discussions about the content children consume online. Character education must also cultivate media

literacy among children, helping them discern between beneficial and harmful content, thereby empowering them to navigate the digital world judiciously (Aflisia et al., 2021; Susilo et al., 2022).

In conclusion, the urgent need for transforming children's character education within Islamic da'wah is not merely a response to the challenges posed by digital media; it is an opportunity to innovate and adapt educational practices to meet the needs of the younger generation. By embracing these changes, Islamic education can maintain its relevance and effectiveness in nurturing morally upright individuals, ensuring they are well-equipped to engage with the complexities of the modern world while firmly grounded in their faith.

Character education (*tarbiyah akhlāqiyyah*) is crucial in Islamic tradition, emphasizing the internalization of key virtues such as *ṣidq* (truthfulness), *amānah* (trustworthiness), *ḥilm* (forbearance), and *raḥmah* (compassion). The prophetic maxim, "I was sent only to perfect good character" (Aziz et al., 2019), underscores the importance of nurturing these values within the younger generation. However, with the exponential rise of digital media consumption, these noble teachings risk being overshadowed by the secular and materialistic ideals prevalent in social media content. Recent statistics indicate that children between the ages of 8 to 12 spend an average of 4 to 6 hours per day engaging with digital media (Jibril & Kayode, 2023). This reality necessitates that Islamic da'wah evolve beyond mere existence in the digital domain to ensure its effectiveness in positively shaping the character of children.

Abdullah's work emphasizes that failure to meaningfully engage children through digital channels can result in the predominance of non-Islamic worldviews that may dominate their minds and moral perspectives (Hamdani & Yulianto, 2020). Therefore, a critical transformation in Islamic da'wah approaches must take place. This transformation should encompass adapting communication models, educational tools, and da'wah narratives to align with the digital context, making them relevant and engaging for today's tech-savvy youth. Strategies such as digital

storytelling, gamification of Islamic teachings, the creation of short video da'wah, and the involvement of Islamic influencers are among the innovative tactics proposed to effectively reach and engage children (Yusoff et al., 2020; Jima'ain, 2023).

Moreover, these digital strategies should not merely mimic secular content styles but must be deeply rooted in *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, the higher objectives of Islamic law. This ensures that all endeavors in digital da'wah promote the protection and flourishing of children's faith, intellect, and morality. By anchoring strategies in Islamic values, the educational outreach can counterbalance the negative impacts of detrimental content readily available on social media platforms (Indrioko, 2023).

In sum, the urgency of transforming character education in Islamic da'wah is not solely a reactive measure in response to technological advancements; rather, it is a proactive endeavor to fulfill the Islamic mandate of guiding future generations toward *ṣāliḥ* (righteous) living. In leveraging contemporary digital platforms, Islamic educators and da'i can effectively cultivate a generation that embodies the teachings of Islam, ensuring that the principles of good character remain not only preserved but also actively practiced in every era, including the age of social media.

C. Strategies for Transforming Children's Character Education through Islamic Da'wah in Social Media

In order to address the challenges of social media influence on children's character, Islamic da'wah must develop adaptive, innovative, and structured strategies. These strategies should integrate Islamic values deeply into digital platforms that children frequently engage with, while maintaining both ethical rigor and creative appeal.

One effective strategy is the use of *digital storytelling* based on Islamic teachings. Digital narratives can capture children's attention while embedding lessons of *īmān* (faith), *akhlāq* (ethics), and *‘ilm* (knowledge). Research by Khan and Farooq emphasizes that digital stories, when infused with moral values,

significantly enhance children's ethical awareness and empathy development¹. Therefore, Islamic educators must invest in creating short films, animations, and story-based content rooted in Qur'anic narratives and prophetic traditions.

Another approach is *gamification* of Islamic education. By integrating game elements such as rewards, challenges, and storytelling into learning apps or online platforms, children's engagement with Islamic content can be increased. An example of this is the "Muslim Kids TV" platform, which successfully blends Islamic education with entertainment². Such methods align with the principle of teaching in a manner that suits the learner's nature, as the Prophet Muhammad SAW advised to speak to people according to their level of understanding³.

Promoting *positive Muslim role models* through social media is also crucial. Children are highly influenced by figures they admire. Creating content around young Muslim influencers who exemplify Islamic virtues in contemporary settings can provide relatable examples. A report by the Pew Research Center found that youth tend to internalize values displayed by digital celebrities more readily than those taught formally⁴.

