

Da'wah Communication in Enhancing Islamic Understanding among Students at IAIN Ternate in the Digital Era

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Received: 15/07/2025

Revised: 30/07/2025

Accepted: 07/08/2025

Abstract

The development of the digital sphere has brought significant changes in communication methods and the dissemination of information in various aspects, especially in the field of da'wah. This study aims to explain the influence of digital technology in increasing the Islamic understanding of students at IAIN Ternate, North Maluku. The research utilizes a qualitative approach with a literature review method. Primary data sources were obtained from various da'wah content on social media, such as content from Ustadz Abdus Somad, while secondary data was gathered from books, articles, and other references relevant to the research. Data analysis was conducted using content analysis techniques, utilizing Everett Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation theory. The results of this research show that the use of digital technology in da'wah can increase the creativity of preachers and serves as an effective medium for conveying da'wah messages, enabling those messages to be easily received by the audience—in this context, the students of IAIN Ternate.

Keywords

Da'wah communication; Islamic understanding; digital era

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1. PENDAHULUAN

The advancement of the digital era has brought about major changes in communication methods and the dissemination of information across various aspects, especially in the field of da'wah. Da'wah can be interpreted as an activity of inviting, calling, summoning, and influencing someone to have faith in Allah SWT. Da'wah communication is the process of delivering Islamic information to influence the communicant (the object of da'wah/mad'u), so that they will believe in, understand, practice, spread, and defend the truth of Islamic teachings.

In this digital era, changes in da'wah communication are very significant. Previously, da'wah could only be carried out through sermons, khutbah (Friday prayer sermons), and religious study



sessions, but now da'wah can be conducted through social media. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter have become new means for conveying Islamic messages. Da'wah communication in the digital era has greatly influenced the public's Islamic understanding, especially among the younger generation such as university students. As the younger generation, students have a great influence on implementing Islamic understanding through social media because they are very familiar with technology. Digital da'wah for students is a strategic step to reach young people who are attuned to technology and social media. As a group that is critical, creative, and full of enthusiasm, students have great potential to spread Islamic messages and can enhance Islamic understanding in the digital era. (Pitaloka, P., & Juansyah, A. 2024)

This is further supported by the fact that many researchers have conducted studies on da'wah communication in the digital era. Previous research by Kasir, I., & Awali, S. (2024), "The Role of Digital Da'wah in Spreading Islamic Messages in the Modern Era." *Jurnal An-Nasyr: Journal of Da'wah in the Ink of the Eye*. This study examines Da'wah in Islam as an activity of delivering religious messages to individuals or groups to increase the understanding, appreciation, and practice of Islamic teachings. (Kasir, I., & Awali, S, 2024). Another study was conducted by Ridwan Rustandi and Mukhlis Aliyudin titled "Cyber Culture in the Transformation of Urban Da'wah: A Case Study of Pemuda Hijrah Community Bandung, Indonesia." This study explores the transformation of da'wah culture through the Hijrah community in the digital era and its impact on the Islamic understanding of urban youth. (Rustandi and Mukhlis Aliyudin, 2025). Another study by Siti Nurmaya & Juni Wati Sri Rizki, titled "Utilization of TikTok as Da'wah Media among Islamic Communication and Broadcasting Students," investigates da'wah strategies through the TikTok platform among Islamic communication students and their impact on users' Islamic understanding. (Nurmaya dan Juni Wati Sri Rizki, 2024). Another research, titled "Navigating Faith Online: Social Media and Religious Literacy among Women's Religious Groups," examines religious literacy through social media among female student groups and its impact on religious understanding. (Iskandar, Geri Suratno, and Didik Haryadi Raharjo, 2025)

Da'wah communication is the process of conveying communication or messages from an individual or a group of people to another individual or group, which originates from the Qur'an and Hadith, using symbols—either verbal or otherwise—with the aim of changing attitudes, opinions, or behavior for the better in accordance with Islamic teachings, whether directly or indirectly through media. (Firman, A.A, 2022)

Thus, da'wah communication is at stake in this digital era in enhancing students' Islamic understanding. The availability of da'wah content circulating on social media can help students more easily understand Islamic teachings. Therefore, there needs to be an in-depth study of how da'wah

communication can play a role in increasing students' Islamic comprehension. The goal is to analyze da'wah communication in improving the Islamic understanding of students in the digital era.