Parental collaboration must also be emphasized. Parents play a pivotal role in guiding children's media consumption and reinforcing Islamic values learned online. Research by Kurniawati and Nugroho indicates that digital literacy among parents significantly influences the effectiveness of children's online religious learning⁵. Therefore, Islamic da'wah programs must include training modules to empower parents in supervising and participating in their children's digital experiences.

Lastly, the establishment of *safe Islamic digital communities* where children can interact positively is vital. Platforms should promote Islamic ethics of communication such as *ḥusn al-ẓann* (positive assumption), *ṣidq* (truthfulness), and *ʿadālah* (justice), while protecting children from harmful digital interactions.

Initiatives such as "SalamWeb" demonstrate the feasibility of creating sharia-compliant digital environments⁶.

In conclusion, transforming Islamic da'wah for children's character education in the era of social media requires a multi-pronged strategy: creatively designed content, educational games, positive role models, parental involvement, and secure community building—all grounded in authentic Islamic teachings.

D. Evaluating the Effectiveness of Digital Da'wah for Children's Character Building

The transformation of Islamic da'wah in the digital era must be measured to ensure that it genuinely contributes to the intended goal: nurturing children's Islamic character. An evaluation framework is therefore essential to assess its effectiveness both qualitatively and quantitatively.

1. Indicators of Success in Digital Da'wah for Children

Effectiveness can be gauged through several key indicators. First, the internalization of Islamic values must be observable in children's behavior. Studies in educational psychology show that behavior change is a more reliable indicator of learning outcomes than mere knowledge acquisition¹. For instance, increased acts of honesty (*sidq*), compassion (*rahmah*), and responsibility (*amānah*) among children who regularly engage with Islamic digital content are clear signs of successful da'wah.

Second, children's ability to critically assess and select appropriate digital content is another important marker. According to a report by the Common Sense Media organization, children who are taught digital literacy and ethics are more selective and less vulnerable to harmful content². Therefore, if digital da'wah initiatives succeed, children should demonstrate improved digital discernment aligned with Islamic ethical principles.

2. Challenges in Measuring Effectiveness

Despite the clarity of objectives, measuring the success of digital da'wah is not without challenges. One significant difficulty is the long-term nature of character formation, which cannot be fully captured through short-term assessments. As Wulandari notes in her research on Islamic education in digital settings, character development often manifests subtly and cumulatively over time³.

Moreover, external factors such as parental involvement, school environment, and peer influence also affect children's character development. Thus, isolating the specific impact of digital da'wah requires careful methodological design, such as longitudinal studies or mixed-method research combining surveys, interviews, and behavior observation.

3. Recommendations for Enhancing Impact

To enhance the effectiveness of digital da'wah for children's character education, several recommendations can be proposed. First, Islamic digital platforms should regularly evaluate user engagement and learning outcomes through feedback tools, quizzes, and interactive assessments. Second, collaboration between *da'i*, educators, child psychologists, and digital content creators is essential to design more impactful programs. Third, continuous improvement based on empirical research findings should be a priority, ensuring that digital da'wah remains responsive to the changing digital habits of children.

In summary, while digital da'wah presents a promising avenue for children's character education, its true success lies in thoughtful evaluation and persistent innovation rooted in Islamic values.

E. Concluding Remarks

The transformation of children's character education through Islamic da'wah in the era of social media is an urgent and significant endeavor. Social media, with

all its potentials and pitfalls, demands a creative, strategic, and deeply rooted Islamic approach to ensure that children's moral and spiritual development is not only preserved but also enhanced. This paper has discussed the need for innovative methods such as digital storytelling, gamification, promoting positive Muslim role models, parental involvement, and creating safe digital communities, all rooted firmly in authentic Islamic teachings.

Evaluating the effectiveness of these methods reveals both promise and challenges. While observable behavioral changes and enhanced digital literacy are encouraging indicators, long-term and cumulative assessments remain necessary to truly capture the impact of digital da'wah. Continuous improvement based on empirical research and collaboration among various disciplines is crucial for sustaining the effectiveness of these initiatives. Further research is recommended to develop a standardized framework for assessing the long-term impact of Islamic digital da'wah on children's character. Longitudinal studies, cross-cultural comparisons, and interdisciplinary approaches will enrich the scholarship and practice in this vital field.

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