2. METHODS

This study is a qualitative research with a case study type. (Moleong, 2019). The subjects of this research are students at IAIN Ternate, while the object of the research is da'wah communication (strategy, media, and messages) used and its influence on students' Islamic understanding.

The data collection techniques were conducted in three ways: interviews, observation, and document study. Interviews were conducted with IAIN Ternate students. Observations were made by monitoring students' da'wah activities on digital platforms. Next, document studies were conducted by collecting documentation of digital campus da'wah media such as video content, digital posters, da'wah captions, and interaction statistics. (Sugiyono, n.d.)

The data analysis technique was conducted through data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction was carried out by filtering data relevant to the study. Data presentation was done by arranging the results of interviews and observations in the form of thematic narratives. Finally, conclusions/verification were drawn by identifying effective da'wah communication patterns in forming Islamic understanding. (Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M, 2014)

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The role of Da'wah Communication in the Digital Era is highly important in enhancing Islamic understanding among students. Da'wah in the digital era requires preachers to be creative and innovative. The Diffusion of Innovation Theory by Everett Rogers explains how new ideas, products, or practices spread in society. In the context of digital da'wah, this theory can be used to understand how digital technology is adopted by preachers and audiences. According to this theory, the diffusion process consists of five stages: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. Preachers who successfully adopt digital technology and spread Islamic messages in innovative ways will act as "innovators" and "early adopters" who drive the spread of digital da'wah (Kasir, I., & Awali, S. 2024). The use of social media as a means of da'wah is quite beneficial, considering that Indonesia is one of the countries with a high rate of social media users, meaning the majority of Indonesians are familiar with social media—not only among the younger generation but even among older groups who are relatively active on social platforms. The use of social media as a da'wah platform allows preachers to reach a vast da'wah segment, crossing various age groups, from children and teenagers

to adults and the elderly.

The Role of Social Media in Da'wah Communication

Social media has become the main tool in da'wah communication in the digital era. With its interactive features, social media allows preachers to interact directly with the da'wah audience (mad'u). In da'wah communication via social media, social interaction occurs, but this social interaction implies reciprocal relationships that mutually influence each other (Rohman D.A. 2019). This function makes media play a very important role in carrying out da'wah. As Jumantoro explains, da'wah is an effort to invite people toward goodness through oral, written, behavior, and other forms of communication, whether consciously or deliberately planned, with the aim of influencing others, both individually and collectively, so that they understand, internalize, and practice religious teachings as messages communicated without any element of coercion (Nurfitria, 2022). Some commonly used platforms in da'wah include:

a. YouTube as a medium for preaching



Figure 1. Preaching content through YouTube

Source: Ustadz Abdul Somad's YouTube account

Famous preachers and scholars often utilize YouTube to spread their lectures, which are recorded in video format. YouTube plays an important role in improving the quality of Islamic preaching, as it is one of the most wide-reaching digital platforms, with content easily accessible to a global audience. In this way, Ustadz Abdul Somad takes advantage of YouTube's potential for preaching by uploading videos that not only explore Islam in depth but also employ innovative delivery methods. As a result, he has succeeded in creating content that is both educational and

entertaining, with messages that are easily received by a wide audience—including young people or students who are more accustomed to digital content.

b. Instagram as a medium for preaching



Figure 2. Preaching content through Instagram

Source: Ig account @dakwah_tauhid

Instagram is used to share preaching content in the form of images, short videos, and infographics. This highly visual style of delivery captures the attention of the audience, especially among the younger generation.

Opportunities for Digital Preaching in Enhancing Islamic Understanding

The digital era offers vast and varied opportunities for preaching activities. The existence of various digital platforms makes it easier to disseminate information throughout the world, including in preaching activities (Ummah, 2022). With social media, the field of Islamic preaching is expanding, reaching more people. However, this also requires vigilance to ensure that Islamic preaching is not limited only to places of worship or study circles. Muslims must make good use of digital technology to spread Islam in a spirit of compassion, not hate or violence. (Sutisna, 2022).

Digital and other digital platforms offer global reach, allowing preaching to reach audiences from diverse geographic and cultural backgrounds. The digitalization of preaching creates space for two-way interaction, where audiences can ask questions, provide feedback, and participate in

discussions. Digital media enables the diversification of preaching methods and content, from text, images, and audio to video, which can be tailored to fit the preferences and demographic characteristics of the target audience.

In this fast-paced information age, digital preaching faces significant challenges in combating the spread of misinformation that can mislead people about religious teachings. To optimize the potential of digital preaching and address the associated challenges, several strategies can be implemented. First, digital education needs to be strengthened to raise awareness and improve digital literacy skills among preachers and the audience. The goal is to understand how to use digital technology responsibly and effectively. Second, a strict system for verifying and filtering preaching content is necessary to prevent the spread of false or misleading information. Third, a personalized approach to delivering preaching content can be implemented by using data and analytics to understand audience preferences, making the content more personal and relevant (Pratama, A. R., Aprison, W. 2024)

Digital Da'wah Communication and Islamic Understanding among IAIN Ternate Students

IAIN Ternate students, as the young generation, are very familiar with digital technology and social media. Most of them have YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok accounts, and actively use these platforms not only for entertainment, but also as a source of religious knowledge. They show a high interest in da'wah content that is easy to digest, light, visual, and practical.

This reflects that students are no longer dependent on conventional lectures like recitations or mosque sermons, but instead more often gain information and Islamic understanding from digital media. Digital da'wah among students takes place informally, flexibly, and interactively. Students are both passive audience members (consumers of da'wah content) and active participants (re-sharers or creators of Islamic content).

Some observed examples of forms of da'wah communication include:

1. Students watch Ustadz Abdul Somad's sermons on YouTube as daily Islamic references.
2. Following Instagram accounts such as @dakwah_tauhid to get quotes, Islamic law infographics, and religious reminders.
3. Re-sharing short videos about ethics, worship, and Islamic motivation through Instagram stories or campus WhatsApp groups.

This da'wah communication is more personal, adapted to the students' schedules and moods, and expands the horizontal reach of Islamic messages among peers.

Based on interviews and observation, it is known that social media is very effective as a medium for da'wah. Several factors that make social media successful in enhancing students' Islamic

understanding include:

- a) **High accessibility:** Students can access content anytime and anywhere without limitations of time and place.
- b) **Visual and engaging:** Infographics, Islamic memes, and short video formats help students understand material faster than reading thick books.
- c) **Interactivity:** Comment and Q&A features allow students to ask questions directly and discuss material they do not yet understand.

Students mentioned that they often get “Islamic insights” unintentionally while scrolling through social media, which eventually sparks their desire to learn more about Islam.

From a strategic perspective, Islamic preachers or Islamic content creators have succeeded in capturing students’ interest through:

1. Casual language relevant to youth culture
2. Choosing themes close to student life, such as social etiquette, the intention of worship, motivation for studying as worship, and social issues
3. Attractive visualization, using soft background music, subtitles, and cinematic video clips
4. Consistency of uploads: Preaching accounts that regularly upload content gain greater trust.

In the context of the Diffusion of Innovations theory by Everett Rogers, these digital da’wah creators act as innovators and early adopters, followed by students as part of the early majority or late majority.

The Impact of Digital Da’wah Communication on IAIN Ternate Students

Positive Impacts:

- a. Enhances religious knowledge in a practical and applicable manner
- b. Cultivates spiritual awareness amid a secular campus life
- c. Improves worship habits (such as performing prayers on time, reading the Qur’an, maintaining good character)

- d. Helps students face life's challenges from an Islamic perspective

Negative Impacts:

- a. Potential spread of religious hoaxes if students do not cross-check the sources
- b. The presence of provocative or intolerant content that may be misunderstood by lay students
- c. Dependence on social media for religious learning, reducing the motivation to read religious texts or have direct discussions with lecturers or religious scholars

CONCLUSION

The role of Da'wah Communication in the Digital Era is very important in improving Islamic understanding among students. Da'wah in the digital era requires preachers to be creative and innovative. The Diffusion of Innovations theory by Everett Rogers explains how new ideas, products, or practices spread within a society. The use of social media as a platform for da'wah enables preachers to tap into a vast preaching niche, reaching across various age segments—from children, teenagers, adults, to the elderly.

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